

**AN EVALUATION  
OF THE JUNE 21, 1992  
ELECTIONS IN  
ETHIOPIA**

**NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC  
INSTITUTE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
INSTITUTE**

# **An Evaluation of the June 21, 1992 Elections in Ethiopia**

**National Democratic Institute  
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# Administrative Regions for the Transitional Period

## KEY TO REGIONS

### Reg.10

- 1 Basketo
- 2 Mursi
- 3 Ari
- 4 Hamar
- 5 Arbore
- 6 Gassawach
- 7 Gungatom
- 8 Tsamai
- 9 Mole
- 10 Dime
- 11 Bodi

### Reg.11

- 1 Keficho
- 2 Ndo
- 3 Dizi
- 4 Surma
- 5 Selman
- 6 Sheko/Mocha
- 7 Mem
- 8 Chari
- 9 Bench
- 10 Sheko

### Reg.12

- 1 Agnuak
- 2 Nuer
- 3 Mejangir

### Reg.13

- 1 Harari

### Reg.14

Addis Ababa

### Reg.1

- 1 Tigray
- 2 Selo
- 3 Kunama

### Reg.2

- 1 Afar

### Reg.3

- 1 Amara
- 2 Agere-Kamer
- 3 Agere-Aamgi
- 4 Oromo-Katu

### Reg.4

- 1 Oromo

### Reg.5

- 1 Somali

### Reg.6

- 1 Gumuz
- 2 Kone
- 3 Berta
- 4 Semien Mole
- 5 Shinasha

### Reg.7

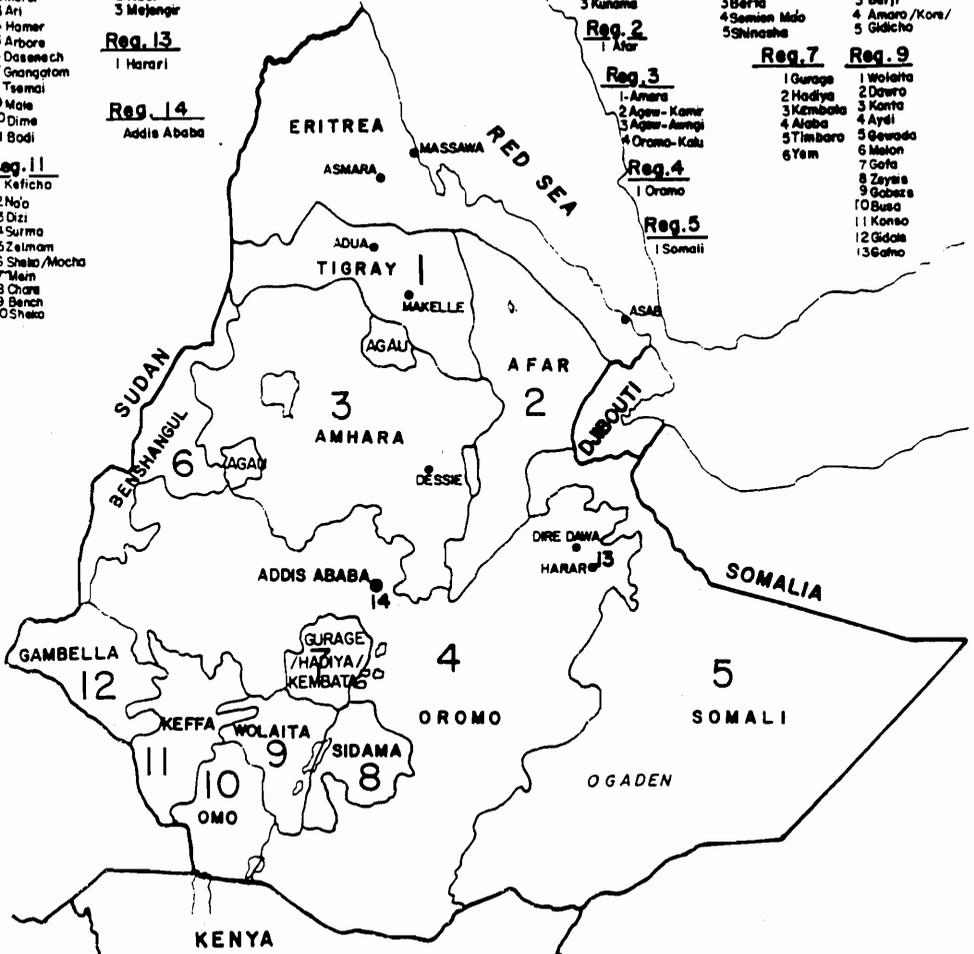
- 1 Gurage
- 2 Hadiya
- 3 Kembata
- 4 Alaba
- 5 Timbaro
- 6 Tem

### Reg.8

- 1 Sidama
- 2 Gedeo
- 3 Burji
- 4 Amaro/Kore
- 5 Gidicho

### Reg.9

- 1 Woleita
- 2 Dawro
- 3 Konro
- 4 Aydi
- 5 Gensoda
- 6 Melon
- 7 Gafa
- 8 Zayse
- 9 Gobeza
- 10 Busa
- 11 Koneo
- 12 Gidalo
- 13 Galmo



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Larry Garber, NDI Senior Associate for Electoral Processes, served as the principal author and redactor of the study. Edmond Keller, who served as AAI's field director for the Ethiopia observation project, Clark Gibson, Curtis Vredenburg and Christopher Fomuyon drafted individual chapters of the report and commented on the various drafts. At NDI, Executive Vice President Kenneth Wollack, Public Information Director Sue Grabowski, Senior Program Officer Eric Bjornlund and Program Officer Steven Griner edited the study. AAI Executive Vice President Steve McDonald, AAI Vice President Carl Schieren and Terrence Lyons of the Brookings Institution also reviewed the draft. Grabowski and Griner were responsible for organizing the appendices.

Steve Morrison, United States Agency for International Development's (AID) adviser on democracy and governance issues in

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Ethiopia, deserves special mention for his support of various projects involving NDI and AAI in Ethiopia. Dating back to early 1992, and particularly in the conception and final preparation of this study, NDI has benefitted considerably from the analytical and organizational support provided by Morrison. In addition, Morrison was instrumental in helping implement the international observer operation for the elections, particularly the AAI component.

A second person deserving special mention is Leticia Martinez, who was retained to organize logistics for the AAI team. Drawing upon her experiences working with NDI and the Carter Center of Emory University, Martinez also contributed significantly to the Joint International Observer Group (JIOG) operation.

Finally, AAI and NDI gratefully acknowledge the support received from AID. AAI received a generous grant from AID to organize the 70-member observer team and to provide sub-grants to NDI and the Inter-Africa Group, an Ethiopian-based organization, for the purpose of preparing critical evaluations of the Ethiopian electoral process.

# Glossary of Abbreviations and Terms

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***AAI - African-American Institute:*** a United States-based organization, which sponsored a 70-member international team for the June 21 elections.

***Contact Group:*** an advisory group designated by a restricted donors group of 12 countries, the U.N. Development Programme and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that determined policy for the JIOG (see below); included the ambassadors of Canada, Sweden and the United Kingdom, the United States chargé d'affaires and the United Nations resident representative, although other diplomats and representatives of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations often participated in contact group meetings affecting the monitoring exercise.

***Council of Representatives:*** an 87-member body established pursuant to the National Charter (see below) as the interim national legislative body in Ethiopia; until June 1992, when several parties withdrew, included representatives of 29 organizations.

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***EPDM - Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement:*** an Ethiopian party that participates in the EPRDF coalition (see below) and is prevalent in the Amhara regions of the country.

***EPLF - Eritrean People's Liberation Front:*** the principal Eritrean group fighting the Mengistu regime during the 1980s and, since May 1991, the dominant group in the Provisional Government of Eritrea.

***EPRDF - Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front:*** a coalition of several groups formed in 1989 to fight against the Mengistu regime and, since July 1991, the dominant group within the TGE (see below).

***IAG - Inter-Africa Group:*** an Ethiopian civic organization whose leaders returned from exile following the overthrow of Mengistu Haile Mariam and which conducted an independent study of the June 21 elections.

***JIOG - Joint International Observer Group:*** the umbrella arrangement for all observer groups present in Ethiopia for the June 21 elections; JIOG included nationals of 23 countries and representatives of several intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations.

***Kebele:*** the smallest unit in Ethiopian administrative structure; the country includes more than 30,000 *kebeles*.

***National Charter:*** adopted in July 1991 by the Democratic and Peaceful Transitional Conference in Ethiopia; sets forth the interim government arrangements until a new constitution is adopted and national elections held.

***NDI - National Democratic Institute for International Affairs:*** a Washington-based political development institute, which has organized technical assistance programs in Ethiopia since November 1991 and which was responsible for producing this study.

***NEC - National Election Commission:*** a 10-member body appointed in December 1991 to plan for and implement the regional, local and "snap elections" (see below).

***OAU - Organization of African Unity:*** a regional body comprising all African states; sponsored an 18-member observer team comprising principally OAU staff and African ambassadors based in Addis Ababa.

***OLF - Oromo Liberation Front:*** the second largest group in the Council of Representatives until its members left in June 1992;

withdrew from the election process on June 17, four days before the elections.

**OPDO - Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization:** a party affiliated with the EPRDF, was established to counter the OLF claim to represent the Oromo people.

**Regions:** political units; pursuant to Proclamation 7, adopted in January 1992, Ethiopia was divided into 12 regions and two chartered cities, with each region theoretically dominated by a particular ethnic group; the June 21 elections were designed to establish elected regional councils, which would be authorized to exercise some autonomy in promulgating legislation and implementing policy.

**Snap Elections:** akin to open town meetings, they were designed ostensibly to provide an administrative structure for the conduct of regional and local elections; occurred at the *kebele* level beginning in mid-April and continuing through early June.

**TGE - Transitional Government of Ethiopia:** entity responsible for implementing government policy; formed in July 1991, comprising representatives of several parties, but dominated by the EPRDF and its affiliates.

**Wereda:** an administrative unit that comprises several *kebeles*; there are 600 *weredas* throughout the country; the June 21 elections were for *wereda* and regional councils.

**WPE - Workers Party of Ethiopia:** established in 1984 as the sole political party in the country; more than half-a-million Ethiopians reportedly were members before the ouster of Mengistu.

# Preface

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The June 21, 1992 regional and local elections in Ethiopia generated considerable interest within the international community. More than 200 observers from 23 countries responded to the invitation of the National Election Commission and visited Ethiopia at the time of the elections. The African-American Institute (AAI) organized the United States segment of the Joint International Observer Group (JIOG). The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), meanwhile, agreed to conduct an overall evaluation of the Ethiopian election process.

Since its founding in 1983, NDI has supported the development of democratic institutions in more than 60 countries. In Africa, NDI programs have included: a study of the United Nations role in the Namibian transition; comprehensive evaluations of the election systems of Senegal and Cameroon; a multi-faceted monitoring effort of the October 31, 1991 Zambian elections; a series of conferences and workshops for political party leaders and domestic election monitors in East, Francophone and Southern Africa; and a series of 27 civic education workshops in 17 South African cities.

NDI's involvement in Ethiopia began in November 1991, when a three-member team visited the country to advise the government on electoral matters. The trip was arranged in response to a request from Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi to former U.S. President

Jimmy Carter, who had visited Ethiopia in early November. At the time, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), citing the timetable set forth in the National Charter adopted in July 1991, sought to schedule regional and local elections within two months.

The NDI team met in Addis Ababa with President Meles and his key legal advisers, members of the Council of Representatives, leaders of civic organizations and representatives of the diplomatic community. While in Ethiopia, the team prepared a document outlining a series of electoral options for consideration by the Council's Committee on Elections and Nationalities. The team subsequently prepared a survey report that highlighted the positive improvements in Ethiopia following the May 1991 ouster of President Mengistu Haile Mariam. The report also noted the myriad challenges facing the TGE in developing a democratic election system, particularly given the decades of war that afflicted the country, the consequent mistrust among parties, the ambitious nature of the plan to reorganize the country's administration and the limited infrastructure capabilities.<sup>1</sup>

In January 1992, NDI – in conjunction with the Inter-Africa Group (IAG), an Ethiopian civic organization whose leaders returned from exile following the overthrow of Mengistu, and with the cooperation of the newly formed National Election Commission – organized a one-day symposium for 30 members of the Council of Representatives. The seminar focused on issues relating to electoral administration, campaign organization and security.

NDI representatives again visited Ethiopia in mid-May to consider program possibilities in the period preceding the regional and local elections. After consulting various Ethiopian officials and representatives of the international community, NDI committed to preparing a report that would analyze the Ethiopian electoral process and would suggest future political development programs in Ethiopia. The United States Agency for International Development (AID) agreed to finance this effort and AAI agreed to provide the raw data collected by its observers in the field.

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<sup>1</sup> National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Ethiopian Trip Report: NDI Elections Advisory Team*, p. 1 (1991).

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For the June elections, the NDI evaluation team included: Christopher Fomuyon, a Cameroonian lawyer, currently studying in the United States; Larry Garber, NDI Senior Associate for Electoral Processes and a participant in the November and May missions to Ethiopia; and Clark Gibson, a doctoral student at Duke University who worked with NDI in Zambia. The team was in Ethiopia from June 9-30 and, for the days immediately preceding the elections, was joined by NDI Senior Program Officer Eric Bjornlund.

NDI conducted its evaluation of the Ethiopian electoral process in cooperation with AAI, a private, United States-based organization. Since 1953, AAI has pursued a mission of fostering development in Africa, principally through programs of human resource development and improved mutual understanding between Africans and Americans. During the past two years, AAI supported African democratization by organizing an election observer mission to Benin and hosting conferences in Africa and the United States on various aspects of political pluralism and governance in Africa.

Responding to the invitation of the TGE and after obtaining funding from AID, AAI sponsored a 70-member delegation to observe the elections, subsidized a local Ethiopian monitoring effort initiated by the Inter-Africa Group and provided NDI with a sub-grant that permitted preparation of this evaluation report. The AAI delegation included academic experts, former Peace Corps volunteers in Ethiopia, and other individuals who had spent considerable time in the country (see Appendix I). U.S. Representative Donald Payne (D-NJ) and Joseph Duffey, president of American University in Washington, D.C., co-chaired the delegation. AAI's field director was Edmond Keller, professor of political science and director of the African Studies Center at the University of California at Los Angeles, president of the African Studies Association, and a longtime specialist on Ethiopia.

Many of the AAI delegates arrived in Ethiopia in early June. Soon after their arrival and following a review of the various forms prepared by AAI and the United Nations, they were dispatched, together with observers from other countries operating under the auspices of the Joint International Observer Group (see Chapter 5), to one of 15 hubs located in various regions of the country (see Appendix II). The observers met with regional party and election officials, reviewed preparations for the elections and observed the

local political environment. In some regions, the observers arrived in time to monitor the “snap elections” (see Chapter 3), which were still underway, while in other regions the observers were able to obtain reliable information regarding the snap elections from individuals who participated in them. The observers encountered logistical hurdles and a tenuous security situation that impeded the monitoring effort and, in some regions, required the withdrawal of the observers before election day.

Most of the international observers remained in the field for two weeks. Given the length of their stay, they were competent to evaluate many, but certainly not all, of the claims and counterclaims presented by the different parties and individuals in the days before the elections. The observers also collected a plethora of valuable, first-hand information, which was communicated to AAI and the JIOG secretariat through daily phone contacts, post-election debriefings and extensive written reports. These field reports, many of which responded to the specific issues listed in the NDI evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix III), form the basis for the information included in this report. In addition, excerpts from some of the more comprehensive written reports are included as appendices.<sup>2</sup> The NDI evaluation team also benefitted from information provided by the IAG’s Ethiopian Free Elections Group, which conducted a parallel evaluation effort and hosted a post-election debriefing session.

The Ethiopian transition process highlights the challenge of balancing the desire for an immediate democratic transition with the reality of initiating a democratic transition in a country with a limited democratic experience, an underdeveloped civil society and high levels of illiteracy. More important, since the second half of Ethiopia’s transition process lies ahead, a review of the important choices that have been made, especially the plunge into regional and local elections, allows for consideration of possible mid-course alterations. The lessons that emerge from the Ethiopian experience since the overthrow of Mengistu are discussed in the penultimate chapter of the report.

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<sup>2</sup> Due to concerns regarding possible recrimination, several observers requested that their reports not be attributed. These requests have been respected. Consequently, quotations from observers in the text are simply ascribed to AAI observer field reports.

This evaluation differs in a few respects from a traditional election observer report. Once several major opposition parties withdrew from the elections on June 17, technical and administrative problems affecting the elections became less significant. The report reflects this reality, in devoting less discussion to issues relating to electoral procedures and observed irregularities than is the case with other election observer reports prepared by NDI. Instead, this report emphasizes the state of Ethiopia's democratic institutions and the possible options for strengthening them. While the report is candid and forthright in recounting the considerable criticisms of the June 21 elections, it does so in the hope that substantial opportunity still exists to redress the problems and thereby increase the prospects that more competitive elections might be staged in the future.

The first chapter provides an overview of the Ethiopian electoral process and highlights several problems that beset the process. To place the elections in context, the second chapter briefly reviews recent Ethiopian history. The third chapter offers a national overview of the electoral process, while the fourth chapter describes this process as it unfolded in different regions of the country. The role of the international community in supporting the electoral process is assessed in chapter five. The sixth chapter reflects on the Ethiopian transition process as it has unfolded to date. The final chapter evaluates the state of civil society in Ethiopia, suggests various political development programs that might strengthen Ethiopia's fragile and nascent democratic system and recommends specific changes with respect to electoral procedures.

## *Chapter 1*

# Overview

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In July 1991, less than two months after the ouster of Mengistu Haile Mariam, whose brutal regime had ruled Ethiopia since 1977, political groups met to draft a new national charter. The “Democratic and Peaceful Transitional Conference of Ethiopia” established the TGE whose principal mandates were to prepare a new constitution and schedule national elections within two-and-a-half years. On July 22, the conference participants unanimously approved the Charter, which was effective from that date forward.

Article 13 of the Charter authorized regional and local elections within three months, wherever local conditions allowed. These elections, in the words of the Charter, were designed to empower Ethiopian national groups by decentralizing authority and by creating a federal structure of government. This approach reflected the historical experience and political platform of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which dominates the TGE. The goal of decentralization also enjoyed the official, if somewhat ambivalent, endorsement of important tactical partners in the TGE, most notably the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which sought autonomy in “Oromia.”

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The elections also were designed to serve three additional goals. First, the TGE believed that regional and local elections would help resolve the armed conflicts among and within the different contending ethnic groups; these conflicts have plagued the southern regions of the country, especially the eastern and western sectors of the Oromo region, since shortly after the July 1991 Transitional Conference. Second, the TGE hoped that the elections would provide regional and local governments with a popular mandate and sanction the replacement of the non-elected administrators designated by the TGE. Finally, the elections were envisioned as a demonstration of the TGE's commitment to political pluralism.

To realize this last goal, and to assist in lessening tensions and in raising popular confidence in the electoral process, the TGE welcomed the presence of international observers for the elections. The TGE also solicited material and technical assistance from the international community in support of the electoral process.

Planning and preparation for the elections encountered several formidable challenges. Ethiopia's predominantly peasant society, overwhelmingly illiterate, has little collective experience with the formal structures of democratic government, exists in a poor state of economic development, and is just emerging from years of war and famine. Additional impediments to creating a meaningful electoral system include: intensified intra-ethnic mistrust and violent conflict; the wide availability of weapons; a gross disparity of power between the EPRDF and all other movements; the lack of genuine, functioning political parties; a public administration woefully ill-prepared to conduct formal elections across Ethiopia's large territory; and, perhaps most important, considerable ambivalence regarding the TGE's proposed electoral transition to a new, ethnically-based federalism. Some Amhara political leaders, for example, asserted that the TGE's experiment implied the sacrifice of an Ethiopian national identity and effective central government. Alternatively, certain quarters within the OLF believed that the proposed ethnic federalism would merely co-opt the OLF into yet another northern-dominated system, and that Oromos would thereby forfeit an historic opportunity to achieve true sovereign independence for Oromia.

Not surprisingly, the three-month timetable for regional and local elections set forth in the Charter could not be maintained; ultimately, the elections were scheduled for June 21, 1992, 11 months after the

adoption of the Charter. From late 1991 until shortly before the June elections, discussions between the EPRDF and the OLF to defuse armed conflict dominated political life in Ethiopia. Other initiatives, including drafting a new constitution, were placed on hold until after the regional and local elections were concluded.

By early May 1992, sufficient progress appeared to have been made in encamping fighters. However, given the delays, little time remained before the onset of Ethiopia's rainy season to permit proper preparations for elections. The result was the haphazard and partial June 21 regional and local elections.

### **Election Process**

The June 21 elections did not achieve their proclaimed objectives.

- *Competitive participation, for the most part, did not occur.* Virtually all fledgling parties lacked the organizational capacity to compete effectively against the EPRDF's overwhelming local military and administrative power. This stark imbalance left opposition parties vulnerable to EPRDF manipulation, and contributed to the charges and countercharges of intimidation, violence, fraud, detention and administrative malpractice. The disparities further encouraged many parties — particularly those already ambivalent about, or outright opposed to, reorganizing Ethiopia according to ethnic nationalities — to discredit the electoral process rather than aggressively work to improve the process.

Ultimately, several political parties, including the OLF, the All Amhara People's Organization (AAPO), the Ethiopian Democratic Action Group (EDAG), the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO), and the Gideo People's Democratic Organization (GDPO), withdrew from the election process. In the face of these departures, voters in several regions could only select individuals designated by the EPRDF and its allies, rather than choose candidates from slates presented by competing parties.

Final election results reflected the consequences of the disparities and the withdrawals: 1,108 of the 1,147 regional assembly members elected (96.6 percent) are members of the EPRDF or its affiliate organizations. What began, ostensibly at

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least, as a multiparty affair ended in, what appeared to be, the consolidation of one-party rule.

- *Acute administrative and logistical shortcomings seriously impaired the electoral process.* In many regions, local election commissions were not formed according to the timetable established by the National Election Commission (NEC), registration materials arrived late, and no effective control was exercised on the distribution of election paraphernalia. Notwithstanding the more open political atmosphere, the more voluntary and far less coercive nature of voting, and the evident enthusiasm exhibited at many polling sites, many voters, especially those in areas where EPRDF conflicts with other parties were most intense, experienced little difference between the June 21 elections and the one-party elections conducted during the Mengistu era.
- *The elections failed to resolve the nagging ethnic problems concentrated in the southern regions of the country.* Indeed, in the Oromo-third of Ethiopia, aborted attempts at elections ushered in a new, more uncertain and problematic phase in Ethiopia's struggle with ethnic aspirations. The OLF not only withdrew from elections on June 17, but one day later decamped 15,000 fighters, abrogating an April encampment accord. Shortly after the elections, the OLF withdrew from the Council of Representatives, OLF ministers resigned from the TGE and the OLF closed its Addis Ababa compound. During the month of July, a limited war began in the Oromo region. Within a brief period, the EPRDF army stripped the OLF forces of their heavy equipment, seized control of all Oromo towns, forcibly re-encamped several thousand OLF fighters and reduced OLF force levels to below 5,000.

A peace commission comprising several prominent ambassadors made repeated efforts to revive OLF-EPRDF talks, including one mediation mission in mid-July dispatched to the eastern Oromo region to meet with the OLF General Secretary. However, these efforts proved futile in achieving a reconciliation among the former TGE partners.

- *Finally, despite what may have been the TGE's best intentions, the voting exercise did not educate a majority of the population regarding the nature of genuine, multiparty elections.* Even

before the last-minute withdrawal of various parties, only limited campaign activity occurred anywhere in the country. Ethiopians witnessed little, if any, debate concerning the political, economic and social issues central to their country's future.

The media, in particular, were not used effectively to explain the significance of the elections to the population, to describe the procedures for registering and voting, or to discourage intimidation by supporters of the contesting parties. Rather, the government-controlled media were employed extensively for propagandistic attacks upon the OLF and other opposition parties; comparable vitriolic assaults, aimed at the EPRDF, were broadcast on OLF-controlled radio stations.

### **International Observer Effort**

Responding to invitations from the NEC and with the encouragement of virtually all political parties, more than 200 international observers were present in Ethiopia for the elections. The observers operated under the umbrella of the JIOG, which was established by several diplomats and U.N. officials to coordinate the observers designated by the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), various governments and two nongovernmental organizations. United Nations-designated personnel acted as the JIOG secretariat (see Appendix IV).

The JIOG observer operation represented a unique and innovative approach to coordinating an international monitoring effort. However, the short time-frame in which the JIOG operation was initiated precluded a reliable assessment of logistical and administrative needs, at times resulting in confusion and disorganization. The conceptualization, staffing and delivery of basic inputs for the operation relied overwhelmingly upon ad hoc initiatives involving several key embassies and nongovernmental organizations.

In addition, the JIOG operation suffered from a failure to identify the precise role to be played by the observers and their sponsoring organizations. The JIOG was envisaged by its initiators as a civilian peacekeeping operation, whereby observers would be dispatched throughout Ethiopia for extended intervals, chiefly to encourage a reduction in tensions during the period preceding the elections. Given this initial conception, the systematic gathering and analyzing of data was seen as a lesser priority and, consequently, little attention was

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directed, at the outset, to how information collected by the observers would be used by the organizers of the observer operation. Later, several observer groups within the JIOG preferred to play the more traditional role of election evaluators, issuing post-election statements that helped shape opinion regarding the efficacy and legitimacy of the overall process. Other groups, including several embassies that sponsored observer teams and the OAU, chose to communicate their findings in confidence to the TGE.

In a post-election statement, the African-American Institute delegation, which contributed the largest contingent of observers to the JIOG effort, declared that the June 21 elections “fell considerably short” of fulfilling the purpose of “empowering through the vote all of Ethiopia’s nationalities within a new pluralistic political system” (see Appendix V). In a similar vein, a German observer group sponsored by the Heinrich Boll Foundation concluded that, given the observed harassment and administrative problems, the election results “should not be taken as a fair and free reflection of the democratic will of the people” (see Appendix VI).

In reaction to the criticisms presented in the AAI statement, President Meles acknowledged “that the election process was flawed in many ways,” but asserted that the elections represented an “important first step towards establishing a democratic political process in Ethiopia” (see Appendix VII). To his credit, President Meles reiterated the TGE’s “commitment to discuss and address the findings of all international observer teams in Ethiopia” and expressed a willingness to “redress any irregularities, even to the extent of repeating elections in some areas should that be necessary.” On July 27, 1992, the Council of Representatives adopted a proclamation authorizing the establishment of an Election Review Board, which was mandated to review all aspects of the election process and to nullify election results where grave irregularities occurred.

### **Summary**

To the disappointment of many Ethiopians and their friends in the international community, the June 21 elections represented a sterile, surreal and wholly formalistic affair. Voter registration occurred, but it did not serve the goal of placing on the voter rolls the vast majority of eligible voters in an open and transparent process. Candidates were designated for specific offices, but no genuine

competition among candidates or parties existed. Ballots were printed, but no meaningful control was exacted regarding their distribution. Voters went to the polls, some waiting in the inevitable long lines, but few understood the significance of the elections or the difference between these elections and those that occurred during the previous regime. For election officials and voters alike, the June 21 elections did not serve as an effective educational exercise.

Given these shortcomings, the June 21 elections did not contribute directly to Ethiopia's development as a democratic state. At best, the elections were premature, especially for the southern half of Ethiopia. Less kindly judged, the elections were ill-conceived, dubious and counterproductive in their contribution to the democratization of Ethiopia. The elections, moreover, exacerbated existing tensions, reinforced the hegemonic power of the EPRDF while marginalizing other fledgling parties, and were a central factor in the withdrawal of the OLF from the TGE and the return to war in the Oromo region. Finally, the elections created new "political facts" — EPRDF-dominated regional and district assemblies — that will remain controversial in regions where the elections are mired in doubt and suspicion.

From this perspective, the June 21 elections offer sobering lessons for Ethiopia and countries in similarly unfavorable circumstances, regarding the dangers of organizing hastily executed elections as the lead element in a democratization strategy. The elections revealed the need for careful administrative preparations prior to the scheduling of first elections, the importance of developing effective civic education programs, the high expectations of donor countries providing support to an uncertain election process and the nature of the international community's observation of elections under difficult circumstances. The challenge will be to transform these lessons, together with the TGE's rhetoric and the observed desire of a majority of the population to live in a pluralist society, into programs and policies that permit the emergence of a genuine, multiparty democracy in Ethiopia.

## *Chapter 2*

# **Contextual Setting**

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### **A. Geography, Demography and Social Structure**

Ethiopia is strategically located adjacent to the Red Sea in the northeast quadrant of the African continent. The country is relatively large in area, twice the land size of France. Ethiopia's ecology – comprising thick, green forests, lush highland plateaus, tropical lowlands, and expansive deserts – is as varied as its population, which is the third largest on the African continent.

The more than 50 million Ethiopians represent approximately 80 distinct ethnic groups and speak more than 70 languages. The largest single ethnic group is the Oromo people, who account for between 30 and 50 percent of the total population. Most of the Oromo population can be found in the south-central part of the country, but Oromo enclaves are also located in the west, central and east-central areas. The second largest ethnic group is the Amhara, who constitute between 15 and 20 percent of the total population. Tigrayans, the third largest group, account for just under 10 percent of the total. The rest of the population includes the numerically smaller but nonetheless significant “southern” ethnic groups (Hadiya, Gurage,

Wolayta, Sidama, Omo); the Afar peoples who inhabit the northeastern part of the country, adjacent to Djibouti and the Republic of Somaliland, and ethnic Somalis who occupy the vast, arid and desert Ogaden region to the east and south.

The Tigrayans dominated politically during the mid-to-late 19th century; since that period until 1990, the Shoan Amharas have exercised control over Ethiopia. Historically, this political supremacy was complemented by the religious hegemony of Orthodox or Coptic Christianity, the state religion until 1974. Upward mobility required adoption of the Amhara-Tigre culture, language and religion.

Currently, it is estimated that approximately 50 percent of the population, including a majority of the Amharas and Tigrayans, identify themselves as Orthodox Christians. Most other ethnic groups adhere either to Islam (about 40 percent), or some form of Protestantism or animism (less than 10 percent combined).

