

Table 2. Names of political parties, Number of candidates Representing Parties and Individual (private) candidates

No	Name of Party	Areas of Competing	Number of Candidates
1	Somali People Democratic Party (SPDP)	Shinile, Fiq, Liben, Warder, Degehabur Jijiga, Afdem, Gode and Korahe zones	3480
2	West Somali Democratic Party	Shinile, Fiq, Liben, Warder, Degehabur, Jijiga, Afdem, Gode and Korahe	123
3	Private Candidates	In all the nine zones	491

Problems faced prior to Election Day

Members and supporters of opposition political parties were the subject of various abuses and intimidation from the ruling party. Particularly, Western Somali Democratic Party (WSDP) told EHRCO that its candidates had been attacked, imprisoned and assaulted. The details of abuses are presented in the table below.

Table 3- Names and other details of abused opposition party members and private candidates.

No.	Name	Party Affiliation	Details
1	Ali Ibrahim	WSDP	A candidate of the party in Shinile kebele. Shinile town police assaulted and arrested him while conducting election campaign on 22 Jan.2004
2	Ahmed Ibrahim	WSDP	A candidate of the party in Shinile kebele. Shinile town police assaulted him while conducting election campaign on 22 Jan 2004
3	Egal Almafrah	WSDP	A candidate of the party in Gad kebele. Shinile town police assaulted him while conducting election campaign on 21 Jan.2004
4	Mohammed Ibrahim	WSDP	A candidate of the party in Harre kebele. Shinile town police assaulted and arrested him while conducting election campaign on 22 Jan.2004. He was released after one day in detention.
5	Yusuf Ibrahim	WSDP	A candidate of the party in Shinile wereda. Shinile town police assaulted him on 22 Jan.2004 while conducting election campaign

Also, Shinile town police arrested the following persons on 22 January 2004 for being supporters of the Western Somali Democratic Party (WSDP). They were released latter on the day after negotiations between police and people from the National Election Board.

1	Hassen Musse	12	Meidene Waderi
2	Ahmed Aden	13	Bede Ismail
3	Indris Tahir	14	Tsrele Aden
4	Ibrahim Ali	15	Tahir Farah
5	Abdukerim Aden	16	Abdi Farah
6	Ahmed Oumer	17	Mehad Ahmed
7	Hussein Farah	18	Mehad Sida
8	Mohammed Abdi	19	Hussein Yara
9	Isse Warisemu	20	Ahmed Mohammed
10	Mohammed Tukule	21	Sintayehu Robele
11	Irab Gede		

Moreover, the ruling Somali Peoples Democratic Party (SPDP) was using government vehicles and ambulances for conducting its election campaign. Opposition party members and private candidates were denied such facilities, WSDP told EHRCO.

Preparation of polling stations

EHRCO observers arrived a day before the election day in most of the polling stations. This was done with a view to introducing themselves with election officers and observing the overall preparation.

EHRCO observers noted that there was problem of transportation and acute shortage of vehicles to transport election materials from the election center in Shinile to other polling stations.

The observation as regards posting of emblems of candidates is presented in the table below.

Table 4. Posting emblems of candidates

Wereda/Town	Stations Where Emblems were posted	Stations Where Emblems Were not Posted
Shinile	Mermersa	
Shinile	Tome	
Shinile	Adigala	
Shinile		Milo
		Gad
Shinile		Lasdre
Shinile	Berdiyer	
Shinile	Harewa	
	Shinile	
		Mito
Aysha		Aysha
Aysha		Dewele
Aysha		Laserat
Aysha		Adelle
Meisso	Adigala	
Meisso	Hardi	
Meisso	Meisso	
Meisso	Mencha	
Meisso	Mulu	
Afdem		Holobora
Afdem	Bikke	
Afdem		
Shinile	Berak	

As could be seen from the above table it is only in the 13 polling stations that emblems of candidates were posted. This was not done in nine other polling stations.

Opening of polling stations

In all of the 21 election centers (polling stations) that EHRCO assigned its observers, the ballots were not counted before the voting started.

The election law provides that polling stations have to be opened and voting should start on 6:00 A.M. However in many stations that EHRCO observers were present the polling stations were opened well after 6:00 A.M.

