

Somaliland: Code of conduct for the political parties voter registration process

REPUBLIC OF SOMALILAND NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE POLITICAL PARTIES ON THE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS

HARGEISA, 10.02.2009

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Preamble

After holding a series of consultative meetings in which the results and outcomes of the Voter Registration Process were discussed and assessed,

Fully aware of the importance of the Voter Registration Process both in the democratization and electoral process,

Mindful that the success of the Voter Registration will further advance the Democratization process and the cause of Somaliland,

Having seen Law No: 37/2007: The Somaliland Voter Registration Law, in particular Article 6, Article 33, and Article 36

Having seen Amendment to Law No: 37/2007, in particular Article 3.b, and Article 11
Having engaged in serious discussions and deliberations to review and analyze the present Somaliland situation and the objectives noted gaps and achievements as reported by the national Electoral Commission.

Expressing gratitude and appreciation for the Somaliland people, the local VR teams and the international supporters as well as the media.

Have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of this Code of Conduct which was jointly developed by the National Electoral Commission and the three Political Parties and which was signed by representatives of the three parties and the National Electoral Commission.

Objectives

The following objectives shall be the focus of this Code of Conduct:

1. To ensure that the development of the Final Voter List is conducted in the spirit of the law and in the best interest of the country.
2. To address the possible gaps of the Voter Registration as reported by the National Electoral Commission (NEC).
3. To reach a consensus agreement on the procedures to use in concluding the Voter Registration process, culminating in the publishing of the Final Voter List.
4. To ensure consensus endorsement and acceptance of the final outcome of the Final Voter List.
5. To have the Code of Conduct, which establishes the necessary agreements to achieve the above-stated objectives, and is signed in a public ceremony by the senior representatives of

the Somaliland political parties (UDUB, KULMIYE & UCID) and co-signed by NEC.

Noted Gaps in the Voter Registration Process

The actual process of registering voters has produced a number of gaps that must be addressed in order to solidify the process and ensure the results are technically sound and that the Final Voter List warrants the confidence and support of the voting populace. Gaps in the process, witnessed throughout Somaliland, include:

1. Limited technical gaps and errors by the operators and equipment.
2. Non-fingerprinted registrants throughout Somaliland.
3. Double and multiple registrants throughout Somaliland.
4. Under-aged registrants throughout Somaliland.

Agreed Resolutions:

The following resolutions shall be applied to the process of developing the Final Voter List, the voter roster for each of the official polling stations.

1. The Technical Committee (also referred to as the Task Force), and as called for in Article 36 of the Voter Registration Law, shall oversee the development and validate the draft Voter List. All recommendations to NEC by the Technical Committee, through their oversight, must be unanimous and forwarded to NEC for consideration. NEC, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Political Parties shall ensure that their Committee members are qualified to carry out these responsibilities and per Article 36 of the Voter Registration Law, are appointed by NEC. It is the responsibility of NEC to take into consideration the recommendations of the Technical Committee before publishing the Final Voter List.
2. The Voter Registration server, which houses the registrant database and recognition software, shall have controlled and limited access. NEC shall ensure that only the following technical persons, making up the Server Team² are present at any time in the Server Room unless unanimously agreed upon by the Technical Committee:
 - a. The National Register Officer (or acting³)
 - b. The Chairman of the Technical Committee⁴ (NEC Commissioner)
 - c. The ECIL⁵ technical expert
 - d. The Interpeace Regional Director for Eastern and Central Africa⁶
 - e. The Interpeace Voter Registration Programme Director ⁷
3. An Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) will be utilized to disqualify all double and multiple registrants who have been electronically fingerprinted.
4. A Facial Recognition System will be utilized to further assess for double and multiple registrants.
5. The Server Team shall run the recognition software and establish the parameters for qualifying/disqualifying registrants based on data collected from the recognition software. The Server Team will develop a draft set of these qualification parameters and submit to the Technical Committee for unanimous approval and forwarded to NEC for final authorization. These parameters must be consistent with the Voter Registration Law and its amendment.

6. The approved qualification parameters will be applied to the data of all registrants to identify all qualified and disqualified registrants. From this, the Server Team will produce the draft Final Voter List as well as an annex report identifying all disqualified registrants and the reason for their disqualification (based on the approved parameters for disqualification).

7. The Technical Committee shall unanimously approve the Final Voter List, after which the lists shall be forwarded to NEC for final authorization and publishing.

8. Under age registrants shall be discouraged through a public awareness campaign warning all under-aged registrants from voting. Disqualification of under-age voting shall not be carried out at the polling center on Election Day.

9. Given the large number of double and multiple registrants, it is imperative that NEC take the prescribed legal action against violators of Article 33: Prohibition to have more than one card. Greater awareness must also be brought forth by NEC regarding the criminality of holding more than one card.

Explanation of the issues mentioned above (Index)

1. The signature of the NEC in this code of conduct means that there are gaps and criticism towards the voter registration and that NEC is prepared to address these issues.

2. Technical expert from ECIL and the acting national registrar will be working on the Server. The other members will go there for an inspection once in a while and for support

3. The acting registrar is Tani Omer

4. The Commissioner of NEC is Ismail Muse Nur

5. ECIL company (The Electronic Company of India Limited) is the company that produced the registration equipment and is represented by Sunil Kumar Reddy who is highly trained for the server

6. Interpeace regional Director for Eastern and Central Africa is Jerry McCann

7. Interpeace Director for registration is Ruben Zamora

Signatories:

Political Parties' Representatives

1. Jama Yasin Farah – Secretary-General of UDUB party

2. Kayse Hassan Egeh – Secretary-General Of Kulmiye party

3. Mohamed Hassan Bashe – Secretary-General of the UCID party

NEC Representative:

1. Jama M. Omer – NEC Chairperson