



Somaliland Non State Actors Forum

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Sahil, Gabilay and Bali-gubadle Voter Registration Preliminary Findings

Summary

From March 12 - 18 2016: Somaliland Non - State Actors Forum (SONSAF) in collaboration with Somaliland Civil Society Election Forum (SCISEF) deployed voter registration observers in the districts of Berbera, Sheikh, Gabelay and Bali-gubadle in which observers reached 150 voter registration centers of 82.87% out of 181 across these districts. This is the third mission of the domestic observers' deployment to observe how voter registration process is performing against its compliance with the legal and regulatory framework. Domestic observers pointed out that political parties visit to the regions starting from Togdheer region turned into campaigning and competition between political parties rather than monitoring how voter registration is performing in particularly Kulmiye and Waddani. Chairman of UCID Eng. Faysal Ali Warabe denounced the activities of Waddani and Kulmiye are pursuing along the voter registration process and this has caused inflammatory words exchanged by political parties through the media, especially Waddani and UCID. On the other hand, observers generally reported that the consequence and difficult conditions brought by the drought were in common throughout the regions and districts following the high temperature in the coastal areas of Saaxil region. Hence, the high mobilization of the people for the first day of the voter registration combined with technical problems tempered the registration process and caused some stampede where one voter registration center called Barwaaqo some minor incident occurred because three girls got simple injured when the police forces attempted to push the people back to the queue. In addition, the observed reported that double registration occurred in 2008-2009- currently NEC has succeeded to overcome due to online registration system.

General Overview

On March 12 2016 the voter registration started with four districts of Berbera, Sheikh, Gabilay and Bali-gubadle, over 181 voter registration centers deployed the kits. It is the third time that domestic observers succeeded to observe how the voter registration process is performing against its compliance with legal and regulatory framework signed by the political parties. The main aim of this civil society observation is to make sure that the process of the voter registration is accessible, transparent and credible.

Despite political parties are attempting to mobilize citizens and contribute the awareness raising and community education on voter registration process, but during various visits of the political parties, at each areas and upon the commencement of the voter registration, political parties namely KULMIYE and WADDANI have organized political rallies at each areas they visited, domestic observer reported that their supporters have raised the respective flags of the political parties namely Kulimye and Waddani.

This is contrary to the rules and regulations of the voter registration. National Electoral Commission and its Disciplinary Committee on voter registration have jointly issued instructions on 7th March 2016, which they intended political parties to refrain any breach against voter registration Code of Conduct dated on 7th January 2016, which the instructions addressed all political parties requesting to perform in conformity of the voter registration code of conduct signed by the political parties.

Moreover, the domestic observers have recommended to the Disciplinary Committee on voter registration to take an action to the political parties, who have obviously violated the voter registration code of conduct. Observers stated that mobilizing the public rally during the voter registration process has created unhealthy political competition between all political parties and among supporters.

The issue of the technical deficiencies of the voter registration has become more repetitive issue throughout the districts and regions but it is constantly resolved and domestic observers are recommending NEC to expand its technical operators in the remaining regions in order to avoid these temporary technical problems that often challenged the process of the voter registration. Due to the long distance and rough roads in the coastal areas of Saaxil region, the technical solutions took more than anticipated period and this has constrained the turnout and smoothness of the voter registration.

The domestic observers reported that the severe droughts affected the turnout and the moral of the people going to the registration centers particularly in Gabilay and Bali-gubadle districts in which the drought hugely interrupted the accessibility of the people in the voter registration

locations. On the other hand, many people who crossed the border of Ethiopia have also faced both border restrictions and circumstances brought by the droughts in particular Bali-Gubadle.

In this regard, domestic observers also revealed that the difficult circumstance brought by the harsh situation of the drought made the process of the voter registration worrying environment and observers are recommending the need to reconsider some of the voter registration centers in Gabilay and Bali-gudbale to give some additional kits in the residual period.

In the meantime, domestic observers have recommended to the NEC and other concerned stakeholders to employ different methodologies of the voter education and awareness raising activities, otherwise the shortage of the voter education may directly affect the general public understanding of the terms and conditions of the voter registration laid down law #37/2007.

Conclusion

The domestic observers reported that voter registration started on 12th March 2016 from the districts of Berbera, Sheikh, Gabilaly and Bali-gubadle has successfully ended for the first phase of 7 days. Despite that observers witnessed the consequences that droughts caused the lives of the people and livestock, which resulted severe conditions.

Domestic observers are appealing from the political parties to respect the voter registration code of conduct and recommended voter registration Disciplinary Committee to tight their monitoring of political parties and their compliance to the code of conduct.

To this end, Somaliland Non- State Actors Forum (SONSAF) is congratulating to the National Electoral Commission (NEC), for their successful conclusion of the voter registration in the third region of Sahil and some districts of Maroodijex, without dedication and assistance of the political parties, government, civil society and grass-root communities, this achievement will not be possible. Finally, SONSAF commends NEC for their competence to curb any attempts of the multiple voter registration as domestic observers confirmed.