

The Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Coalition for Elections (Coalition for Elections)

Preliminary Observation Report

June 03, 2026

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Introduction

The Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Coalition for Elections (CECOE) is known to have deployed 2,506 sitting observers and 867 mobile observers, totaling 3,373 observers from the Coalition, to conduct national Citizen Election Observation for the 7th General Election held on June 01, 2026. These observers were recruited from the Coalition's 101 member organizations. The deployment of the Coalition's observers took place in electoral districts excluding the Tigray region, eight (8) electoral districts in the Amhara region, and 5 contentious electoral districts. This deployment strategy is based on a proportional observation method that considers the number of polling stations in each region.

The Coalition's sitting observers, in the polling stations to which they were assigned, observed the organization and opening of the stations, the voting process, the closing of polling stations, the vote counting process, and the official posting of results at the station level, starting from 5:30 AM. On the other hand, each mobile observer visited and observed at least six (6) different polling stations. By deploying mobile and sitting observers, the Coalition was able to cover 7,723 stations, or 15 percent, out of a total of 51,026 polling stations established by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia.

This preliminary observation report is based on the five (5) polling day processes reported by the Coalition's sitting observers from the stations where they were deployed (namely, the organization and opening of the stations, the voting process, the closing of polling stations, the vote counting process, and the official posting of results at the station level).



The report is organized into six main sections; the main findings included within it are documented based on the 2,506 polling stations where the Coalition's permanent observers were deployed. On the other hand, the critical incidents discussed in the report were compiled from reports received from both permanent and mobile observers deployed by the Coalition.

Section 1: Organization and Opening of Polling Stations

1.1. Location of Polling Stations

According to the electoral law, polling stations are prohibited from being established in military camps, police stations, religious institutions, health facilities, bars or hotels, political party offices, or private residences.

Among the 2,506 stations observed by the Union, 2,490 (99%) stations were observed to have been established in legally permitted locations. Conversely, 16 (1%) stations were observed to have been established in legally prohibited locations.

1.2. Regarding Observers Being Allowed to Enter and Observe Polling Stations

The electoral law stipulates that election observers recognized by the Board can freely enter their assigned polling stations and observe the process. Among the 2,506 stations observed by the Union, approximately 2,503 (100%) were able to enter the stations and observe without any restrictions.

Conversely, it was noted that observers were denied entry to 3 polling stations.

1.3. Presence of Election Officials at Polling Stations at Opening Time

Election officials are required to be present at polling stations before the legally stipulated opening time of 6:00 AM. This is a prerequisite for the timely preparation of the polling station, the arrival of election materials, and the orderly commencement of the voting process.



Out of the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Union, in 2,428 (97%) stations, the Union's observers noted the presence of election officials when they arrived at the polling stations.

Conversely, in 55 (2%) polling stations, the Union's observers noted that election officials were not present at the opening time (6:00 AM) when the observers arrived. In 23 (1%) stations, observers did not arrive until 11:30.

1.4. Regarding the number of polling officials present at polling stations at the start of voting

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the union, the union noted that more than three (3) officials were present and started work at 2,377 (95%) stations. In contrast, it was confirmed that three (3) election officials were present at 102 (4%) stations, while fewer than three (3) election officials were observed at 27 (1%) stations.

1.5. Regarding ensuring ballot boxes are empty before sealing

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the union, 2,499 (100%) stations reported that ballot boxes were empty before being sealed. Conversely, it was observed that ballot boxes at 7 (0%) stations were not clearly seen to be empty before sealing. We observed that ballot box seals were present at 2,500 stations, while ballot box seals were absent at 6 stations.

1.6. Regarding the completeness of all voting materials

Among the 2,506 stations observed by the union, ballot papers were found in 2,505 (100%), the board's legal stamp in 2,505 (100%), indelible ink in 2,505 (100%), voter registration lists in 2,504 (100%), and the board's ballot boxes in 2,505 (100%) stations. Conversely, the results declaration and reconciliation form was not found at 3 (0%) stations; and the complaint submission and witness reception form was not found at 38 (2%) stations.

