



Center for Policy Analysis
Peace, Democracy, Human rights

BRIEFING PAPER: SOMALILAND VOTER CARDS DISTRIBUTION

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BACKGROUND

The long awaited presidential election in Somaliland is scheduled on 13th November 2017. The voter cards distribution started on 29th April 2017. To provide voters cards to the registered citizens, the electoral body started the first phase of distributing voter cards at Awdal, Sahil and the coastal districts of Sanaag. The second phase commenced on 8th July from Maroodijeeh (Hargeisa) and Togdheer. The third and final phase will start on 12th August 2017 in Sool and Sanaag. According to the Electoral Commission, the final list of registered voters who received their cards will be published after the final phase is concluded on 8th September.

On 28th March 2017, the National Electoral Commission released a preliminary results of the registered voters. these are the results of all regions.

Maroodijeeh Region (Hargeisa): 312, 634

Saahil Region: 78,842

Togdheer Region: 178,506

Sool Region: 71,096

Sanaag Region : 85,222

Awdal Region: 147,031

Total Registered Voters: 873,331

After September 8th, when the third phase finish, the National Electoral Commission will release the official results of the registered voters who are eligible to vote, at the upcoming presidential elections.

The three political parties are required to officially submit the list of their respective presidential and vice-presidential contenders before the official campaigning starts. Kulmiye held its Central Committee meeting and selected Muse Behi Abdi as the presidential candidate and Abdirahman Sayli, the

current vice-president, as his running mate. Waddani chooses Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi and Mohamed Ali as the presidential and vice-presidential contenders respectively. The third party, Justice and Welfare Party has selected only the presidential candidate, Faisal Ali Warabe, but not his vice-presidential running mate.

WORRYING INCIDENTS

The voter cards distribution is moving peacefully. There have been reports of people buying voter cards from the people in Saylac District of Awdal. The Electoral Commission and the Monitoring Committee issued warnings against two of the three political parties, and one of the opposition parties complained about campaigning during second phase. Here is the list of incidents documented by the Center for Policy Analysis:

1. Waddani, an opposition party, told the media that the government has prevented them opening an office in Gabiley, west of Hargeisa. Waddani leaders in Gabiley, hold a press conference in front of a house they rented. State Minister of Interior dismissed the allegations of Waddani Party. [1]
2. On 17th July 2017, the Monitoring Committee of the National Electoral Commission accused Waddani and Kulmiye of campaigning during the voter cards distribution at Hargeisa and Togdheer regions. The Committee said such campaigns are prohibited and are in violation of the Code of Conduct signed by the parties. [2]
3. On 20th July 2017, the National Electoral Commission imposed penalties on Kulmiye and Waddani for violating the Code of Conduct and campaigning during the voter cards distribution exercise in Hargeisa and Togdheer. The Commission said they received complaint on that matter from the Justice and Welfare Party, an opposition party. Somaliland National Electoral Commission Praised UCID Party, that they followed the Ethical Codes of the Elections. [3]
4. On 20th July 2017, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi "Irro" the presidential candidate of Waddani claimed that 20 members of his party have been arrested by the government in last ten days in different places. He complained that the government is oppressing his party and closing down offices. Irro said his party will demonstrate if the government does not stop the "intimidations". [4]

5. On 22nd July 2017, Kulmiye, the ruling party, told the media that its office in east of Hargeisa has been damaged by people who stoned the building. Kulmiye's Chairman of Gacan-libax District Ahmed Yonis Aadan claimed that Waddani was behind the incident. [5]

6. The supporters of Waddani and Kulmiye exchange heated and inflammatory remarks at the social media.

7. Politicians are using clan divisions which is further polarizing the society.

8. On July 23, there was a demonstration in Gabiley, where the people who attended the demonstration were shouting slogans against the Kulmiye Presidential Candidate. Ministry of Interior accused Waddani Party was behind the demonstration. State Minister told Star Tv that security forces arrested several people linked to the protest. [6]

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To hold a smooth, peaceful, and free and fair election, all the stakeholders shall cooperate to solve the challenges and conclude the pending activities;

2. The government, the political parties and, the National Electoral Commission shall work together, share information and solve problems amicably;

3. The Electoral Commission should share information with the public to increase transparency;

4. The political parties should stop using clan narratives to divide the public and create tension;

5. The current voter education awareness shall be reviewed and shall be based on effective means and manners that can reach all the voters including those who live in the rural areas;

6. The civil society organizations should play their role in the process of voter card distribution and awareness.

7. There are increasing Fake News activities in Somaliland Social Media, if not prevented, those fake news can cause distrust between the parties and create

tensions. So, all stakeholders must come up, a plan to increase the awareness against the Fake News.

8. We are calling the political parties to restrain and respect the code of conduct, show tolerance and patience, when it comes the national Interest and the peace of the state.

ABOUT CENTER FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

CPA was established to help the countries of Horn of Africa region to build, peace, democracy, human rights and effective governance systems where all citizens are equal. CPA is based in Hargeisa, the Capital of Republic of Somaliland.

LINKS:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKeIyw6WfpE&t=168s>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySytqKbvoSc>
3. <https://www.slnc.com/2017/07/20/daawo-war-saxaafadeed-kdq-soo-saareen-20072017/>
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enT3ziRMKuM>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZU36iBhgUgE>
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYZUX35aP5Q>