

Directive on Candidate Registration, Collection of Endorsement Signatures and Selection of Symbols no. 7/2021

Chapter One **General Provisions**

Article 1. Issuing Authority

The National Election Board of Ethiopia issued this directive pursuant to the powers vested on it under article 8 sub article 1 of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia Establishment Proclamation No. 1133/2019 and article 37 sub-article 7 and article 163 sub-article (2) of the Ethiopian Electoral, Political Parties Registration and Election's Code of Conduct Proclamation No. 1162/2019.

Article 2. Short Title

This directive may be cited as “Candidate Registration Directive No. 7/2021”.

Article 3. Definition

In this directive, unless the context requires otherwise:

1. “**Proclamation**” means the Ethiopian Electoral, Political Parties Registration and Election's Code of Conduct Proclamation No. 1162/2019.
2. “**Board**” means the National Election Board of Ethiopia established under Proclamation No 1133/2019.
3. “**Candidate**” means any person registered to compete in an election independently or on behalf of a political party.
4. “**Candidature Certificate**” shall mean a certificate issued to a registered candidate who fulfills all eligibility requirements for candidacy under the proclamation to compete in a particular constituency.
5. “**Person with Disability**” means a person who, due to permanent physical or mental injury, is in vulnerable situation and is deprived of equal opportunity.
6. Unless the context requires otherwise, the definitions provided in the Proclamation shall as appropriate apply to this directive.

Article 4. Scope of application

This directive shall be applicable to registration of candidates, collection of endorsement signature and selection and usage of symbols during general elections, by-elections and local elections.

Article 5. Gender reference

Provisions set out in one gender shall also apply to the other gender.

Article 6. Objective

The objective of this directive is to provide eligibility requirements and application procedures for candidature, as well as selection and usage of symbols

Chapter Two

Application and Registration Procedure for Candidacy

Article 7. Eligibility for Candidature

1. Any person is eligible to contest as an independent or a political party candidate who
 - a) is an Ethiopian citizen and registered to be elected;
 - b) is 21 years of age or above on the date of registration;
 - c) has continuously resided in the constituency of his intended candidature for one year before election day; or whose place of birth is in the constituency of his intended candidature;
 - d) is not stripped off his electoral rights by law or decision of a court;
 - e) is not declared as incapable of making effective decisions due to insanity verified by an authorized body or by sufficient evidence.
 - f) fulfills eligibility requirements stipulated in the Proclamation and this directive.
2. Without prejudice to sub-article 1/c of this article
 - a) A person who, due to education or internal displacement, is away from his permanent residence can compete as a candidate in a constituency of his permanent residence where he has been living prior to his departure to another place for education or be in an internally displaced people's camp.
 - b) A person who, due to change of place of work, is away and yet still a permanent resident of a particular place can compete in a constituency of his permanent residence where he was prior to moving away to another area for work reasons.
3. A person who seeks to contest in a city or woreda that has more than one constituency and if he has been on a regular work duty for two years in a city or woreda can contest in any constituency of his choice. However, he shall secure endorsement signature only from the constituency in which he chooses to contest in.
4. An application for candidature shall only be granted after securing signed acknowledgement of an independent candidate himself or the political party that nominates him to abide by the code of conduct issued by the Board.
5. A candidate can contest only in one constituency and for one type of election at a time.

Article 8. Proof of identity and residence

1. Any person seeking to register as an independent or a political party candidate shall submit a valid and unexpired photographic residence identification card, driving licence, military service document, an employee or student identification card issued by a legally recognised governmental or private employer, university or school to prove identity.
2. Any person seeking to register as an independent or a political party candidate for the purpose of proving residence shall
 - a) If he is registering in his constituency of birth submit an official birth certificate and as appropriate a birth certificate issued by a religious institution or similar certificate written and stamped by a medical facility where he was born. In the event that he could not produce such documents witnesses who were there during his time of birth can prove birth place of the person.

