

NATIONAL ELECTION BOARD OF ETHIOPIA

Implementation Framework for Voter Registration in Special Constituencies

I. Introduction

In addition to its mandate to conduct elections in regular constituencies the National Election Board of Ethiopia has the legal responsibility to administer election in special constituencies. As the main reason for organizing these special constituencies is to ensure representation of minority nationalities in the Federal and Regional governments those who are eligible to vote in these special constituencies would be residents of these special constituencies. However, there are instances where it may be difficult to ascertain eligibility particularly the ethnic identity of the voter of a special constituency. An appropriate framework dealing with procedures for ascertaining membership of a minority nationality as well as the manner in which objections to eligibility could be entertained should be designed and consistently applied. This will have a significant role in ensuring the fairness and credibility of elections in special constituencies.

Thus, pending the adoption by the Board of a comprehensive directive on minority constituencies in accordance with article 13/1/d/ of Proclamation No.1162/2019, it is decided this implementation framework should be operational for the conduct of the 6th national election.

II. Objective

The main purpose of this directive is to determine the procedures for ascertaining voter's membership of a minority nationality and entertaining objections against claims of membership of that nationality.

III. Scope of Application.

This directive is applicable during the process of voter registration at special constituencies in the sixth national election.

IV. Fundamental principle for verifying identity of voters of Special Constituency

A person may be registered as voter in special constituency by declaring or identifying herself/himself as such (through self-identification).

V. Need to fulfill other eligibility criteria

A person registering as a voter in special constituency must fulfill all eligibility criteria for any voters voting in any constituency is required to fulfill as provided under article 9 of the Voter Registration Directive No 6/2021.

VI. Objection

Members of a minority nationality voting in a special constituency or agents of political parties or independent candidates may registration of a self-identifying voter of a special constituency. Where a valid objection is presented as provided above, the head of the polling station shall require the person challenging eligibility to produce evidence proving his objection.

VII. Evidence to be produced to support an objection against a voter's claim of membership of a minority nationality.

A person disputing the eligibility of a self-identifying voter registering in a special constituency may not be produce as evidence three senior members of the minority nationality with adequate understanding of the culture and traditions of that nationality as witnesses three senior members of that specific nationality who know the culture and customs of the nationality.

Witnesses testifying against a self-identifying voter may not be

A candidate or candidate agent and must be a registered voter in the special constituency.

VIII. Procedure for hearing of witnesses and decision giving

Testimony of witnesses in relation to objections against a self-identifying voter shall be conducted in the following procedure.

- The testimony shall be heard under the coordination of the head of the polling station
- The testimony shall be recorded in a minute.
- All election officers of the polling station shall sign on the minute.

Upon completion of testimony of witness as provided above and examination of the evidences by the election officials

- If the evidence proves objection shall be granted, the voter shall be denied registration as a voter in the special constituency.
- If conclusive evidence proving the objection is not produced the voter shall be registered in the special constituency shall be.

IX. Organization of Polling Station

The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia shall establish regular polling stations for registration and polling by all eligible voters of a constituency. Polling stations in which members of a specific nationality will be registered and cast their ballots shall also be established.

The Board shall make every effort to ensure that the polling stations are established in different locations.

The Board shall prepare and post in visible places of the entrance sign posts identifying polling stations for voters voting in special constituencies

This implementation framework shall enter into force upon its adoption by the Board on August 26, 2021.

Birtukan Midekssa

Chairperson of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia

