

**DIRECTIVE FOR THE REGISTRATION OF
ELECTORS
Number 2/2009
(as amended)**

Article 1. Issuing Authority

The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia has issued this Directive pursuant to the authority granted to it by the Amended Electoral Law of Ethiopia Proclamation Number 532/2007.

Article 2. Short Title

This Directive may be cited as “Electors’ Registration Directive No.2/2009”

Article 3. Definitions:

Unless the context otherwise requires, in this Directive:

1. “FDRE” shall mean the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;
2. “Board” shall mean the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia;
3. “Political Organization or Political Party” shall mean a group legally registered to lawfully advance its political programme;
4. “General Election” shall mean elections to the House of Peoples’ Representatives and Regional State Councils conducted in accordance with relevant laws;
5. “Local Election” shall mean Elections to Zonal,

Woreda, City, Municipality, Sub -City or Keble Councils conducted in accordance with relevant laws;

6. “Polling Station” shall mean a location where voter registration, voting, and counting is carried out for elections at every level;
7. “Electoral Roll” shall mean a record wherein voters are registered at polling stations as electors for elections conducted at every level;
8. “Elector’s Identification Card” shall mean an identification card issued to an elector upon registration at polling stations;
9. “Registrar” shall mean a person who is a member of the polling station election officials who is assigned by the head of the polling station to register voters;
10. “Special Registration” shall mean registration conducted according to a special programme set to register those electors who were unable to register according to the regular timetable issued by the Board for the registration of voters because of force majeure or those voters who were not able to do so because of complaints lodged against their registration and in favour of whom a court has decided;
11. “Reelection’ shall mean an election to be conducted upon the decision of the Board in accordance with the Electoral Law or where

candidates get equal votes and it becomes impossible to determine the winner;

12. "Bye-election" shall mean an election conducted to fill in vacant seats of members whose mandates are terminated due to recall or any other reason;
13. "Referendum" shall mean a system of voting conducted when decided in accordance with the Constitution of the FDRE to assess public interest and to know the decision of the public;
14. "Electoral Law" shall mean the Proclamation to Amend the Electoral Law of Ethiopia Proclamation No. 532/2007;
15. "Person" shall mean any natural or juridical person.

Article 4. Scope of Application

This Directive shall be applicable to general and local elections, bye-elections and re-elections, and also to referendums conducted in accordance with the Constitution.

Article 5. Objective

The objective of this Directive is to set up a transparent system whereby the citizens are able to register impartially and without harassment so as to participate in government by electing their deputies.

Article 6. Gender Reference

In this Directive, provisions set out in the masculine gender shall also apply to the feminine gender.

Article 7. Structure of the Polling Station Organs

1. Each polling station shall have a committee composed of five election officials recruited from the constituency according to the electoral law.
2. Each election official shall fulfill the following criteria:
 - A. be loyal to the FDRE Constitution;
 - B. be non-partisan;
 - C. be a professional as the case may be;
 - D. be known for his good conduct.
3. Each polling station shall have five public observers who are impartial and elected by the public.
4. Each polling station shall have a Grievance Hearing Committee chaired by the head of the polling station and have two public observers as members.
5. The head of the polling station shall assign two of the election officials of the polling station as registrars.
6. The registration of voters shall be conducted by the assigned registrars.
7. Without prejudice to the provisions of sub-article 5 above, if an election official assigned as a registrar cannot be present at his post because of

force majeure, the head of the polling station shall instruct another polling station official to temporarily carry on the registration.

8. If a registrar cannot be present permanently at his post the head of the polling station shall replace him by immediately assigning one of the polling station officials present to take over as registrar.
9. Any polling station official assigned as a registrar:
 - A. Shall perform the task of registering of voters. He shall fill out the elector's identification card and shall immediately issue it to the registered voter;
 - B. When registering electors on the electors roll assigned to him, he shall do so only by using ball- point pens, in legible handwriting with no cancellation or erasure.

Article 8. Registration Timetable

1. Registration of candidates for general elections shall, throughout the nation, begin and end at dates to be fixed by the Board. The Board shall consult political parties before deciding on the dates for registration.
2. The Board shall, based on the constitution or decision of concerned Regional States, issue registration timetable for local elections. It shall hold consultations with political parties on the timetable.
3. The Board shall indicate the date of registration in its election timetable and continually announce the date on the mass media and advertise it 15 days before the start of the registration.