- b) If he is registering in his permanent place of residence, a residence identification card;
 - c) If he is registering in a constituency where he was elected or contested as a candidate winners or candidature certificate
 - d) If he is registering in a place where he worked or studied in for two years or more a document by the employer or school proving employment or enrolment and duration thereof ,
3. Without prejudice to the provisions sub-articles 1 and 2 if documentary evidences submitted by the person doesnot prove age or residence she can be registered as a candidate by proving such facts through testimony of witness having documentary evidence proving five years residence in the locality where the constituency situate and upon recording this on a minute.
 4. Where a person produces forged documents or unrelaible witnesses or provides false information to be registered as candidate the Board ,in addition to appropriate measures to be takenin accordance with pertinent criminal law, shall decide rejection of application for or cancellation of registration as well asbarsuch person from standing for office either as an independent candidate or participation in political parties either in a leadership capacity as well as a member for the coming five years period.

Article 9. Competing as an independent candidate

1. In addition to eligibility requirements for candidature listed under article 7 of this directive, any person seeking to register as an independent candidate and contest for a seat in the House of Peoples’ Representatives shall:
 - a) Secure endorsement signatures of at least 5000 eligible voters residing in the constituency where he is intending to contend.
 - b) Where the she is a person with disability secure endorsement signatures of at least 3000 eligible voters residing in the constituency where she is intending to contend
2. Where the independent candidate is contesting for a seat in a regional council she shall
 - a) submit endorsement signatures of 2500 eligible voters residing in the constituency in which s/he wishes to compete.
 - b) Where she is a person with disability, submit the endorsement signature of at least 1500 eligible voters residing in the constituency in which s/he wishes to compete.
3. If the person is contending for a seat of council of special zone, nationalities’ zone, woreda, city administration or kebele
 - a) He must submit endorsement signatures of not less than 500 eligible voters, for a seat in a special zone, nationalities zone, Woreda or city administration council.
 - b) Where he is a person with disability and if competing for a seat in a special zone, Nationality zone, Woreda or city administration council, he shall submit endorsement signatures of not less than 300 eligible voters.
 - c) He must submit endorsement signatures of not less than 100 eligible voters, for a seat in a Kebele council.
 - d) Where the independent candidate is a person with disability and contending for a seat in kebele council, he shall submit endorsement signatures of not less than 50 eligible voters.
4. Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-article (3) of this article and where it is an election

for a seat in a special zone, kebele or city administration council the Board may, where it deems it necessary, reduce the number of endorsement signatures by an independent candidate in respect of certain constituencies.

5. The requirements of this article pertaining to submission of endorsement signature by an independent candidate shall partly be inapplicable for the 6th national election provided amendment proposal submitted by the Board is endorsed by the House of Peoples' Representatives.

Article 10. Nomination of candidate by political organizations, political organizations' fronts or coalitions

1. A political party, front or coalition shall nominate only one candidate for a single council seat in a constituency.
2. The nominated candidate shall:
 - a) Fulfill the eligibility criteria set in the Proclamation and this directive;
 - b) Be a member of the political organization;
3. If contending for a seat of the house of Peoples' representative the candidate shall submit at least 2000 endorsement signatures of eligible voters. However, if the candidate is a person with disability the required number endorsement would only be 1500. -
4. If contending for a seat of Regional council the candidate shall submit at least 1000 endorsement signatures of eligible voters. However, if the candidate is a person with disability the required number endorsement would only be at least 750. If contending for a seat in a special zone, woreda, kebele or city administration council the candidate shall submit 300 signatures of eligible voters residing in the constituency. However, if the candidate is a person with disability the required number endorsement would only be at least 200.
5. If contending for a seat of a special zone, woreda, kebele or city administration council the candidate shall submit 100 signatures of eligible voters of the kebele. However, if the candidate is a person with disability the required number would only be at least 50. The requirements of this article pertaining to submission of endorsement signature by a political party candidate shall be inapplicable for the 6th National Election provided amendment proposal submitted by the Board is endorsed by the House of Peoples' Representatives.

Article 11. Eligibility to Endorse a Candidate

A person endorsing a candidate shall

1. Be an Ethiopian citizen;
2. Be a resident of the constituency for a period of six months
3. Be 18 years old or above;
4. Not be stripped of voting rights by law or decision of a court;
5. Not be restricted to vote due to mental illness

