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**Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society
Organizations for Elections**

The 7th General Election Mid-Day Observation Report

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, June 1, 2026

The Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for Elections (CECOE) has deployed 2,258 sitting observers and 891 mobile observers, totaling 3,149 observers, to conduct Citizen Election Observation for the 7th General Election on June 1, 2026.

The CECOE's stationary observers began monitoring their assigned polling stations at 5:30 AM to observe the setup and opening of the stations, the voting and counting processes, and the official posting of results at the station level. On the other hand, each mobile observer was assigned to move around and monitor at least six (6) different polling stations.

The deployment of the CECOE's observers was carried out in constituencies excluding the Tigray region, eight (8) constituencies in the Amhara region, and 5 disputed constituencies. This deployment strategy is based on a proportional observation methodology determined by the number of polling stations in each region.

This mid-day observation report is based solely on the 2,258 polling stations where the CECOE's stationary observers were deployed. Information gathered from the mobile observers consists only of reports regarding critical incidents. The CECOE Data Center prepared this report based on the observation data received up to 1:00

PM on election day from the 2,258 stationary observers.

Due to expected but delayed data transmission, some observation findings are not included in this report. These delayed reports will be incorporated into the preliminary statement to be released later by the CECOE. This mid-day report is prepared based on ten (10) key indicators across the 2,258 stations where the CECOE's observers were deployed.

Key Mid-Day Observation Findings

1. Permission for Observers to Enter Polling Stations and Observe

The electoral law stipulates that election observers accredited by the NEBE can enter their assigned polling stations and freely observe the process. Regarding the permission granted to the CECOE's observers to enter polling stations and observe, in 2,241 (99%) of the reports received, observers were able to enter the stations and observe without any restrictions. Conversely, it was reported that they were barred from entering in 17 (1%) polling stations.

2. Full Presence of Election Officials at Polling Station Opening Time

Election officials are expected to be present on-site before the legally mandated polling station opening time of 6:00 AM (local time 12:00 morning). This is a prerequisite for the timely setup of polling stations, delivery of election materials, and orderly commencement of the voting process. In 2,183 (97%) of the observation reports received by the CECOE, observers noted that election officials were present when they arrived at the polling stations. Conversely, in 50 (2%) of the polling stations, observers noted that election officials were not present before the opening time of 6:00 AM.

3. Number of Officials Present at Polling Stations at the Start of Voting (6:00 AM)

At the commencement of voting, the CECOIE observed that in 2,146 (95%) polling stations, more than 3 election officials were present and had started working in accordance with the law. On the other hand, in 90 (4%) stations, exactly 3 election officials were confirmed present, while in 22 (1%) polling stations, fewer than 3 election officials were observed on-site.

4. Gender and Disability Representation among Election Officials

Among the observed polling stations, in 1,380 (61%) stations, more than one female election official was present; in 697 (31%) polling stations, there was one female official. Conversely, in 181 (8%) polling stations, it was observed that no female election officials were assigned.

Regarding the representation of persons with disabilities among the election officials, in 76 (3%) of the observed polling stations, more than one official with a disability was present. In 224 (10%) stations, one official with a disability was present. Conversely, in 1,958 (87%) stations, it was observed that there were no election officials with disabilities.

Regarding the gender distribution of polling station heads, in 587 (26%) stations, the head of the polling station was female. Similarly, we observed that in 54 (2%) polling stations, women with disabilities served as station heads, and in 65 (3%) polling stations, men with disabilities served as station heads.

5. Commencement of Voting

Out of the 2,258 polling stations observed by the CECOIE, voting began before 6:00 AM (local time 12:00) in 947 (42%) stations, and between 6:00 AM and 7:00 AM (local time 1:00) in 1,276 (57%) stations. Conversely, the CECOIE observed that voting started after 7:00 AM in 32 (1%) stations, and in 3 stations, the voting process had not yet begun at the time this statement was compiled.

6. Locations of Polling Stations

According to the electoral law, establishing polling stations in military camps, police stations, religious institutions, health facilities, bars/hotels, political party

offices, or private residences is prohibited.

Out of the 2,258 stations observed by the CECO, 2,182 (97%) stations were established in legally permitted locations. Conversely, 76 (3%) stations were found to be established in legally prohibited locations.

