

# Should charities be allowed 'political' advertising on TV?

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F\*\*king Clooney

Is the ban on political broadcast adverts preventing people from doing good? Was Bono's latest [celebrity-filled advertisement](#), released by his charity, a political act or merely an effort to draw attention to famine in East Africa? Polis intern [April Simpson](#) reports.

The organization that approves British adverts says "[The F Word — Famine is the Real Obscenity](#)," violates rules on political advertising, and has refused to broadcast it in the UK. However, a spokeswoman for [ONE](#), the U2 singer's favourite charity, says the minute-long piece will be broadcast in the U.S. and France.

Katherine Sladden, ONE media manager, says ONE is not a political party, nor is it affiliated with any political organization. "Our objectives relate only to the health and well-being of those in poverty," she said in an email.

The advertisement cuts to celebrities including Idris Elba, George Clooney, Jessica Alba and Kristin Davis, presumably shouting obscenities — a black strip covers their mouths — before Bono interjects that "famine is the real obscenity." Repeated lines like "30,000 children have died in 3 months" and "famine is manmade" drive home ONE's claim that the food

crisis in East Africa was preventable.

[Clearcast](#), the organization that approves adverts, said ONE [may be in violation of the country's 2003 Communications Act](#).

"These rules ensure that adverts aren't being broadcast by bodies whose objects are wholly or mainly political," Clearcast [said in a press release](#), adding that ONE aims to "pressure political leaders."

The advert is part of ONE's "[Hungry No More](#)" campaign, which is drawing signatures for a petition asking world leaders to "[break the cycle of famine](#)" when they meet at the [Group of 20 Summit](#) next month in France.

ONE told [BBC it's challenging the decision](#). Clearcast says [it is working with with ONE](#) to remove any "apparently legal hurdles" so the ad may be cleared.

The controversy not only raises issues about broadcast regulation, but also about NGOs. What right do they have to campaign on 'political' issues. How accountable are they and their celebrity supporters? What, in your opinion, constitutes political advertising? Is the "The F word" political or humanitarian?

This article by Polis reporter [April Simpson](#)

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