Amharas and Tigrayans occupy the highland core of Ethiopia. Historically, the predominant economic activity in this area has been the subsistence cultivation of grains, mainly a form of wheat known as *teff*. Traditionally, land was communally owned, but members of the aristocracy and nobility claimed rights to a certain amount of the surplus produced by those who shared the communal land rights.

In the more recently incorporated peripheral areas of the south and southwest, which were conquered during the latter part of the 19th century, all land was either crown land or church land. The former was distributed to representatives of the crown who were posted to the ever-expanding, distant reaches of the Ethiopian empire as a form of remuneration for their service.

In most cases, the relationship that developed around land and agricultural production in the periphery was akin to that between lord and vassal, with the lord drawn from the Amhara, Tigre or some "Amharized" ethnic group. The vassals tended to be largely Oromos or members of smaller ethnic groups that inhabited the periphery.

After World War II, Ethiopia's economy grew more capitalist and shifted emphasis toward the international market. In the process, the relationship between lord and vassal grew increasingly exploitative. This imbalance heightened, particularly among many of the newly incorporated peoples, a sense of resentment and moral indignation against those considered responsible for their exploitation.

### B. Historical and Political Background

To fully comprehend the 1992 regional and local elections, the historical context in which these elections took place must be understood. The Ethiopian state traces its history back more than 2000 years. However, the modern state was not born until the mid-19th century when Emperor Tewdros reconsolidated a political entity that had all but ceased to exist.

During the preceding centuries, various segments of the nobility had divided the territory of Ethiopia and ruled their autonomous domains. Tewdros restored central control and direction. He was followed by emperors Yohannes, Menelik II, and finally Haile Selassie I, who assumed the throne in 1930 and reigned for the next 44 years. The modern Ethiopian empire-state flourished for roughly 120 years, coming to an end with the overthrow of Haile Selassie in 1974.

By the time the geographic boundaries of the modern state had been internationally established in the mid-1800s, Ethiopia extended far to the west, south and east, and several ethnic groups had been incorporated into the state. Most notable among these groups were the Oromo people, along with the Afar and segments of the Somali nation. The Afars and Somalis are significant not so much in terms of their numbers, but because they occupy territories of strategic importance and rich in economic potential.

The empire-state maintained control of territories incorporated during the mid-1800s by force of arms and exploited both the land and the people of these areas. In the periphery, imperial authority was exercised by the emperor's army and through *ketemas*, garrison towns, which were erected throughout the country and became increasingly important in administering Oromo and Somali areas. These towns housed soldiers dispatched to certain areas to act as "watchmen" for the crown, as well as to maintain law and order. The contrast in social and economic status between the indigenous populations and the agents of the state was exceedingly sharp.

During this period, no meaningful efforts were undertaken to integrate the indigenous populations into the expanded political system, except to impose forcibly the Amhara-Christian culture upon them and to extract economic resources from them. This exclusionary and exploitative rule, in large measure, inhibited the

development of an Ethiopian national identity among the people of the southern periphery.

In 1895, the Italians colonized Eritrea, which is located on the Red Sea and is inhabited principally by Tigrayan-speaking peoples, at the very time that the modern state of Ethiopia was evolving. The Italians coveted highland Ethiopia as well, but were unable to obtain control over the empire-state. In early 1896, Italy suffered a resounding defeat at Adowa by the forces of Emperor Menelik II, marking the most notable instance where a European power was defeated during the late 19th century scramble for African colonies.

Less than 40 years later, under the leadership of dictator Benito Mussolini, the Italians finally succeeded, for a brief period of five years, in establishing a presence in Ethiopia. However, in 1941, a combined force of British and Commonwealth troops, along with Ethiopian guerrilla patriots, brought the Italian interlude to an end.

For about a decade following the defeat of the Italians, the British governed Eritrea directly. In 1953, Britain formally turned over the reins of governmental authority in Eritrea to Ethiopia. A year earlier, the United Nations, yielding to the strong pressures of the Ethiopian government, which was vigorously supported by the United States, mandated that the former Italian colony and Ethiopia be federated. In 1962, Ethiopia formally annexed Eritrea, making it the country's 14th province and signaling the formal onset of the Eritrean struggle for national liberation.

Successive Ethiopian regimes during the modern era have failed to resolve the nationalities question. Groups like the Oromo, the Somali and the Eritrean have claimed the right to self-determination. These groups and others question the validity of their inclusion in the Ethiopian state. They consider the Amhara and Tigre elites who have governed their territories as nothing more than "black colonialists."

Under Haile Selassie, Ethiopia's economy depended heavily on coffee production. Most of the coffee was farmed in areas occupied by the Oromo people and characterized by landlord-tenant relations, mostly between Amhara-Tigre settlers and Oromo tenants. Few state resources were devoted to delivering social services to these areas. The same pattern was repeated in the Afar area, which was targeted by Haile Selassie for the development of large-scale agri-business enterprises, as well as in the Ogaden, which was valued mainly for its potential oil deposits. For the most part, Haile Selassie repressed

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sentiments for self-determination among the Oromo, Somali and Afar throughout his reign. Principally for geopolitical reasons, the United States provided Haile Selassie's government with large amounts of military and economic assistance.

When Haile Selassie was overthrown, nationalist sentiments were unleashed. The new military government indicated that it would strive to find an acceptable solution to the various claims of Ethiopia's nationality groups. Divisions emerged within the new government, however, regarding the demands of Eritrean nationalists, who continued to pursue an independent Eritrea. Following the murders of those members of the new government most sympathetic to Eritrean independence, the new regime, with Mengistu Haile Mariam as the undisputed leader, attempted to crush the Eritrean liberation movement once and for all.

Between 1976 and 1978, Ethiopia was nearly torn apart as serious armed challenges to the state were waged not only in Eritrea, but also in the Ogaden, and at the center, by groups opposed to the regime on political grounds. In a climate of escalating human rights violations and internecine warfare, Ethiopia's superpower patron, the United States, attempted to force the increasingly radical regime to moderate its policies. However, this move failed, and the two countries severed relations in April 1977. Ethiopia immediately turned to the Soviet Union as an alternative source of military assistance, which allowed the now Marxist-Leninist regime of Mengistu to consolidate power.

In September 1984, Mengistu established the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE) as the country's sole political party. The WPE's proclaimed goal was to transform Ethiopia into a Marxist-Leninist state. A new communist-inspired constitution was adopted in 1987, which reflected this orientation.

Throughout the Mengistu era, Ethiopia's human rights record was among the worst of any country in the world. Prisons were constantly filled with individuals arrested for political reasons, as the government sought to brutally repress all forms of dissent. The government also exercised tight control over the political processes, judicial functions, the media, labor and education. The dismal performance of the economy, coupled with excessive taxation and recurrent mass-conscription drives, fed further popular discontent. Mengistu's plans, announced in March 1990, to liberalize the

economy and introduce multiparty politics proved too late to stop the complete collapse of the regime.<sup>3</sup>

### **C. The Origins of Transition**

From the late 1970s to the late 1980s, various ethnically based movements emerged in opposition to the Mengistu regime. These movements included the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Afar Liberation Front (ALF), the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), the largely Amhara-based Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Ethiopian Democratic Officers Revolutionary Movement (EDORM) and the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP). These movements did not achieve much success until several of them coalesced in 1989 under the leadership of the TPLF into a united front known as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The ALF, WSLF and the OLF, however, never formally joined the EPRDF coalition.

In 1987, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the TPLF agreed to coordinate their military strategies. After 1989, the OLF also began coordinating some military activities with the TPLF and the EPLF, although relations remained quite strained. The EPRDF, meanwhile, created its own Oromo affiliate, the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), from the ranks of soldiers who either had defected from the Mengistu army after an abortive 1989 coup or were prisoners of war. Similar organizations affiliated with the EPRDF were created to incorporate other ethnic groups.

In 1989, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter initiated efforts to broker a peace between Mengistu and the EPLF in Eritrea. The Italians made similar overtures with respect to the TPLF and the Mengistu regime. However, these diplomatic initiatives were overwhelmed by the rapidly declining military position of the Ethiopian forces and by Mengistu's apparent loss of political will. Even as plans were underway for an all-parties peace conference in London, the EPRDF tightened its encirclement of the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, and the EPLF closed in on the Eritrean capital of Asmara.

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<sup>3</sup> See generally, S. Morrison, "Ethiopia Charts a New Course," *Journal of Democracy*, pp. 126-27 (July 1992).

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Finally, in late May 1991, the United States government secured the departure of Mengistu to exile in Zimbabwe. The ensuing power vacuum set the stage for the EPRDF's triumphant entry into the capital and for the EPLF's assumption of complete control over Eritrea with a limited amount of bloodshed. With no recognized central authority, the country was thrown into a state of near anarchy. EPRDF forces moved quickly to fill the void left by the complete collapse of an army that had recently numbered more than 500,000 troops. The United States endorsed the EPRDF action in the hope that it would result in the quick restoration of public order and prevent additional bloodshed.

The EPRDF leadership immediately sought to establish a broad-based transitional government. A conference was convened for this purpose in July 1991, with the participation of the OLF, the Afar Liberation Front (ALF), and several Somali organizations. Those excluded from the conference included groups most opposed to the EPRDF's leadership role, such as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement and the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF).

The Transitional Conference prepared a National Charter, which was signed by representatives of 27 political movements. The Charter authorized the creation of an 87-seat Council of Representatives and the establishment of the TGE. The Charter comprises five parts and 20 articles, covering issues such as basic democratic rights, foreign policy, the composition and structure of the TGE, the transitional program and the legality of the Charter. The Charter is designated as the supreme law of the land for the "duration of the transitional period," which was projected to be no more than two-and-a-half years. Significantly, the Charter articulates the TGE's commitment to the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Perhaps the Charter's two most important articles are Articles 2 and 13. Article 2 asserts the right of self-determination for all of Ethiopia's nationalities and the preservation of national identities and self-government within the context of a federated Ethiopia. Article 13 provides that:

There shall be a law establishing local and regional councils for local administrative purposes defined on the basis of nationality. Elections for such local and regional councils

shall be held within three months of the establishment of the Transitional Government, wherever local conditions allow.

Under the Charter, the TGE is composed of the president's and prime minister's offices and an ethnically mixed, 17-member Council of Ministers. The EPRDF holds the largest single bloc (32 of the 87 seats) in the Council of Representatives, which is responsible for promulgating legislation decreed during the transition. The OLF, until its withdrawal from the TGE immediately following the elections in June 1992, held the second largest bloc in the Council with 12 seats. Eighteen southern parties collectively account for 30 seats in the Council. Altogether, 29 political organizations were represented in the Council of Representatives.

In a bold and controversial departure from the policies of past regimes, the Transitional Conference committed the TGE to honor the outcome of an internationally monitored referendum on the future of Eritrea. Since that time, the TGE and the Provisional Government of Eritrea have developed close working relationships in both the economic and political spheres.

The political transition is taking place at the same time as the TGE is attempting to restructure the economy (see below) and society, and amid continuing ethnic tensions. The growth of ethnically based armed groups have complicated the process of transition and reconciliation. For example, in the year following the overthrow of Mengistu, the OLF increased the ranks of its military wing by an estimated three-fold from its maximum strength of about 8,000 in 1991. This expansion was made possible by the attraction of new recruits in areas heavily populated by the Oromo and by the incorporation of Oromo who had formerly served in Mengistu's army. In mid-1992, according to one estimate, roughly half of the 29 movements represented in the Council of Representatives supported armed wings.

Proclamation 8, adopted in January 1992, designated the EPRDF army "as the State Defense Army for the Transition Period." The proclamation also authorized the establishment of regional police forces, which in the absence of regional governments, were subject to TGE control. In Oromo areas, tensions developed between the EPRDF and Oromo forces, sometimes erupting into near civil war.

In preparation for the regional and local elections, the Council in April promulgated an encampment accord that confined all armed

groups operating in the country to specified quarters. This policy held negative implications for areas in which OLF forces were well represented.

Securing encampment proved a difficult task. The EPLF attempted to broker an agreement between the EPRDF and the OLF at Mekele in early 1992. But, not until April was an encampment accord was finally achieved. The agreement called for confining the OLF into eight major camps and 16 smaller ones. The EPRDF forces were assigned to eight camps and 64 garrisons in the Oromo-dominated Region 4. However, in those areas of Region 4 where the EPRDF forces were needed to maintain law and order, the accords authorized such a role. The whole encampment process was monitored by tripartite commissions, comprising three-member teams, each including a representative of the EPLF, the EPRDF and the OLF.

Eventually, enough political stability was achieved to permit “snap elections” in April 1992 in 450 of Ethiopia’s 600 administrative *weredas* (districts). Although these elections realized only partial success, with some results being canceled or disallowed, the TGE forged ahead with plans for regional and local elections in June, before the onset of the rainy season.

### D. Economic Conditions

The emperors who fashioned the empire-state of Ethiopia were considered modernizing autocrats. Nonetheless, when Haile Selassie I was overthrown in 1974, the country was characterized by illiteracy, poverty and underdevelopment. Ethiopia supported less than 10,000 kilometers of all-weather roads and a monoculture economy, which depended upon coffee exports for about 85 percent of the country’s foreign exchange earnings. Less than 1 million young people were formally enrolled in school from the elementary to the university levels.

On the eve of Ethiopia’s first revolution in 1974, 70 percent of the country’s economic activities were clustered in the highland capital city of Addis Ababa and in Asmara, the principal city in the then-province of Eritrea. Rural industries, to the extent they existed, were concentrated in Shoa Province and in the Awash Valley. This pattern did not change much during the 17-year rule of Mengistu Haile Mariam, despite his Marxist-Leninist orientation.

After a rocky beginning, the Mengistu regime introduced slight improvements in the quality of life. The feudal land tenure system was swept away, with the state seizing all rural and most urban land and property. In the countryside, rural producers were granted an amount of land deemed sufficient to meet basic family needs or to satisfy market demands as determined by the state.

Impressive gains were made in several areas of social policy. The illiteracy rate dropped from 90 percent in 1974 to 40 percent in 1987. The availability of formal educational opportunities and access to professional health care also increased dramatically during the first 13 years of the Mengistu regime. Nonetheless, the patterns of inequality that characterized the imperial era persisted during the Mengistu period.

In a November 1988 speech before the Central Committee of the Worker's Party of Ethiopia (WPE), Mengistu announced a package of reforms intended to promote private-sector investment in industry, mineral exploration, agriculture and tourism. The full thrust of the New Economic Policy (NEP) was unveiled in March 1990, at the 11th Plenum of the Central Committee of the WPE.

The NEP provided for a mixed economy, characterized by the participation of state, private and cooperative sectors in managing and controlling the economy. Also, the NEP conferred upon state enterprises the managerial autonomy necessary to allow them to operate much in the manner of private enterprises. These reforms signalled the end of the regime's attempt to develop a centrally planned economy and to control the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Despite these dramatic changes, the Mengistu regime failed to revitalize the economy. Foreign investors did not rush to Ethiopia, and the domestic economy remained based primarily on food production and distribution.

When it assumed power in the spring of 1991, the TGE inherited an economy in shambles (see Appendix VIII). Per capita income was less than \$130 per year, making Ethiopia one of the poorest countries in the world. International export earnings had dropped to their lowest levels since 1974, and the foreign debt, excluding money owed to the Soviet Union, exceeded 53 percent of the country's Gross National Product. Food production was unable to meet the country's

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needs even in non-drought years. The country, meanwhile, had experienced two major famines during the previous seven years.

A primary reason for this economic stagnation was the fact that war had come to dominate Ethiopian life. Thus, many Ethiopians expected that the end of the civil war would generate significant peace dividends, but this anticipated economic windfall did not materialize. Real military expenditures dropped only a few percentage points. The rest of the defense budget derived from grants and loans, which simply disappeared with the withdrawal of Soviet military aid. In addition, the demobilization of the Ethiopian army further swelled the already massive ranks of the unemployed.

Increased smuggling and an over-valued currency contributed to the bleak economic picture in the immediate aftermath of Mengistu's ouster. Moreover, the country's economy seemed to be drifting out of control in large measure due to the void created by the deterioration of the former state bureaucracy and the TGE's inability to establish its administrative authority throughout the country.

The TGE initiated significant reforms aimed at producing a more market-oriented economy. The reforms included restructuring tax collection, depreciating the currency to reflect more realistically its value on the international market, reducing the size of the bureaucracy, privatizing some state-controlled enterprises and liberalizing rules for foreign investment.

In February 1992, the TGE and the World Bank reached an agreement on the terms of the Emergency Recovery and Reconstruction Project (ERRP), which represented a 30-month, \$600 million multi-donor package. However, further talks were required to secure the commitment of additional resources from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. By June 1992, on the eve of the regional and local elections, the first installments of the ERRP package had yet to arrive. Consequently, the TGE was unable to use the much needed foreign assistance to invest in development projects that would have demonstrated its commitment to a "new deal" for all Ethiopians.

## *Chapter 3*

# **Ethiopian Elections: A National Perspective**

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Preparing for the June 21 regional and local elections presented the TGE with a major challenge. Before the elections, the TGE established new administrative and legal structures, prepared and distributed election materials, registered voters, authorized procedures for nominating candidates, set aside time for campaign activity and sought to train local election officials regarding balloting and counting procedures. This chapter reviews each of these developments at the national level and uses specific examples as reported by international observers to highlight the constraints faced by the TGE as election day approached.

## **A. National Election Commission**

As a first step in preparing for regional and local elections, a 10-member National Election Commission (NEC) was established in December 1991. The commissioners, drawn from the Council of Representatives, reflected the balance of political forces within the Council (see Appendix IX). Mohamad Abdurahman, a prominent

constitutional expert who lived in exile for 10 years during the Mengistu period, was designated chairman of the NEC, and Dawit Yohannes, a close adviser to President Meles and a leading member of the EPRDF, was selected vice-chairman. Abdurahman's absence from the country for several weeks during the period immediately preceding the elections, coupled with Yohannes's energy and close ties to the president, resulted in Yohannes assuming the dominant role on the Commission.

The Council of Representatives delegated to the NEC responsibility for developing the rules and regulations governing the regional and local elections. In some cases, proclamations were adopted by the Council of Representatives; at other times the NEC simply promulgated administrative regulations. In the absence of a constitutional order and an institutional history, the allocation of election-related responsibilities between the Council and the NEC was determined in an ad hoc fashion, but EPRDF control of both bodies made such an approach workable.

The NEC operated from offices of the Institute of Ethiopian Nationalities, although the commissioners spent much of their time attending sessions of the Council of Representatives. The organizational structure of the NEC included an executive committee, a secretariat and a national/regional electoral committee. The latter was responsible for interacting with commissions in each of the 14 electoral areas.

## B. Legal Framework for the Elections

### 1. Proclamation 7

On January 14, 1991, the TGE issued Proclamation 7 to "provide for the establishment of national/regional self-governments." Designed to implement the Transitional Charter's provisions regarding the establishment of autonomous regions based upon ethnic identities, Proclamation 7 partitioned Ethiopia into 12 regions and two chartered cities. Additionally, the proclamation articulated the relationship between, and powers of, the national/regional and *wereda* (district) political structures.

Because the TGE based Ethiopia's political future on establishing regions dominated by a single ethnic group, the implications of the delimitation exercise were understood by all parties. The 14 boundaries were created by combining *weredas* composed of similar

ethnic groups, based on census data identifying the ethnic composition of Ethiopia's 600 *weredas*. Addis Ababa and Harar were accorded the special status of chartered cities due to their multi-ethnic characters and particular cultural histories. Disputes were only partially avoided by Proclamation 7's assurance that the TGE would update the pre-1974 *wereda* map it was using when the "details of the geographical borders of each nation, nationality and people are specifically laid down." From the very beginning, various ethnic groups complained about what they perceived as the inaccuracies in these regional and *wereda* boundaries.

The number of *weredas* contained in each region varies dramatically. Region 4, where the Oromo population is concentrated, includes 220 of the country's 600 *weredas*. Region 3, where the Amhara group predominates, is the next largest region and comprises 126 *weredas*. Region 1, in the northern part of the country, is chiefly populated by the Tigrayans and consists of 62 *weredas*. Region 5 is dominated by Somalis and covers 47 *weredas*.

Proclamation 7 establishes the *wereda* as the basic unit of self-government within each region. *Wereda* residents are allowed to elect leaders to a *wereda* council according to democratic principles. To guarantee minority rights, all nationalities, regardless of their numerical size within a *wereda*, are afforded representation on the *wereda* council. The council is granted certain powers over legislation, social services and the implementation of central and national/regional government decrees.

National/regional governments are accorded much broader executive, legislative and judicial powers by Proclamation 7. Nonetheless, the central government remains supreme, particularly in matters of defense, foreign affairs, economic policy, the designation of citizenship, the printing of currency and the building of major communications networks. Moreover, notwithstanding the detailed provisions of Proclamation 7, the TGE intended that the respective powers of the federal and regional governments would be elaborated in a new federal constitution. The newly formed regional governments, therefore, were not expected to immediately adopt regional constitutions or to exercise other prerogatives generally associated with autonomy.

Rather than mollify the yearnings of various nationality groups for their assumed rights to self-determination, the TGE's attempt to

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empower various nationalities through Proclamation 7 may have broadened and deepened ethnic discord. In part, these strains arose as a consequence of the slow pace with which administrative reform unfolded, *i.e.*, by election day, some regional boundaries had yet to be clearly drawn. But friction also emerged from the contrary expectations of OLF and EPRDF leaders concerning the authority of national/regional governments. Elements of the OLF had long hoped to establish the independent state of Oromia and sought an arrangement from the EPRDF similar to the plan for Eritrea. The EPRDF, however, intended regional autonomy only within the context of a unified Ethiopia, with Eritrea representing a unique solution to past colonial injustices.

### **2. Proclamation 11**

To establish the administrative framework necessary to stage the national/regional and *wereda* elections, the Council of Representatives adopted Proclamation 11 in February 1991. This proclamation prescribes the powers and duties of the election commissions, eligibility requirements for voters and candidates, regulations regarding the voter registration process, procedures for nominating candidates and acceptable forms of campaigning.

Proclamation 11 provides for electoral commissions at the zonal (a unit composed of *weredas* in the larger regions), *wereda* and *kebele* (village) levels. The proclamation also outlines the staffing of each commission, attempting to ensure that membership represents the ethnic and political diversity of the country, region and locality.

The election commissions, however, were never fully established. In large measure, this failure reflected the time pressures of preparing for elections and the willingness of the NEC to compromise with prescribed procedures to preserve the June 21 election date. The resultant patchwork of functioning, non-functioning and non-existent commissions at all levels was identified by the OLF as a principal reason for its withdrawal from the election process.

Proclamation 11 incorporated many constructive provisions designed to promote public confidence in the electoral process. The proclamation provided, for example, that regional election commissions should comprise the main political parties active in the region, and conferred upon these commissions broad authority to “examine and decide on irregularities and grievances related to the

election process.” Nonetheless, in retrospect, provisions of Proclamation 11 seem unrealistic, given the short time and limited resources available to prepare for the elections and the overall underdeveloped state of democratic institutions in Ethiopia. For example, the detailed procedures for challenging prospective voters and candidates were much too complicated, resulting in confusion regarding the grounds for disqualification and uneven enforcement of the requirements throughout the country.

Moreover, several provisions of Proclamation 11 seemed to exclude unnecessarily certain segments of Ethiopian society from the election process, raising concern over the TGE’s commitment to human rights. Sections 26 and 36 proscribe all former WPE members and former security force personnel from participating in the elections as either candidates or voters. Also, requirements that a candidate demonstrate his or her ability “to communicate in the language of the nation in which he [or she] seeks to become a candidate,” and be “a bona fide resident of the constituency . . . for at least five years before the elections,” failed to account for the significant migration and the multi-ethnic patterns existent in many parts of Ethiopia.

### **3. Electoral regulations**

In early June, less than three weeks before the elections, the NEC issued the “Electoral Rules of Implementation,” which elaborated on Proclamation 11 and sought to resolve some of the proclamation’s ambiguities. The rules detail the procedures for organizing election commissions at all levels and their respective responsibilities. The rules also specify mechanics for registering voters and candidates, legal and illegal campaign activities, and balloting and counting procedures.

Most significantly, the Electoral Rules of Implementation establish the precise nature of the election system. The elections would be conducted on a non-party basis, with no mention on the ballots of a candidate’s party affiliation. Three individuals would be elected from each *kebele* to serve on the *wereda* council, and three individuals from each *wereda* would be elected to serve on the regional council. Politics provided the most obvious rationale for choosing this multi-member election system; it permitted each EPRDF faction active in a given *wereda* and *kebele* to designate candidates,

rather than have them compete against one another or cause dissension within the EPRDF coalition.

The NEC's authority to issue substantive regulations became a matter of some controversy. On June 4, 1992, 18 organizations represented in the Council of Representatives released a manifesto objecting to various aspects relating to the NEC's plans and preparations for the elections (see Appendix X). The statement requested, *inter alia*, "verification whether or not the Election Commission's guidelines and statements are in line with the laws and decision [sic] of the Council of Representatives." The NEC responded that the:

Commission has consistently pursued the laws, decisions and guide-lines [sic] promulgated by the Council and acted only within the confines of the mandate given it by the same body. Accordingly, the Election Commission's decisions have always reflected these laws, rules and decisions. Otherwise the Commission . . . pursues the democratic principle of decisions through consensus or by majority vote (see Appendix XI).

### C. Snap Elections

In late January, the TGE decided to organize "snap elections" in each of Ethiopia's approximately 30,000 *kebeles* (a *kebele* comprises, on average, 1,000 prospective eligible voters). Proclamation 9 explained that these elections were necessary "to prepare the ground and ensure conducive conditions for the forthcoming principal elections." However, due to increased fighting throughout the southern regions of the country, the snap elections were repeatedly postponed. Only in April, following the encampment accords, were circumstances deemed propitious enough to proceed.

The snap elections were not traditional electoral exercises, with formal campaigns and secret ballots. Instead, public meetings were organized for the purpose of selecting *kebele* leaders, who would then serve on the *kebele* election commissions. These commissions were responsible for administering the polling sites on election day. In several regions, the meetings were organized with little difficulty. But many regions experienced serious problems regarding control over candidate nomination and meeting attendance. As a result of

certain real or imagined deficiencies, a significant number of snap election results were nullified.

The *kebele* election commissions were supposed to include representatives of the two leading political forces in the *kebele* and one independent member “elected by the people.” Yet, throughout the country, serious irregularities plagued the composition of these commissions. Observers received numerous complaints that the “independent” *kebele* election commission member was, in reality, a supporter of the EPRDF. As an observer in Awasa noted, the “chances that so-called representatives of the people would be neutral under the circumstances appear slim.”

In areas where snap elections were either not held or strongly disputed, for example near the cities of Dire Dawa and Dembi Dolo, *kebele* election commissions were simply not formed before the June 21 local and regional contests. The resulting power vacuum was sometimes left unfilled or, more often, assumed by the local political party officials, who managed voter and candidate registration themselves.

Election officials in Addis Ababa were divided in their reactions to the snap elections. As reported in the *Election Commission Bulletin*, the vice-chair described the snap elections as:

a vital exercise within the democratic process. We've learnt many lessons from the exercise and we judge this experience will have a tremendous input into the next regional election. On the whole, apart from certain irregularities, there seems to be a consensus that the election was free and fair. These irregularities are avoidable, and with the help of the international observers we hope they will be overcome.<sup>4</sup>

Other election commissioners and several political parties were less sanguine in their evaluation. The June 4, 1992 manifesto released by 18 organizations represented on the Council of Representatives importunes that “before the current election is made an evaluation of the snap election should be made and the strong and

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<sup>4</sup> Transitional Government of Ethiopia, *Election Commission Bulletin*, Issue No. 3, p. 3 (May 1992).

weak points discussed.” The statement explicitly criticizes the NEC for failing to prepare a written report evaluating the snap elections.

NEC member, Dr. Gebreab Barnabas, criticized the snap election process for its failure to encourage the participation of women. Barnabas asserted “the results of the snap elections have not yet arrived, but it is a foregone conclusion — women got little or nothing in the snap election.”<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, Barnabas’s comment was reprinted in the NEC’s official bulletin.

The most serious criticism directed against the snap election process was that it reflected an attempt by the EPRDF to eliminate its political opposition. The elections obliged supporters of opposition parties to identify themselves publicly, thereby subjecting them to potential reprisals by the ruling party. Ironically, according to one non-EPRDF election commissioner, the snap elections in fact demonstrated to the EPRDF that it lacked genuine support in certain regions.

### D. Voter Registration

The regional and *wereda* elections were initially scheduled for June 6. Following meetings with the chief of the U.N. Election Assistance Unit in mid-May, the NEC recognized that the June 6 date was unrealistic. To allow more time for voter registration and other administrative preparations, the elections were postponed until June 21 and a revised calendar adopted (see Appendix XII).

Voter registration officially began on Saturday, May 23, and was scheduled to continue until June 1, with offices open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. However, voter registration materials — the books for entering data regarding each voter and the voter cards provided to each voter upon completion of the registration process — did not reach many regions by the prescribed date or arrived without the necessary instructions. In Gimbi, for example, registration materials did not arrive until June 15, just six days before the elections; observers reported similar belatedness in virtually all regions. Given the delays in initiating the effort, the NEC ultimately

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<sup>5</sup> G. Barnabas, “Women and Elections,” in *Election Commission Bulletin*, Issue No. 2, p. 13 (May 1992).

permitted voter registration to proceed until the day before the elections.

As recounted by international observers, administrative problems, political impediments and fear of violence marred the voter registration process. Prospective voters perceived to be opposed to the dominant party in a region (usually the EPRDF, but occasionally the OLF or some other local party) were often unable to register. Intimidation, ranging from immediate threats of physical harm to future reprisals, was frequently alleged, although claims were difficult to verify. In several regions, observers reported that the registration books were maintained not by the *kebele* election commissions, but were stored in the local offices of the EPRDF or OLF. The registrar in Awasa, for example, conceded that "the TGE relies on the [local EPRDF affiliate] to carry out the local election process." The opposition party in Awasa, meanwhile, complained that when its party supporters attempted to register they were told that registration materials assigned to their party had not yet arrived.

In contrast to the obstacles encountered by opposition voters, great efforts were taken to register voters expected to support the EPRDF. In several regions, party officials were seen proceeding door-to-door with registration books, convincing people to register. In other regions, EPRDF party sympathizers allegedly received more than one registration card, a circumstance that could have facilitated multiple voting. Observers also reported that food from local government storehouses was selectively distributed either to bribe people to register or to be withheld from those who did not.