1.7. Regarding the gender and disability composition of election officials



Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the union, more than 1 female election official was present at 1,508 (60%) stations; in contrast, we observed that 793 (32%) polling stations had 1 female official. Conversely, we observed that no female election officials were assigned to 205 (8%) stations.

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the union, more than 1 election official with a disability was found at 88 (4%) of them. On the other hand, we observed that 1 official with a disability was present in 247 (10%) stations. In contrast, it was observed that there were no election officials with disabilities in 2,171 (87%) stations.

1.8. Regarding the gender and disability composition of polling station Officials

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Coalition, in 655 (26%) stations, the head of the polling station was a woman. Similarly, we observed that in 66 (3%) polling stations, women with disabilities served as station heads, and in 76 (3%) polling stations, men with disabilities served as station heads. In 1,709 (68%) stations, the head of the station was a man.

Part 2: Regarding the Voting Process

2.1. Regarding the Permission for Observers to Monitor the Voting Process

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Coalition, it was observed that in 2,479 (99%) polling stations, observers were not asked to leave the station during the voting process.

Conversely, it was observed that in 27 (1%) polling stations, the Coalition's observers were asked to leave the station during the voting process.

2.2. Commencement of Voting

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Coalition, the Coalition observed that in 1,091 (44%) stations, the voting process began before 6:00



AM, and in 1,370 (55%) stations, it began between 6:00 AM and 7:00 AM. Conversely, it was observed that 36 (1%) stations began between 7:01 AM and 9:00 AM, 3 stations between 9:01 AM and 12:00 PM, and in 6 (0%) stations, the voting process had not started by 12:00 PM.

2.3. Regarding the Presence of Campaign Signs and Campaigning Activities within the Polling Station or within 200 Meters

Among the 2,506 stations observed by the Coalition, it was observed that in 2,495 (100%) stations, there were no political party campaign signs (posters) or campaigning activities within the polling station or within 200 meters. Conversely, we observed the presence of political party campaign signs, materials, or campaigning activities in 11 (0%) stations or within a 200-meter radius.

2.3. Regarding the Accessibility and Convenience of Polling Stations

According to the electoral law, it is essential for polling stations to be established in legally authorized locations, to be easily accessible to voters, and to be equipped with basic election materials for the voting process to proceed in an orderly manner. Specifically, the existence of accessibility for women, people with disabilities, the elderly, pregnant women, and parents with infants is crucial to ensure the participation of all citizens.

Regarding the convenience of the locations where polling stations were established for women, the coalition observed that out of the 2,506 stations it monitored, 2,383 (95%) were convenient for women. Conversely, it was observed that 123 (5%) polling stations were not convenient for women.

Regarding the accessibility of polling stations for people with disabilities, out of the 2,506 polling stations monitored by the coalition, we observed that 2,353 (94%) stations were convenient for people with disabilities to vote independently without assistance, while conversely, 153 (6%) stations were not convenient for people with disabilities.



Out of the 2,506 stations monitored by the coalition, we observed that 2,399 (96%) stations were convenient for the elderly, pregnant women, parents with infants, and voters with mobility issues. Conversely, we observed that 107 (4%) polling stations had problems in this regard.

2.4. Regarding voters who deserve priority

Out of the 2,506 polling stations monitored by the coalition, it was observed that 2,351 (94%) polling stations had queue controllers giving priority to the elderly, people with disabilities, pregnant women, parents with infants, as well as uniformed defense and police personnel.

Conversely, it was observed that 155 (6%) polling stations did not give appropriate priority to voters who deserved it in this regard.

2.5. Presence of domestic observers other than coalition election observers

Out of the 2,506 polling stations monitored by the coalition, it was observed that 1,908 (76%) polling stations had other domestic observers present in addition to the coalition's observers.