7. Campaign Signs and Campaigning Inside or Within a 200-Meter Radius of Polling Stations

Out of the 2,258 stations observed by the CECO, 2,171 (96%) stations showed no political campaign signs (posters) or campaign activities inside or within a 200-meter radius of the polling station. Conversely, we observed political party campaign signs, materials, or active campaign activities inside or within a 200-meter radius in 87 (4%) stations.

8. Accessibility and Suitability of Polling Stations

According to the electoral law, establishing polling stations in legally permitted areas, making them easily accessible to voters, and ensuring that basic electoral materials are fully available are essential for an orderly voting process. In particular, ensuring accessibility for women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, pregnant women, and parents with infants is crucial to guaranteeing the participation of all citizens.

- **Suitability for Women:** Out of the 2,258 stations observed by the CECO, 2,157 (96%) stations were observed to be suitable/convenient for women. Conversely, 101 (4%) polling stations were observed to be unsuitable for women.
- **Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs):** Out of the 2,258 polling stations observed, 2,110 (93%) stations were suitable for persons with disabilities to enter and vote without assistance. Conversely, we observed that 148 (7%) stations were not accessible or suitable for PWDs.
- **Accessibility for Vulnerable Groups:** Regarding suitability for the elderly, pregnant women, parents with infants, and voters with mobility issues, 2,158 (96%) stations were observed to be accessible and suitable. Conversely, 100 (4%) polling stations were observed to have difficulties in this regard.

9. Availability of All Voting Materials

Based on the CECOE's observations, it was confirmed that primary election materials—including ballots, the Board's stamp, indelible ink, ballot seals, voter registers, and the Board's ballot boxes—were fully present at the observed stations. Conversely, result sheets and reconciliation forms were present in 99% (1,693) of stations but were missing in 1% (11) of stations; additionally, complaint submission and testimony intake forms were available in 99% (1,680) of stations but were recorded as missing in 1% (24) of stations.

10. Verification of Ballot Boxes Being Empty Before Sealing

Out of the 2,258 polling stations observed by the CECOE, in 2,232 (99%) stations, it was observed that the ballot boxes were verified empty before being sealed. Conversely, in 26 (1%) polling stations, it was observed that the ballot boxes were not clearly shown to be empty before sealing. We observed that ballot seals were present in 2,253 stations, while in 5 stations, ballot seals were missing.

Critical Incidents

At the time this mid-day report was compiled, CECOE had received a total of 203 reports of critical incidents related to the opening and preparation processes, of which approximately 40 have been verified. The remaining 163 reported cases are still in the verification process, and detailed information will be disclosed in the preliminary report to be released by the CECOE.

Polling Stations Established in Prohibited Locations

- **Amhara Region, North Shewa Zone:** The Antsokiya and Gemza polling station was established inside a health center; it is officially named *Mekoy Health 3 B-1 Polling Station*.
- **Addis Ababa, Yeka Woreda 1:** A polling station was established in a tent pitched inside the compound of a health center.
- **Dire Dawa City Administration, Woreda 02:** Voting is taking place in a

room utilized inside the *Sabian Primary Hospital*.

Campaigning Inside Polling Stations or Within a 200-Meter Distance

- **Addis Ababa City, Addis Ketema Sub-City, Woreda 4:** At the Sefere Selam Pre-Primary School polling station, we observed a Prosperity Party agent actively conveying campaign messages.
- **Sidama Region, Hawassa City Administration:** At polling station 0851207010120, a Prosperity Party observer was seen campaigning to voters waiting in queue.

Observers Barred from Entering Polling Stations

- **Woldia (Amhara Region):** The CECOE's observer at the *Woldia Gudina* polling station was barred from entering. Although the observer arrived early at the polling station, explained the purpose of their presence to the election official, and presented their ID card, they were not permitted to enter.
- **Oromia Region, Illu Ababora Zone, Alge Sachi Woreda:** At polling station code 422111281401, our observer arrived on time but was barred from entering the polling station by the election official.
- **Oromia Region, Illu Ababora Zone, Alge Sachi Woreda:** At *Alge Polling Station No. 422111281401*, the observer was allowed to enter upon arrival at 6:00 AM, but after entering, they were not permitted to sit and observe and were subsequently removed from the station.
- **Amhara Region, South Wollo Zone:** At the *Adame Polling Station "A-1"*, the observer stated they did not have a Kebele ID card. Despite presenting a work ID card containing their full name and photo alongside the CECOE's observation badge, they were told they could not observe without a Kebele ID and were barred from entering the polling station.
- **Central Ethiopia Region, Hadiya Zone, Duna Woreda:** At the *Chefmera Kiray Bet* polling station No. 0748215020104, the female observer was barred from entering and observing on the grounds that the specific observation site was not explicitly written on her badge.