While the proclamation governing voter registration contained specific rules regarding voter eligibility, implementing the law generated significant confusion. As noted above, former WPE members, Mengistu security agents and "non-reeducated" soldiers were ineligible to register. However, formally identifying these individuals was not always an easy matter, particularly in areas that experienced significant migration due to the wars. In Wollega, a pro-OLF area, observers reported that some young males could not register, presumably because many in this age group served in Mengistu's army. Uncertainty also surrounded the eligibility of current members of the armed forces and paramilitary forces.

Finally, the inclusion of a question regarding ethnic identity on the registration form apparently dissuaded some prospective voters

from registering. In certain *kebeles*, registrants who identified themselves as "Ethiopian" were denied registration cards, while in other, sometimes neighboring, *kebeles* registration was granted even if an individual refused to list his or her ethnic identity.

The late arrival of registration materials posed a serious problem throughout the country, but it was most acute in rural areas. Observers reported that some *kebele* election commissions began registering voters before the arrival of the registration materials by writing down the necessary information in a blank book and later copying the data into the official registration roster. In other regions, registration proceeded in a dilatory fashion and the resulting long lines may have discouraged prospective registrants.

According to several observers, women were less represented on the registration lists than men, although this imbalance may have been more attributable to cultural, rather than political, causes. By contrast, in a few regions, particularly those that had been hard hit by military actions, observers reported quite high levels of registered women voters.

The NEC was never able to provide a national estimate of the number of Ethiopians who registered for the elections. Based on the reports of the international observers, it appears that considerable variations in the percentage of registrants existed within and among the different regions. Not surprisingly, in areas where the elections were unlikely to occur (parts of Region 4), observers noted that voter registration tended to be low, while in regions where there was little competition (such as Region 1), a relatively high percentage of eligible voters was registered. In the Nekemte area, Region 4, one observer noted that registration occurred only in EPRDF-controlled neighborhoods.

### **E. Nominating Candidates**

According to Proclamation 11, the process of nominating candidates was to begin only after the registration process concluded. However, with voter registration effectively extended until election day, this scheme could not be maintained. Moreover, the precise formalities for nominating candidates were never clarified.

Election officials throughout the country were generally uncertain about who could be nominated as a candidate, the requirements for nominating candidates and the exact period during which nominations

could be permitted. Confusion increased when the number of signatures required for candidates to register was reduced from 1,000 to 350 for *wereda* constituencies and from 500 to 50 for *kebele* constituencies. This change was made in May, pursuant to the recommendation of the chief of the U.N. Election Assistance Unit, who convinced the NEC that the original requirements were unduly burdensome and would stifle competition. The timely dissemination of the changing regulations to *kebele*-level election commissions proved an impossible challenge, especially in the more rural areas.

Even before the opposition parties officially withdrew from the elections, observers reported few candidates designated by parties other than the EPRDF or its affiliates. In some regions, opposition political parties appeared unwilling to participate in elections dominated by the EPRDF, while in other regions the opposition parties simply could not organize given the tensions created by local supporters of the EPRDF. Thus, in most regions, independent candidates provided the only competition to the EPRDF-designated candidates. And, in many instances, it was alleged that the independent candidates were actually EPRDF members or supporters.

Observers received many reports of intimidation directed against opposition candidates who sought to register. The GPDO in Awasa complained that the registrar rejected GPDO candidacy petitions on the ground that the "GPDO had no right to collect petitions." Observers also reported instances where individual voters registered to vote and simultaneously placed their signatures on nomination papers.

Elaborate rules existed for challenging a person's candidacy. Criminal behavior, insanity, or former membership in the WPE, for example, were among the grounds for precluding a candidate from participating in the elections. In many regions, reviewing the credentials of candidates was virtually impossible given the fact that nominations were presented as late as the day before the elections and no formal lists of candidates were ever published, either locally or nationally. There were, however, numerous allegations that prospective candidates were challenged on trumped-up charges and denied permission to register as candidates.

## **F. Pre-Election Environment**

By June 1992, the number of registered political parties had multiplied to more than 100, but less than a dozen enjoyed significant followings (see Appendix XIII). Supporters of even the more popular parties were concentrated in particular regions. Few parties, other than the EPRDF and its affiliates, developed a national organization, and the EPRDF itself was a coalition of ethnic-dominated parties.

Given Ethiopia's limited experience with multiparty election procedures, the NEC and nongovernmental organizations recognized the need for an aggressive civic education campaign, although country-wide civic education efforts were more the exception than the rule. In some regions, election commissions organized civic education meetings whereby the public learned about the mechanics of voting and the confidentiality of their vote. These meetings were typically well attended, although in several instances the local election commission distributed outdated or incorrect instructions.

The electoral regulations authorized political rallies "without further permission within the constituencies." The regulations also contained several other provisions designed to promote competitive elections. However, as reported by observers in almost all regions, no meaningful campaign activity occurred during the period preceding the elections. Support for political parties, in general, depended more on cultural history and ethnic affinity than political platforms. In some areas where the elections were better organized, observers reported limited campaign activities. Such activities included candidates wearing placards bearing their party symbols, posters supporting individual candidates or parties, and candidates introducing themselves to prospective voters on the street or by canvassing door-to-door.

Opposition party members claimed that their campaign activities were often erroneously labelled "agitation" and that their supporters were subject to police harassment and arrest. In Sire, which is located near Nekemte in Region 4, 32 people were arrested on June 15 for agitating "against the OPDO." Based on conversations with local leaders and visits to prisons, observers in several regions concluded that charges of politically motivated arrests were credible; in other regions, the allegations could not be corroborated.

In announcing its withdrawal from the elections on June 17, the OLF stated:

[OLF] offices, which serve as the springboard for our political activity, in many areas still remain closed. Hundreds of our members and supporters still remain under detention. More are being detained. The most frustrating latest development is that our candidates upon presenting their candidacy credentials to the election committees of various constituencies are being terrorized and imprisoned. . . . So much for the democratic atmosphere that prevails in Ethiopia today.<sup>6</sup>

### **G. Developments During the Week Preceding the Elections**

The June 17 withdrawal of the OLF and other parties was a major blow to the credibility of the election process. Nonetheless, the TGE remained adamant that the elections proceed as planned on June 21, 1992. OLF leader Lencho Leto, for his part, rejected assertions that the OLF was never interested in participating in the elections, claiming that the OLF had invested heavily in preparing for them.

A few days before election day, several members of the diplomatic community in Addis Ababa proposed a two-week delay in conducting the elections in exchange for a commitment by the OLF and the other withdrawing parties to participate in the process. The TGE, citing the imminent onset of the rainy season, rejected the proposal.

On the eve of the elections, the NEC proposed that the Council of Representatives postpone elections in several areas of the country due to the difficulties in arranging the administrative preparations. The Council, as a conciliatory gesture, accepted the proposal. The postponements involved 37 of the 220 *weredas* in the Oromo region and in insecure areas of the periphery such as Gambela and Kefa. By previous actions, the NEC had postponed elections in Region 2 (the Afar area); Region 5 (the Somali area); Region 13 (the chartered city of Harar); and in three *weredas* of Region 7 (the Gurage/Hadiya area). The earlier postponements were deemed necessary because of "civil war conditions" and administrative difficulties.

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<sup>6</sup> OLF, *Statement Announcing Withdrawal from the Election Process*, June 17, 1992.

Further, to provide voters an opportunity to express dissatisfaction with the process, the Council, on the day before the elections, approved a procedure whereby voters could nullify their vote by drawing a line through the ballot or tearing the ballot. Not surprisingly, given the last-minute announcement, few election officials and voters were aware of the option for nullifying ballots. Moreover, election officials exhibited confusion regarding the counting of nullified ballots.

### **H. Balloting Procedures**

Each voter was permitted to vote for three candidates in both the regional and *wereda* elections. To overcome the hurdle of printing thousands of individual ballots for each geographically specific election, the NEC authorized two generic ballot forms, printed on blue paper for the regional elections and on white paper for the *wereda* elections (see Appendix XIV). Each ballot contained 20 symbols. Candidates in a particular constituency were assigned specific symbols.

Distribution of the ballots proved a major challenge, as more than 65 million ballots had to be disbursed to 26,000 *kebeles* throughout the country. Observers reported that in several instances ballots were simply addressed to the provisional government or delivered to the local EPRDF office. In part, this reflected the lack of properly designated election commissions at the *wereda* and *kebele* levels.

On election day, a voter could either write the candidate's name or place a thumbprint next to the candidate's designated symbol. Once marked, the ballots were placed by voters in pouch bags, which contained an opening for the ballots but were otherwise sealed. The pouch bags, which were manufactured locally, provided a cheaper and more efficient alternative than the more traditional metal or wooden ballot boxes used in many other countries.

Candidates were allowed to display their pictures and symbols inside the voting booth. In many polling stations, however, observers found only pictures of EPRDF candidates, even where independent candidates were contesting the elections. Observers also reported placement of campaign propaganda for EPRDF candidates inside or near the polling site. Moreover, in several regions, security forces

aligned with the EPRDF reportedly played an intimidating role, thus raising questions about the significance of turnout figures.

Other election-day problems reported by observers included:

- little understanding and respect for the concept of a secret ballot in many polling places;
- an unnecessarily slow and complicated balloting process, resulting in long lines and significant delays;
- widespread confusion regarding the precise procedure for marking ballots;
- lack of resources available to local election commission officials, preventing effective and timely distribution of election materials; and
- inability of voters and election officials, in certain regions of the country, to read or understand the rules governing the elections, which for the most part were written only in Amharic.

Also, despite the relatively liberal provision in the electoral regulations regarding domestic observers, the NEC discouraged at least one civic organization, the Inter-Africa Group, from mounting a large-scale domestic monitoring operation. Indeed, other than designated election officials, few Ethiopians sought to monitor the balloting process — as party pollwatchers, as representatives of non-partisan organizations or as individuals.

## **I. Post-Election Developments**

In many regions, the polls did not close at the prescribed hour because of the long queues. In some instances, the polls remained open until the following morning. Once the polls closed, the ballots were counted either at the polling site or at the *wereda* election commission offices. While few reports of irregularities emerged during the vote counting process, no effective safeguards — most notably, the presence of pollwatchers from more than one party — existed to prevent wholesale manipulation of the results reported in many *kebeles*. And, given the noncompetitive nature of the elections, little popular interest existed for monitoring the counting process or for learning about the outcome of particular elections.

On the day after the elections, the NEC issued a press release announcing that balloting took place in 19,148 of the 22,605 *kebeles*

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where the elections had not been postponed (see Appendix XV). The NEC estimated voter turnout at 80 percent in these areas, based on the questionable assumption that an average of 1,000 voters managed to cast ballots in each *kebele* where voting was conducted.

In mid-July, the NEC announced the results of the elections. The EPRDF and its affiliate organizations won 1,108 of the 1,147 contested seats. The breakdown among the EPRDF parties was as follows: OPDO - 433 seats (38.8 percent); EPDM - 279 seats (24.3 percent); TPLF - 243 seats (21.2 percent); EPRDF - 81 seats (7.1 percent); SPDO - 36 seats (3.1 percent); KRPDO - 27 seats (2.3 percent); and GPRDM - nine seats (0.3 percent). The BPRDM won 17 seats (1.5 percent), independents garnered 14 seats (1.2 percent) and four small parties obtained a total of eight seats (0.8 percent).

Proclamation 11 did not establish a formal procedure for filing post-election complaints challenging the fairness of elections in a particular constituency. To fill this gap, and in recognition of the criticisms presented by various Ethiopian parties and by international observers, the Council of Representatives, on July 27, 1992, approved the establishment of an Election Review Board, whose objective was "to examine and decide in accordance with the law contested election results of the *Wereda* and National/Regional Council[s]" (see Appendix XVI).

The Board comprises 21 voting members, nominated by 10 specifically designated groups and appointed by the Council of Representatives. The Board is authorized to annul elections where "grave irregularities" are established. Where a regional pattern of irregularities is confirmed, the Board has authority to nullify the elections for the entire region. The Board was given three months following its appointment to conclude its work.

Despite the Board's broad mandate, the parties that withdrew from the elections did not accept the establishment of the Board as an effective means for reviewing the legitimacy of the elections. The OLF, for example, is pressing for the scheduling of new elections throughout Region 4 and seeks an even more extensive international presence to ensure the fairness of the process. In addition, the southern parties other than the OLF have refused to file complaints with the Board, fearing that the whole review process is a ploy. Consequently, it is doubtful that the Board will prove effective in

promoting reconciliation between the EPRDF and the parties that withdrew from the election process.

## *Chapter 4*

# **A View from the Regions**

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### **A. Overview - General Patterns**

In areas exhibiting competition of any kind during the period before opposition parties withdrew from the process, observers tended to find evidence of institutional rigging and manipulation of the electoral rules by the EPRDF. This pattern existed in almost all of Regions 4 (Oromia) and 13 (Harer). There was a direct correlation between the degree of electoral competition and the level of imprisonment, harassment, misuse of authority and materials, name-calling and cheating. Military forces were more visible in these areas as well. In a few places (far western Oromia, rural areas in far eastern Oromia and the Oromia/Ogaden boundary areas), the OLF acted in a similar manner, but rarely with the same degree of intensity. In regions where EPRDF and its affiliate parties dominated, the rules were followed, the materials were generally delivered on time and intimidation was much less evident.

EPRDF and affiliate parties controlled the local administrative apparatus in more than 90 percent of the areas observed, even in places where their followers constituted a struggling minority. In these regions and those where the EPRDF/affiliate candidates faced no meaningful competition, the problems encountered, if any, were logistical in nature. Interestingly, much of the logistical confusion that bedeviled areas closer to Addis Ababa appeared to have less impact on the more remote, EPRDF-dominated, localities.

Observer reports suggest that the central bodies of both the EPRDF and its affiliates and the OLF instructed their followers on precisely how to respond to observer questions. Where an OLF office was closed, the EPRDF claimed that “the people” drove OLF supporters from the area. When OLF members were described by EPRDF representatives, they were labeled “ex-soldiers and WPE members.” There was little deviance in the answers, regardless of the region. OLF representatives also offered strikingly unvaried responses. One international observer, however, attributed the use of jargon and rote responses by Ethiopians as a by-product of the pressures of the political and cultural environment existing during the Mengistu regime.

Below are profiles of the electoral process in and around the following cities: Addis Ababa, Dire Dawe, Nekemte, Jima and Asela. The descriptions are drawn from the reports of the AAI observers and from interviews conducted by the authors of this evaluation study. Excerpts from additional reports concerning the electoral process in Tigre (Region 1), Bale (Region 4) and Welo (Region 3) are included in Appendix XVII.

## **B. Hub 1: Addis Ababa, Region 14**

Many of the problems that plagued election preparations in Ethiopia’s more far-flung towns were largely absent in its capital, Addis Ababa. In this chartered city (Region 14), observers reported that snap elections, registration, election-day modalities and counting procedures proceeded relatively smoothly.

Observers found some officials and voters unfamiliar with electoral regulations. Often, election commission officials at the *kebele* level encountered situations for which they were not trained, such as very long and slowly moving queues. When unexpected circumstances occurred, the better educated officials seemed more

capable of ensuring an efficient process. But observers also found some *kebele* election commission members who demonstrated a serious lack of familiarity with the electoral rules as promulgated by the Transitional Government.

Little violence marred the election process in the Addis Ababa region. Allegations of intimidation were made by many different parties, but observers witnessed few incidents — a stark contrast to the areas with a strong OLF or OPDO presence. Despite the low level of overt violence, many citizens expressed their frustration to observers regarding the non-competitive nature of the local and regional elections.

### 1. Snap elections

In the great majority of cases, observers were told that snap elections were held and the results honored. In *wereda* 21, for example, both *kebeles* 19 and 20 reportedly had more than 600 residents attend the town meeting that selected *kebele* administrators; in *wereda* 19, 2,000 of *kebele* 57's residents participated. The dates that the snap elections were held varied widely: April 20 in *wereda* 3 and May 10 for *wereda* 19, for example. But unlike other regions, Addis Ababa held snap elections relatively early, and they appeared generally successful.

### 2. Preparations for regional and local elections

Like with the snap elections, the local and regional election preparations were marked by relative efficiency and peace: candidates campaigned with loudspeakers and posters, allegations about intimidation were infrequent and the disbursement of election materials was generally complete. Controversies that did surface concerned the requirement that potential registrants declare their ethnicity, differences of opinion over the assignment of symbols for candidates and parties, and most significantly, the domination of the process by the EPRDF and its affiliated parties.

Observers reported that many local election officials did not make the declaration of ethnicity a pre-condition for voter registration; in keeping with what NEC Vice Chair Dawit Yohannes had told observers, even those people who responded "Ethiopian" to the ethnic question would be registered and allowed to vote. However, his flexibility on this issue was not matched by other election commission staff in Addis Ababa. In *kebele* 45, among

others, potential voters were rejected during registration for claiming "Ethiopian" as their ethnic background. Two hundred people were not able to register in *wereda* 11, *kebele* 2, because they refused to state their ethnicity. While this trend did not seem widespread enough to significantly affect the outcome of the elections, these situations illustrate that communication problems surfaced even within the Addis Ababa region.

Similar communication failures occurred with disseminating the order that extended the registration period and the nullification of votes. On June 17, for example, the election commission members of *wereda* 21, *kebele* 20, had not received any information about the extension of the registration period to June 19. Officials from the following areas did not receive word of the vote-nullification announcement: *wereda* 3, *kebele* 44; *wereda* 2, *kebeles* 12 and 13; *wereda* 21, *kebeles* 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24 and 25.

Debate emerged in several parts of Addis Ababa regarding procedures to distribute party symbols. The electoral regulations did not provide precise instructions to election commission members about how to allocate symbols, which had already been drawn up by the National Election Commission. In *wereda* 18, the entire election commission (composed of members from the OPDO, GPDF, GPRDM, AAPO, OLF and EDU) erupted in an argument in front of the international observers about the vague procedures. The AAPO member complained that symbols were assigned in a biased manner — more desirable symbols were being given to members of the EPRDF or its affiliates. Several *wereda* election commissions alleviated tension over this issue by drawing symbols by lot.

Similar to the rest of the country, in Addis Ababa the well-organized parties affiliated with the EPRDF fielded three candidates for each contest. This dominant presence of the ruling coalition, along with the withdrawal of opposition parties, led many Ethiopian citizens in the Addis Ababa region to doubt the competitive nature of the local and regional elections. International observers were told repeatedly by residents that while the EPRDF's step toward a multiparty democracy was appreciated, the lack of choice that characterized the June 21 elections undermined the government's democratic reforms.

### 3. Election day

Observers were generally impressed with the courteous and efficient work of election officials in the Addis Ababa region. Some small irregularities in the voting process affected the election's fairness. These irregularities included the absence of voting screens necessary to ensure a secret ballot, the illegal posting of party literature and signs too close to polling stations, and the presence of armed security personnel unwilling to identify themselves.

The lack of voting screens was widespread in the region. Approximately 10 percent of the 111 written observer reports mentioned an absence of voting screens that imperiled the secrecy of the vote. In some areas where screens were unavailable, officials improvised methods to protect voter privacy, such as setting the booth near walls or conducting the vote in a separate room. The secrecy of the vote was also compromised in the several polling stations that allowed officials, party representatives and security personnel to wander in and around the voting booths.

*Wereda 21, kebele 24*, exemplified the problem that officials encountered with illegal campaigning on election day. In this *kebele*, EPRDF party literature was evident at the polling station, as were party flags.

Despite the few irregularities, many hardworking election officials efficiently implemented election procedures. Observers found sufficient election materials in nearly every polling station. Observers also noted that election officials were usually polite to voters and observers, despite some lack of familiarity with election-day procedures.

Some Ethiopian citizens in Addis Ababa attributed the peaceful nature of the balloting process to the lack of a credible opposition. Many local residents went out of their way to inform observers that the elections held little meaning because the OLF, among others, had pulled out of the contest. Citizens told observers that enthusiasm for the elections had dissipated due to the perceived institutional advantages of the EPRDF.

### C. Hub 11: Harer, Region 13

Harer, in eastern Ethiopia was founded around the 13th century and grew into an important center of trade and a springboard of Islamic expansionism. In the late 1890s, Emperor Menelik II

captured the city and used it as a military base to extend “greater Ethiopia” into Somali-speaking lands in the south. Currently, Harer is headquarters for the EPRDF army’s important southeastern command, which also is known as Military Zone II.

The Council of Representatives granted Harer the status of “chartered city,” thus establishing it as independent Region 13. Various nationalities who consider Harer part of other regions, assailed this map-drawing exercise. Harer is simultaneously claimed by the Hareri; Oromo leaders of Region 4, which surrounds the city; and by the Somali-based parties of Region 5, which sits on three sides of Region 4.

The NEC demarcated Harer as an electoral region with 19 urban *kebeles*. Leaders of the Hareri National League (HNL) vigorously opposed this plan because they claimed that Hareris had owned a considerable amount of land situated around the city before Mengistu’s assumption to power. After the 1974 revolution, Mengistu’s administration gave this land to the Oromos who had been renting it from the Hareris. The Hareri leaders asserted that Harer could comprise as many as 50 *kebeles* if the surrounding areas were returned to their original owners.

Oromo-based political parties claimed that most of Harer’s *kebeles* contained a majority of Oromos. Accordingly, these parties maintained that Harer should not be an independent region, but included in Region 4. Somali parties also believed Harer should not be accorded the special status of a chartered city; they demanded it be part of Somali-dominated Region 5.

The Council of Representatives sent an *ad hoc* committee to Harer to investigate the demarcation controversy. Headed by NEC Chairman Mohamad Abdurahman, this committee visited rural *kebeles* around Harer to determine the nationalities and preferences of the inhabitants. Rural residents overwhelmingly supported their placement in Region 4, but quarrels over boundaries continued up through the local and regional elections.

Tensions run high in the area. In this polarized environment, observers were surprised that the only overt violence before the June 21 election date occurred on April 10, when a shootout between EPRDF/OPDO and OLF guards left two people dead, two wounded and an OLF office riddled with bullets and shrapnel.

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As a result of the demarcation problem, snap elections never occurred in Harer. The provisional appointees of the TGE, therefore, remained in power throughout the pre-election period, precluding local control over the election administration.

Beset with demarcation problems and the presence of 13 separate political party offices, the regional election commission sought early in the process to mediate among the contesting groups. The commission was initially chaired by Ahmed Idriss (HNL) and included representatives of the IFLO, Gurage People's Democratic Front (GPDF), Oromo Abo Liberation Front (OALF), OLF and OPDO. As parties withdrew from the elections, the membership of the regional election commission decreased. Ten days before the elections, the regional election commission consisted only of a chairman sent from Addis Ababa who complained to observers that he could not even cash checks because no other commission member was present to countersign them.

Due to a lack of *kebele*-level election commissions, the chairman of the regional election commission sent the election materials to EPRDF city administrators. Although voter registration had been taking place, he conceded that OPDO supporters comprised all of the registrants in some places. In a meeting with observers, OPDO leaders confirmed that the EPRDF gave them registration and election materials. The OPDO also conceded that the election commission was virtually dormant and that electoral activities could not continue without a functioning commission.

OLF leaders offered extended accounts of how the election process favored one side: the EPRDF/OPDO possessed all of the election materials; EPRDF troops planted illegal weapons on OLF members and then arrested them; 500 OLF supporters were detained in camps around Harer; and OLF forces were encamped, but EPRDF soldiers roamed the streets (in point of fact, the encampment agreement of April 21 only covered Region 4). The leaders further alleged that OPDO supporters harassed OLF members in the *kebeles*.

OALF representatives highlighted as their central complaint the EPRDF's failure to provide the OALF with adequate representation on the regional election commission. OALF leaders asserted that the majority of Somalis in the area supported their party, yet the OALF designee was removed from the regional election commission and

replaced with two other Somali parties, the WSLF and ENDO, neither of which even kept an office in Harer.

Preparations for local and regional elections, meanwhile, were marred by reports of violence and intimidation that ultimately led to the NEC's postponing elections in Region 13.

#### **D. Hub 15: Nekemte, Region 4**

The city of Nekemte, which served as capital of the Wollega Region during the Mengistu regime, lies approximately 280 kilometers due west of Addis Ababa in Region 4. Nekemte is currently the capital of the Nekemte Administrative Region, which includes all of the former Wollega territory (Kelem, Gimbi, Arjo, Horo Gudru and Nekemte Zuria), except for the Asosa area that is now part of the Beni-Shangul controlled Region 6. The Nekemte zone contains 48 *weredas* and 2,010 *kebeles*; Nekemte city comprises nine *weredas*, encompassing 35 peasant associations and nine urban dwellers' associations, each of which constitutes a separate *kebele*.

Observers witnessed strong support for OLF in the area. Interestingly, observers noted that some support for the OLF in Nekemte seemed to be sympathetic in nature, stemming directly from the heavy-handed tactics of the EPRDF/OPDO. EPRDF soldiers and OPDO cadres, who were considered outsiders with little standing in the community, were often implicated in acts of violence and intimidation. Despite being perceived as outsiders, OPDO supporters held the overwhelming majority of positions within local government, including the chair of most *kebele* election commissions.

##### **1. Snap elections**

Three different attempts were made to conduct snap elections in the Nekemte area, with political violence marring the first two ventures. During the third round, which occurred May 18-23, members of the diplomatic community noted little outright violence, although they reported a continuing hostile political atmosphere. The tensions were fostered by the arrests of OLF political cadres, manipulation of electoral procedures by authorities and a high level of distrust among all parties.

Members of both the OLF and the OPDO appeared guilty of intimidation tactics. OLF officials complained that many of their cadre were arrested and some of their offices were closed down. The

OPDO responded that the office closures were the “spontaneous actions of the masses” against the OLF. The OPDO also asserted that criminal, not political, acts justified the arrests of OLF supporters.

During the first snap elections, the OLF tried to prevent non-Oromos from competing. The OLF also maintained that the EPRDF forces in town should be encamped, that the EPDM and TPLF should not hold positions on the *kebele*-level election commissions, and that only the Oromina language should be used at *kebele* meetings. The Nekemte *wereda* election commission rejected these demands.

In fact, OPDO’s dominant position in the administrative structures of Nekemte allowed it to invalidate election results in *kebeles* where the outcome did not favor the OPDO. In some cases, election commissions, without explanation, denied non-OPDO candidates authorization to contest the *kebele* elections. OPDO candidates, meanwhile, were proposed without formal nomination.

On the day of the third attempt at snap elections, observers were surprised to find between five and 11 EPRDF soldiers surrounding each *kebele* hall. The soldiers stated that the zonal election commission requested their presence. Residents expressed fear that they would be attacked unless they voted for the OPDO.

Despite the presence of troops and general confusion about electoral procedures, the third snap elections were more successful. There were exceptions, however. For instance, one *kebele* never held elections because of a dispute over which language to use.

In another *kebele*, the OPDO candidate failed to receive the most votes in the first snap elections, causing the OPDO election chairman to walk out of the meeting. Later, the chairman scheduled another meeting. When a large crowd of OLF supporters turned up, he feigned sickness. Then, claiming that he never called for an election that day, the chairman explained that the large number of people at the *kebele* hall had been confused by a radio program announcing the introduction of an ambulance service to the area. A vote was finally held, and the winner of the second snap elections, who was from the OLF and who had been previously denied office because he was “too nationalistic,” emerged as the winner of the third election.

## 2. Preparations for local and regional elections

The strained political atmosphere surrounding the snap elections continued during the weeks leading up to the local and regional

elections. The chairman of the zonal election commission, an independent, expressed concern about the poor relationship between OLF and OPDO representatives on the commission.

Berhanu Haro, the OLF representative for the Nekemte area, argued that the very structure of the *wereda* election commission and the zonal election commission in the Wollega area allowed the EPRDF to control the electoral process. According to Haro, three of the five commission members – representing the OPDO, TPLF and Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO) – were affiliated with the EPRDF. He said that when any contentious issue facing the committee was put to a vote, the OLF always lost.

Haro expressed frustration with the OPDO's abuse of power. He claimed that OLF candidates and election officials were prevented from visiting certain areas; the OLF was not allowed to hold political rallies; 26 out of 36 OLF offices in Wollega region had been forcibly closed; all election materials were in the hands of the OPDO (a fact confirmed by the Nekemte election commission); and the EPRDF was arresting and beating OLF supporters for political purposes.

To substantiate the last charge, observers visited the regional prison of Wollega on June 20. The EPRDF representative at the prison asserted that all detainees had committed criminal offenses and that no one was jailed for political reasons. While walking through the prison director's office, however, the observers noticed a blackboard upon which was written the various types and numbers of prisoners held at Nekemte. Under the category "political prisoner" was the number "27."

Some of the prisoners themselves also contested their status as common criminals. One inmate claimed that not only was he incarcerated for political reasons, but that the OPDO would not release him despite his acquittal by a local court. Another prisoner showed observers injuries that he claimed resulted from a beating given by an OPDO official wielding a metal bar. Eighty-five of the 128 prisoners were being held without charge. Many of these people suspected that their detention was a consequence of their support for the OLF.

TPLF, OPDO and EPRDF representatives on the zonal election commission denied most of the OLF allegations. These groups repeatedly stressed to observers their openness to other political parties, their capacity to accept a loss at the polls and their belief in

a federal system. The OLF, they contended, was frustrating this attempt at peaceful federalism. The EPRDF member explained that the OLF withdrew because it had no local support since it contained mostly “ex-WPE members and ex-Derg soldiers.”

Members of the tripartite commission, comprising representatives of the EPRDF, OLF and EPLF, arrived in Wollega in May, but were principally involved in monitoring the military situation in the area. The head of the commission, Ato Bisrat Yemane, a fairly senior EPLF diplomat, intervened for the OLF in a few political and electoral disputes, but generally maintained a low profile during most of the OLF-OPDO struggles.

Shortages and late delivery of election materials and misunderstanding about electoral procedures further contributed to the difficult election environment in the Nekemte area. By June 17, only 23 out of the 48 *weredas* in the zone had completed voter registration. The registration materials, however, were never delivered to the zonal election commission, but were given to, and distributed by, the OPDO.

### 3. Election day

Despite the OLF's withdrawal from the elections, voting was conducted on June 21. Observers noted a fairly orderly process at most of the Nekemte *kebeles* visited. Administrative mistakes and omissions occurred, most noticeably the absence of any means to ensure a secret ballot.