4. The registration of electors shall be carried out according to the timetable issued by the Board during government office working hours, weekends and public holidays

Article 9. Special Registration

1. The Board may, under special circumstances, decide a special registration date.
2. The Board decides on a special registration date:
 - A. to enable a person, who is eligible to vote but has encountered a force majeure, to register as an elector and
 - B. a person who comes to register by virtue of an appellate court decision after the deadline for registration has passed.
3. If the Board decides on a special registration date pursuant to this article:
 - A. it shall publicize its decision in any media it deems fit so that all those bodies who are concerned may be aware of it;
 - B. when polling stations receive the decision according to 'a' above, they shall issue an announcement so that the concerned electors may register pursuant to the directive issued by the Board.
 - C. polling stations shall register those electors who are allowed to register because of special circumstances within the timetable for special

registration on a special electors roll meant for this purpose at the end of the electors roll.

Article 10. Distribution of Documents and Advance Preparation for Elector Registration

1. The Board shall have all the documents to be used for the registration of electors delivered to all constituency offices 10 days before the commencement of the registration of electors.
2. The Board and election officials at all levels shall have the documents for elector registration delivered to the polling stations at least 8 days before the commencement date of elector registration.
3. The Board shall give training to election executive bodies at all levels on elector registration.

Article 11. Transfer of Election Documents and Materials

Each Constituency shall take delivery of documents and other materials sent to it for the registration of voters and dispatch it with appropriate care to every polling station. The transfer shall be effected against a legal transfer form.

Article 12. Safekeeping of Election Documents and Materials

1. Election officials at all levels shall make due care to be taken when election documents and materials are dispatched by the Board to the constituencies or to polling stations.

2. Constituency and polling station election officials shall prepare a suitable place for receiving and safekeeping of electors' rolls and other election documents and materials.
3. Constituency and polling station officials shall carefully keep the electors roll, and other election documents and materials in a secure place so that the documents and materials are safe from being damaged, burnt or stolen.

Article 13. Place for the Registration of Electors

1. The registration of electors shall be undertaken at polling stations established by the Board in the constituency where the electors reside.
2. It is prohibited to register electors outside polling stations by going door to door to their homes or other similar places.
3. Without prejudice to the provisions of sub -article 2 of this article, the Board may establish mobile polling stations taking into account the lifestyle of pastoralists.
4. Election officials shall arrange the place for the registration of electors and other election activities in such a way that it will be convenient to carry on these activities, and that it is centrally located and easily identifiable by electors.
5. The polling station where elector registration is carried out shall be announced to the public in time.

6. There shall not be more than one polling station at the same place.
7. In any election, the number of electors accommodated by a polling station shall not exceed one thousand.
8. If the Board estimates that there are more than one thousand electors in a polling station, it shall divide them into two groups and it shall have them register in two polling stations.
9. When the Board thus divides a polling station, it shall assure that it is not complicated and that it is clearly delimited and convenient to the elector.
10. The Board may change the venue of a polling station; it shall immediately inform competing political parties, candidates and the electorate of any change in the location of polling stations.

Article 14. Places that cannot serve for the Registration of Electors

The following places shall not serve as places for the registration of electors:

1. Military camps
2. Police stations
3. Churches
4. Mosques
5. Hospitals

6. Bars
7. Buildings of political or religious organizations and
8. Private homes

Article 15. Preparation of a Polling Station

1. With a view to making a polling station suitable for the registration of electors polling station election officials shall make the following preparation:
 - A. For the purpose of registering electors they shall prepare a room, tent or shed with a separate entrance and exit;
 - B. They shall arrange the seating in such a way that the public observers and candidates' representatives are seated opposite the registrars where they will be able to observe the process by seeing and hearing clearly the coming and going of electors to and from the place of registration;
 - C. They shall prepare a waiting area where electors who come to register are protected from the elements;
2. 15 days before the commencement of elector registration, election officials of polling stations shall clearly announce to the electorate:
 - A. The approach of the date for elector registration and indicate the duration of the registration process by specifying the dates when it will begin and end, and

- B. The polling station where the elector registration will be carried out.
3. With a view to enabling the electors to register without any hassle, the announcement under sub article 2 of this article shall:
 - A. be conspicuously written on a paper prepared for this purpose and hung or posted within the premises of the polling station or
 - B. be posted at a place where people congregate in large numbers or
 - C. be officially publicized in a way they dim fit.
 4. Election officials shall see to it that electors roll, the elector ID cards, ink pads and other documents and materials necessary for the registration of electors are ready.