Repeated Assistance Conducted by Unauthorized Individuals

Other Than Polling Station Heads

- **Addis Ketema Sub-City, Woreda 4:** At the Sefere Selam Pre-Primary School polling station, unauthorized individuals were repeatedly providing assistance to voters inside the booths.
- **Addis Ababa, Kirkos Sub-City, Woreda 03:** At the *Edir Bet* (community hall) polling station, an unauthorized woman who had been assisting more than 14 voters was subsequently ordered to leave by the polling station head after the issue was noticed.
- **Northern Sidama, Gorche Woreda:** At the *Dona* polling station (specifically known as *Gorche 01*, polling station No. 0850910042012), we confirmed that the queue controller (marshal) was providing assistance to 30 voters.
- **Oromia Region, Nekemte City Administration:** At *Burqa Jato Polling Station No. 0432405390101*, an election official was observed entering the voting booth more than once to assist voters, regardless of whether they requested assistance or not.
- **Amhara Region, Awi Zone, Zigem Woreda:** At polling station No. 0315105111302, election officials distributing ballots were observed marking ballots for 10 voters before handing them over.

Sealing Ballot Boxes Without Confirming They Are Empty

- **Oromia Region, West Wollega, Haru Woreda:** At the *Genet Abo Kebele, Genet Abo* polling station (code 0426401691801), our observer noted that officials commenced voting without showing that the ballot box was empty beforehand.

Distributing Ballot Papers Without Stamps

- **Addis Ababa City, Arada Sub-City, Woreda 7:** At the *Tesfa Birhan Consumers* polling station (No. 1452706030103), our observer noted at 7:30 AM (local time 1:30 morning) that around 15 voters had been handed ballot papers without any stamp on them.

Mix-up/Swapping of Polling Station Materials

- **Addis Ababa City, Lemi Kura Sub-City:** At *Ayat Zone 3* sub-polling station,

ballots for candidates competing in Constituency 28 were mistakenly sent to Constituency 17. Voting was suspended until the issue was resolved, after which it resumed.

Security Disruptions

- **Amhara Region, Central Gondar Zone, Wegera Woreda:** At the *Amba Giorgis* town polling station (No. 031750508100, Kebele 02), although voting had started at 6:00 AM, the process was interrupted around 11:10 AM due to gunfire heard near the station.
- **North Wollo, Gazo Woreda:** At *Meket 2* polling station (No. 0314019071101), the voting process was suspended for about 40 minutes due to gunfire that occurred starting at 7:00 AM. At another station within the same woreda, the voting process was suspended from 6:30 AM to 7:10 AM due to the sound of heavy gunfire; the process resumed after 7:30 AM.
- **South Gondar Zone, Farta Woreda:** At polling station No. 0310718140216, the process was suspended due to the sound of gunfire. A similar disruption occurred in **Fogera Woreta** town (polling station 0311116140402).
- **Debre Tabor Town, Kebele 4:** Polling station officials were forced to close the stations and evacuate for the same reason. The station in Debre Tabor resumed operations at 9:00 AM. Meanwhile, at **Enatitu Maryam** polling station (0310718140107), after gunfire broke out at 8:35 AM, the process was suspended as staff evacuated while loading up materials and equipment.

Unauthorized Individuals inside Polling Stations

- **Amhara Region, South Wollo Zone, Legambo Woreda:** At the *Akesta* polling station (polling code 013403070301), unauthorized government officials entered, inspected the premises, and left.
- **Sidama Region, Hawassa City Administration, Tula Woreda:** At the *Mesafint Zeleke Kiray Bet* polling station (polling code 851206011111), unauthorized Kebele administrators were observed entering the secret voting booths and coercing voters.

June 1, 2026 (Ginbot 24, 2018 E.C.) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia For further information: Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for Elections (CECOE)

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