With a few exceptions, observers found consistently low turnout percentages at most of the *kebeles* they visited. The overall turnout rate in Nekemte city was estimated by observers as a mere 35 percent. Many voters expressed their dissatisfaction with having only OPDO candidates from which to select. The lack of choice and the strong support for the OLF help explain the low voter turnout.

### E. Hub 13: Jima, Kefa, Agaro and Mizan Teferi, Regions 4 and 11

Located approximately 330 kilometers southwest of Addis Ababa, Jima is one of the largest and more prosperous cities in Ethiopia, due in part to the coffee that is grown and exported from the region. The Oromos form a slight majority in Jima city, with minority populations of Gurage, Amhara, Hadiya, Dawaro, Janjero

and Keffa peoples. Travelling west in Region 4 to Metu town, the Oromo majority increases; travelling south toward the Kefa and Wolaita regions (Region 11), the Oromo population decreases and other nationalities and parties predominate.

As in other parts of Region 4, Jima experienced a tense political atmosphere, an environment in evidence in most towns from Jima to Metu during the pre-election period. The OPDO sought to manipulate the initial stages of the election process in these areas by selectively releasing materials such as registration cards and books, denying other parties access to the nominating process by ostensibly legal (claiming a candidate missed a deadline) and extra-legal (requiring a TGE stamp on candidate petitions) means, closing OLF offices and using armed OPDO cadres (“core cadres”) to intimidate OLF supporters.

The OLF refused, early in the campaign period, to participate actively in the local and regional elections. The boycott was attributed both to the OPDO’s actions in the region and what appeared to be a conscious strategy, which was made formal by the official OLF boycott announced on June 17. Observers suspected that the OLF also engaged in intimidating tactics, especially in Agaro town where apparently thousands of Gurage were forcibly driven from their homes under the pretext of “Oromia for Oromos only.”

The OLF office in Agaro, which had just reopened in June after a three-month closure, symbolized the strains between the OPDO and OLF: the doors, shutters and interior walls were riddled with bullet holes. OLF representatives complained of continual harassment — two of their followers had been shot, EPRDF soldiers were violating the encampment accords by trailing OLF members, and EPRDF officials were entering secondary schools and speaking out against the OLF.

In contrast to the tension exhibited in Region 4, a much smoother electoral process was witnessed by observers in neighboring Region 11. Political party supporters and election commission officials seemed to cooperate with each other. Difficulties in mounting free and fair elections in this region stemmed mostly from logistic and administrative constraints.

### 1. Snap elections

Aside from OPDO members, few Jima residents were satisfied with the conduct of the snap elections. The OPDO, meanwhile, declared unsuccessful only six of the 21 *wereda* elections in Jima. OLF representatives countered that their supporters had been chased from every town, imprisoned and prevented from taking seats on provisional administrative bodies. In Agaro, OLF officials also believed that the EPRDF/OPDO canceled the outcomes of the snap elections in every place that indicated an OLF victory.

OPDO members asserted that “the people” had thrown out the OLF from their offices in this town, that the OLF was recruiting ineligible ex-WPE members and ex-soldiers as candidates, and that the OLF attempted to frighten people into supporting them. When asked why the OPDO canceled some of the snap election results, the OPDO responded that the OLF was “against democracy” and had not allowed the OPDO to compete fairly.

Strikingly different from the events in Region 4, the Kefa region experienced unsuccessful snap elections in only four *weredas*. The election commission chairman, Ato Tesfaye Mikail, a Tigrayan with the EPRDF, stated that simple communication and transportation difficulties had prevented the snap elections from occurring within the originally specified timeframe in the distant Bero and Gesha *weredas*. In two other *weredas*, both near the Sudanese border, long-standing ethnic hostilities between the Ethiopian Sutuma and the Sudanese Bume prevented the occurrence of snap elections.

The zonal election commission in Mizan Teferi included representatives from the Bencho People’s Revolutionary Democratic Organization (BPRDM), Kefa Regional People’s Democratic Organization (KRPDO), Shinasha People’s Democratic Movement (SPDM), Kefa People’s Democratic Union (KPDU), OLF and OPDO/EPRDF. The ethnic composition of the region is equally diverse, including Bencho, Shekecho, Kefa, Menit, Duzi, Shoko, Suruma, Nao, Chara, Amhara and Oromo.

The KPDU complained about the KRPDO domination of the process, but all other interested parties interviewed by the observers expressed satisfaction with the snap election procedure and the outcomes. The major regional parties exhibited their commitment to a peaceful transition by attending a conference in Bonga to discuss the prospects for peace and development in their areas.

## 2. Preparations for local and regional elections

The administrative machinery in Jima appeared to be functioning as prescribed by the electoral regulations. Election materials arrived at the zonal-level election commission and were quickly distributed to the *wereda* election commissions. Four days before the elections, *wereda*-level chairpersons attended a training seminar on election-day procedures. They, in turn, trained *kebele*-level chairs. In most cases, OLF representatives were not present during these preparations.

Observers witnessed large numbers of people registering at the *kebele* election commissions. In many cases, the commissions lacked the necessary number of cards and books, which resulted in the postponement of deadlines. The registration books revealed the registration of many different nationalities, although the observers received a few complaints that some nationalities were excluded from registering in certain towns; the Yem People's National Democratic Movement (YPNDM), for example, was reportedly prevented from registering because they were non-Oromos.

Approximately three days before the elections, political signs and symbols were distributed to *kebeles* and candidates. Registration books were made public, as required by law, only in some areas.

*Kebele* and *wereda* election commissions were formed in all but the most distant areas of Mirzam Tefri. Election commission members, however, were not well versed in electoral procedures. The strategy that these commissions followed, especially at the *wereda* level, was to do nothing until explicitly authorized by a higher body. Since communications were generally erratic, this tactic led to a great deal of commission inactivity.

## 3. Election day

Due to security precautions, observers were limited to Jima town and its immediate vicinity. Voting proceeded smoothly in the *kebeles* and *weredas* visited by the observers. Elders, armed guards and members of the peace and security committees were seen at all polling places, although observers could not tell whether their collective presence threatened or maintained the peaceful atmosphere.

Sufficient voting materials appeared to have been provided by election officials. Procedures were in place to ensure a secret ballot. The voting process itself, however, proceeded very slowly. Some

polling stations did not close until midnight, while others suspended voting at midnight and reopened the next day.

The only problem that arose on election day concerned the last-minute NEC decision to allow voters to nullify their ballots as a sign of disapproval. Most voters were unaware of the change before their arrival at the polling site, and several election officials misinterpreted the revision and instructed voters that they could spoil their ballot with respect to individual candidates.

Despite the OLF boycott, turnout was respectable in Jima town: observers estimated that more than 65 percent of the registered voters cast ballots. Election officials appeared to have followed proper procedures during the counting phase. Witnesses at the count included elders, candidates, police and peace and security committee members.

### **F. Hub 3: Asela, Region 4**

Asela is located 150 kilometers south of Addis Ababa, near the center of the former Arsi region. Now located within electoral Region 4, Asela comprises 22 *weredas* and 1,180 *kebeles*.

Despite Asela's relative proximity to the capital, observers found election officials uncertain about the procedures and lacking the requisite election materials. For example, many rural areas did not receive information regarding the extended period for registering candidates. Further, on election day, *kebele* officials did not know whether to require voters to sign their own names on the ballots or to require fingerprints on the ballots. The late delivery of election materials — some registration books and cards did not reach certain *weredas* until June 16 — compounded the difficulties.

As in most of Region 4, observers in Asela reported significant tensions between the two Oromo-based political parties, the OLF and OPDO. Allegations of intimidation, imprisonment and violence punctuated the OLF's description of OPDO activities in the area. Friction was also evident among the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO), the United Oromo People's Leadership for Jihad and Liberation and OPDO.

The presence of observers appeared to affect the political environment in Asela. The OLF claimed that their offices were reopened only after the observers arrived. Also, political prisoners

were reportedly released or moved when observers entered various localities.

The eventual withdrawal of the OLF from the process left many residents of Asela questioning the significance of the local and regional elections. Ninety-five percent of the candidates slated for the area's elections were OPDO members, the rest were independents.

### **1. Snap elections**

The bulk of the information received by observers regarding the snap elections reflected OLF and IFLO allegations of OPDO manipulation and outright violation of the electoral rules. In Nguchida *kebele*, for example, OLF representatives asserted that 35 of their local leaders were arrested and held for 40 days to preclude OLF participation in the snap elections. In Iteya town, OLF representatives recounted how they succeeded in placing their followers on the provisional administrative committee. After two weeks, the OLF members were removed from the committee and replaced by EPRDF appointees.

The OLF's willingness to participate in snap elections, however, was called into question by their conduct in Ogolcho. In this *kebele*, the OLF secured seats on the provisional administrative committee, but refused to assume their positions because of "nasty" conflicts with the OPDO. OLF representatives in Asela found it difficult to justify their defection from the committee, leading the observers to conclude that the decision on this matter was made at OLF headquarters in Addis Ababa.

### **2. Preparations for local and regional elections**

Observers found a bustling OPDO office in Asela when they arrived on June 12. The local OPDO leadership declared that all candidates were registered and that preparations for the election were proceeding well, although the OLF had not presented any candidates.

The Asela zonal election commission consisted of a chair of unknown affiliation, and one member each from the Hadiya National Democratic Organization (HNDO), Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) and OPDO. Despite a complete lack of transport and election materials, the committee expected to register most of the 830,000 eligible voters in the Asela zone.

The zonal election commission held a briefing for the *wereda* election commission chairpersons on June 16. Six of the 22 chairpersons, representing 247 *kebeles*, failed to attend, reportedly because of “ethnic and security” concerns. The zonal election commission assumed that elections would not be held in these *weredas*. Twenty-three additional *kebeles* in six *weredas* were also expected not to hold elections because of “agitation from the OLF.” The zonal election commission members declined to identify the names and locations of these six *weredas*.

In a meeting with the observers, IFLO representatives presented a list of alleged abuses committed by OPDO supporters. IFLO claimed that OPDO closed IFLO offices and arrested 44 IFLO followers in Asela.

Other problems affecting the electoral process included:

- Amharas failing to register because, according to one registrar, they were afraid of a process dominated by Oromos;
- rising tensions among members of the election commissions representing different parties;
- intentional exclusion of OLF members from the *kebele* election commissions; and
- pressures to place OPDO representatives on the *kebele* election commissions even where they were unsuccessful in the snap elections — in several *kebeles*, it was alleged that registration cards and books would be released only if an OPDO representative was on the commission.

### 3. Election day

Balloting on June 21 was a calm, if confused, affair in Asela. Election commission chairpersons were present at all of the polling stations visited by observers. Armed security guards — either from the EPRDF, the police or “peace-keepers chosen by the people” — were found at the majority of balloting sites.

Many citizens complained to observers that not enough time was given to learn the system. Local election officials were also bewildered by the complicated procedures. Each *kebele* seemed to possess a different understanding of how to mark ballots (fingerprints, candidate’s name and voter’s name were all used in various places).

Several *kebeles* had only one ballot box and no procedures for ensuring secrecy. In some cases, residents cast their votes directly in front of election commission members. Campaign materials for the EPRDF were found inside many polling stations. Few officials knew of President Meles's announcement that citizens could vote against the election. The irregularities created a very slow balloting process.

## *Chapter 5*

# **The Role of the International Community**

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During the past decade, an increasing number of countries have initiated transitions from non-democratic forms of government to multiparty democracy. With this achievement, requests for political development assistance have multiplied. These solicitations have been directed toward intergovernmental organizations, donor countries and nongovernmental organizations. In this context, donor countries have stressed linkages between economic assistance and movement toward more democratic forms of government. Countries receiving external assistance, meanwhile, have begun to tolerate, if not always appreciate, such linkages.

These worldwide trends have been conspicuous in Ethiopia since even before the overthrow of Mengistu. During the May 1991 London conference, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen admonished the EPRDF, which was in the process of seizing power,

that future U.S. development assistance would be linked to democracy. The Transitional Charter, adopted in July, explicitly commits the TGE to respect internationally recognized human rights instruments and to establish a democratic system of government. To rebuild an economy devastated by war and mismanagement, the TGE solicited financial and other economic assistance from various donor countries. From the outset, the TGE also sought and welcomed political development assistance from the international community to help spawn democratic institutions in Ethiopia.

Consequently, a unique relationship formed between the TGE and several donor countries during the period preceding the June 21 elections. The NEC, for example, received more than \$12 million in financial and material support from the donor community for the elections (see Appendix XVIII). The international community also responded positively to the TGE's request for technical assistance and international observers. Finally, the diplomatic community in Ethiopia was quite active in promoting reconciliation among the different ethnic groups and in recommending specific solutions to problems relating to the election process.

### **A. Assistance**

In October 1991, the Washington-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED) published a report advocating a multi-faceted political development program be initiated in support of democratic institutions in Ethiopia. The report recognized that:

[t]he experiment underway in Ethiopia is still at an early moment, the precise form that major policies will take remain[s] uncertain, and the political atmosphere is fluid and highly charged. It is unclear when and how the bureaucracies will be refashioned to new objectives, and when precisely new policies affecting the judiciary, human rights, the media and promotion of the private sector will be clarified.

*Nonetheless, there are many promising and appropriate opportunities for NED and other U.S. organizations to become involved in Ethiopia [emphasis added].*<sup>7</sup>

Specifically, the report recommended a series of activities. These included: advising on constitutional revisions and electoral processes; promoting the development of independent human rights organizations; nurturing a free press; and encouraging private sector development.

Soon after publication of the NED report, a three-member NDI advisory team visited Ethiopia in November 1991 to discuss with government officials plans for regional and local elections. The team highlighted the specific challenges faced by Ethiopia in implementing a democratic transition:

Unlike other countries where NDI has worked, Ethiopia has no historical experience with competitive elections. Moreover, the government is committed to a process of decentralization and regional autonomy, which in several respects complicates the democratization process. Finally, Ethiopia's underdeveloped transportation and communications networks pose logistical hurdles, which the soon-to-be-formed election commission must overcome in developing a credible and meaningful election system.<sup>8</sup>

Coincident with the visit of the NDI team, the Ethiopian government began to request specific forms of material assistance from various donor countries. The donors were inclined to respond positively, but were discouraged by the lack of specificity included in the initial requests.

With the appointment of the National Election Commission in December 1991, planning for elections commenced. Donor countries started committing concrete sums of money and in-kind contributions

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<sup>7</sup> S. Morrison and J. Clark, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Democracy: Significant Opportunities Amidst a Fragile Transition*, p. 11 (National Endowment for Democracy, October 1991).

<sup>8</sup> National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Ethiopia Trip Report: NDI Elections Advisory Team*, p. 1 (November 1991).

in support of the election effort. In addition, various forms of technical assistance were also made available.

During the next few months, the diplomatic community in Addis Ababa concentrated on demobilizing the different guerrilla forces active in the country. U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Marc Baes, in particular, played an instrumental role in helping negotiate the encampment agreement, which significantly reduced the number of armed skirmishes between EPRDF and OLF forces. Once agreement was reached on encampment and various collateral issues, attention again turned to preparing for the regional and local elections.

In April and May, two Swedish election experts spent several weeks in Ethiopia advising the NEC. They provided the NEC with model election laws and helped members of the Commission think through various options relating to election procedures. Specific acknowledgement was extended in the *Election Commission Bulletin* to the "expert advisors from the U.N. family and the Swedish Embassy [who] have made themselves available to assist the Commission in working out the plan of action." The *Bulletin* continues:

The absence of any previous democratic election process in Ethiopia as a whole, and the lack of any professionals who have experience with such a process, means we are starting from scratch. There also is a lack of any credible civic organization. This leaves us heavily reliant on the international community. We are ready to learn from the experience of as many countries and experts as possible.<sup>9</sup>

Material assistance was also furnished to the NEC by various donor countries during this period, although the offered assistance was not always utilized in an effective manner. Conversely, the NEC expressed some exasperation at the slow pace with which assistance was provided. Publicly, however, problems were attributed to the constraint posed "by the lack of time before the election[s]."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Transitional Government of Ethiopia, *Election Commission Bulletin*, Issue No. 3, p. 1 (May 1992).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

In May, the chief of the U.N. Election Assistance Unit, which was formed in March 1992, visited Ethiopia to discuss with the TGE the types of assistance that the United Nations could offer in support of the elections and to advise the NEC on technical aspects of the process. As noted earlier, the U.N. representative convinced the NEC to postpone the elections for two weeks to allow additional time for voter registration and administrative preparations. He also persuaded the NEC to reduce the number of signatures required to nominate a candidate to a more realistic figure.

The United Nations developed a two-part program for assistance: support for the NEC and support for an international observer effort. The United Nations provided technical experts in the electoral and logistical fields and coordinated a fund whereby donors could earmark funds for election-related activities; the funds were then disbursed by the United Nations to the NEC.

The United Nations also agreed to organize the secretariat for the Joint International Observer Group (JIOG) and to manage logistics for the observers visiting Ethiopia at the time of the elections. The U.N. assumed these responsibilities notwithstanding the fact that the situation in Ethiopia did not meet the criteria for U.N. electoral verification set forth in the 1991 report of the Secretary General: the elections represented a rather limited international dimension and were not national, but regional, in scope.

The United Nations responded positively to the request for some form of monitoring. According to a document prepared by the U.N. Election Assistance Unit, the following factors contributed to the affirmative response: the elections were a first step in a democratization process; all parties participating in the elections sought a large observer mission; and key members of the international community were committed to supporting the process in as active a manner as possible. The effort, however, represented a shift in emphasis from a high profile verification mission, as exemplified by the United Nations activities in Namibia, Nicaragua and Haiti, to a more limited, confidence-building operation. Given the timing of the

United Nations commitment, the coordinated monitoring effort was also organized with limited advance preparation.<sup>11</sup>

## **B. Monitoring**

The international election observation effort in Ethiopia exhibited several unique features. This section describes several innovations employed in the course of the Ethiopian observer operation and identifies some of the problems associated with this effort.

The JIOG served as an umbrella for the more than 200 observers operating in Ethiopia. The JIOG included observers designated by 23 nations, the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the African-American Institute, and the Heinrich Boll Foundation, a German political foundation affiliated with the Green Party. United Nations personnel living in Ethiopia also participated in the observer operation.

JIOG delegates were deployed to 15 hubs around the country, with each team usually including nationals of two or more countries. U.N.-designated personnel, assisted by various diplomats based in Ethiopia and individuals retained by the AAI and the Heinrich Boll Foundation, arranged logistics for the deployments. The effective deployment of observers proved difficult, given the limited availability of vehicles, the National Election Commission's failure to produce a complete list of *kebeles*, and security concerns, which ultimately required the withdrawal of observers from several regions in the days prior to the elections.

Included among the JIOG observers were individuals with years of experience in Ethiopia, several of whom were fluent in local languages and familiar with particular regions. Many of the observers spent two or more weeks in the field, travelling, in the words of one observer, "anywhere the muddy roads would permit." The observers' relatively lengthy field stays contributed to the collection of an exceptionally high quality of raw data regarding developments in different regions of the country. This high quality compares favorably to the information typically assembled by

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<sup>11</sup> See United Nations and United Nations Development Programs, *Guidelines for Special Arrangements for Electoral Assistance*, pp.6-7 (August 1992).

observer delegations, absent a formal verification exercise undertaken by the United Nations or some other intergovernmental organization. This information proved critical in determining the tone and content of the post-election public statements issued by the AAI and Heinrich Boll teams, the report prepared under the auspices of the JIOG and presented by the contact group to President Meles, and this evaluation report.

Policy for the JIOG was made by a contact group of ambassadors from Canada, Sweden and the United Kingdom; the United States chargé d'affaires; and the United Nations resident representative in Ethiopia. The contact group was designated by a restricted-donors group of 12 countries, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the OAU. This group, in turn, was responsible to a full-donors group of 23 countries and eight intergovernmental organizations (see Appendix XIX). This structure, in part, was an outgrowth of the role played by the donor countries dating back to the famine of 1984 and the willingness of several ambassadors to assume activist roles.

In the week before the elections, the contact group met several times with President Meles to convey concerns about the electoral process. In making these representations, the contact group relied on information obtained by the observers in the field. The contact group also assumed responsibility for deciding when observers should be withdrawn from threatened areas.

The leading role played by the contact group with respect to the observation effort reflected several considerations: the perceived need for a centralized decision-making authority within the JIOG; the failure of other components of the JIOG to emerge as a dominant group; and the desire of diplomats based in Ethiopia to control what had become a very controversial and complicated observation mission. The diplomats participating in the contact group devoted considerable time and energy to guiding the activities of the JIOG. Their interventions with the president and the NEC were timely and substantively correct.

Nonetheless, the contact group approach was not a panacea. The composition of the contact group – with ambassadors from four large donor countries – reinforced the impression that the elections were simply designed to ensure the continuation of international assistance. Moreover, the relationship between the JIOG and individual

observers, teams of observers designated by governments and nongovernmental organizations was never precisely defined. The loose association, and the fact that the two nongovernmental organizations were not formally represented in the contact group, created some misunderstandings, particularly in the aftermath of the elections when the AAI and Heinrich Boll teams, which were operating as part of the JIOG, issued critical public statements.

The NEC promulgated a code of conduct for international observers following negotiations with members of the contact group (see Appendix XX). The code reflected the conception of the observer mission as a civilian peacekeeping force designed to promote confidence in the process and reduce tensions. While explicitly prohibiting public statements by the observers regarding the electoral process, the code encouraged the observers to communicate their findings and comments privately to the NEC. The proscription was rationalized as necessary given the highly charged political environment and the fear that a statement by an observer, even if accurate, might inflame opinion in Ethiopia and provoke retaliation against observers generally.

The ban on public statements proved problematic, particularly after the June 17 boycott by many parties and in view of the critical reports being received from the observers outside Addis Ababa. Several observers felt that they had to issue some summary public statement, given the evidence of intimidation, abuse and malpractice. In the minds of these observers, to remain silent in the face of this evidence would have left the observers open to the charge that they had compromised their professional integrity and played into the hand of the TGE and the NEC, which were using the presence of observers to legitimize the elections.

Given these circumstances, the AAI team interpreted the code of conduct as permitting the issuance of public statements abroad, once the elections were over and a majority of the observers had left the country. The JIOG contact group did not explicitly object to this planned course of action. Consequently, the AAI delegation held several lengthy drafting sessions before finalizing a statement, which was released from AAI's headquarters in New York on June 25. The Heinrich Boll delegation, meanwhile, issued its statement in Germany on June 26.

Several observers complained that they were never entirely clear as to the purpose of the mission. No formal terms of reference, other than the NEC code of conduct, were ever distributed to the observers by the JIOG, to whom many of the observers looked for guidance and direction, or by the nongovernmental organizations, which fielded the largest observer teams operating under the JIOG umbrella.

Briefings in Addis Ababa emphasized logistic and security concerns, rather than familiarized the observers with the many political challenges they would be encountering and examining in the field. Although observers were provided with an assessment checklist for use on election day (see Appendix XXI), they were never informed precisely how the information they collected would be used by the JIOG. One observer commented that she experienced difficulty “in answering satisfactorily the simple question posed repeatedly by representatives of opposition parties: ‘What are you going to do with what you are writing down?’”

Many of the problems could be attributed to the hastiness with which the entire observation effort was arranged. The operation was organized in less than a month and ultimately involved the participation of more than 200 observers deployed to 15 sites. The observers required adequate transportation and lodging facilities, interpreters, and a means for communicating with the JIOG headquarters in the capital. And, all of these arrangements had to be undertaken in a country with limited infrastructural capabilities.

In retrospect, the successful occurrence of the observer operation represented a logistical wonder of sorts. Significant numbers of individuals were placed in the field for extended periods of time. Communications with the observer teams in the field were maintained on a regular basis. Despite a precarious security situation, poor road conditions and limited lodging availability in many regions of the country, no calamitous developments affected the observer operation.

In many instances, the presence of observers and the questions they directed to election officials and political party leaders prompted the initiation of the election process in given localities<sup>12</sup>. In other

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<sup>12</sup> Despite the failure to produce free and fair elections, did our being there make any positive difference. I think it did, in several ways. I believe that our

regions where tensions were high, the observers were occasionally asked to mediate informally among the parties.

The observers' activities were also conducted in accordance with internationally accepted standards. To evaluate an election objectively, observers must consider all aspects and phases of the process, and cannot rely exclusively on the uncorroborated statements of the electoral participants. A visit to a prison, for example, may help in assessing the reliability of an allegation that individuals have been arrested for their political opinions. Indeed, in several instances, observer team visits to prisons failed to establish the presence of political prisoners.

The TGE's response to the observation effort was mixed. President Meles's formal reply to the AAI statement, for example, acknowledged flaws in the process and a desire to correct them, while expressing disappointment with the overall negative tone of the statement. Some EPRDF officials, however, criticized the observers for their naïve, self-righteous attitude, for their political biases and for exceeding their authority as observers by, for example, visiting prisons. The criticism may have reflected the EPRDF's frustrations with the unwillingness of the observers to accept, at face value, the TGE's democratic rhetoric and to sanction unequivocally the elections process.<sup>13</sup> The criticism, moreover, demonstrated a lack of appre-

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presence helped reduce abuse. Many times we were told that previously unavailable registration cards suddenly materialized or that election committees had hastily been formed when we showed up in the area.

G. Kulick, "Ethiopia's Hollow Election: Observing the Forms," *Foreign Service Journal*, p. 45 (September 1992).

<sup>13</sup> A similar dissonance could be observed in the TGE's response to a report issued by the human rights organization Africa Watch. The TGE criticized Africa Watch for failing to recognize that:

[c]ut and dried democratic institutions cannot be set up overnight, especially in Ethiopia where democratic tradition is virtually non-existent. If, therefore, the speed with which the present government in the country is currently tackling the multi-faceted challenges of ensuring peace, democracy and stability, as well as economic and social transformation, cannot meet the expectations

ciation for the highly charged atmosphere in which the observers were operating and the methodology employed by credible international election observers around the world.

Perhaps the most telling example of the conflicting conceptions of the observer operation revolved around the TGE order expelling Edmond Keller, the AAI field director, from the country. The ostensible reason for the order was Keller's appearance at an OLF election-day gathering, during which he briefly spoke to the crowd. The TGE accused Keller of violating the code of conduct by interfering in the election process. In fact, Keller, who was accompanied by the leaders of the AAI team, simply described the role of the international observer team to the crowd, prior to meeting privately with the OLF leadership.

The EPRDF was angered by reports it received of Keller's comments, which inferred that Keller had called for an independent Oromia. The source of this information was a fabricated broadcast on an OLF radio station that sought to use Keller's presence at the gathering for the purpose of delegitimizing the EPRDF. In addition, the EPRDF may have been looking for an excuse to undermine the credibility of the AAI team in anticipation of the team's expected criticism of the election process.

In the end, the observation effort, with all its flaws, ensured that the problems associated with the elections were reported to the Ethiopian people and the international community. The reports of individual observers and the statements of the AAI and Heinrich Boll teams were reported by the international media.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the TGE, confronted with the very specific collective statements, adopted procedures for responding to election grievances; indeed, the JIOG was listed as one of the organizations that could designate a member

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of the Africa Watch report, it is not for lack of good intentions or dedication to the cause of democracy, but for the lack of adequate economic and human resources.

Transitional Government of Ethiopia, "What Africa Watch Didn't Watch," p. 2 (June 15, 1992). The Africa Watch report entitled *Ethiopia: Waiting for Justice* was issued May 8, 1992.

<sup>14</sup> See *Washington Post*, "International Observer Team Criticizes Ethiopian Elections," June 24, 1992.

to the Election Review Board. Finally, and perhaps most important, the people of Ethiopia, whatever their particular feelings about the June elections, appeared to genuinely welcome the presence of the observers as a concrete expression of the international community's commitment to the democratic transition in Ethiopia.

## *Chapter 6*

# Reflections on the Ethiopian Transition

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Many international observers left Ethiopia following the June 21 elections disappointed and confused. The optimism with which they arrived in the country, in some cases after years of absence, had slowly faded. As observers, they seemingly were unable to reduce the likelihood of renewed armed conflicts among the various national groups. Moreover, the majority of the population appeared to have gained little from the election experience.

In these circumstances, some observers wondered whether the TGE should have expended scarce economic and political resources in organizing the regional and *wereda* elections so early in the transition. The observers also questioned the role of the international community: should support have been provided to an inevitably imperfect effort or was the effort flawed because the international community was not sufficiently supportive? were the donor countries mistaken in initially pressing for a TGE commitment to early elections? did the donors' pressure reveal superficial understanding of Ethiopia's complex realities and establish overly narrow,

counterproductive criteria for evaluating the TGE's progress in democratizing?

Finally, observers speculated about the aims of the different parties in welcoming an international observer presence. Was the TGE naïve in assuming that the observers would commend the EPRDF's stated intentions simply on their face value or was it merely cynical in presuming that the observers would overlook the problems that eroded the fairness of the process? From the opposite perspective, did the OLF want observers present to sanction its withdrawal from elections that it never seriously prepared to contest?

A review of the choices made by the EPRDF in implementing the transition may provide some insights regarding these issues. The lessons gained from this exercise could assist the EPRDF, opposition groups, civic organizations and the international community in formulating future policies. Other countries and the international donor community also may learn a great deal from the Ethiopian transition experience.

## **A. The Nature of the Transition**

In several respects, the actions undertaken by Ethiopia's current leaders in implementing a transition can serve as a model for other countries. The first step involved organizing a multiparty conference and adopting a consensus National Charter that set forth a timetable for the transition and committed the TGE to respect human rights. The TGE included different parties and Ethiopians were afforded a freedom to organize and associate previously unknown. The dominant emphasis was on reconciliation rather than retribution, although former Mengistu soldiers were initially detained and both former soldiers and WPE members were barred from participating in the June election process. Recognizing the challenges that lay ahead, the TGE sought the advice and assistance of those with more experience and resources.

Yet not everything proceeded according to plan. Regional and *wereda* elections that were originally scheduled for three months after adoption of the charter were not held until 11 months later. And the groups that formed the TGE remained profoundly distrustful of one another and, in the case of the OLF, internally divided regarding the wisdom of accepting transitional arrangements intended to preserve the national unity of Ethiopia, rather than pressing immediately for an

independent Oromia. Ultimately, these factors contributed to the withdrawal of the OLF and other parties from the election process, the decamping of OLF forces and the OLF's subsequent departure from the TGE.

Could the transition have proceeded differently? Could steps have been taken to ensure a more meaningful election process? As intimated above, choices made by the TGE, including most notably the decision to establish elected regional and *wereda* councils, generated some of the problems encountered during the transition period.

In evaluating the EPRDF's choices, the situation that existed in May 1991 must be considered. The country was emerging from a long and brutal war. The economy was in a dismal state, with famine an ever-present threat. Refugees needed resettlement, with attendant economic and social costs. The 500,000-member army required demobilization and reintegration into civilian society.

A gross disparity in political power separated the EPRDF from all other political interests. Political parties did not exist in conventional organizational terms. Indeed, in many instances, it was necessary for various ethnic entities to hastily constitute themselves as movements to ensure their representation in the July 1991 Transitional Conference.

A revamping of the political structure also was essential. The new government was committed to recognizing an Eritrean referendum on the subject of independence. While this decision was justifiable on historical and pragmatic grounds, it opened a Pandora's box regarding the status of other national groups within Ethiopia. Some groups pressed for the administrative division of the country along ethnic lines, while others feared that this would jeopardize the unity of Ethiopia as a nation. The Amhara elite, in particular, embraced a strong unitarian view of Ethiopia and feared a centrifugal disintegration of the country. The arguments regarding the future structure of the state occurred in circumstances where weapons were widely available and armed movements were affiliated with many of the political movements.

The new government also sought to dissolve the one-party system that existed under the previous regime. The WPE, however, comprised more than half-a-million members. Many Ethiopians undoubtedly joined the WPE for pragmatic as opposed to ideological

reasons, but the extent to which these individuals should continue benefitting from the privileges they accumulated during the Mengistu era or, on the other hand, should be excluded from participating in the political process, posed practical and philosophical dilemmas.

From the outset, the EPRDF and its allies in the TGE embarked on an unprecedented approach in seeking to establish a pluralist society in Ethiopia. Establishing a federal system *per se* is not remarkable. Nor is it unusual for a federal system to be justified as necessary to protect regional, ethnic and minority interests. The development of the current federal structure in Ethiopia is distinguished by its creation of ethnic-based regions where none previously existed. More significant, the EPRDF, through its actions, made ethnicity the controlling consideration in national politics.

The precise authority of the regional councils was never fully defined. In part, the failure to articulate the role of the regional councils reflected a desire to postpone debate over this issue until a new Ethiopian constitution was drafted. However, the sequence of the transition and the powers for regional authorities prescribed in Proclamation 7 implied more a devolution of power to elected subordinate bodies than a genuine establishment of autonomous federal units.

The political implications of establishing this type of federal system, under the existing circumstances, also were profound. For newly-emerging political parties, there was little incentive to create pan-Ethiopian structures. Rather, parties emerged as representatives of single ethnic groups and generally declined to develop support outside their home regions. In the case of the EPRDF, there was ample incentive to capitalize upon its strength and hegemony, through the development of affiliated ethnic movements, which would operate under the EPRDF umbrella.

Certainly, alternatives strategies for encouraging the emergence of a non-ethnic federal system could have been utilized. For example, political parties could have been required to demonstrate cross-regional support before obtaining official recognition or various state benefits. Such a requirement would have promoted coalition-formation among ethnically-based parties, thus reducing the number of parties active in the political process to a more manageable total and increasing the likelihood for the emergence of a coherent federal system.

Elections also could have been postponed until after federal and regional constitutions were in place, political parties were better organized and a massive civic education program had been implemented. A postponement would have also provided the National Election Commission with more time to prepare for elections.

Delaying elections, however, would have raised questions regarding the commitment of the new regime to respect human rights generally and the overall legitimacy of the government. Various international human rights instruments guarantee citizens a right to participate in the selection of their government through free and genuine elections. Moreover, the legitimacy of a new government, particularly in the aftermath of a revolution, can best be established through competitive elections. Indeed, in explaining the OLF's refusal to accept the authority of the Council of Representatives on a specific issue, OLF leader Lencho Leto argued that because the Council was not an elected body, the OLF "had the right not to accept [the Council's decisions] if [the OLF] believed them wrong."

On the other hand, neither international human rights instruments nor general practice establishes a precise timetable for holding elections following the forcible removal of a nondemocratic or brutal regime. In some cases, a new government will promulgate an extended transition calendar, sometimes lasting more than five years, with elections occurring only at the end of the transition period. To implement such an approach without causing outright rebellion requires a consensus among the political leadership in the country or a firm control over the political process typified by the inevitable human rights abuses. Initially, a consensus existed among the groups represented in the TGE for a staggered transition, which included early elections for the regional and *wereda* councils and a coalition government at the national level until a constitution was adopted. For a variety of reasons, this consensus eventually disintegrated.

Given the challenges involved in organizing elections in Ethiopia after years of war and with a population inexperienced in democratic practices, one can ask why Ethiopia's leaders provided for regional and *wereda* elections within three months of adoption of the National Charter and ultimately scheduled elections less than a year after the Charter was adopted? Several factors appear to have played a role in the EPRDF's calculations.

First, EPRDF leaders, although undoubtedly appreciated by the majority of the population for overthrowing Mengistu, were interested in demonstrating the profound philosophical differences between themselves and the previous regime. EPRDF leaders recognized the tensions within Ethiopian society and the inevitable growth of skepticism regarding the long-term intentions of the EPRDF. A genuine election process provided an effective means of confirming the commitment of the EPRDF to a pluralist Ethiopia.

Second, EPRDF leaders were well aware of the ethnic divides that existed within Ethiopian society. Establishing popularly elected regional and *wereda* governments was considered an effective means for alleviating concerns regarding Tigrayan dominance and also for providing a vehicle to allow other ethnic groups to exercise significant political control over their future. As a member of the National Election Commission remarked: "the overriding concern was in keeping the country together; thus a consensus emerged in favor of elections as soon as possible, even at the expense of quality."

Third, the EPRDF leaders sought to establish their legitimacy with the international community. Given the global trend in favor of democratization and the preference of donor countries to support existing democracies and those countries initiating democratic transitions, the EPRDF perceived a need to move quickly in scheduling elections at some level.

The EPRDF's goals, however, may not have required such an expedited election schedule. An alternative interim approach would have involved establishing regional councils in the same manner as the Council of Representatives — appointing members based on the perceived political support of different parties and groups in the region. The regional councils could have been authorized to develop their own constitutional framework, to hold region-wide referenda and to schedule elections all within a given period. This plan would have allowed the regional councils to exercise autonomy and to develop structures reflecting their particular circumstances. The councils would still have been subject to the dictates of the National Charter and the federal constitution, which would have developed simultaneously with the regional constitutions.

This approach probably would have been accepted and supported by the international community so long as fundamental human rights were respected and a consensus existed among the major Ethiopian

political leaders regarding the timetable. Indeed, at several points in the process, international experts and diplomats in Ethiopia, drawing upon experiences in other countries, urged the TGE to postpone the elections or to reorganize the transition process. The TGE, however, may never have fully comprehended the donor community's flexibility on the appropriate strategy for establishing a democratic government structure in Ethiopia.

### **B. Top Down Versus Bottom Up**

The National Charter and the decision to hold regional and district elections reflect a top down approach to political development. By contrast, the *kebele* meetings and the snap elections illustrate a bottom up strategy to securing popular participation in government decisions. There is nothing inappropriate in attempting to implement these two strategies concurrently. However, the TGE's employment of both a top down and bottom up approach generated a dissonance that has yet to be resolved.

In some regions, community meetings occurred on a regular basis during the year preceding the June 21 elections. These meetings involved reviewing decisions that had been made at higher levels and discussing their impact on the local community.<sup>15</sup> Although the community was made aware of decisions taken at higher levels, the extent to which they could question decisions or influence future policies was unclear.

The snap elections, at least in theory, exemplified the grassroots approach to democratic development. The meetings were open, although in many cases the results foreordained. Detailed procedural requirements regarding, for example, eligibility to participate were disdained. Notwithstanding the lack of formalism associated with the snap elections, an election worker in Tigre commented that "people felt that th[e snap] election was a step back from the democratic institutions they had established over the years."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Ethiopia Trip Report: NDI Elections Advisory Team, Appendix IV* (Trip to Gonder) (1991).

<sup>16</sup> Transitional Government of Ethiopia, *Election Commission Report*, Issue no. 1, p. 9 (1992).

The town meeting approach works well so long as a general consensus exists within the community. However, when a community divides over personality, ethnicity, economic well-being or other matters, a more formal and rule-oriented decision-making procedure becomes necessary. Without such techniques, the dominant group often will exercise control at the expense of other groups. This sequence of events came to pass in Ethiopia. As noted by an observer: "the lower down you move to the grassroots, the stronger and more exclusive the control of the EPRDF-aligned parties seems to be."

The June 21 elections in Ethiopia demonstrate that adopting formal rules without introducing a broad-based and comprehensive civic education program is likely to be ineffectual. In planning for the future, therefore, the TGE should attempt to harmonize between the top down and bottom up approaches so that they become mutually reinforcing. For example, periodic town meetings might encompass civic education programs in which the different components of a democratic election system are described and the balloting process is demonstrated. Also, the programs can discuss the differences between grassroots democracy and representative democracy, and highlight the role of the citizen in the latter system.

### **C. Resource Allocation**

Another issue that emerges from a review of the June 21 elections involves the allocation of scarce resources for political development purposes. The TGE made a commitment early in the process to schedule regional and *wereda* elections. However, it almost certainly underestimated the costs involved in such an effort, including monetary expenses, diversion of personnel and material resources and postponing the resolution of other fundamental issues such as the preparation of a constitution and the restructuring of the economy.

The TGE also expected the international community to assume more of the costs involved in preparing for the elections than proved reasonable. Donor countries have limited resources for development work overseas. In distributing such assistance, they have to balance the relative benefits of political, economic and humanitarian assistance and to weigh the relative needs of different countries. Even after a decision is made to extend political development assistance to a given

country, most donors will not simply furnish a blank check to the recipient, but will want to be assured that the funds, materials and technical assistance will be used effectively.

These considerations assumed particular relevance in the case of Ethiopia. The donors were concerned from the outset by the implications of the plan to create a federal system and by the ambitious character of the election timetable. At the same time, the donors wanted to be supportive of the TGE's efforts and to avoid the perception of intervening in Ethiopia's internal affairs. These circumstances placed the donor community in a difficult position: the TGE, at times, accused the donors of not providing adequate support, while the donors often feared that their money and assistance was being wasted in a process that would not result in a salutary outcome.

There are no easy solutions to this conundrum. Donor countries cannot abdicate their fiscal and political responsibilities simply because they like an individual leader or believe he or she is truly committed to a given policy. The policies of the recipient country must coincide with the rhetoric of its leaders. Yet, absent an extreme situation, donor countries should not dictate particular solutions to a recipient country on matters relating to political development so long as the choice falls within the spectrum of internationally recognized standards.

### **D. The Observers' Predicament**

Following the elections, a consensus emerged among the JIOG observers that the process had been flawed, but divergences surfaced regarding the degree of the EPRDF leadership's culpability for the problems. The differences reflected the varied experiences of observers assigned to diverse regions of the country and the fact that some observers sought to apply universal standards for evaluating election processes while others emphasized contextual factors. In ascribing responsibility, the observers divided into three viewpoints.

One group attributed the failings in the process primarily to the circumstances in Ethiopia. Logistical constraints, ethnic conflicts and the lack of experience with democratic practices were all viewed as contributing to the failure of the elections to achieve their primary goals. In this vein, one observer suggested that, even with the flaws, the elections marked a step forward for Ethiopia: "the transition from closed and oppressive structures of the past to a system that

encourages diversity, that is characterized by freedom of expression and that provides all parties with access to the political machinery, is of necessity in its first step of conception.”

Another group blamed the EPRDF for many of the problems associated with the process. This group recognized that the EPRDF's intentions may have been constructive, but concluded that the EPRDF, as the ruling party, had an obligation to ensure that all parties could compete effectively and to prevent the abuses committed by EPRDF supporters around the country. This responsibility was not met, in the view of this group of observers.

A third group was even more critical of the EPRDF, focussing on the degree and consistency of the abuses committed throughout the country, which suggested a concerted effort by the EPRDF to interfere with the electoral process in order to ensure victory for EPRDF candidates. In the words of one observer: “the main problem in this election was not lack of civic education, but the lack of democratic political will at the top.” Another observer was more blunt:

By the end of our stay . . . it was no longer possible for me to believe that the local authorities were behaving other than they had been instructed by Addis Ababa; that is to do whatever necessary to ensure that OPDO won the election, whether the people wanted them or not. Some people in Addis Ababa may misguidedly believe that this is self-determination. To most of the Oromo people . . . it looks like just the newest face of exploitation and coercion by the Abyssinian colonialists and their ‘Galla’ collaborators that they have experienced for the last hundred years.

## **E. Lessons for Future Monitoring Operations**

Following the elections, organizations, governments and individuals participating in the election monitoring operation sought to evaluate the role played by the observers. The general appreciation for the observers' contributions in critically reporting on the process was balanced by a realization that, in several respects, the observer operation was flawed. With this in mind, several lessons of the Ethiopian experience are worth pondering.

Planning for the monitoring operation began less than a month before the elections. Transportation, lodging and translation, there-

fore, had to be arranged on very short notice. Briefings and orientations were superficial and failed to adequately identify the precise information the observers were to collect. Moreover, the precise number of observers participating in the operation was never certain until the day of the elections, requiring constant scrambling to permit observers to be used in an effective manner.

Equally significant, the short time frame precluded the implementation of a holistic monitoring plan. Such an effort would have involved a permanent on-site presence in Ethiopia months before the elections, periodic high-level fact-finding missions resulting in specific recommendations for improving the electoral environment, a mutually supportive relationship between domestic and international observers and the development of mechanisms for evaluating the seriousness of election-related complaints before, during and after the elections.

The purposes, or terms of reference for the mission, were never clearly delineated. Moreover, while observers must respect the laws of a country and should remain neutral and objective, organizations and governments sponsoring election monitors should generally refuse to participate in such a mission unless certain conditions are accepted by the government and the electoral authorities. These conditions, at a minimum, should include:

- ability to meet with representatives of all parties and with individuals randomly selected and to obtain information regarding the election process from the electoral authorities at all levels;
- permission to travel in all regions of the country during the election campaign;
- unimpeded access to polling sites and counting centers throughout the country; and
- authority to issue public statements.

## **F. Conclusion**

The issue for many observers became less the tone of the post-election statement and more whether the conduct of the elections should influence the extent and nature of future support for the Ethiopian government. Certainly, the events surrounding the elections counsel against relying exclusively on the TGE as the mechanism for strengthening democratic institutions in Ethiopia. Indeed, in the future, the provision of political development

assistance, as discussed below, should be conditioned on the practical possibilities of working with nongovernmental entities — including opposition parties, civic organizations and the alternative media. On the other hand, so long as a society remains relatively open and human rights are generally respected, support should be provided to government efforts that are specifically designed to strengthen democratic institutions, including election commissions, parliaments, local governments, media and even government-directed civic education programs.

More generally, the international community must consider how extensive a role it is prepared to play not only in promoting political development in Ethiopia but in encouraging a negotiated conciliation between the EPRDF and the OLF that will restore conditions under which progress in the implementation of the National Charter will be credible. Between the June 21 elections and early September, a core group of diplomats based in Ethiopia, working with the Provisional Government of Eritrea, sought to mediate the dispute between the EPRDF and the OLF. However, little progress was achieved in convincing the OLF to resume participation in the government or the Council or Representatives. The OLF demands include the rescheduling of elections with a more active international role, including the placement of peacekeeping forces in Region 4 until the election process is complete.

A major commitment of peacekeeping forces in Ethiopia is unlikely given existing obligations in other regions of the world. On the other hand, it may be possible to further develop the innovations that were attempted with respect to civilian peacekeeping in the context of the June 21 elections. A better prepared international monitoring effort, coupled with simplified rules of the game as agreed upon by the contesting parties, may indeed result in a more efficacious election process that will enhance Ethiopia's prospects for developing politically, economically and socially.

## *Chapter 7*

# **Moving Forward**

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This chapter discusses possible roles the international community can play in supporting the development of Ethiopia's democratic institutions. These roles derive from an operational premise that presumes that Ethiopia's needs require a concerted, consistent and sustained effort. It also is urgent to embark on these programs soon, if for no other reason than that the volatility of the political situation demands the immediate development of effective communication channels.

The programs described below should be implemented principally in regions of the country other than Addis Ababa, which is relatively less politically turbulent and more politically developed, and in Tigre where the TPLF appears genuinely popular. However, a minimal level of peace, security and political stability must be maintained if implementation of the proposed programs is to prove feasible.

In the short term, four categories of principal recipients of political development programs can be identified. The first group includes the general public as a whole. The second category comprises political party leaders. The third classification constitutes

civic organizations, many of which are still in the embryonic stages. Elected leaders at the regional and local levels compose the final category. Other potential beneficiaries include academics, judges, lawyers, police, armed services personnel, journalists and labor leaders, although programs for these categories are not delineated in this chapter.

The June elections demonstrated the existing weaknesses in Ethiopia's civil society and democratic culture. The programs outlined below are designed to respond to these deficiencies on an urgent basis. In addition, the sequence of implementation and selection of prospective participants will be instrumental in determining the impact of the different programs on the democratization process in Ethiopia. The following programs should be considered in descending order of priority.

### **A. Election Advisory Assistance**

Even those who consider the June 21 elections an important step forward, including the TGE and the NEC, recognize the flaws associated with the process. These deficiencies have affected public confidence regarding the ability of the TGE to conduct fair and credible elections. Thus, as a first step in restoring popular trust in the electoral process, a grand scale debriefing of a broad cross-section of election officials — national, regional, zonal, *wereda* and *kebele* — should be organized.

Such a debriefing would provide useful and practical insights into the problems encountered at both the national and grassroots levels. The review should examine the entire electoral process and would be distinct from the work of the Election Review Board, which is considering grievances related to irregularities that may require the nullification of elections in particular *kebeles* or *weredas*.

The review would be enhanced by involving several of the international election experts who visited Ethiopia before the June elections or as part of the JIOG operations. Indeed, the presence of international experts and the use of an open forum may convince parties that withdrew from the electoral process to attend the review sessions. The review would consider such issues as the choice of election system, the formation of the national and subordinate election commissions, the procedures for voter registration and nomination of candidates, the implementation of a more concentrated civic education

program, the distribution of election materials and the complaint review mechanisms. Based on observations of the June elections and NDI experiences elsewhere, a few specific modifications are suggested below.

The composition of the NEC adequately reflected the different political groups represented in the Council of Representatives. Nonetheless, the NEC, at times, was perceived as being controlled by the EPRDF. The dominant role played by Dawit Yohannes, President Meles' legal adviser, contributed to this perception. However, the problem appeared as much attributable to the failure of the other commissioners to assume an active role. In any event, the problem could be rectified by the adoption of rules governing the internal operations of the NEC regarding such matters as the scheduling of votes, the establishment of sub-committees and the authority of individual commissioners to act independently on specific issues.

Another possibility would be to designate a position on the NEC as a full-time job, at least for the election period. The NEC also could be granted the authority to recruit a professional staff, which would be responsible for developing an operational plan for the elections, subject to NEC guidance.

Subordinate election bodies should be made more directly responsible to their immediate superior body. In this context, consideration should be given to changing the method for designating *wereda* and *kebele* election commissions, with reliance on the superior election panel to designate the subordinate personnel. To ensure the integrity of the process, political parties could have an official role in monitoring the election process, with party pollwatchers authorized to file complaints and to receive an official report of the election results from all polling sites.

With respect to the election system, consideration should be given to adopting a simpler scheme than the one used in the June elections. One possibility would be to adopt a party-based approach whereby the voter would place a mark next to the name and symbol of his or her preferred party choice on the ballot. This system would strengthen the role of political parties in the election process, rather than permit the conduct of elections on a non-party basis as in June. Alternatively, if a majoritarian system is preferred, single-member districts would be easier for the voter to understand and also simpler

to implement than the multi-member districts used in June. At a minimum, the names and affiliations of all candidates should be transmitted to the NEC before election day.

Voter registration procedures should be developed with precise goals in mind including educating the public regarding general election procedures, training election officials, providing a basis for administrative preparations and deterring various forms of fraud. Lists should be publicized and available for scrutiny by parties before the elections. The NEC should collect and analyze all voter registration information both to ascertain any obvious anomalies and to determine where to send election paraphernalia before the elections. Sufficient time, perhaps as long as six months given conditions in Ethiopia, should be set aside to permit achievement of these distinct goals.

More definite rules are required for determining voter and candidate eligibility. In particular, the proscription on the participation of former WPE members should be reconsidered both on philosophical and pragmatic grounds. Preventing individuals from participating in the political process based on previous associations, without a corresponding criminal conviction, is contrary to accepted international human rights standards. Moreover, excluding these individuals from political activities may encourage their involvement in extra-legal endeavors, which could threaten the stability of the elected government and decrease the prospects for reconciliation. In a related vein, the requirement that prospective voters and candidates indicate their ethnic identification should be reexamined to avoid the controversies and confusion that emerged in some regions before the June elections.

The media should be used more effectively to educate the public regarding electoral procedures and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. To ensure that the media is not used for partisan purposes, a high-level media advisory board might be established with the specific mandate of developing nonpartisan programs concerning basic civic matters. The board could include individuals representing different parties, both as a sign of goodwill and to ensure that the programs address the concerns of all Ethiopians.

A staggered election calendar and a longer lead time between scheduling an election and election day itself would allow the NEC to exercise more effective control concerning the distribution of

election paraphernalia. Similarly, better procedures are required to ensure the prompt transmission of election results and the reporting of electoral complaints.

## **B. Civic Education**

Democracy training programs should be organized in a coordinated fashion and directed at areas outside Addis Ababa. These programs should involve informing prospective voters about various aspects of an election process and also serve to train a committed group of trainers. The program should be sponsored by credible Ethiopian civic organizations, perhaps in cooperation with a non-Ethiopian organization with expertise in these matters. Political parties should be consulted on the design of the programs.

In implementing these programs, a series of workshops could be organized to further familiarize the electorate with the purposes and activities and procedures surrounding the next round of elections. The workshops would focus on all aspects of the election process, ranging from voter registration, election laws, codes of conduct, election monitoring, and the balloting and counting processes. Workshop participants would gain familiarity with techniques for training their fellow citizens and for transmitting their newly acquired knowledge down through the various layers of hierarchy to the grassroots level.

## **C. Developing Civic Organizations**

In Ethiopia, as in many other countries proceeding through democratic transitions, a significant number of people are unfamiliar with their rights and obligations as citizens. They are also unaware of how to draw the attention of the political leadership to their specific concerns or issues. This advocacy function is a critical role that civic organizations can play.

Functioning civic organizations exist in Ethiopia, but, with a few exceptions, they have yet to develop coherent strategies for promoting citizen awareness. In some cases, the TGE has discouraged civic organizations from assuming activist roles. For example, a request by the Inter-Africa Group (IAG) to organize a large-scale domestic monitoring effort for the elections was rebuffed by the TGE. Instead the IAG was limited to conducting an evaluation of the electoral process, which in many respects paralleled the international

monitoring effort discussed in the previous chapters. As experience has shown in other countries, nonpartisan domestic monitors not only play a critical role in promoting fair elections but also can be used to implement civic education programs.<sup>17</sup>

Given conditions in Ethiopia, there is an urgent need to encourage the evolution of civic groups, both national and local. Infrastructural support should be provided to enable the already existing organizations to expand their activities beyond Addis Ababa.

The more nonpartisan and non-ethnically based organizations or institutions that can be identified and supported, the greater the chance that these organizations can contribute to the establishment of a broadly based democratic culture. The expansion of these civic groups will eventually permit them to promote and sustain some of the activities that international observers and the diplomatic community have undertaken, including election monitoring, mediation, national reconciliation and conflict resolution.

In providing training to pre-existing nonpartisan civic organizations, workshops could be organized on such topics as:

- the conduct of national civic education campaigns;
- the recruitment and training of volunteers to monitor election processes;
- the promotion of reconciliation among the Ethiopian people of different "nationalities" and among the electoral contestants in the post-election period; and
- the continuous promotion of advocacy on issues pertinent to Ethiopian civil society including, but not limited to, women's rights, human rights, land ownership and use, famine and irrigation, freedom of the press, and environmental protection.

#### **D. Political Party Training**

A stable democracy requires the development of strong, broadly-based and well-organized political parties. These parties usually serve as channels for the expression of political and socio-economic

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<sup>17</sup> L. Garber, "Observers at the Polls Include Those Without a Stake," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 13, 1992.

viewpoints and grievances. Unfortunately, it will require some time for parties to reach this level of development in Ethiopia.

The dominant party within the TGE, the EPRDF, has sought to form coalitions with other parties. Nonetheless, the prevailing view is that most political parties rely only on ethnic appeals for their support. Regionalism and ethnic identification are such controlling factors in political life that political parties seeking to organize membership across ethnic lines or to develop nationality blind platforms have experienced considerable difficulty.

The regional and local elections should have distinguished the more popular of the many registered organizations, providing a basis for evaluating the level of political support enjoyed by each group. Because of circumstances described elsewhere, this screening process did not occur. Thus, subjective determinations must be made in identifying the significant parties that might be invited to participate in political party training workshops.

The curriculum of these workshops and seminars could include:

- developing techniques for encouraging tolerance and minimizing tensions and intimidation among political parties competing in the election process;
- enhancing practical political techniques in such areas as organization, management, election preparedness, candidate selection, coalition-building, voter contact and outreach;
- defining mechanisms for developing more issue-based political parties by considering such subjects as message development and dissemination, campaign themes and governance strategy;
- encouraging the active participation of women in the political process;
- training local partisan activists in various aspects of the electoral process, including election monitoring; and
- promoting dialogue between election winners and losers by examining the respective roles of ruling and opposition legislators in a democracy.

## E. Parliamentary Training

The June elections were intended to establish regional councils whose membership would have ranged from three to 660 councilors. At the lower levels, each *kebele* was supposed to elect three *wereda* council members, which would have resulted in an average 120 members for each *wereda* council. Thus, had the elections proceeded according to plan, thousands of elected officials would now be serving at the regional and local levels, most of whom would have never served in a parliamentary body.

The legitimacy of regional and *wereda* councils formed as a result of the June elections remains a controversial issue. However, assuming the future formation of fairly elected regional and local councils, training workshops and seminars might be organized to assist the new members of the council in carrying out their responsibilities. These workshops would concentrate on providing information relative to:

- the principles of Ethiopian federalism, decentralization and the relationship between regional and federal structures;
- the separation of powers among the different branches of the regional governments;
- the importance of establishing an independent judiciary at the regional level and the mechanisms for so doing;
- the budget process and its significance for regional autonomy;
- the exercise of legislative control and oversight concerning such matters as the police and prisons; and
- the role of regional authorities in future elections.

## F. Conclusion

The above list of programs is not exhaustive. Nor are all the contingencies for implementing these programs fully developed. Nonetheless, preparations for the national elections now scheduled for 1993, as well as any future elections that are organized at the regional and *wereda* levels, should begin immediately. Absent such arrangements, the serious problems associated with the June 1992 elections are likely to be reoccur in the future.

**APPENDICES**

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*Appendix I*

**African-American Institute Election Observation  
Delegation to the Ethiopian Elections**

**June 21, 1992**

**JOSEPH DUFFEY**  
Delegation Co-Chair  
President  
The American University

**DONALD PAYNE**  
Delegation Co-Chair  
U.S. House of  
Representatives (D-NJ)

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Freedom Foundation

ANNETTE SHECKLER  
Program Officer  
African-American Institute

JASPER SMITH  
P.S. Communications

MARGARET C. SNYDER  
Founding Director, UNIFEM

NEIL SOBANIA  
Director of International  
Education/Associate  
Professor, Hope College

ED STEWART  
Regional Program Director  
International Republican  
Institute

CHARLES SUTTON  
Musician (Former Peace  
Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia)

THOMAS TEEPEN  
National Correspondent  
Cox Newspapers

LUCY THOMAS  
Director, International  
Division, National Council of  
Negro Women

**CURTIS VREDENBURG**  
Graduate Student  
Center for Latin American  
Studies, Stanford University

**SIDNEY R. WALDRON**  
Professor of International  
Studies and Anthropology  
State University of New York

**GERRI WALKER**  
President, The Forerunners  
Institute, Inc.

**ROGER WINTER**  
President, U.S. Committee  
for Refugees

Appendix II

Map of Hubs Visited by JIOG Teams



*Appendix III*

**NDI Evaluation Questionnaire**

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: AAI Election Monitors  
FROM: Larry Garber, Senior Associate for Electoral Processes  
DATE: June 4, 1992  
RE: Evaluating the Ethiopian Electoral Process

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), in coordination with the African-American Institute (AAI), is conducting an evaluation of the June 1992 regional and *wereda* elections. The purposes of the evaluation are:

- to provide Ethiopian government officials and political leaders with a comprehensive assessment of the laws and procedures as they were implemented in the context of the June elections;
- to make specific recommendations to the authorities as they prepare for the national elections currently scheduled for 1993; and
- to help develop a long-term political development program for Ethiopia.

NDI is well-positioned to perform this evaluation. Since 1986, NDI has observed elections in more than 25 countries. In addition, the Institute has conducted extensive evaluations of the election systems in Senegal and Cameroon. In both cases, the evaluations were undertaken at the invitation of the governments and with support of all political parties. Many of the recommendations included in the reports were ultimately adopted by the governments.

NDI has been working in Ethiopia since November 1991, when a three-member team visited the country at the invitation of President Meles Zenawi to advise on preparations for elections. NDI subsequently conducted a training seminar for political party leaders in January 1992. NDI representatives visited Ethiopia in May 1992 to discuss preparations for the elections with the Central Election Commission, political party leaders, diplomats based in Ethiopia and United Nations officials.

In performing the evaluation, NDI will rely heavily on the observations and insights of the election monitors operating under the auspices of the AAI. Many of you have lived in Ethiopia and

understand the culture and history of the country. Your insights on the types of political development programs that might be appropriate in a given region would be particularly helpful.