Article 16. Preparation of Electors Rolls

1. Each polling station shall have two electoral rolls of its own according to the electoral law.
2. Before the date of the commencement of the registration of candidates, the electoral roll shall be prepared in the following manner:
 - A. On the front cover of the first and the second roll, it shall be written Roll Number 1 and Roll Number 2 respectively;
 - B. The name of the region, zone, woreda, kebele and the polling station and the year shall also be written on the front cover of both rolls;

- C. Page numbers should be carefully written in the space provided on the internal pages of the rolls;

Article 17. Persons Who Shall Be Present at the Place for Elector Registration

1. The following persons shall be present at the polling stations where electors are registered during the days when electors are registered:
 - A. Election officials;
 - B. Stationary agents of competing political parties or private candidates;
 - C. Public observers
2. Ten days before the commencement of the registration of electors, the head of the polling station shall notify in writing the persons enumerated under sub -article 1 of this article, to be present at the polling station on the date of registration;
3. The process of registration of electors shall not be interrupted because of the absence of a public observer, a representative of a competing political party or a private candidate who has been served notice to be present during the time of registration.

Article 18. Criteria for Registration as an Elector

1. A person shall fulfill the following criteria to be registered as an elector:
 - A. is an Ethiopian;
 - B. is 18 years old or above at the time of registration;
 - C. has been residing within the constituency for at least 6 months.
2. Where there is no written evidence to prove that the age of a person who wants to be registered or whether there is doubt in this regard, it shall be decided based on the testimony of a senior member of the family or relative of the person and where these are not available by any person who knows about the age of the individual after which the person shall be registered.

Article 19. Identification Cards to be presented to register as an Elector

1. A person who is eligible to register as an elector can do so in a polling station near his residence by presenting one of the following documents as the case may be:
 - A. an identification card to prove residence issued by the kebele in the city or rural area where the elector is a resident;
 - B. Employee identification card;
 - C. Student identification card;
 - D. Passport or

- E. in the absence of one of the above identity cards, a recently issued driver's license, a certificate to prove residence, a document given to prove discharge from the army, a refugee card issued by the United Nations or ID card issued to those who receive retirement benefits bearing a recent photograph of the elector or other similar identity cards.
2. An identification card issued according to sub article 1 'A' to 'D' may, irrespective of its validity, serve for the purpose of registration
 3. In the absence of the above mentioned documents it is possible to register an elector:
 - A. where the registrars recognize the elector or
 - B. where it is possible to identify the elector through a traditional or customary way.
 4. If it is still impossible to identify the elector through the means provided above registration may be carried out where it is possible to recognize the elector based on the testimony of public observers, which shall be duly recorded in the minutes.
 5. The minutes recorded pursuant to sub- article 4 above shall be signed by polling station public observers and election officials.

Article 20. Persons ineligible to register as electors

Persons listed hereunder cannot register as electors:

1. A person who is not an Ethiopian national;
2. A person who is below 18 years of age on the date of registration;
3. A person who is notoriously insane;
4. A person who is serving a prison term;
5. A person who has been deprived by law of his right to vote.

Article 21. The Registration Process

1. A person who appears before a registrar to be registered as an elector shall answer correctly all the questions addressed to him by the registrar with a view to establishing his identity; all the information he provides in this regard shall be carefully entered in the register prepared for this purpose.
2. To avoid a lopsided registration in only one of the registers, election officials shall effect the registration of electors as evenly distributed as possible between the two electoral rolls.
3. Eligible voters shall be served in order of their arrival and an elector whose turn it is to register shall appear before one of the registrars and his name shall be entered in the electors roll.

4. Old people and people with physical disabilities shall be given priority after informing the head of the polling station thereof.
5. The registrars shall, for the benefit of the public observers and the elector himself, speak out the particulars that they enter onto the electoral roll.
6. After an elector has been registered, he shall be made to put his signature or finger print depending on his abilities, or if a person is missing all his fingers, the registrar shall assist him to make a mark as far as is possible under the circumstances.
7. The infirm and the blind that are eligible to register as electors may register in person with the help of their assistants.
8. The assistant to infirm or blind persons shall be:
 - A. An Ethiopian;
 - B. 18 years old or above and
 - C. A person who is not a candidate or a representative of a candidate.