Conversely, it was observed that 598 (24%) polling stations did not have other domestic observers present in addition to the coalition's observers.

2.6 Attacks, Disturbances, Threats, or Harassment at Polling Stations

Of the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Union, it was noted that no attacks, threats, or harassment occurred against election officials, observers, or political party agents at 2,503 (100%) of the polling stations. However, attacks, disturbances, threats, or harassment were observed at or around 26 (1%) of the stations.

2.7 Voters Not Registered in the Voter List or Without Identification



Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Union, it was noted that in 2,368 (94%) of them, all voters had their names listed in the voter register and possessed voter identification.

Conversely, in 130 (5%) of the polling stations, it was observed that 1 to 10 individuals were allowed to vote without their names being in the voter register and without holding a voter identification card. In 8 (0%) of the polling stations, it was observed that more than 10 individuals were allowed to vote without their names being in the voter register and without holding a voter identification card.

2.8 Voters Registered in the Voter List Who Did Not Vote

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Union, it was noted that in 2,458 (98%) of them, no person whose name was on the voter register was prevented from voting.

Conversely, in 46 (2%) of the polling stations, it was observed that 1 to 10 individuals whose names were on the voter register were prevented from voting. In 2 (0%) of the polling stations, it was observed that more than 10 individuals whose names were on the voter register were prevented from voting.

2.9 Assistance Provided to Voters Requiring Support

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Union, in 2,277 (91%) of them, elderly, disabled, or illiterate voters were allowed to be assisted by an aide of their own choice.

Conversely, it was observed that in 32 (1%) polling stations, voters requiring assistance were not allowed to be helped by an assistant of their own choice. In 197 (8%) polling stations, it was noted that there were no voters in the queue who required assistance.

2.10 Repeated Voter Assistance

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the coalition, it was noted that in 2,187 (87%) polling stations, no one other than the presiding officer was seen assisting different voters more than once.



Conversely, in 87 (3%) polling stations, it was observed that someone other than the presiding officer was assisting different voters more than once. In 232 (9%) polling stations, it was noted that there were no voters requiring assistance.

2.11 Voting Instructions Given by Election Executives

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the coalition, it was noted that in 2,487 (99%) polling stations, election executives, while explaining voting procedures to voters, did not advise them to vote for a specific party or candidate.

Conversely, in 19 (1%) polling stations, election executives were observed advising voters to vote for a specific party or candidate.

2.12. Regarding Indelible Finger Ink

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the coalition, it was noted that in 2,413 (96%) polling stations, every voter had indelible finger ink applied before casting their vote.

Conversely, in 87 (3%) polling stations, it was noted that 1 to 10 voters were allowed to cast their votes without indelible ink being applied to their fingers.

In 6 (0%) polling stations, it was observed that more than 10 voters were allowed to cast their votes without indelible ink.

2.13. Regarding the stamping of ballot papers

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Union, it was noted that in 2,442 (97%) stations, all ballot papers were stamped before being issued to voters.

In 59 (2%) stations, the Union observed that 1 to 10 ballot papers were issued to voters without being stamped.

Furthermore, in 5 (0%) stations, it was observed that more than 10 ballot papers were issued to voters without being stamped.

2.14. Regarding the secrecy of voting

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Union, it was noted that in 2,337 (93%) stations, the secrecy of voting was not violated.



Conversely, 151 (6%) polling stations observed a violation of voting secrecy for 1 to 10 voters.

Moreover, in 18 (1%) stations, it was observed that the secrecy of voting was violated for more than 10 voters. This includes situations such as entering the secret polling booth following voters, or requesting to see marked ballot papers.

2.15. Regarding the placement of ballot boxes

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Coalition, it was noted that in 2,502 (100%) polling stations, the ballot boxes were placed in a clearly visible location. Conversely, it was observed that in 4 (0%) polling stations, the ballot boxes were not placed in a clearly visible location.