This questionnaire outlines various categories of information that would contribute to a comprehensive and constructive evaluation. We hope that you will use the outline in preparing a written report regarding your specific observations and recommendations in the region to which you have been assigned. However, you should not feel obliged to limit your analysis to the questions listed below. Your report would then be then incorporated into the final evaluation report.

NDI representatives will be in Ethiopia to coordinate the evaluation. NDI expects to produce a draft evaluation by August 1 and a final report by September 1. We intend on soliciting comments from all those participating in the monitoring effort.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

## Questionnaire

### I. Snap Elections

- A. What impact did the snap elections have on the regional and *wereda* elections? Did they provide administrative experience to the electorate? Did they provide the population with experience in multi-candidate elections? Did they serve to identify prospective candidates for the regional and *wereda* elections?
- B. What role did the officials elected in the snap elections play with respect to the regional and *wereda* elections?

### II. Election Administrators

- A. How and when were the regional, *wereda* and *kebele* election officials designated? What types of individuals were designated as election officials (breakdown by profession, level of education, gender, etc)? What role did political parties/movements play in the designation process? Did any political parties/movements object to the designation process?
- B. What training did election officials receive from the electoral authorities or from other sources? How were instructions communicated to the lower-level electoral authorities? What

initiatives did election officials take to ensure the success of the elections?

- C. What responsibilities did the election officials assume with respect to preparing for the elections? Did they prepare ballots, ballot boxes and other election paraphernalia or were these materials supplied by a central authority?
- D. What responsibilities did election officials assume with respect to the resolution of complaints? Were any formal procedures utilized for hearing or investigating complaints?
- E. What role did the election officials play in educating the public regarding balloting procedures?
- F. What changes would you suggest in the process of designating and training election officials?

### **III. Election Administration**

- A. What instructions did voters receive regarding the registration and balloting processes?
- B. Did the procedures prove adequate to ensure that voters were properly identified? Did the procedures protect against multiple voting and other fraudulent practices?
- C. Did voters appreciate the significance of the secret ballot? Were there efforts to compromise ballot secrecy?
- D. Did voters understand the procedures for marking the ballots? What mistakes proved common? What impact did the number of invalid ballots have on the overall election results?
- E. Who was present, other than polling officials, inside the polling site during the balloting and counting processes? Did their presence serve a constructive role or did it interfere with the process?
- F. Were adequate safeguards in place to ensure that the vote count was not manipulated?
- G. What changes would you suggest in the election-day procedures?

### **IV. Civic Education**

- A. How did prospective voters learn about the need to register or about balloting procedures? (media, word-of-mouth, etc.)

- B. What percentage of prospective voters were unable to cast ballots because they never registered?
- C. How was information communicated to prospective voters regarding the candidates contesting the elections (meetings, rallies, canvassing, media, etc.)?
- D. What information did Ethiopian citizens receive in general regarding "democracy," "multiparty elections," and "federalism?" How was this information communicated to the population?
- E. What suggestions would you make with respect to developing a voter education program in this region?

**V. Political Parties/Movements**

- A. What parties/movements are active in the region? When did they form? How were leaders chosen? What structures exist within the parties?
- B. What parties and prospective candidates were proscribed from participating in the elections? Who decided upon the proscriptions and did the decisions appear well-founded in law or arbitrary? What role, if any, did those officially proscribed play in the election process?
- C. What is the level of communication between national parties, regional parties and party activists at the *wereda* and *kebele* levels?
- D. What activities have political parties undertaken since their formation (meetings, educational programs, training, canvassing, etc.)? How do they support this level of activity (payment of party activists)?
- E. How were candidates selected? Were candidates generally party activists? What was the background of the candidates (breakdown by profession, level of education, gender, etc)?
- F. How can party organizations be strengthened?

**VI. Civic Organizations**

- A. What civic organizations exist (elders, professional associations, religious groups, labor unions, public interest organizations, etc.)? What types of individuals are active in these organi-

zations? How are these organizations structured? How are these organizations financed?

- B. What role did civic organizations play with respect to the electoral process? Did they undertake civic education activities? Did they encourage voter participation? Did they endorse candidates or parties? What impact did these activities have on the process?
- C. Are certain civic organizations reluctant to become involved in civic education or elections? How can this reluctance be overcome?
- D. Would program activities directed at civic organizations stimulate voter awareness? What themes should be incorporated into these programs?

#### **VII. Security Forces**

- A. Which forces were present in the region? How were they organized?
- B. What role did they play in the election process? Were they responsive to orders from the civilian authorities? Was the national armed forces deployed to the advantage of a particular political movement?
- C. How did the encampment process work in this region? What effect did it have on the operations of political movements?
- D. What role are the security forces in this region likely to assume following the elections?
- E. What role did the tripartite commissions play in the Oromo region? What role did the joint liaison committees play in helping to resolve conflicts?

#### **VIII. Media**

- A. What role did radio play in preparing voters for the elections? Which radio stations were the most effective?
- B. What role did newspapers or other print media play in the election process?
- C. Based on your experiences, what types of media programs would be effective in educating the public?

**IX. Regional Assembly**

- A. Based on your observations of the elections and your interactions with various candidates, what role do you expect the regional assembly to play in governing the region?
- B. Would the regional assembly benefit from a program focusing on models of parliamentary procedures and organization? Based on your experiences, do you believe candidates would be interested in such programs?
- C. What substantive areas do you expect to pose the most difficulty for the regional assemblies (finance, security, constitution-writing, establishing an independent judiciary, corruption and executive oversight)?

**X. Wereda Assembly**

- A. What role do you expect the *wereda* assembly to play in local government?
- B. What types of training would most benefit local government officials?

*Appendix IV*

**Observers by Country and Organization**

<b>NATION OR ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>OBSERVERS</b>
Belgium	1
Canada	10
CSFR	1
Egypt	10
France	5
Germany	18
Ghana	1
Greece	4
Indonesia	4
Italy	9
Japan	3
Netherlands	16
Niger	1
Nigeria	3
Norway	6
Russia	12
Spain	1
Sudan	5
Sweden	12
Switzerland	6
Tanzania	1
United Kingdom	6
United States	70
EEC-European Economic Community	3
FAO-Food and Agriculture Organization	2
OAU-Organization of African Unity	18
UNDP-United Nations Development Program	5
UNEP-United Nations Environment Protection Act	3
UNICEF-United Nations Childrens Fund	7
UNIDO-United Nations Industrial Development Organization	1
UNILO-United Nations International Labor Organization	1
WFP-World Food Program	3
WHO-World Health Organization	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>

In addition, the following organizations facilitated the required logistics or the writing of the reports:

African-American Institute

Heinrich Boll Foundation

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

*Appendix V*

**Revised Statement of the African-American  
Institute on the June 21 Elections in Ethiopia**

**June 25, 1992**

For Immediate Release

At the invitation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), the African-American Institute (AAI) sponsored 70 of more than 200 members of the Joint International Observer Group (JIOG), charged with the impartial observation of the election process in Ethiopia. AAI is a private voluntary organization whose mission is to foster development in Africa, primarily through human resource development and improved understanding between Africans and Americans. Its observers were integrated into multinational teams and dispatched throughout Ethiopia.

Beginning in early June, roughly half of AAI's observers were deployed to numerous regional sites where they remained for the subsequent two weeks. They attended political meetings and observed the election process before and on election day. What follows is a preliminary statement of the African-American Institute, based on contributions from nearly all members of the delegation.

Within the next two months, AAI, in collaboration with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, will prepare a full evaluation of these elections and provide a fuller assessment of the findings of the observer team. The report will be made available to relevant policymakers in Ethiopia, the United States, and the United Nations, and to other interested parties.

On June 21, 1992, Ethiopia held what was to be the first truly democratic elections in its history. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia had great expectations that these district and regional elections would set the stage for national elections projected to take place in 1993. The primary political purpose of these elections was, according to the National Charter, to "empower" through the vote all of Ethiopia's nationalities within a new pluralistic political system. However, this first round of elections fell considerably short of this objective.

Less than a week before the elections, the Oromo People's Liberation Front (OLF), undeniably a significant political party in the south, as well as other parties including the All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPO), the Ethiopian Democratic Action Group (EDAG), the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO), and the Gideo People's Democratic Organization (GDPO), announced their withdrawal from the process. Together the partisans of these organizations represent a significant proportion of the Ethiopian electorate. Moreover, the provocative movement of EPRDF forces throughout the election process, combined with the OLF's decision to decamp approximately 15,000 fighters immediately after withdrawing from the elections, raised the prospects of a return to armed conflict in the Oromo region.

The bases of the OLF complaint were that the National Election Commission had not followed Proclamation 11, calling for the establishment and management of electoral committees; that OLF offices were arbitrarily closed in some areas; and that prospective candidates were detained without reason. In partial response to growing charges of procedural irregularities, the day before the elections, the Council of Representatives ordered that in those locations where serious administrative problems were found to exist, the voting period would be extended by up to a week, while in those areas where there were enduring political obstacles, elections would be postponed indefinitely and these problems would be investigated and resolved.

In the rest of the country the elections did go on as planned. The results were mixed, with some parts of the north, including Addis Ababa and other major urban centers, experiencing what appeared to be procedurally regular elections. Here some voters were enthusiastic about their opportunity to vote in these historic elections, and hopeful for a democratic future. In other places, such as the Afar and Somali regions, the charter city of Harar, and eastern and western Oromo areas, for various reasons elections were postponed indefinitely.

In very few places were there competitive, multiparty elections. The EPRDF and its affiliated parties (*e.g.*, EPDM, OPDO, etc.) were usually the only parties on the ballot. Non-participation was explained both as a response to intimidation and detention of sup-

porters and candidates, or alternately as an expression of a party's unwillingness to participate in the electoral process.

In rural and peri-urban areas of the north and central areas of Ethiopia, as well as in most parts of the south, there were serious problems in the election process. These problems were in part administrative and in part political. Among the administrative problems were the failure to constitute *bona fide* local and regional election committees in the manner specified by Proclamation 11; poor communications up and down the election committee hierarchy; the failure to deliver registration and voting materials on time; and, inadequate and/or delayed funding for election committees. Another serious problem had to do with the failure of election officials to adequately educate the population about the purposes of the ballot and the procedures for casting their votes.

Political problems were no less daunting. Where the EPRDF controlled local administration (particularly in the south and east), it was not uncommon for electoral and local administrative officials to prevent candidates and voters from opposition parties from registering. In some cases those who refused to state their ethnicity or referred to themselves simply as "Ethiopians" were prevented from registering, notwithstanding a decision on the part of the Ministry of Justice that individuals could indeed refer to themselves as "Ethiopian" without violating any laws.

Prior to the elections, political intimidation and harassment were reported in most parts of the country. In addition, violence and fraud were reported in such areas as Dire Dawa, Harar, parts of Shoa, Dembi Dolo, Awasa and elsewhere. In most cases, the allegations were made against local administrators and the EPRDF-based government. In others, they were made against opposition parties such as the OLF in Wollega.

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia, in accordance with the 1991 National Charter, has begun to open up the political system. There is now more freedom of political expression than ever before.

Much needs to be done before the system is truly democratic. A strengthening of electoral institutions, along with the political will and mutual restraint of all parties, are of the highest priority. A major shortcoming of the whole process appears to be that the government tried to do too much too soon.

This is not to say that some progress has not been made. Many Ethiopians spoken to by the AAI observers expressed fervent yearnings for peace and democracy. One can only hope that immediate steps are taken to avert further bloodshed and that these admittedly imperfect elections contribute toward peace and the advance of a democratic process.

For further information, please contact:

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or

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Vice President for Programs,  
AAI  
(212) 949-5666

*Appendix VI*

**Statement of the Heinrich Boll Delegation**

Embargo June 26, 1992

11 a.m. Central European Summer Time

Cologne, 26 June 1992: At the invitation of the Transitional Government in Ethiopia, 16 observers sponsored by the German Heinrich Böll Foundation took part in the Joint International Observer Group charged with the impartial observation of the 1992 district and regional elections in Ethiopia. The group welcomed the invitation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia to witness its efforts of democratization.

This is a preliminary statement of the group based on its own observations in the following towns and their surrounding areas: Arba Minch, Addis Abeba, Asela, Awassa, Dembi Dolo, Dire Dawa, Harar, Gode, Jimma, Negele and Nekempte. The group's observations are supplemented by taking into account the reports of over 200 other international observers.

The group was deployed by JIOG in areas in western, eastern, central and southern Ethiopia, where reports of observers indicated that the implementation of the Transitional National Charter of Ethiopia was at risk.

On the basis of its observations, the group reached the following assessment in an attempt to ask what can be learned from the experience and to invite and open a discussion.

The group was privileged to have full access to all institutions and parties concerned with the elections and appreciates their unrestricted cooperation as well as the fact that there was no interference with the work of the observers.

- In most areas observed, essentially non-competitive, one party elections were held. In some areas elections did not take place. In the run-up to the elections, conditions were frequently maintained or created that prevented the opposition parties from equal participation. The organizational work of these parties was seriously hampered by the closure of party offices, the imprisonment and harassment of party officials and even sympathizers. In some areas controlled by Oromo parties, the EPRDF experienced similar treatment. In the Dire Dawa/Harar region, excesses were committed by all parties against

the background of longstanding, intensive conflicts among local communities. In areas such as the Ogaden (Region 5, Zone 4) where the elections have been postponed, there is at present no open confrontation. However, there is every reason to fear that when the election process begins in these areas conflicts similar to those observed elsewhere will become manifest.

- In many places where the May 1992 pre-elections (snap-elections) had taken place, the newly elected *kebele* and *wereda* organs had not taken up their duties or had been prevented from doing so. Therefore the Transitional Government structures and the ruling parties, EPRDF and its affiliates, continued to exercise state power at local level. Similarly, the new police forces established have not assumed their responsibilities in many *kebeles* and *weredas*. The security functions continued to be exercised there by armed groups of political organizations and the military.

Throughout the areas observed by the group, the election committees at the *kebele* level were not the independent institutions specified in Proclamation 11, in which the contesting parties were to be equally represented. The *kebele* election committees were the key organs for the registration of voters, the acceptance of candidates and the organization of the ballot process. Consequently this central deficiency of the election process was not overcome by the fact that at *wereda*, zonal, regional and national levels contesting parties were represented. Last-minute efforts of the Council of Representatives to reopen the registration of voters and candidates could not therefore reverse the systematically biased registration process. As a result, the registration remained entirely in the hands of those parties that were in control of the local administration, *i.e.*, in most areas the EPRDF and its allied parties but in some parts of western Wolega and in the Harar/Dire Dawa area, the OLF or IFLO.

- This bias was reinforced in most places by lack of instructions and logistical deficiencies, such as late arrival of election material and insufficient supplies.
- In many places, the group observed that the election process, far from easing the prevailing political contradictions, escalated the political conflicts.
- In some areas, observed movements of EPRDF-troops, *e.g.*, in Mugi (Wollega, June 18, 1992), and the decampment of the OLF forces (June 19) contributed to the escalation of political tensions.

- Our observations indicate that in many *kebeles* local elections personnel tried to implement the formal procedures of balloting as well as possible under prevailing adverse technical conditions. As such, we feel that the exercise was valuable as a step in the process of gaining both positive and negative experience in carrying out a democratic balloting process.

In summary, we conclude that the forthcoming election results for the observed areas should not be taken as a fair and free reflection of the democratic will of the people. We further conclude that for the peoples in western, eastern, central and southern Ethiopia, the elections did not contribute to the implementation of the right of national self-determination, as enshrined in the Transitional National Charter of Ethiopia. In several places, a large number of people urged us to convey the message that they are in fear of a new civil war, and that they want peace and a chance of sustainable development. They called for reconciliation and negotiation instead of confrontation and destruction of resources.

*Cologne*  
*June 26, 1992*

Appendix VII

**Ethiopian President's Response  
to AAI Statement**

**The Embassy of Ethiopia**

**PRESS RELEASE**

*This statement is issued in response to the "Statement of the African-American Institute on the District and Regional Elections in Ethiopia - 1992," which was issued and distributed internationally by the AAI on 24 June 1992.*

On Sunday, 21 June, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia convened Ethiopia's first free elections, in accordance with the National Charter adopted in July 1991. While the elections process was flawed in many ways and suffered the effects of administrative and logistical difficulties, budgetary problems, and the withdrawal of some organizations from the process, the Transitional Government views the elections as an important first step towards establishing a democratic political process in Ethiopia.

The goal of the Transitional Government was to lay the groundwork for popular representation and to learn lessons that will allow it to convene more effective elections in the future. It is the view of the Transitional Government that we have achieved these goals, and that we have both learned from the process and set an important precedent for the future.

In accordance with its desire to convene free and fair elections, the Transitional Government invited international observers to oversee the elections process and to advise the Transitional Government of ways and means of improving the electoral process in the future. Over 250 observers were dispatched to all parts of the country where they enjoyed unrestricted access in their efforts to monitor events leading up to and including the election itself.

The observer delegations from most countries reported their findings to their embassies or host governments, which will in turn share those findings with the Transitional Government. The African-American Institute, however, issued its own statement on June 24.

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia is in no position to reply to the specifics of the AAI statement for the simple reason that

AAI's findings were at no time communicated to the government, and because contrary to norms and to our expectations, neither the findings from the field nor the statement were shared by AAI with appropriate government bodies. As a consequence, the Transitional Government has no knowledge of the data upon which the AAI has based its conclusions.

This being said, the Transitional Government can respond to some of the points made in the AAI statement, and, in particular, to those which are factually incorrect.

The AAI statement refers to "The failure of the Addis Ababa encampment accord" and to "The provocative movement of EPRDF forces throughout the election process." These comments betray a total ignorance of the encampment agreement which, had AAI taken the time to refer to relevant proclamations of the Council of Representatives of the Transitional Government, to consult with the Transitional Government, or to inquire of the American Embassy in Addis Ababa, which was intimately involved with the encampment process, could have been avoided.

The fact that EPRDF troops which, as endorsed by the Council of Representatives, function as the national defense army for the transitional period, were found outside camps does not mean that the encampment agreement was violated. The encampment agreement entitles the army to move to any place, and at any time, in order to fulfil its obligation to preserve law and order. Further, the agreement empowers the army to continuously patrol the main highways and national borders of Ethiopia.

As the report notes, the OLF took a decision to disencamp its own members immediately after withdrawing from the elections process. According to the encampment agreement, this is a violation. The movements of EPRDF forces took place after the OLF withdrew its members from the camps because there was a threat of disruption. We fail to see why the movement of state defense forces, in an effort to prevent such disruptions, should be termed provocative.

It is at this point constructive to point out that there has been low-level conflict in much of southern Ethiopia since shortly after the defeat of Megistu and that, in light of the numerous incidents that have occurred — many of them involving OLF members — the state defense army had good reason to take preventive measures. The statement of the AAI observers suggests that they, perhaps are

unaware of the violence which, throughout the first year of the transitional period, has prohibited effective governance in many parts of the country.

The fact that the OLF and some other organizations withdrew from the electoral process had the added unfortunate effect of limiting political competition in some areas. In other areas, and for historical reasons, some organizations might have had greater capacity than others to field candidates, and in others it may be that candidates were prevented from competing. In the view of the Transitional Government, the observers should have undertaken the responsibility to determine which was the case in each locality rather than to make general statements which distort the realities on the ground.

The Transitional Government must also note its astonishment at the fact that the AAI observers' statement fails to make any mention of the extraordinary enthusiasm of the electorate or of the high voter turnout in most areas despite the boycott of elections by some parties and despite all of the logistical and administrative difficulties that were encountered. Along this same line, the government is surprised by the fact that the AAI statement gives only one paragraph to elections in the north of the country and to Addis Ababa where, it states, the election process was procedurally regular. AAI also failed to mention that some of the same irregularities that form the basis of their findings were reported by Ethiopian State Television and Radio, and openly shared with the people.

While the findings of other international observer delegations have not yet been finalized, the Transitional Government hopes and expects that these will be shared with the government in good faith and with a view to building our capacity to convene more effective elections in the future. With regard to the AAI statement and process, however, we are compelled to convey our great disappointment.

As stated earlier, the Transitional Government undertook the elections process in order to set the stage for eventual popular representation throughout the country and to learn the lessons of democracy in a country which has never practiced democracy in any form. Our appeal for international observers was made in order to convey to the world and to our people our willingness to be held accountable and to learn, from international observers with more experience than we, how can we continue to democratize this country.

It is our finding that the AAI mission did not share these goals. While we had hoped for their advice and counsel, we found that they reported their analysis of the elections process to international donors, the media and the public before and without sharing it with us. We have received no recommendations from them. While they are insistent that the reports gathered from the field underpin their findings, as expressed in the statement they have as yet failed to share those reports with the Transitional Government. While we anticipated criticism of EPRDF, as the main political party in the country, we also expected AAI to acknowledge the fact that, by Transitional Government, and playing a key role in the formulation and adoption of the National Charter, it was the EPRDF which made the elections possible.

The fact that the leader of the AAI delegation had the poor judgment to address an OLF rally on election day, bearing in mind that the OLF is the only one of a number of political parties and that it had withdrawn, in protest from the elections process, suggests that the AAI delegation conducted itself with a gross lack of professionalism, to say the least. Given that the AAI has not, as we had hoped, discussed its findings with the Transitional Government, we are forced to believe that its mission was to judge, and not advise, the Transitional Government in its efforts to democratize Ethiopia.

The Transitional Government stands firm in its commitment to discuss and address the findings of all international observer teams in Ethiopia, and hopes that this will be possible with other observer teams. When and if AAI approaches the Transitional Government to share and discuss its own findings, we are ready to engage in an appropriate dialogue. As we have made clear throughout the elections process, we are prepared to redress imbalances and irregularities, even to the extent of repeating elections in some areas should that be necessary.

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia will convene other elections in the future. It is our hope that the international community will, at that time, join with us and assist us to achieve our goals and the goals and the goals of the Ethiopian people: to learn lessons and to build democracy. We will expect, and in fact demand, that this partnership be undertaken with transparency, open lines of communication and a level of professionalism that will allow us to achieve those goals.

This statement is issued from the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, Office of the President

*June 25, 1992*

*Appendix VIII*

**Chart of Basic Economic Data on Ethiopia**

**POPULATION:** Approximately 50 million in 1989

**GNP PER CAPITA:** Estimated at \$120 (US) per capita in 1989

**GDP COMPOSITION (%), for 1989**

Services (42%)

Agriculture (41%)

Industry - Manufacturing (11%)

Industry - other (6%)

(n.b. Services includes armed forces — this figure has probably decreased somewhat since 1989)

**EMPLOYMENT (%), for 1990**

Agriculture (74%)

Services (15%)

Industry (10%)

**MAIN PRODUCTS**

Agriculture: Food crops such as barley, maize, sorghum and *teff* and cash crops such as coffee

Manufacturing: Food processing, textiles and beverages

**MAIN IMPORTS 1987-1988 (% of total)**

Machinery (20%)

Vehicles (16%)

Food (11%)

Petroleum (8%)

**DIRECTION OF TRADE 1989 (% of total)**

Exports: West Germany (18%), USA (14%), Japan (10%), Italy (7%)

Imports: USSR (18%), Italy (15%), West Germany (11%), USA (7%)

**SOCIAL INDICATORS 1989**

Life expectancy at birth: 47.6 years  
Adult literacy rate: less than 35 percent  
Infant mortality rate: 133.2

**SOURCES**

African Development Bank, *African Development Report 1991*  
The Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Profile: Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, 1991-92*  
World Bank Tables, 1991

*Appendix IX*

**National Election Commission Membership**

ATO MOHAMAD ABDURAHMAN, Chairman  
Harari National League, Lawyer

ATO DAWIT YOHANNES, Vice Chair  
EPRDF, Lawyer

ATO BIYA ABAJEBEL\*, Secretary  
Oromo Liberation Front, Lawyer

HAILE W/MIKAEL  
Gurage United People's Democratic Front, Sociologist

BEYENE PETROS  
Hadiya National Democratic Organization, Biologist

NEGASSO GIDADA  
EPRDF, Historian

GEBREAB BARNABAS  
EPRDF, Medical Doctor

ATO MUHAMED UGAZ  
Western Somali Liberation Front, Veteran Fighter

ATO ASEFA WODAJO  
Labor Representative, Economist

ATO ALEMAYEHU TAREKEGN\*  
Oromo Liberation Front

\* Denotes the two OLF members who were replaced by Ato Abdulaziz Ahmed (IGLF) and Ahmed Abdul Majid (IFLO) respectively after the elections.

*Appendix X*

**June 4 Manifesto**

*Statement of Various Member Organizations of the Council of Representatives Objecting to NEC Plans for June 21, 1992 Elections*

Thanks to the heavy sacrifice made by our people, the age-long oppression that prevailed in Ethiopia has been removed and a concerted effort made to establish a democratic and humane administration so far. It is the wish of us all to see to it that the transitional charter which guarantees the respect of human rights and the establishment of a democratic social order is implemented and the laid objectives met. It is high time that the current atmosphere of democratic practices and conditions are re-appraised and a common ground established. Accordingly, we've been compelled to make the following statements.

Taking to account our responsibility as members of the Council of the Transitional Government and looking into the issues whether or not human rights and law and order are respected; we want to check the hasty and insufficient assessment of the previous elections which was deemed a pre-condition to the current one. Otherwise, adverse outcomes may be seen in so far as preventative measures are not taken. We members of the Council with a total casting vote of [number missing in original text] in the Council and [number missing] organizations and using our rights and the rules and regulations of the Council of Article 10.2 have jointly raised the following questions for discussion.

- 1.1 There is a wide rumor (YISEMAL) to suggest that an extensive number of forces are present all over the country aimed at thwarting the election process. Therefore, the Election Commission should restrain from limiting the registration process unless an urgent report on the contrary is made by the Commission.
- 1.2 We want a verification whether or not the Election Commission's guidelines and statements are in line with the laws and decisions of the Council of Representatives.
- 1.3 There are accusations from various corners to suggest that the supporters of the main contending parties are being discriminated in the registration process and that such denial of

- rights be investigated by the Election Commission. Till then the Election Commission may not limit the date of registration.
- 1.4 We want a report from the Election Commission whether or not the various books, cards and forms released for election are put into their proper places and the registration process has begun.
  - 1.5 We demand that up until it is made sure that Proclamation 9/1992 is fully implemented – namely that illegally armed forces were disarmed, the new police force is in place, the army of the Transitional Government is well away from the polling station and human rights violations are abated, until all these preparations are made elections should not go ahead.
  - 1.6 Before the current election is made, an evaluation of the snap election carried out on April 22 should be made and the strong and weak points discussed.
  - 1.7 It is not appropriate to hold an election without conducting an adequate civic education programme through the mass media to the public.
  - 1.8 We demand the evaluation of areas with particular problems such as Region 5.
  - 1.9 We demand that the election is made with the full support and confidence of the electorate.
  - 1.10 The Election Commission's manner of forming regional, zonal and *wereda* committees was demanded by us to be reported to the Council, but it has failed to do so till this day (June 4); and hence we felt it is high time to make our statements on this crucial issues.  
What are the crucial problems that needed urgent solutions?
  - 2.1 The Election Commission was requested to write up a report on the snap election for evaluation and discussion but has failed to do so.
  - 2.2 The Election Commission has, without forming a necessary organizational structure, dispersed election materials such as registration books, cards, forms, etc. under the aegis of Transitional Government representatives and this has led to loss of accountability; opened the way to disrupting the election process by creating venues for discrimination. Further, such materials have not even reached Region 5.

- 2.3 The Election Commission has no contact over how much of the cards were printed and how much distributed and how much left and this is seen to be in a chaotic situation because it has no proper electoral structure.
- 2.4 In some regions, registration books are found in the hands of individuals who are forcefully registering people on a house to house basis.
- 2.5 There are individuals who have been imprisoned or intimidated with false charges for example in Regions 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 14, etc.
- 2.6 People who were elected during the snap election for provisional *wereda* and *kebele* administration are being harassed to switch allegiance from one organization to another.
- 2.7 As there is no formed electoral structure, hearing of complaints has not been made possible.
- 2.8 Candidates have not been given sufficient time to campaign despite the fact that the Council has decided to enable organizations to use the mass media. There are no preparations to that effect.
- 2.9 There is no report or verification of the objectives laid down by Proclamation 9 – which were:
  - a) The transfer of arms from those illegally armed to the people has not been made;
  - b) The police force envisaged has not been fully instituted;
  - c) The encampment of armed organizations and removal of the transitional army, away from polling stations has not been secured; and
  - d) Those responsible have not matched up to their responsibilities because by April 28, all armed groups were supposed to be disarmed and this is a serious concern to address.

Although we had high expectations for this elections to be conducted as soon as possible, we are not ready to accept an election that is shrouded with doubts and one without the confidence of the people. As members of the Council we feel the responsibility of averting such practices in time and to that effect we jointly stand for a common solution.

(followed by signatures)

Note: The signatures bear inconsistencies in that one individual has signed for three organizations, which is an open forgery (ECB).

*Appendix XI*

**National Election Commission Response  
to the June 4 Manifesto**

**Transitional Government of Ethiopia  
Election Commission  
June 9, 1992**

The Election Commission is an organ set up by the Council of Representatives with full power and mandate to execute the election process all over the country.

To that end, the Election Commission had set up election committees at various levels in order to conduct the snap election. The provisional *wereda* and *kebele* elections were accordingly carried out more or less successfully all over the country. At the moment, a concerted effort is being made to carry out the national regional elections by the Commission.

It is admissible that during the snap election, some irregularities and inconsistencies had occurred and the same can be expected during the current election for national/regional election.

In so far as specific inconsistencies and irregularities are reported, the Commission should take preventive measures as has actually been doing so to this date.

The petition signed by various member organizations of the Council of Representatives and addressed to its chairman and president of the Transitional Government, and made copy to the Council as well as the Ministry of Information, but did not send a copy to the Commission itself while the whole issue remained to be pertaining the election process. In any case, the Commission was forced to examine the content of the petition pursuant to its mandate and take the correct position thereof.

Following is the answer to the points raised in the petition in so far as the Commission understands, and deems it necessary to the best of its knowledge.

1. To the statement which alleges:

“we urge that registration continues unabated in so far as there are widespread rumours that there are vast forces

that hamper the correct procedure of the election process.”