Table 5. Opening Times of Polling Stations

No.	Wereda	Before 6:00	On 6:00	6:01-6:30	6:31:7:00	7:01-7:30	After 8:00
1	Shinile						Mermersa
2	“						Tome
3	“			Milo			
4	“					Gad	
5	“					Lasdre	

6	“		Berdiyer				
7	“			Harewa			
8	“			Shinile			
9	“		Mito				
10	“					Berak	
11	“			Adigala			
12	Aysha			Dewele			
13	“						Laserat
14	“		Adelle				
15	“		Aysha				
16	Meisso						Hardi
17	“						Meisso
18	“					Mencha	
19	“						Mulu
20	Afdem				Holobora		
21	“						Bikke

As could be seen from table 5, out of the 21 stations where EHRCO observers were present:

- 4 were opened at 6:00
- 5 were opened at 6:30
- 1 was opened at 7:00
- 4 were opened at 7:30
- 7 were opened at 2:00

The Role of Election officers

Most of the election officers in EHRCO observed stations were not doing their best as regards clarifying matters to voters, maintaining order, controlling those who were trying to cast votes more than once, and restricting child voters. However, those in Shinile kebele were doing better to prevent the above-mentioned malpractices.

General Conduct of Voters

In most cases in elections in Somali areas nomination of candidates for election is based on positions they have in their respective clans and their economic status. Party and private candidates in the wereda council elections were nominated likewise. As a result, voters tend to cast their votes to candidates of their own clan without paying much attention to the candidates’ qualifications and competence. Apart from that, there were child voters, people who try to cast votes more than once and individuals who have 100-150 elector cards at their hands.

In most cases the involvement of security forces was needed to maintain order and conduct the election peacefully.

One incident is worth mentioning with respect to the conduct of voters on the election day. In Lasdre polling station in Shinile wereda, the wife of a private candidate arrived at the polling station at about 3:00 pm, took the file on which names of voters were registered from the person in charge and tore it up in view of the public. Her accomplices also threw stones at the election officers. The voting was disrupted as a result.

Many voters had difficulty reading and writing. People of 11 to 70 years of age were very eager to vote. This is partly because candidates were mostly conducting their campaigns by appealing to their clan background.

Activities of candidates

The names of competing parties in the 21 polling stations of the Shinile Wereda, and the number of candidates in the polling stations is presented in table 6

Table 6.

No	Zone	Wereda	Polling Station	SPDP	WSDP	Private
1	Shinile	Shinile	Tome	4	4	3
2	“	“	Millo	4	2	-

3	“	“	Shinile	4	4	3
4	“	“	Gad	2	4	1
5	“	“	Bedriyer	4	4	-
6	“	“	Harewa	4	3	1
7	“	“	Mito	4	4	1
8	“	“	Berak	4	-	3
9	“	“	Mermersa	4	-	2
10	“	“	Lasdre	4	-	4
11	“	“	Adigala	4	4	-
12	“	Aysha	Dewele	6	-	3
13	“	“	Laserat	6	-	2
14	“	“	Adelle	6	-	1
15	“	“	Aysha	6	-	2
16	“	Meisso	Hardi	-	-	8
17	“	“	Meisso	6	-	1
18	“	“	Mencha	-	-	8
19	“	“	Mulu	6	-	3
20	“	Afdem	Holobora	4	4	-
21	“	“	Bikke	4	2	4

There was no major problem caused by candidates themselves. However supporters of the ruling party (SPDP) were harassing voters in Harewa, Adigala and Berak polling stations. Election officers had to flee the Adigalla polling station because of a disturbance caused at about 3:00 P.M. Moreover, the voting has been repeatedly disrupted in Shinle, Mermersa and Berak polling stations due to the havoc initiated by supporters of candidates. A supporter of the SPDP threatened to kill the EHRCO observer in Harewa polling station by showing a dagger and saying “you will get your due should we do not win.”

After the Votes Were Counted

After the votes were counted, the standard form that has to be filled out and signed by observers, competing parties and election officers by attesting that the voting has been completed, was filled out and signed in the 19 polling stations. This was not done in two polling stations as the observers representing the opposition party were not willing.

The number of candidates from the competing parties and private candidates who won the election in the 21 EHRCO observed polling stations is presented in table 7

Table 7.

No.					Number of winners
	Zone	Wereda	Polling Station	Party Represented	Number
1	Shinile	Shinile	Harewa	SPDP WSDP	1 3
3	“	“	Berak	Private SPDP	3 1
3	“	“	Jedene	SPDP Private	2 2
4	“	“	Lasdre	SPDP	4
5	“	“	Ayliso	SPDP	4
6	“	“	Berdiyer	SPDP	4
7	“	“	Gad	SPDP WSDP Private	2 2 1
8	“	“	Adigala	SPDP	4
9	“	“	Arkelle	SPDP Private	3 1
10	“	“	Andube	WSDP SPDP	3 1

11	“	“	Tome	SPDP WSDP Private	2 1 1
12	“	“	Shinile	SPDP WSDP	2 2
13	“	“	Dinlle	SPDP Private	2 2
14	“	“	Lasdre	SPDP	4
15	“	“	Mito	WSDP SPDP	3 1
16	“	“	Harre	SPDP	4
17	“	“	Degajebis	SPDP	4
18	“	“	Millo	SPDP	4
19	“	“	Mermersa	SPDP	4
20	“	Meisso	Hardi	Private	4
22	“	“	Meisso	SPDP	4
22	“	“	Mencha	Private	4
23	“	“	Mulu	SPDP	4
24		Aysha	Dewelee	SPDP Private	3 1
25	“	“	Laserat	SPDP	4
26	“	“	Adelle	SPDP	4
27	“	“	Aysha	SPDP Private	3 1
28	“	Afdem	Holobora	SPDP	4
29	“	“	Bikke	SPDP	4
Total				SPDP WSDP Private	60 18 19

In Shinile zone in 4 weredas and 29 polling stations the following number of candidates from the parties and private contestants have won seats in the wereda councils.