2.16. Regarding the Interruption of the Voting Process

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Consortium, it was noted that the voting process was not interrupted at any time in 2,466 (98%) of the polling stations. Conversely, in 40 (2%) of the stations, it was observed that the voting process was interrupted.

2.17. Regarding the Presence of Political Party Agents

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Consortium, it was noted that political party agents were present at 1,635 (65%) of the polling stations. On the other hand, it was observed that political party agents were not present at 871 (35%) of the polling stations.

2.18. Assistance Provided to Voters Requiring Support

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Consortium, 2,277 (91%) of the polling stations allowed elderly, disabled, or illiterate voters to be assisted by an aide of their own choice.

Conversely, it was observed that 32 (1%) of the polling stations did not allow voters requiring support to be assisted by an aide of their own choice. In 197 (8%) of the polling stations, it was noted that there were no voters in the queue who required support.



Section 3: Regarding the Closure of Polling Stations,

According to the law, polling stations should close at 6:00 PM. However, due to the presence of many voters still in queues at the closing time, the Board extended the closing time until 12:00 AM (midnight).

3.1. Polling Station Closing Time

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Union, it was noted that 313 (12%) polling stations closed before 12:00. 1,848 (74%) polling stations closed between 12:00 and 1:00, 104 (4%) stations between 1:00 and 3:00, and 241 (10%) polling stations closed after 3:00.

3.2. Voters in Line at Closing Time

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Union, it was noted that at 780 (31%) polling stations, there were no people in line at closing time.

It was observed that at 1,715 (68%) polling stations, all people who were in line were able to vote. However, at 9 (0%) polling stations, it was noted that some of the people who were in line were not allowed to vote. Furthermore, it was observed that at 2 (0%) polling stations, all people who were in line were not allowed to vote.

Section 4: Regarding the Vote Counting Process

4.1. Regarding Observers Being Allowed to Observe During the Vote Counting Process

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Union, it was noted that at 2,490 (99%) polling stations, the Union's observers were not asked to leave the station during the vote counting.

Conversely, it was observed that at 16 (1%) polling stations, the Union's observers were asked to leave the station during the vote counting.

4.2. Location and Time of Vote Counting



Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the coalition, 2,447 (98%) stations observed that the vote count was conducted at the polling station on election day. Conversely, it was observed that in 59 (2%) stations, the vote count was not conducted at the station on election day.

Additionally, 59 (2%) stations observed that the count was not conducted at the polling station where votes were cast.

4.3. Interruption of Vote Count

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the coalition, 2,446 (98%) stations observed that the vote count was conducted without interruption. Conversely, it was observed that in 34 (1%) polling stations, the vote counting process was interrupted. Furthermore, in 26 (1%) stations, the count was not conducted at the station.

4.4. Intervention or Intimidation during Vote Count

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the coalition, 2,468 (98%) polling stations observed no intervention or intimidation during the vote count.

Conversely, it was observed that in 12 (0%) stations, there was intervention or intimidation during the vote count. Furthermore, in 26 (1%) stations, we observed that the count was not conducted at the station where votes were cast.

4.5. Display of Marks Made on Ballot Papers

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the coalition, 2,415 (96%) polling stations observed that the counting was conducted by clearly displaying the marks made by voters on the ballot papers.

Conversely, 65 (3%) stations observed that the counting was conducted without clearly displaying the marks made by voters on the ballot papers. In 26 (1%) stations, the coalition observed that the vote count was not conducted within the stations.

4.6. Regarding the identification of valid and invalid ballots



Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Consortium, 2,462 (98%) stations observed election officials following a uniform procedure to identify valid and invalid ballots. Conversely, it was observed that 16 (1%) stations did not have election officials following a uniform procedure for identifying valid and invalid ballots. In 28 (1%) stations, it was observed that the counting was not conducted at the polling station.