The reply of the Commission is as follows:

We believe that it is the Commission and its various echelons which is in touch with the day-to-day activities of the election process and this has been going on quite attentively to the best of our abilities — but the hearsay say which claims that there are widespread rumours (YISEMAL) about extensive forces to hamper the election process has not been reported with any tangible evidence from any level of the election committees that we set up so far. However, if there are hard evidences that suggest to support the said allegation, the Commission is duty bound to respond quickly and swiftly. Otherwise, it is very difficult to take any “meaningful action” on the basis of an unverified allegation (hearsay — TESMTOAL).

Had there been attempts by the members organizations of the Council who wrote the petition, to collect hard and verified facts and there were put forward to the election Commission which is part of the Council itself, problems would have been resolved in time, obstacles removed and the lofty aims of the election carried out on time. Unfortunately, this opportunity has been side tracked.

The Commission, therefore, wants to strongly remind every interested party that the re-scheduling of the time table done recently was due to logistical problems rather than any other thing. There were no grounds and/or reports to suggest that there were other obstacles that necessitated the adjournment of registration.

2. With regard to the allegation that the Commission’s guide-lines and statements needed verification, whether or not they were consistent with the election laws of the Council.

The Commission has consistently pursued the laws, decisions and guide-lines promulgated by the Council and acted only within the confines of the mandate given it by the same body. Accordingly, the election Commission’s statements have always reflected these laws, rules and decisions. Otherwise, the Commission works pursues the democratic principle of decisions through consensus or by majority vote. To that end, we believe that our carefully done statements never traversed the election laws in any sense of the term.

3. With regard to the “demand that the Commission’s registration books, cards and forms dispatched to the regions be verified before hand.”

The Commission’s answer is that all necessary materials have been dispatched to all regions and polling stations fairly and sufficiently to the best of our knowledge. That this is true has been reported to us through our channels and proper election committees. It is known that in the absence of proper election committees at the regional, zonal and *wereda* levels, the Election Commission decided to temporarily use the representatives of the Transitional Government all over the country to distribute the register contrary to the allegations, our reports on the distribution of these materials show that they have reached the polling stations quite safely and early. There are no reports from the recently formed election committees to suggest otherwise.

4. With regard to the fear that – there may be illegally armed groups roaming about, the non/establishment of the police force, the non/presence of the armed forces of the Transitional Government at the polling stations, according to the objectives of the snap election – (Proclamation No. 9).

There is no doubt that the snap election was related to the national-regional election. To that end, to make sure that the defense and security committee is doing the necessary preparations with regard to the training and posting of police force, the commission had posting of police force, the commission had arranged a meeting with the concerned bodies of the police commission. From this body, we have been adequately debriefed about the plans and actual preparations and we’ve no grounds to fear that the election process will be thwarted for security reasons. We also feel that the details of the preparations be presented by the concerned defense and security committee, to the council of representatives.

5. On the question of “report to the Council by the Commission on the snap election.”

This question was raised by the Council earlier on, and the Commission mandated to carry on the national/regional election preparation and side by side prepare an evaluation of the snap election. It must be admitted, pressure of work and other reasons deterred the Commission from accomplishing this task. These were amongst others:

- 5.1 It was not possible to get a holistic evaluation in that; a significant number of regions did not report as yet to the Election Commission with regard to the snap election.
- 5.2 Some election committees were torn apart by factions and had ceased to function let alone to produce a joint report.
- 5.3 Pressure of work at the centre overwhelmed us not to examine whatever reports available. Although these were the main reasons for our failure to report on time, we still feel that we'll have to produce a report in the near future.

6. On the question of "civic education"

The Election Commission has so far produced six regular and three special issues of the *Election Commission Bulletin* in Amharic. Thirty thousand copies of each issue were sent to all regions using whatever transport there is. There were also posters on the time table and registration book. To inform the international community, the Commission issued five issues of the *Bulletin* in English. It has also used the government media almost daily by creating liaison with the Ministry of Information authorities. It has called upon all organizations involved and held a seminar for half a day in Addis Ababa. All said and done, the Commission feels that it has done all it could in this regard but also strongly believes that it is beyond the ability of the Commission to deal with all civic education. This is the duty of every citizen and particularly the duty of every political organization galvanizing the support of the populace that they educate the electoral process. This is expected of political organizations and have made calls and we still call upon them to conduct civic education.

7. On the question of "fair and free election" – the Commission believes that it is doing its utmost towards achieving this objective. Apart from our guide-lines and statements of commitment in this direction, we have invited hundreds of international observers and prepared all necessary arrangements to oversee the election. What more can possibly be done other than these efforts, one is forced to ask?
8. The question of campaigns by candidates:

It is a common knowledge that the democratic atmosphere created by our historic charter has enabled our citizens to organize more than 90 (ninety) political groups and organizations to date.

The current election is not directly a competition between political parties but between individual candidates on their own and/or with the support of political groups. What is more, the constituency for a *wereda* council is a *kebele* and that of national/regional council, a *wereda*. Although informal campaigns began from the first day of registration, the formal campaign period of 10 days is deemed adequate for any serious candidate aware enough to compete. In this connection too, the Commission has nothing to blame.

9. Inconsistencies during registration – that some registration officers are conducting this by moving from a house to house, that there is discrimination amongst supporters, that there are arrests related to the election, that some candidates are being intimidated to switch allegiance etc. are mentioned in the petition.

The Commission to date has not formally received such reports or allegations through its formal channel.

In conclusion, it is our objective that our society should move towards a democratic set-up where nations and nationalities exercise their inalienable rights of self administration, an atmosphere of equality, freedom and democracy. The national/regional election is the first and most concrete step towards such an arrangement.

Although the Commission has been assigned to directly lead the election process, the entire people and all political organizations are expected to match up to this lofty tasks and contribute their due share to make it possible.

If all obstacles regarding the election could be directed to the Election Commission, it could shoulder the responsibility to find solutions by taking all necessary measures and powers at its disposal.

We call upon again that the entire people and all political organizations stand by our side to make the election process yield a successful outcome.

**Post Script**

This statement was read at the 45th regular session of the parliament. The Council with 45 votes to 12 approved the statement to be correct. Further, as the signatories included some forgery of signatures where one person was found to have signed for three political organizations, the Council reprimanded it for ethical considerations. The entire voting result went 45 for 12 against and four abstainers on the Election Commission report.



*Appendix XIII*

**Partial List of Parties and Acronyms**

AAPO	All Amhara People's Organization
ALF	Afar Liberation Front
APDM	Agew People's Democratic Movement
APLF	Afar People's Liberation Front
BPDO	Burgi People's Democratic Movement
BPLF	Beni Shangul People's Liberation Front
BPRDM	Bencho People's Revolutionary Democratic Organization
EDAG	Ethiopian Democratic Action Group
EDC	Ethiopian Democratic Coalition
EDORM	Ethiopian Democratic Officers Revolutionary Movement
EDU	Ethiopian Democratic Union
ENDO	Ethiopian National Democratic Organization
EPDM	Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESDM	Ethiopian Somali Democratic Movement
GGPDO	Gamu-Gidole-Gofa-Geleb-Hame-Basketo People's Democratic Organization
GPDF	Gambella People's Democratic Front
GPDF	Gurage People's Democratic Front
GPDO	Gideo People's Democratic Organization
GPLM	Gambella People's Liberation Movement
GPRDM	Gideo People's Revolutionary Democratic Movement
GUPDF	Gurage United People's Democratic Front
HNDO	Hadiya National Democratic Organization
HNL	Hareri National League
HORAYAL	Horayal
HPDO	Hadiya People's Democratic Organization
IFLO	Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia

IGLF	Issa and Gurgura Liberation Front
KRPDO	Kefa Regional People's Democratic Organization
KPC	Kembata People's Congress
KPDU	Kembata People's Democratic Union
KPDO	Konso People's Democratic Organization
OALF	Oromo Abo Liberation Front
OIU	Ogaden Islamic Union
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogadeni National Liberation Front
OPDF	Omotic People's Democratic Front
OPDM	Oromo People's Democratic Movement
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organization
OPDU	Omo People's Democratic Union
SGPDO	Sodo Gordena People's Democratic Organization
SLM	Sidamo Liberation Movement
SPDO	Sidamo People's Democratic Organization
SPLM	Sidama People's Liberation Movement
TAI	Tadamun Al Islam
TPLF	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
UOPLF	United Oromo People's Liberation Front
UPDM	Umma People's Democratic Movement
WPDF	Wolayta People's Democratic Front
WPDO	Wolayta People's Democratic Organization
WORKERS	Workers
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front
YPM	Yem National People's Movement
YPNDM	Yem People's National Democratic Movement

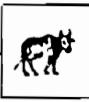
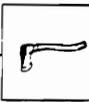
Appendix XIV

Sample Ballots

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1. Ato Tesfay Berhe		<input type="checkbox"/>	11. W/ro Kefalech Ayulu		<input type="checkbox"/>
2. W/ro Nega Ticheb Goshu		<input type="checkbox"/>	12. Ato Tesdome Yihwa		<input type="checkbox"/>
3. W/ro Akemach Gzuru		<input type="checkbox"/>	13. W/ro Genet Nega		<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Ato Berhannu Kifle		<input type="checkbox"/>	14. Ato Mohamed Javis		<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Ato Dejene Bekete		<input type="checkbox"/>	15. Ato Regassa Gidada		<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Ato Tikun Haile		<input type="checkbox"/>	16. Ato Waqfirra Degefu		<input type="checkbox"/>
7. W/ro Wubet Gudeneja		<input type="checkbox"/>	17. Ato Haile G/Selesse		<input type="checkbox"/>
8. W/ro Senait Degefu		<input type="checkbox"/>	18. W/ro Mehret G/Selesse		<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Ato Salomon Tesge		<input type="checkbox"/>	19. Ato Melekamu Jifarja		<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Ato Kiliom Haxaja		<input type="checkbox"/>	20. W/ro Sa'ada Bona		<input type="checkbox"/>

የክልል ምክር ቤት የመምረጫ ሰነድ ሰኔ 14 ቀን 1984

1. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ			11. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ		
2. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ			12. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ		
3. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ			13. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ		
4. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ			14. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ		
5. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ			15. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ		
6. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ			16. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ		
7. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ			17. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ		
8. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ			18. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ		
9. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ			19. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ		
10. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ			20. ለጎ ልጅ ልጅ		

*Appendix XV*

**Statement of National Election Commission  
on Election Results**

TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

**ELECTION COMMISSION BULLETIN**

Press Release No. 1

The picture of polling stations on June 21st 1992, evening, has been as follows:

Out of 22,605 polling stations so far verified 19,148 have been active during the day. This means 84.7% of the country went to the polls. We know that over 5,000 people have been registered in some polling stations and around 800 in others. Assuming that an average 1000 people managed to vote, the total early indications of voters could come to around 19,148,000 voters which gives us over 80% turn out if we exclude those Regions and weredas that were deliberately postponed due to logistical difficulties (3534 polling stations) security problems (1,677 polling stations) and The Afar, Somali and Harar regions (859 polling stations).

The league table of participant polling stations by regions is given below:

Region	Total Polling Station	Elections held in	% Total
1.	1,101	1,101	100
2.	176	postponed	
3.	5,485	5,387	98.2
4.	9,937	8,048	80.9
5.	647	postponed	
6.	517	414	81.0
7.	1,229	1,185	96.5
8.	975	853	87.5
9.	1,121	1,005	90.0
10.	209	139	67.0
11.	661	551	83.0
12.	183	137	75.0
13.	36	postponed	
14.	328	328	100.0
Total	22,605	19,148	84.7

The encouraging results of high voter return out is a vote for peace loving forces and a reward to the great efforts who worked to make this election a reality. It is a genuine demand for local government and self administration. We pledge to release all information as soon as they arrive.

## Appendix XVI

## Election Review Board Establishment Proclamation

August 15, 1992

NEWS FROM ETHIOPIA

3

*The Council of Representatives recently approved a proclamation providing for the establishment of a neutral board entrusted with the responsibility of rectifying electoral irregularities in the national, regional, district and zonal elections. Below we reprint this proclamation in its entirety.*

Whereas National/Regional and Wereda Councils members elections have been completed in most regions of the country and it is necessary to see into grievances and complaints in order to correct irregularities;

Whereas to expedite this objective it has become necessary to set up an Election Review Board which will rectify irregularities committed during elections;

Now therefore in accordance with article 9(d) of the Transitional Charter, it is hereby proclaimed as follows:

### 1. Short Title

This proclamation may be cited as the "Election Review Board Establishment Proclamation No. 21, 1992".

### 2. Definition

In this proclamation, unless the context requires otherwise:

1. "Electoral Laws or "Electoral Law" includes National/Regional and Wereda councils members Election Commission Establishment Proclamation No. 11/1992, electoral rules of implementation on the election of members of the National/Regional and Wereda councils issued on June 2, 1992 and other directives and documents passed by the commission from time to time in order to direct its activities;
2. "Election Commission" means the organ established by virtue of proclamation No. 11/1992 to implement the election of National/Regional and Wereda Councils members;
3. "Electoral Committees" refer to electoral committees established at National/Regional, zonal, Wereda and polling station levels to implement the election of National/Regional and Wereda Councils members.

### 3. Establishment

1. An Election Review Board, here in after the "Board," is hereby established by this Proclamation.
2. The Board shall be accountable to the Council of Representatives.
3. The Board shall carry out its activities by the budget to be determined by the Council of Representatives. It shall prepare and submit its budget to the Council of Representatives for approval.

### 4. Objective of the Board

The main objective of the Board is to examine and decide in accordance with the law contested election results of the Wereda Council or the National/Regional Council.

### 5. Organs of the Board

The Board shall have the following organs:

1. a General Assembly; and
2. a Secretariat

### 6. The General Assembly of the Board

The general assembly of the Board is the highest organ of the Board with the powers and responsibilities referred to under article 11 of this Proclamation.

### 7. The Secretariat of the Board

The board shall have a secretariat to carry out its day to day activities. The secretariat of the Board shall be headed by the chairman of the Board. The secretariat shall have staffs either on secondment basis or directly employed.

### 8. Constituting Panels

1. The Board may form a panel or many panels to hear and decide minor grievances arising from the June 1992 election proceedings.
2. Each panel shall be composed of three Board members.
3. Each panel shall have the powers referred to under articles 10 and 11 of this Proclamation in order to carry out its assignment.

### 9. Membership of the Board

1. The Board shall have twenty one (21) voting members; and the membership shall be composed of representatives of:
  - a. the Judges of the Supreme Court;
  - b. the Ministry of Justice (Judges);
  - c. the Bar Association;
  - d. the Faculty of Law;
  - e. the Labor Unions;
  - f. the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce;
  - g. the Ethiopian Teachers Association;
  - h. the four Ethiopian religious organizations;
  - i. the Ethiopian Medical Association;
  - j. the National Observers Group; and
  - k. the Joint International Observers Group;
2. Each of the institutions indicated under sub-article 1 of this Article shall submit a list of three candidates to the Council of Representatives.
3. Members of the Board from the International Observers Group shall participate in the Board as non-voting members.
4. No official of the electoral organ, a candidate in the June election and members of political organizations may be elected Board member.

*Continued on next page*

## Proclamation (from page 3)

5. After the election of Board members is finalized by the Council of Representatives, the Board members shall elect a Chairman from amongst themselves.

## 10. Jurisdiction of the Board

1. The board shall have full jurisdiction to hear and determine grievances and complaints about election proceedings and campaigns where electoral laws on the election of members of the National/Regional and Wereda Councils were violated or not fully implemented.
2. No person may be permitted to bring to the Board grievances or complaints that took place prior to the date of election except where he shows good cause like absence of organizational structure to use the grievance procedures laid down under Articles 29 and 37 of the Electoral Rules of Implementation or where the aggrieved party is a political organization.
3. All cases which involve grave irregularities shall be heard by the Board. Cases involving minor irregularities shall be dealt with by individual members or panels of the Board.
4. The general assembly of the Board shall, before referring cases to panels, individual Board members and the general assembly assign a panel to identify cases involving grave irregularities and minor irregularities of elections.

## 11. Powers and Duties of the Board

The Board shall have the powers and duties to:

1. receive petitions or grievances from political organization, electoral committee or individuals regarding irregularities encountered in Wereda or National/Regional elections;
2. investigate contested election results and the manner in which they were conducted in order to prove or disprove the allegations made in the grievances and petitions;
3. evaluate contested election results as to whether or not they were done in accordance with the electoral laws;
4. examine books and documents as well as persons to verify election results and grievances;
5. summon and receive testimony and clarification from members of election committee, electorates, candidates and leaders of political organizations;
6. refer to reports made by observers and other pertinent information sources;
7. declare null and void election results obtained in flagrant violations of election laws.

## 12. Rules of Procedure

1. There shall be a quorum of the general assembly of the Board where the majority of the Board members are present in a meeting.
2. Where members of the Board of a panel are not unanimous in deciding cases, the opinions of the majority shall prevail.

3. A party aggrieved by the decision of the Board shall have the right of recourse to courts.
4. Unless decided otherwise by the Board, all meetings of the Board shall be open to the public.

## 13. Presenting Grievances

1. Political organizations, electoral committees, candidates and individuals may present grievances and complaints to the Board regarding election proceedings.
2. Grievances and complaints shall be made in writing to the Board within thirty (30) days of the declaration of the functioning of the Board in accordance with this Proclamation.

## 14. Annulment of Election Results

Election results of any polling station, Wereda or region may be declared null and void where investigation by the Board reveals that there was grave irregularity or patterns of such irregularities in the electoral proceedings as referred to under Article 15 of this Proclamation.

## 15. Cases Constituting Grave Irregularities.

There shall be deemed to be grave irregularities where:

1. The number of votes counted in a polling station exceeds the number of voters registered to vote in that polling station or the number of voters recorded in the registry as having voted on election day.
2. There was a pattern of an illegal arrest or detention, heavy intimidation and harassment against supporters, members, potential candidates, candidates, officials of contending political organizations or organizations by a dominant political organization, security forces or individuals;
3. A pattern of corrupt electoral practices and fraudulent elections, as defined by the Penal code of 1957, was established;
4. potential candidates of contending political organizations or independent candidates are precluded from registering as candidates without legally valid reasons;
5. the entire or the major parts of the electoral process had been administered by persons not authorized by the Election Commission;
6. the electoral process was under strict control of a single political organization to the deliberate exclusion of other political organizations.
7. the electoral laws had not been substantially complied with by election authorities at various levels in administering the election proceedings;
8. there was an illegal removal, withdrawal or destruction of the tampering with ballot papers, registration materials, ballot boxes or other election related materials; or
9. defective election results in a polling station would up-set the election result of a constituency.

*Continued on next page*

**Proclamation (from page 4)**

16. Effect of Annulment

1. Where an annulment of election results has been declared by the Board, a special election shall be held by the Election Commission in that particular polling station, Wereda or region, as the case may be, within three months starting from the date of annulment of election results.
2. A special election may be ordered for the entire region where most of the election results in the region turn out to be nullified.
3. Candidates in a special election shall be the same as those in the regular election declared null and void, provided however, that any candidate found by the Board to have participated in any illegal activities in connection with the regular election may not be allowed to be a candidate in the special election. Potential candidates excluded from registering as candidates without any legally valid reasons shall be allowed to register for candidacy.
4. Those persons registered as voters for the regular election declared null and void shall be entitled to vote in the special election. The same voters register shall be employed in the special election.

17. Penal Effect of Annulment

Violation of the Penal Code of 1957 of Ethiopia as revealed in the proceedings of the Board may be prosecuted for offenses against public elections and voting.

18. Duty to cooperate

Any member of an electoral committee, individual, government or private organization shall have the duty to cooperate with the Board in the implementation of this Proclamation.

19. Sanction Against Disobedience to the Board

1. Any person shall have the duty to obey the orders of the Board made in accordance with this Proclamation.
2. Any person who:
  - a) is found in contempt of the Board order or disobeys directives and decisions of the Board;
  - b) gives false testimony or makes false statements or presents false documents to the Board shall be punished in accordance with the provisions of the Penal Code of 1957.

20. Effective Date.

This Proclamation shall come into force as of its publication in the *Negarit Gazette*.

Done at Addis Ababa, this 27th day of July, 1992.

**Meles Zenawi**

**President of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia**

*Appendix XVII*

**Excerpts from Selected Team Reports**

**Region 1 - Tigre**

*Prepared by Cynthia Tse Kimberlin*

Towns visited: 1) Mekele (June 9-10); 2) Wokro (June 11); 3) Adi Grat (June 11-12); 4) Zala Ambassa, 5) Inticho, 6) Adua (June 13); 7) Axum (June 14-16); 8) Ende Selassie (June 16-17); 9) Shilaro (June 17-18); 10) Seleklaka (June 18); 11) Hawzen (June 19); 12) Abiy Adi (June 20); 13) Maychew (June 21-22); 14) Korem, 15) Alamata, 16) Waja, 17) Kobe (June 22)

**Summary**

The election process took place in all towns visited, although the smaller isolated towns such as Inticho, Abiy Adi and Hawzen, proceeded under great hardship. Ninety percent voter registration resulted from the fact that the people and officials wanted to make the democratic process succeed during this period of political change. Turnout was estimated at 90 percent or more on election day. In Abiy Adi, in particular, the zonal, *wereda* and *kebele* electoral commissions had to convince the people this was not the parliamentary procedure of the former Emperor Haile Selassie's regime where only the wealthy were elected.

Overwhelmingly, the people of Tigre want autonomous rule but federated with Ethiopia. This poses a dilemma because the Eritreans, ethnically and culturally similar to the Tigre, want a separate and autonomous Eritrea. Eritreans, both Tigre and Amhara, with whom I conversed in Tigre, Wallo and Shoa Provinces, wanted Eritrea to be part of a Federation of Ethiopian States.

Officials at various administrative and electoral commission levels were verbally helpful, although there were contradictions between what they said and what I saw, primarily in the manner and timing of the distribution of election materials to the *kebeles* and the percentage of eligible voters registered. Officials and candidates located in the smaller isolated towns like Hawzen, Inticho and Abiy Adi appeared more candid in their comments than those in the larger towns of Mekele and Axum.

Mekele, of course, was the show place for observers and journalists. It was certain that political songs, dances and processional demonstrations were planned in Mekele for outsiders. Planned events, strangely enough, were demonstrated in Shilaro. It was not really surprising as the "Tigre grapevine /network" relayed our travel plans ahead if possible. In Shilaro, the "Women's Association" kept chanting "down with EDU". As the entire region supported the TPLF, this slogan could only be meant for us.

The only party evident in all the towns was the TPLF. EDU was overtly represented in Mekele and Maychew. Although there were independent candidates nominated, I doubt if they were truly independent candidates, as the majority of them were supported by TPLF. An interesting observation made was that it was relatively easy to spot TPLF leaders as they all wore "heavy metal" or "rock" music T-shirts. "Guns and Roses," "Metallica," "U-2," "Poison," "Alice Cooper," "Boss," "Iron Maiden," "Bon Jovi," "Dread," "Rolling Stones," and "Fido Dido Dancing" were represented.

In virtually all cases, the electoral commissions consisted of three individuals, and less so, five individuals as permissible in the election procedure manual. I spoke most often with the electoral commission at the *wereda* and zonal levels. The chair was usually TPLF party affiliated and the secretary and chief accountant usually represented "the people".

As Ethiopia is a patriarchal society, particular interest was focused on the participation of women as commission members, voters and candidates. They were broadly represented in the locations visited. Women were particularly active and outspoken where former women freedom fighters took active roles in the electoral process as *wereda* or zonal administrators, notably in Ende Selassie, Maychew and Adi Grat where there is a *kebele* named after the well-known woman freedom fighter, "Mata." At the time of my visit, the *kebele* was staffed by four women and one man.

It seemed improbable but possible for an EDU candidate to win in a region that is overwhelming TPLF. This was made evident in Maychew where I sat for more than one hour watching and listening to the election commission count the votes. One EDU candidate was winning by a large margin during the time I observed. This was an indication that popular vote could successfully elect a member of a minor party.

The registration ledger makes an excellent source of insights into the election process of individual *kebeles* and, more importantly, to obtain other information useful in documenting contextual cultural data on the area's inhabitants. For instance, where towns were heavily devastated by the war, the register showed only male registered voters between the ages of 45-70, the average age being 55. The 18-35 age range was generally missing. Another check on the degree of devastation is the high number of female registered voters in comparison to male registered voters.

**General Problems:**

1) By far the largest complaint made by all the towns, except for Mekele, was that the election materials arrived late. It was felt that one to five days was not enough time to study the materials, instruct the people, and distribute the materials.

This tardiness caused many *kebeles* to do double work. *Kebele* electoral staff first posted the candidate lists and registered the voters on their "own paper" which the registerees purchased. Then all these written notations were transferred to the official forms when they arrived. In many cases voters had to come to the polling place three times: 1) to register on an unofficial form; 2) to register and confirm their signature/thumbprint on the official form; and 3) to obtain the official registered voter's card and identification.

Some towns, such as Ende Selassie, held orally presented orientation workshops on a daily basis in the evenings using a hand held megaphone. To avoid duplication of work and to proceed until the election materials arrived, Ende Selassie conducted orientation workshops based upon information they received from the radio and newspapers. Thus the actual registration took place with relative ease and little or no duplication of work.

2) Administration and electoral commissions at the *wereda* levels and their staff complained about insufficient funds, that 15 *birr*-per-day-per-individual was not enough. In some cases, *weredas* took the initiative, soliciting donations from the people, thus augmenting government support. In smaller towns, such as Abiy Adi, there were no government buildings available for administrative purposes due to the war. So dwellings and furniture had to be obtained from the private sector, causing hardship for those who vacated their homes for approximately 2-3 weeks.

3) Since all election materials were printed in the Amharic language, it was sometimes difficult (*e.g.*, in Abiy Adi) to find individuals who could translate the Amharic competently into Tigrinya.

4) Fingerprinting in most cases, had to be a symbolic act, not an objective or sure way to confirm or verify signatures. For instance, fingers were sweaty and clear print profiles could not be obtained. A pen was used to mark the finger tip and then stamped on the ledger. In other cases, pen drawn circles supposedly indicated a print. In addition, people could easily switch hands and make a confirming thumbprint signature with the left and/or right hand.

5) Illiteracy caused some problems. Election staff personnel in Inticho, for instance, could not write numbers above 999, writing 10100 instead of 1000. Thus the total number of registered voters for one *kebele* erroneously read 10,000-plus, which would be an improbability in this area. Information was noted in wrong columns. In some cases, errors were noted, erased and corrected but this proved to be a tedious task. On election day, one-third of the ballots in Alamata were thrown out because many voters wrote in between the lines, voted for all 10 candidates, or voted using symbols which represented no candidate.

6) The orientation process was not clear in some cases as the example registration sheet was not available to several election commission staff members until a few days before the elections.

7) There was a tremendous lack of transportation to move the election materials to their destinations in a timely manner. For instance, Axum had only one government automobile available. More donkeys, mules, horses, vehicles and foot couriers were needed.

8) Semantics. The use and meaning of words and phrases translated into Tigrinya were sometimes problematic such as "independent candidate," "parliamentary procedure," "registered voter." Independent candidate could mean one who is supported or selected by a particular party. Parliamentary procedure could refer to the procedure used during Emperor Haile Selassie's regime. Registered voter implied a signature/thumbprint must be included on the register. In some cases, the voter's name was printed by the election commission staff but the voter's signature was omitted.

9) Although disqualification of candidates was based on the lack of the number of support signatures (50 at the *wereda* level and 350 at the regional level), serious disqualification occurred in Adua where one *wereda* candidate was discovered to be a former member of the Derg and was about to receive his COPWE membership card when his Derg connections were uncovered.

10) Because of the political and cultural environment during the Derg regime, it was difficult for individuals to refrain from answering in prepared sloganistic jargon. It was only in the small isolated towns where it was more apparent that individuals were able to separate ideology from reality. The administration chair in Abiy Adi, in particular, offered excellent insights about election problems.

11) In Hawzen, at least, June was a difficult time to vote as this is the seedling time for the farmers. Thus, they sacrificed needed work time to vote.

12) Any candidate who wishes to run for office must be able to speak Tigrinya fluently. Upon further questioning in Mekele regarding potential minority party/ethnic group candidates from the Saho or Kunema peoples, whose primary language is not Tigrinya, officials revised the statement by saying candidates whose first language is not Tigrinya, need only speak passable Tigrinya.

13) Except for major cities like Mekele, registration continued through June 20, contrary to the NEC timetable.

14) When registration ledgers and cards arrived late, the voter had to make two trips: one to register and the second to pick up the card. I witnessed a woman calling out names page by page for those whose cards were ready. After she read through the entire registrar, she started at page one, continuing the cycle until all cards had been dispersed.

## **Region 4 - Oromo; Zone 7 - Bale**

*Prepared by Gilbert D. Kulick*

From June 11 to June 21, Mel Foote and I observed preparations for elections to the *wereda* and regional councils in Zone 7 (Bale) of Region 4 (Oromo). During those 10 days we were based in Goba, the zone's administrative center, and its twin town of Robe. While there, we met with the zone-level representatives of the TGE, NEC, OPDO, OLF and EPLF. (The latter chaired the zone's tripartite

commission.) In four lengthy excursions outside of Goba/Robe, covering 1,700 kilometers in all directions, we visited the *wereda* capitals of Goro (east of Goba), Agarfa and Gasera (north), Menna (south), and Dinshu and Adaba (west).

In each location we met, where possible, with *wereda*-level officials of the above-mentioned organizations, as well as with *kebele*-level “temporary administrators” and chairmen of the *kebele* election commissions (KEC). We also visited the OLF military encampment at Shawe (Meslo) and an EPRDF base at Agarfa. We left Goba for Addis Ababa by air on Sunday, June 21, and therefore did not observe actual voting on election day. The withdrawal of the OLF, however, made the outcome a foregone conclusion. The only issue to be decided was the size of the voter turnout.

### **Overall Conclusion**

The election preparations in Bale were not, by any reasonable standard, conducive to free and fair elections. They were marked by a consistent pattern of harassment of the opposition (OLF), intimidation of potential voters, and manipulation of voter and candidate registration. The entire process, whether for technical or political reasons, was extremely tardy and very uneven in its implementation. Rank-and-file citizens of Bale expressed disappointment and a betrayal of promises made by the government in Addis Ababa regarding their genuine freedom to choose their own leaders.