	Name of party	No. Of candidates
1	SPDP	60
2	WSDP	18
3	Private candidates	19

Table 8. Polling stations Where Major Defects Were Observed.

No.	Defects	Wereda				Infringed Laws		
		Shinile	Meisso	Aysha	Afdem	FDRE Constitution	Procl. Number 111/95	NEB Election Manual
1	Lateness in opening of polling stations	11	3	3	2	-	-	Part 4/Chapter 1/B/2
2	Failure to sign on the ballots before voting starts	11	4	4	2	-	-	Part 4/Chapter1 /B/1.4.4.1
3	Lack of sufficient knowledge about election on the part of both voters and election officers	10	4	4	2	-	-	Part 1/Chapter1 /F/4.19.1 and 19.5
4	Partiality of election officers and observers to the ruling party	9	2	2	2	Art.38/1/C	Art.14/1 Art.48/1 Art.57/2	Part 1/Chapter1 /C/1.1 Part 4/Chapter2

								/A/ 6.1.4
5	Casting votes more than once	11	4	4	2	-	-	-
6	Proxy voting	11	4	4	2	-	-	-
7	Voting by unregistered persons	11	4	4	2	-	Art.58	Part 1/Chapter1 /C/3.2.1 Part 4/Chapter1 /B/2.4.8 Part 4/Chapter1 /B/2.5.13.2
8	Poor understanding of voters about the electoral Process	11	4	3	2	-	-	Part 4/Chapter1 /B/ 2.8.9
9	Casting votes in the wrong polling stations	7	3	3	2	-	-	Part 4/Chapter1 /B/ 2.5.5
10	Poor treatment to voters. Reluctance to help the elderly and the visually impaired	11	4	3	2	Art 38/1/C	-	Part1/Chapter 1 /B/2.7 Part1/Chapter1/ C.1.1, 1.3&1.7 Part 1/Chapter1 /F/ 4.1.9.5
11	Untimely closure of polling stations	3	4	-	1	-	-	Part 4/Chapter2 /A/2.1 M
12	Minor children Voting	11	4	4	2	-	-	-
13	Disturbances caused by candidates' supporters resulting in the disruption of voting	3	-	-	-	-	-	Part 4/Chapter1 /A/1.1.4
14	Absence of electric light causing problems during vote counting	6	2	1	1	-	-	Part 4/Chapter2 /B/
15	Absence of convenient working places allocated to election officers	7	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 9. Polling stations where Positive Activities Were Observed

Positive Activities	Number of Polling Stations In Each Wereda			
	Shinile	Meisso	Aysha	Afdem
Relatively better efforts were made to solve problems by election officers assigned from the center (Addis Ababa)	-	-	-	-
There was a huge voter turnout	11	4	4	2
Positive attitude by most election officers and voters towards independent observers	9	3	4	-
Efforts were made by election officers to work in consultation with observers	10	4	4	2
The commitment of election officers to work in the hostile weather condition of the area on election day	6	2	2	-
Election officers assigned from the center were cooperative in supplying information				

Conclusion

One manifestation of free and fair election is that candidates conduct their campaigns freely and without any fear and intimidation. Voters should also be able to vote for candidates of their choices without any harassment and

fear of persecution. The government has to put in place conducive environment in terms of legal and institutional conditions that would enable candidates and voters to exercise their respective rights during elections. These preconditions do not seem to be fulfilled in the wereda elections in Somali region, at least not in the areas EHRCO observed. Competing parties and private candidates concentrated much on appealing to clan orientation rather than directing their campaigns to tangible and realistic development initiatives. This was one of the causes of the disturbances observed in different polling stations on the election day.

Most of all, there were incidents like people having more than one elector cards, those who were voting more than once, minor children voting, those who use someone else's card to vote etc. As to the election officers, many of them seem to be partial to the ruling party and lack sufficient experience and competence. The manifest disciplinary problems on the part of voters observed in many polling stations, the arrest, harassment and intimidation of opposition party candidates and private contestants and their supports prior to the election day were also defects observed in the Somali Region Wereda Councils elections. In view of all the above defects and malpractices observed prior and on the election day, it is hard to say the election was free and fair.

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