4.7. Markings made by election officials on ballot papers

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Consortium, it was observed that 2,407 (96%) stations did not have election officials making marks on ballot papers. Conversely, it was observed that 77 (3%) polling stations had election officials making marks on ballot papers. In 22 (1%) stations, it was noted that the counting was not conducted at the polling station.

4.8. Regarding formal complaints submitted to the polling station head

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Consortium, it was observed that 2,451 (98%) stations had no complaints submitted to the polling station head during the opening of the polling station, voting, counting, and announcement of results. Conversely, it was observed that 55 (2%) polling stations had complaints submitted to the polling station head during the opening of the polling station, voting, counting, and announcement of results.

Section 5: Regarding the official posting of results at the polling station level

5.1. Posting of Results Statement and Reference Form

Among the 2,506 polling stations observed by the Consortium, 2,440 (97%) stations observed that a copy of the results statement and reference form was posted on the station door for public viewing. On the other hand, we observed that 40 (2%) polling stations did not have a copy of the results statement and reference form posted on the polling station door for public



viewing. In 26 (1%) stations, the Consortium observed that the counting was not conducted at the station where votes were cast.

Section 6: Issues Requiring Attention

The CEOE data Center, established on Election Day, collected various issues requiring attention during the voting process from the 7,723 polling stations observed by its total of 3,373 sitting and mobile observers. After investigating and confirming these issues, the Coalition presents them as follows:

1. **Polling Stations Established in Prohibited Locations:** We observed that polling stations were established in prohibited locations in a total of 11 stations across Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Harari, and Sidama regions, as well as Dire Dawa and the South West Ethiopia Region.
2. **Campaigning in or within 200 Meters of Polling Stations:** Campaign activities outside of what is legally permitted were observed in a total of 9 stations across Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Sidama, and South Ethiopia regions, both within the polling stations and within a 200-meter radius.
3. **Prevention of Observers from Entering Polling Stations:** Observers were prevented from entering polling stations in 11 stations located in Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Central Ethiopia, and South West Ethiopia regions.
4. **Repeated and Unauthorized Assistance by Persons Other Than the Polling Station Head:** Repeated and unauthorized assistance by persons other than the polling station head was observed in 22 stations located in Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Central Ethiopia, Sidama, South Ethiopia regions, Benishangul-Gumuz Region, and Dire Dawa City Administration.



5. **Security Disturbances:** In 19 stations in the Amhara and Oromia regions, the voting process was interrupted due to security disturbances, but the voting process subsequently resumed.
6. **Presence of Unauthorized Individuals in Polling Stations:** Unauthorized individuals were found in a total of 4 stations across Amhara, Sidama, and Central Ethiopia regions, as well as in Addis Ababa.

Finally, we thank the people of Ethiopia for their active participation in the 7th General Election, especially by registering and casting their votes from the beginning to the end, and particularly for the patience shown by queuing up to vote on Election Day.

Furthermore, we extend our gratitude to the member organizations of the CEOE, the CEOE observers deployed throughout Ethiopia, the staff of the CEOE office, and the Data Center experts for their constructive contribution to the building of our country's democratic system.

We would also like to thank the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia for executing this crucial electoral process for our country, the competing political parties, the media outlets that provided election coverage, the civil society organizations that participated in election observation, voter education, and preparing political party debates, and the security forces who played their part in ensuring the peacefulness of the process for their efforts in making this election process happen.

Overall, the Coalition observed that the voting process in the polling stations it monitored was characterized by high public participation, was largely peaceful, was conducted by election executives with high diligence, saw active participation from political parties, journalists, and media, and was free from major shortcomings.



Following the conclusion of the 7th General Election, the Coalition calls upon all competing parties and the entire people of Ethiopia to patiently await the election results and to accept the results when they are announced by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, and to submit any grievances they may have within the existing legal framework.

The full details of this report will be presented in the CECOIE comprehensive observation report, to be released shortly.

**Thank you!!
June 3, 2026 E.C.**