Article 22 . Registration in person at one time and in one place

1. No elector shall be registered more than once in one polling station or in more than one polling station.

2. The registration of electors including special registration shall be carried out only by appearing in person.

Article 23. Elector's Identification Card

Every person who is legally registered as an elector:

1. Shall be issued with an elector's identification card;
2. Each elector's identification card shall have the following paragraphs wherein all the particulars entered on the electoral register shall be copied:
 - A. the name of the elector including that of his grandfather;
 - B. his address- region, zone, woreda, kebele, polling station, house number, village and locality;
 - C. Roll number, serial number and page number;
 - D. the signature of the elector and the signature of the registrar and
 - E. The date of registration.
3. An elector shall have only one elector's identification card.
4. Any person who is registered as an elector shall carry his elector's identification card when he comes to the polling station on polling day.
5. Any elector whose elector's identification card has been lost or damaged may inform the matter to the polling station during working hours before or on voting day. Where the polling station is convinced of the matter, the elector may get a replacement or be allowed to vote.

Article 24. Particulars of the Electoral Roll

1. The electoral roll shall have columns for entering the following particulars:
 - A. serial number of registration
 - B. date of registration
 - C. full name, including that of the grandfather
 - D. age
 - E. sex
 - F. duration of residence within the constituency
 - G. signature or thumb mark at the time of registration
 - H. signature or thumb mark during voting
 - I. house number/village or locality/
 - J. remarks
2. The particulars mentioned under sub -article 1 'C' 'D' 'E' 'F' 'G' and 'I' of this article shall be used during elector registration to enter the information obtained by asking the elector who came to be registered and by verifying his documents.
3. What is provided for under sub article 1- 'H' of this article is the column on which the elector puts his signature on polling day.

4. If multiple elections are to be held and the elector has to register only once, then additional columns similar to the one provided for under sub article 'H' could be added.

Article 25. Minutes to be recorded upon conclusion of each day's Registration

1. Upon the conclusion of each day's elector registration, the last elector's serial number and the total number of registered electors shall be filled out according the form prepared by the Board.
2. The form shall be signed by the registrars of the polling station and a representative of the polling station public observers.
3. The form thus recorded and signed shall be carefully kept in the polling station.

Article 26. Closure of the Regular Elector's Roll

On the final day of elector's registration at the end of the time for elector registration:

1. The registration on both rolls shall stop;
2. Both rolls shall immediately be closed after the activities mentioned hereunder are undertaken;
 - A. On both rolls, an unbroken zigzag line shall be drawn from left to right on the lines below the name of the last elector registered.
 - B. After the rolls have been closed according to 'A' above, the total number of electors on each register shall be

classified by sex and entered separately for the purpose of certification.

- C. The total number of electors arrived at as on 'B' above shall be entered on the last line at the end of the last page of each roll by writing: "Male ----- Female----- Total-----". This shall be recorded in the minutes and signed by polling station officials and the public observers.
- D. No new electors shall be registered or shall new entries be made or shall anything else be written on the electoral roll after it has been closed and after it has been signed by election officials and public observers unless the Board specially decides otherwise and communicates its decision to the concerned polling stations through an appropriate notice.
- E. In addition to the certified document recorded on the final date of elector registration, election officials and public observers shall put their signature at the end of the entry made on each roll according to sub -article 2(c) of this article.

Article 27. Closure of the Special Roll

After electors have been registered on the special roll pursuant to the decision of the Board to this effect pursuant to Article 9 of this Directive, the special roll shall be closed in the following manner:

1. Special registration shall be concluded and the roll closed according to the timetable issued by the Board;
2. The closure of the special register shall follow the procedure laid down under Article 26 of this Directive for the closure of the regular electors roll.