### **Political/Security Atmosphere**

Even in the absence of large visible deployments of armed military personnel, Bale had the feel of an occupied territory. In almost every *wereda* visited, the people making the decisions and issuing the orders were not indigenous to that area. In most cases, the senior *wereda*-level official, *i.e.*, the TGE representative, was a Tigrayan. In many cases, his office was co-located with that of OPDO, and the representative of the OPDO, ostensibly one of the competing political organizations, was directly subordinate to the TGE representative. In virtually all cases, the local OPDO chief was not a native of Bale, and in some cases, not even an Oromo.

While conceding that the OLF enjoyed some support in the major towns because of their alleged alliance with the merchant class and the *neftenyoch* (Abyssinian settlers/landowners), the OPDO claimed

that in the countryside, where the “oppressed” Oromo peasants lived, they enjoyed broad support. However, our contacts with these people all over Bale, revealed very little, if any, grassroots support for the OLF.

Although I witnessed first-hand little in the way of direct physical intimidation, the reports of night-time visits by armed men to people’s homes and villages, arrests, and threats of bodily harm (or worse) or destruction of homes unless residents turned out the vote for OPDO were much too widespread and consistent to be ignored or dismissed as the work of “rogue elements.” Reciprocal allegations of OLF misdeeds by OPDO officials were rarely repeated or substantiated at the grassroots level.

The Tripartite Agreement of March 1992, under which the armed elements of both the EPRDF and the OLF were to be confined to military camps, was honored by the EPRDF mainly in the breach. In almost every locale we either witnessed or heard credible reports of the presence of armed OPDO cadres throughout the area. In one *wereda*, we were told there were seven-15 such men in every *kebele*. The arming of political cadres, in clear violation of the agreement, was rationalized by the zone’s OPDO chief as necessary for self-defense against OLF “terrorists.” Although OPDO officials insisted that the OLF cadres also carried out armed intimidation, I neither saw nor heard any grassroots accounts of armed OLF personnel at large in the area.

We heard few reports of OLF offices having been actually shut down or officials arrested, though in Agarfa the OLF office had been raided and trashed, reportedly by OPDO cadres, and all its furniture stolen. The OLF representative said that the OPDO/TGE representative had been involved in the operation.

### **Election Preparations**

#### *Establishment of Electoral Infrastructure/Voter Registration*

The establishment of election commissions at the zonal, *wereda*, and *kebele* levels was begun very late in the game and was very ragged and uneven in its implementation. The National Election Commission-appointed chairman of the zonal election commission arrived in Goba only a few days before we did. Although he seemed conscientious, well-intentioned, and reasonably objective, he seemed overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task before him — distribution

of voter-registration registers and cards, certification of candidates, dissemination of balloting materials, etc., to 19 *weredas* and several hundred *kebeles* — and the shortage of time in which to accomplish it.

The voter-registration process actually began several weeks before, but in the absence of locally-elected *kebele* and *wereda* election commissions (KEC/WEC's), the process had been largely in the hands of local TGE/EPRDF/OPDO officials. As such, the process was subjected, according to widespread allegations, to manipulation favoring registration by OPDO supporters and discouraging registration by those of the OLF. This included selective distribution of registration cards and the failure to deliver sufficient cards or any cards at all to *kebeles* where no OPDO support could be generated. Even after elected *kebele* and *wereda* election commissions were established — around the time of our arrival — we heard frequent reports that their work was being either hampered or circumvented by EPRDF personnel and their supporters.

In addition to political obstacles, there was no shortage of technical and logistical barriers to the registration process. In several instances there appeared to be a shortage of materials delivered from Addis Ababa to Goba and an acute lack of transportation to deliver the materials to the *weredas* and thence to the *kebele* registration offices. At the time of our arrival, four of the 19 *weredas* — all in remote, roadless areas — had received no materials at all; by the time we left (election day) two of them had reportedly still not received even registration books and cards, much less balloting materials. In most *weredas*, we heard reports of several *kebeles* that had received no registration materials. We were told of several instances in which these materials mysteriously appeared after the OLF withdrew from the elections.

Nevertheless, everywhere we went the level of voter registration seemed remarkably high. From urban *bunna bets* to weekly market-places to remote farmsteads, people proudly showed us their registration cards, even while complaining vociferously about OPDO harassment and manipulation.

#### *Candidate Registration*

At the time of our arrival in Bale — five days after the original deadline — we were informed by the zonal election commission that no list of candidates had been received from any *wereda* or any party

for election to any of the *wereda* councils or the regional council. By the expiration of the extended deadline (June 14), a few lists of OPDO candidates for *wereda* councils, properly endorsed with signatures, had begun to trickle in from the *kebeles*, but none had been submitted by the OLF, though I was told in several places that lists were ready to be submitted. From the outset, we heard rumors that the OLF was planning to boycott the election process, which probably explains in part their failure to submit candidate lists. On June 17, of course, the rumors proved true, though they may have been to some extent self-fulfilling.

In no case, at any level, did we hear that the elaborate provisions in the NEC rules for challenging the registration of either specific voters or candidates were employed, and I doubt that the mechanisms for doing so even existed in Bale.

I was unable to determine how many *kebeles* actually produced lists of candidates (OPDO, that is) to their respective *wereda* councils. As for the regional council elections, several WEC chairmen told us they did not know how they would be able to print and disseminate the lists to all the *kebeles* in the district in time for the elections.

Posters depicting the list of OPDO candidates for Goba *wereda*'s three representatives to the Region 4 Council appeared around town the night before the elections. It was headed by Hassan Ali Ibrahim, OPDO organizer for the eastern zones of the region and a native of Harerge, who had shown up for the first time the week before. (The election rules require five-year residency for regional-council candidates.)

#### *Tripartite (Peace) Committees*

As part of the EPRDF-OLF encampment agreement of March 1992, tripartite committees, chaired by a neutral representative of the EPLF, were to be established in each *wereda* of Region 4. In Zone 7 these "peace committees" were very late in being established. In fact, many of the EPLF men who were to head the *wereda* committees had just arrived in Goba and had not reached their destination because of lack of transport. In two cases, we actually ferried them to their assigned sites on our excursions.

### *Civic Education*

As far as I could tell, there was virtually no organized civic education effort in Bale. Most people did not know — or did not believe — that they had the right *not* to vote if there was no-one they favored on the ballot. There seemed to be practically no understanding of party platforms or political issues, even among so-called party cadres.

### *Attitude and Behavior Toward Observers*

We were warmly received wherever we went by partisans of all sides. The coming of election observers had been widely publicized on radio and television, and townspeople often seemed to be awaiting our arrival, which occasionally attracted crowds of several hundred people, all clamoring for our attention and eager to tell their stories. Our credentials were never challenged or even questioned, and in no case did we encounter anything that could be called hostility from any quarter. Even our request of the authorities in Goba to visit some alleged political prisoners in the local lockup was immediately granted, and we were able to interview the prisoners without hindrance.

### **Conclusion**

Notwithstanding the cooperativeness of the authorities, it became evident with each passing day that the election preparations were being consistently and seemingly systematically manipulated by the EPRDF/OPDO to the detriment of the OLF. I did not arrive at this conclusion with alacrity. If anything, I started out with the assumption that a clever government like that of the EPRDF would not have invited more than 250 experienced international observers to witness their elections if they had not intended to make every effort to ensure that the elections they witnessed were free and fair. Moreover, my sympathy for the Ethiopian people's suffering during the last 15 years and my generally positive impression of the EPRDF inclined me strongly to give the Transitional Government every benefit of the doubt. Therefore, I tended at the outset to attribute reports of armed intimidation and registration manipulation to a combination of OLF exaggeration and local officials' overzealousness.

By the end of our stay in Bale, however, it was no longer possible for me to believe that the local authorities were behaving other than as they had been instructed by Addis Ababa; that is, to do

whatever was necessary to ensure that OPDO won the elections, whether the people wanted them or not. Some people in Addis Ababa may misguidedly believe that this was self-determination. To most of the Oromo people of Bale, however, it looks like just the newest face of the exploitation and coercion by Abyssinian colonialists and their "Galla" collaborators that they have experienced for the last hundred years, from Menelik through Haile Selassie to the Derg.

### **Region 3 - Amhara**

*Prepared by Robert L. Houde*

This report represents the observations of the JIOG team stationed in Dessie, Welo Region.

#### **Route 1: Dessie: Haik-Wuchale-Mersa-Weldiya; Kutaber *Election Commissions***

During our stay in Dessie, we visited both regional and zonal election commissions. Represented were ALF (at zonal level), APDM, (at regional level), EDC, EPDM, and EPDM; the other two members were either from EDC, TPLF or neutral. The WECs were formed only on June 12.

The members of the *kebele* election commissions (KEC) were in most cases elected during the "snap elections." These were held in April and May, but not everywhere completed. Apart from the EPDM, we didn't see political parties involved in the KECs. We were told by the zonal election commission that other political parties did not have enough representatives to forward to the KECs. Several KECs were complaining about their per diem, which had not been paid so far.

#### *Registration*

Voter registration began two or three weeks before election day. As far as we observed, voter registration continued until Friday before the elections.

The main complaint from the representatives of EDU, EDC and OLF in the regional election commission (REC) was that the registration books and cards had been distributed by representatives of the TGE and that the political parties had not been involved in the formation of the KECs. Therefore, the REC felt they had no

adequate information concerning how many registration cards had been issued and to whom.

The EDU claimed that upon registration, people were asked to sign two times: once in the registration book and once to support an EPRDF candidate (doing this, the EPRDF could reach all voters in a particular area and without having transport costs). However, we did not see this happen ourselves.

### *Election Day*

On June 21, we visited eight polling stations: five in the towns of Dessie (H1 K2, H1 K3 H2 K5, H2 K6) and Kutaber; three in the rural areas (Gerado PA 1, Wattaya PA 5, and Kutaber PA 4).

In the five "urban" polling stations in Dessie and Kutaber, it was possible to cast a secret ballot. However, we saw a number of people coming out from the booth giving their unfolded ballot to one of the officials, who folded the ballot for them.

In all polling stations, there was only one voting booth, which led to large numbers of people waiting. Polling stations were closed late at night Sunday evening and opened again early Monday morning. Some were only waiting for the last 40 or 50 voters that had not shown up yet. The security was safeguarded by one or two unarmed policemen in uniform.

In all three peasant associations we visited, ballots were cast in front of the election commission members, who were willing to assist the (illiterate) voters in casting their vote. A rather large number gave the impression they did not know what to do. In one PA, the ballot box was put in a separate – secret – room!

### *Counting*

We witnessed the counting at *kebele* 5 in Dessie. The KEC started the counting on Monday at about 2 p.m. and were ready at 6 p.m. People present during the counting were the KEC, one police official, all four candidates, local observers and some other people.

In this *kebele*, 1,057 people voted (men and women equally represented). People had chosen either one, two or three out of the four candidates (both for the *wereda* and the region). About 25 percent of the votes cast were invalid.

All candidates accepted the results; the atmosphere was relaxed.

**Route 2: Bati-Mitikollo; Kombolsha-Kemise-Karakore-Efeson-Senbete**

*Political Background*

Generally, the area can be characterized as tense, with conflict between the OLF and EPRDF/OPDO/EPDM and between the OLF and the Afar being fairly widespread. The conflict between the Afar and Oromo tends to be a traditional one involving pastoral rights, and not an organized conflict between the two groups. Both the OLF and ALF leadership that we spoke to during our visits downplayed the significance of the clashes between the Afar and the Oromo.

The OLF representatives seemed to speak with one voice, and their messages included the following points:

- the snap elections created a structure favorable to the EPRDF and related parties by establishing a local administrative structure that could be controlled by the central government;
- the OLF lacked adequate time to prepare for the election;
- the OLF was excluded from active participation in the political process due to the fact that the regional elections commission and zonal commission did not insure representation of the major parties throughout the regions;
- intimidation of the OLF was widespread as a consequence of EPRDF forces being allowed access to the areas involved in the political process;
- the potential candidates and OLF members had been harassed and imprisoned and prevented from becoming involved in the political process;
- the OLF was denied office space in all cities in the area, except Bati, where they were able to open an office; and
- if the above irregularities were not satisfactorily addressed, the OLF indicated that it would withdraw from the election.

*Military Presence*

In Bati, soldiers were located on a hill overlooking the offices of the OPDO, OLF and the ALF. The OLF claimed that one of its members was shot and killed by an EPRDF soldier as he was entering the OLF office. When discussing the military presence in the area with the *wereda* election commission, we were told by the EPDM representative that the presence of the soldiers was related to the

soldiers visiting the market for food, and not to the monitoring of political activity. The chairperson, however, said that this was not according to procedure, and that the military should be encamped. Upon return to Bati, we observed that the soldiers were no longer present on the hill overlooking the political offices.

### *Election Commissions*

The election officials in Bati, Senbete and Kemise, at both the *kebele* and *wereda* levels, represented EPRDF-related parties. Two opposing perceptions became apparent. OLF supporters claimed that they were denied access to election commission positions, while the other claimed that the OLF refused to participate in the process. The team observed that the OLF was able to secure representation on the election commission at the regional level.

During our visit to Senbete to obtain information concerning the reasons why the OLF had no office in that city, we observed that there was tension in the community, and that both the OLF and the EPRDF-related representatives expressed fear of the other side. Furthermore, we observed that the members of the election commission at the *kebele* levels in Senbete were fully armed with automatic weapons, and this within the government building.

In later discussions with EPRDF-related election officials and candidates, it was suggested that severe problems developed in the region after the OLF was permitted offices in the region and the OLF presence became increasingly prominent. Claims were also put forth that the OLF presence had disrupted the economy in the region, and increased food prices. Counter-OLF demonstration were held in Kemise, and the OLF then “escaped.” The OLF claims that it was forced by fear to leave the region, but the EPRDF and not the OLF was to blame for problems in the region.

Subsequently, the OLF again expressed interest in establishing offices in the area. The election commission in Senbete and the TGE representative in Kemise indicated that the OLF would be granted office space in their communities. The OLF claims, in turn, that the TGE has granted permission on paper only, but the “sub-communication” is that the offices will not be forthcoming.

### *Training*

It appeared that members of the election commission received some training related to the process but that the electorate was not

well-informed about the election process generally (although some pre-election coaching was observed) and about the election-day procedures in particular.

### *Registration*

Our team observed that a clear majority of the eligible voters were registering in both towns and rural areas. Men were particularly evident registering in rural areas. We witnessed some individuals holding more than one registration card, and upon inquiry, we found that one person would register others as well, particularly their wives. In addition, on election day, in a peasant association near Dessie, we noted that one woman voted for four people, claiming that the others could not make their way through the crowded lines on election day.

### *Materials*

In all cases, we observed that the pre-election materials had been received. Election-day materials were received somewhat later. Ink was not always available and ballot boxes in some cases appeared to be too small for the numbers of people voting.

### *Election-Day Activities*

We observed election-day activities at Mitikollo (between Kombolsha and Bati) and Bati town. At both sites, the tents/rooms were full of people voting. We also observed voters queuing at various polling places as we drove by on election day. In both places, candidates for *wereda* and regional levels numbered three candidates. Since three candidates were to be elected from each ballot, all candidates at these two sites will be elected.

At Bati and at Mitikollo, all candidates at the *wereda* and regional levels were from the EPDM party. Election propaganda was posted by one EPDM candidate within the prohibited distance from the polling station.

The election-day procedures indicated that the electorate was not well informed about the names of candidates or the symbols associated with these candidates. The election officials attempted to overcome this deficiency both individually and in group sessions outside the polling station prior to the elections. Notwithstanding their efforts, a number of (illiterate) voters had difficulty understanding where they should place their print, and needed to be instructed by the official. In some cases, the official actually guided

the placement of the print. In some cases, where little or no instruction was given in the booth, the team observed that fingerprints were placed in inappropriate, undesignated spots on the ballot. The officials also allowed more than one (in some cases up to six) person in the secret booth simultaneously. In another case, a peasant association had no secret room for voting at all. This situation compromised the ideal of a secret ballot, but we cannot verify any case of coercion.

Furthermore, it is clear that the secret voting procedure consumes considerable time, and had each person voted individually in the booth, one at a time, it would have taken considerably more time to have completed the election process (as it was, one P.A. was very crowded and many more had yet to vote at 7 p.m. – one hour after the official closing time).

There was no evidence of a military presence in the vicinity of the polling stations. We did observe black uniformed “police” at some polling stations who assisted voters with the election process.

#### *Regional Election Commission*

In Dubti, we met with the chairperson of the regional election commission and other representatives who outlined reasons for the delay in the election process in the Afar region. All of the officials agreed that the Afar were interested in the elections, but that the delay in the elections was unavoidable. Reasons given for the delay in the elections were as follows:

- communication problems and problems of distance (good communication is lacking even between the local election commissions and the central office in Addis, with the local officials not having been informed of the postponement of the elections);
- drought and water problems directly affecting the elections; and
- the process of determining the composition of the zonal election commission is still underway.

With the exception of the ALF/APDO members, all election commission representatives were “imported” from outside the region for the purposes of the election.

### **Summary Observations and Interpretation**

It would be inappropriate to view the TGE's *commitment* to reform as meaning that the democratization process has to this point been smooth, or that an open society is now in place. An open society is clearly not in place in Ethiopia. However, it must be underscored that the TGE's program of political and social transformation was only recently initiated, and that the transformation from closed and oppressive structures of the past to a system that encourages diversity, that is characterized by freedom of expression, and that provides all parties with substantive access to the political machinery, is of necessity in its first stage of conception. The district and regional elections held in Ethiopia on June 21 cannot assure that democracy will prevail in Ethiopia any more than a midwife can assure that a healthy baby will be born nine months hence.

It is likely that electoral irregularities occurred in Region 2 and parts of Region 3 during Ethiopia's district and regional elections of 1992. These irregularities may have prevented opposition parties from full participation in the electoral process, and may have precipitated the boycott of the election by some of these opposition parties. Two types of election-related problems may be identified: systemic and situational.

Political groups opposed to the EPRDF-related parties claim that the EPRDF had an unfair advantage throughout the electoral process due to its claim as "liberator" and subsequently its superior position in the transitional government. These psychological and organizational advantages ultimately translated into greater numbers of supporters, candidates, access to the electoral machinery, and political power. The team recognizes this systemic advantage as being real, but also sees it as a natural and largely unavoidable consequence of the EPRDF's unique role in overthrowing the previous regime and spearheading the formation of transitional organs of governance in the "new" Ethiopia. To offset this advantage, the EPRDF should consider actively soliciting the input of the opposition groups, requesting that opposition groups identify appropriate counter-balances and correctives that will serve to minimize this natural advantage.

Generally, the team was unable to ascertain the extent to which the charges and counter-charges were valid. Many complaints were rather vague or general and therefore defied investigation and follow-

up. Other complaints could be checked rather easily, but time prevented us from doing so. In two cases where complaints were registered by opposition groups (the arrest and subsequent release of Oromos in Borena and the rejection and subsequent inclusion of an EDU candidate in Kutaber), the team *was* able to obtain useful follow-up information that would tend to support the view that some mechanisms exist to serve as correctives to electoral abuse.

Regardless of the truth of the charges and counter-charges, these complaints suggest that, as far as some of the major political factions are concerned, there is a high level of dissatisfaction with the political structure and resulting electoral process current in Ethiopia today. These complaints must be taken seriously and addressed with vigor and magnanimity, or the resulting disaffection might well destroy this fragile democratic initiative altogether.

CONTRIBUTIONS IN CASH AND KIND TO THE ELECTIONS IN ETHIOPIA  
(All figures in USD)

EMBASSY/ ORGANIZATION	NO. OF OBSERVERS			CASH CONTRIBUTIONS			CONTRIBUTIONS IN KIND			BUDGET FOR OWN OBSERVERS	REMARKS
	RES. IN ETHIOPIA	FOREIGN OBSERVERS	NO OF VEHICLES	TO JIOG	DOUBLE SIG ACCT	DIRECT TO ELEC. COMM.	ITEM	QTY	VALUE		
AUSTRIA		2-3									
BELGIUM	1										
CANADA	2	3	2?			24,150	RADIOS		34,000	40,000	
CSFR	1										
DENMARK					200,000						
EEC	3own car		5				SEC/COMP/PRINT/COPY		338,150		ALLOCATION UNKNOWN
EGYPT		10									
FRANCE	4	1									
GERMANY		18	6	7,800		222,900	JIOG STAFF/REG. BOOK	1		110,000	5,400 RESERVE/JIOG
GREECE	4										
ITALY	6	5								40,000	
JAPAN	3		1								
NETHERLANDS	4	12	6		134,400		STAFF TO JIOG	1		134,400	
NORWAY		5	2	150,000			TENTS		400,000	20,000	
ONU	18			12,077							
RUSSIA	12		11				STAFF TO JIOG	1			
SPAIN	2										
SWEDEN	3	9	6		700,000		TENTS		800,000	90,000	

Note 1: Vehicles to Election Commission, Consultant(s) to Election Commission, Administrative Support.  
Note 2: 130,000 still to be allocated.

Appendix XVIII

Contributions Received by NEC  
for June 21, 1992 Elections in Ethiopia

CONTRIBUTIONS IN CASH AND KIND TO THE ELECTIONS IN ETHIOPIA  
(All figures in USD)

EMBASSY/ ORGANIZATION	NO. OF OBSERVERS		NO OF VEHICLES	CASH CONTRIBUTIONS			CONTRIBUTIONS IN KIND			BUDGET FOR OWN OBSERVERS	REMARKS
	RES. IN ETHIOPIA	FOREIGN OBSERVERS		TO JIOG	DOUBLE SIG ACCT	DIRECT TO ELEC. COMM.	ITEM	QTY	VALUE		
SWITZERLAND		7	3							45,000	
UK	3	4	5				RAD INST/INR/STAFF		301,700		Note 2
UNITED NATIONS	24		32	300,000			STAFF TO JIOG	5			Note 1
USA	4	71	8(+20?)	350,000			RATIONS/COMP/RADICS	2,000	43,000	500,000	
TOTAL USD				833,277	1,034,400	247,050			1,916,850	979,400	

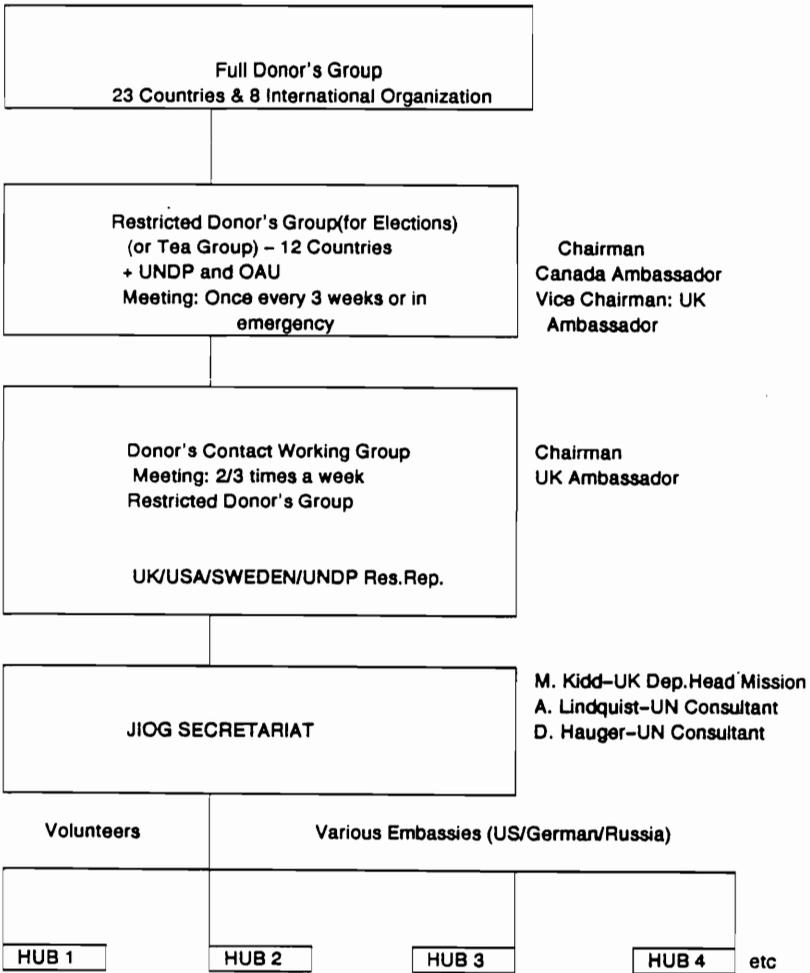
Note 1: Vehicles to Election Commission, Consultant(s) to Election Commission, Administrative Support.

Note 2: 130,000 still to be allocated.

Appendix XIX

Structure of Joint International Observer Group

**JIOG STRUCTURE**



*Appendix XX*

**National Election Commission  
Code of Conduct  
for International Observers**

- I) The Joint International Observer Group (JIOG) organized in response to appeals from the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, the National Election Commission, and Ethiopia's various political movements, in an effort to demonstrate strong international support for a peaceful democratic transition in Ethiopia, leading to general elections at the end of the transitional period.
- II) JIOG members will serve as neutral witnesses of the entire local and regional electoral process, including the registration of voters and candidates, the functioning of political party officers, the campaign period, and the casting of counting ballots. The JIOG's overriding purpose is to establish an impartial international presence in representative areas throughout Ethiopia, in hopes of raising confidence in the electoral process, deterring gross abuse, and thereby raising prospects that this critical phase in Ethiopia's democratic transition will be credible.
- III) The JIOG is committed to regular liaison with the National Election Commission, for the purpose of informing one another of respective plans and updating one another on electoral developments.
- IV) In fulfilling its mandate, JIOG members will circulate freely throughout Ethiopia and establish direct local contact with election commission officials, representatives of competing political movements, TGE officials, candidates, elders, common voters and other private citizens.
- V) Individual JIOG members will refrain from any public comment on the conduct of the elections, including the observed political behavior of individuals or groups. Similarly, JIOG members will refrain from adjudicating disputes or certifying the accuracy of voting results. Individual JIOG members are free to report privately to their embassies or parent organizations. JIOG members may

communicate complaints to election officials. JIOG as a group will communicate its assessment on the electoral process to the National Election Commission.

- VI) The JIOG will be responsible for organizing its own transport, communications and lodging.
- VII) All JIOG members will carry credentials identifying themselves as official international observers. The JIOG will ensure that all JIOG vehicles and local facilities will be conspicuously identified as such.
- VIII) Prior to beginning any observation, every JIOG member will be fully briefed by the JIOG Secretariat on the electoral process and the guidelines outlined in this document.
- IX) To maintain a high level of integrity of the monitoring process and to be consistent with the principle of transparency, every allegation brought to the attention of any member of JIOG individually or JIOG collectively will be counter-checked by reference to the other party concerned. All JIOG members have the moral obligation of reporting to the relevant authorities any criminal activity or violation of electoral law they personally witnessed.

Appendix XXI

Observers' Election-Day Checklist

Name/No. of Kebele: \_\_\_\_\_ Woreda: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_
Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Arrival at Polling Station: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Dep. \_\_\_\_\_
Team Members Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Voters registered? \_\_\_\_\_ (as per registration book)
Number who had already voted? \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Voters queued up to vote: \_\_\_\_\_
Official body conducting the election? \_\_\_\_\_ when formed/arrived \_\_\_\_\_
Which Officials were Present at Polling Station?
E.C. Chairman? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ E.C. Secretary? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
Other E.C. (List) \_\_\_\_\_
What assistance/instruction provided to voters as they enter the polling station or booth (for those who do not understand the process)? \_\_\_\_\_
Is the person giving instruction perceived as neutral or partisan? \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Parties with Representative(s) present:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (7) \_\_\_\_\_
(2) \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (8) \_\_\_\_\_

Election Material in stock:

Ballots? \_\_\_\_\_ Voting Booth Screen? \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting Forms? \_\_\_\_\_
Indelible Ink? \_\_\_\_\_ Registration Book? \_\_\_\_\_
Ballot box seals? \_\_\_\_\_ Others? \_\_\_\_\_
Is the indelible ink being applied properly? \_\_\_\_\_

Political Environment:

Armed Soldiers present near polling station? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
Political propaganda in polling station? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
If yes, which Party? \_\_\_\_\_
Alleged Incidents: Intimidation? \_\_\_\_\_
Arrest of candidates? \_\_\_\_\_
Were these Investigated? \_\_\_\_\_ Who was Informed? \_\_\_\_\_

Closing of the Polling Station and Counting of the Ballots:

What time did the Polling Station Close? \_\_\_\_\_ .If earlier than the mandated 6:00 p.m., what reason given? \_\_\_\_\_
Was anyone waiting in line to vote when the Polling Station closed? \_\_\_\_\_
If so, were those people allowed to vote? \_\_\_\_\_
Who was present for the counting of the ballots? \_\_\_\_\_
Were candidates permitted to witness the counting? \_\_\_\_\_
Were the election law procedures for counting of the votes followed (see pages 31-34 of the Electoral Rules of Implementation): \_\_\_\_\_
Requisite information recorded prior to opening the ballot box? \_\_\_\_\_
Requisite information recorded prior to opening the ballot box? \_\_\_\_\_
Counting procedures followed? \_\_\_\_\_
Procedures followed for the recording and posting of the results? \_\_\_\_\_
How were the results and ballot boxes transported to the woredas? \_\_\_\_\_

How were disputes re: count resolved? \_\_\_\_\_
How was the counting reported? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Remarks: You may record on reverse of this page any comment on election procedure, drawbacks observed, intimidation etc.

## **The African-American Institute**

The African-American Institute (AAI), founded in 1953, is devoted to fostering development in Africa, primarily through strengthening its human resources, and to promoting mutual understanding between Americans and Africans. AAI employs representatives in 23 African countries and claims an alumni roster of approximately 17,000 African graduates of AAI-administered short- and long-term training programs. Of these, 2,700 received degrees at the Master's or Ph.D. level at American universities through the African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD) including the prime ministers of Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and Namibia. AAI has direct relationships with most senior political and diplomatic leaders of African countries, as well as with a wide range of NGOs, professionals, opposition politicians, media leaders, and public and private donor organizations working in Africa.

Since its inception, AAI has been primarily concerned with strengthening African capacities and building African institutions. The Institute has pursued this goal through three major program foci: (1) strengthening human resources development; (2) deepening civil society; and (3) encouraging open, accountable, effective governance. Via conferences, exchange and publications, AAI has sought to strengthen African capacities to develop viable, democratic societies.

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NDI has conducted democratic development programs in more than 60 countries. Programs focus on six major areas:

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