Article 28. Displaying Electoral Roll to the Public

1. Upon the conclusion of electors registration, the electoral roll shall be officially displayed to the public for five consecutive days within the premises of the polling station.
2. The electors roll shall be displayed to the public in the following manner:
 - A. The persons who shall take delivery of the electors roll and are responsible to display it to the public are those election officials who are assigned as registrars;
 - B. The head of the polling station shall arrange for the members of the public who wish to see the electors roll to present themselves one by one according to the order of their arrival;
 - C. The registrars shall show the information requested by the public;
 - D. A person who requests to see the electors roll shall only look at the relevant pages of the roll or listen to it being read and he shall never touch the electors roll or write anything in it or make any mark thereon.
3. Any person who wishes to look at the electors register shall carry an identity card or a document to prove that he is an agent of an organization or entity he is representing as the case may be;
4. The electors roll shall be displayed to the public in the presence of the polling station public observers, representatives of political party or private candidates and polling station officials;
5. The electors roll shall be displayed to the public according to sub -article (1) for five consecutive days including weekends and public holidays during working hours of government offices;
6. At the end of the five days during which the electors roll has been displayed, a document shall be drawn up containing the following information:
 - A. the fact that the electors roll has actually been displayed to the public for five consecutive days;
 - B. the content of the information requested by the public in brief and whether this has been provided or not;
 - C. if there are complaints lodged by the public after looking at the rolls and the response provided;
 - D. whether, public observers, representatives of candidates of political parties or private candidates and polling station officials were

present or not during the five days in which the electors roll has been on display. This document shall be signed by the public observers and election officials and kept as an official document.

Article 29. Cancellation of Registration

1. Except for persons who are notoriously insane or fraudulently registered, or is in prison following a conviction, no registered elector shall be cancelled from the electoral register following a complaint.
2. When electors are imprisoned after a conviction, or when they become insane or when they act fraudulently, courts and 'Idirs' shall have a duty to immediately report the fact to:
 - A. the regional branch office of the secretariat of the Board or
 - B. the constituency or
 - C. the polling station
3. The regional branch office of the secretariat of the board or constituency or polling station which has received information pursuant to sub -article 2 above shall:
 - A. Cancel immediately the elector from the electors roll;
 - B. Record in the minutes the evidence for cancelling the elector according to sub- article (A) above;
 - C. the minutes recorded according (B) above, shall be signed by election officials and public observers.

4. Any person who fraudulently registers after he had been interdicted to vote shall be cancelled from the electors roll.
5. If any person is found to have fraudulently registered in the name of a deceased person and if election officials are convinced thereof, he shall immediately be cancelled from the electoral roll and the case will be brought to the concerned judicial authority.
6. Under the provisions of this article, an elector may be cancelled from the electoral roll up to polling day.

Article 30 Prohibited Activities during Elector Registration

Anybody who commits one of the following prohibited activities shall be prosecuted according to the law:

1. A person who is registered on the electoral roll without fulfilling the criteria to qualify as an elector;
2. The registrar who registers an elector knowing that he does not qualify;
3. A registrar who registers electors outside the dates and time fixed for the purpose and contrary to the electoral timetable;
4. A person who is registered as an elector more than once , or in more than one polling station or

who is found holding more than one elector's identity card;

5. A person who provides false information or evidence, or false document when registering as an elector;
6. A person who intimidates electors in any way to prevent them from registering or who gives false information or evidence for the same purpose;
7. A person who curtails or prevents another from exercising his right to register as an elector or lodge a complaint or who interferes with the exercise of that right;
8. A person who alters, crosses out or erases an elector identity card
9. A person who crosses out or erases from any electoral document a legally registered person;
10. A person who registers electors without being a registrar or without being assigned as a registrar by the head of the polling station according to article 7 sub- article 7 of this directive.

Article 31. Lodging a Complaint

Complaints concerning elector registration shall be resolved pursuant to the provisions of Directive Number 1/2009 issued by the Board.

Article 32. Forms to be Utilized during Elector Registration and the Submission of Reports

1. Election execution organs at all levels shall submit reports on their elector registration activities to election execution organs above;
2. The report to be submitted under sub -article 1 of this article shall be done pursuant to the timetable issued by the Board.

Article 33. Duty to Cooperate

Every person or organ shall have the duty to cooperate in implementing the provisions of this Directive.

Article 34. Penalty

Any person who violates this Directive or who commits the offence of deliberately obstructing the electoral process shall be punishable according to the appropriate law.

Article 35. Repealed Directives

Any directive or practice that is inconsistent with matters covered by this directive shall not be applicable to them.

Article 36 Effective date

This Directive shall come into force on August 19, 2009.

Merga Bekana (Professor)
Chairman
National Electoral Board of Ethiopia