Article 12. Number of endorsement signatures by eligible voters

1. A person shall not endorse more than two candidates contending for a seat of the House of Peoples' Representatives
2. A person may only provide endorsement signatures for twofold of the number of seats of

regional councils being contested by candidates

Article 13. Procedure for submission and verification of endorsement signatures

1. Any independent or political party candidate may himself or through his political party collect from a constituency office one copy of endorsement signature form and make copies thereof as well as collect signatures by himself or through a duly appointed agent ,
2. The constituency shall receive and inspect the endorsement signatures submitted by the candidate. Upon verifying fulfillment of prescribed criteria shall register it in the applicable section of the candidacy form. Where the required number of endorsement signatures have not been submitted, the candidate or the political organization nominating the candidate shall be notified right away of the need to submit a corrected one within a specified timetable
3. Authenticity of endorsement signatures shall be supported by an affidavit annexed to it.. Where the election committee of the constituency by itself or reports it receives from others suspects authenticity of endorsement signatures it may investigate the matter in collaboration with local authorities with mandates to issue residence ID's for residents that endorsed the candidate.

Article 14. Collection of endorsement signatures

1. Collection of endorsement signature by any candidate or his agent shall endeavor to ensure gender representation and participation of diverse members of the community.
2. While collecting endorsement signatures the candidate or agent shall not discriminate people on the basis of gender, economic status, disability or any other social identity.
3. The endorsement signatures' collection form shall include each signatory's
 - a) Full name (including grandfather's name);
 - b) Gender;
 - c) Age;
 - d) Residential address (region, Woreda, kebele, specific name of the residential area and house number)
 - e) Type and number of the proof of residence submitted (if any) or his voter registration card number; and
 - f. The name and signature of the endorser and the person who collects the signatures
4. The endorser may sign or put his fingerprint. Where the endorser has no hands and is unable to sign or put his finger prints he shall give evidence proving such facts to the candidate
5. Any person collecting endorsement signatures shall not threaten, coerce or in any manner induces others for endorsement.
6. Where the constituency proves that endorsement signatures were acquired through threat, coercion, or bribe, it may report to the Board. The Board may as appropriate decide to exclude the endorsement signature, reject application for or cancel candidature.
7. Where the Board, by itself or reports it receives, proves that the endorsement signatures have been collected through misrepresentation, forgery or any other fraudulent act, in addition to measures to be taken in accordance with pertinent criminal laws, shall reject application for or cancel candidature as well as bar the person from being an independent candidate, assume leadership in or be a member of a political organization for the next three years

Article 15. Persons ineligible to be a candidate

1. Judges, prosecutors, soldiers, members of the police and other law enforcement forces, security agency workers and employees of the Board employed by Federal or Regional governments shall not be candidates.
2. Where the persons listed under sub-article (1) of this article wish to be a candidate shall together with their application for candidature submit a stamped letter from their employer attesting their resignation. compete as a candidate in elections, they shall, when applying to register as a candidate, submit a letter indicating that they have resigned from their place of employment, including evidence that the letter has been submitted to the employer.

Article 16. Candidature of a Civil Servant

1. Except those listed under article 15(1), any civil servant may contest as a candidate in an election without being required to resign from his government post.
2. Civil servants shall have a right to leave without pay upon securing certificate of candidature until official announcement of election results by the Board. He shall submit evidence that he has been granted such leave form his employer.

Article 17. Place of candidate registration

1. The registration of candidates for the election of members of the House of Peoples' Representatives and regional councils shall be conducted in constituencies.
2. The registration of candidates for the election of members of a special /zone, Nationality zone, zone, sub-city, Woreda, or Kebele council shall be conducted at a place to be determined by the Board or in the Woreda or kebele election administration office to be determined the appropriate constituency offices.

Article 18. Timetable for Candidate Registration

1. Candidate registration shall in accordance with timetable issued by the Board commence 90 days prior to voting day. It shall be conducted except on public holidays recognized by Federal laws every day including Saturday and Sunday from 8:30-5:30
2. Notwithstanding sub-article (1) of this article, the Board may, where it deems it necessary, extend registration period or introduce special registration hours.

Article 19. Nomination as a political party candidate

1. List of political party nominees for candidacy differentiated by election type as well as constituency shall be submitted to the Board by the head of the organization, front or coalition or a person appointed for this purpose.
2. List of nominees for candidacy for local elections shall be submitted to the constituency office with a stamped letter by head the political organization, head of the organization at zonal or woreda levels or a person appointed for this purpose.
3. Each political organization, front or coalition shall, in accordance with the timetable issued by the Board, submit general list of nominees for candidacy to the Board and the candidates shall submit it to the constituency where they intend to contend.
4. A candidate nominated by a political party shall submit in person evidence attesting nomination as well as consent that he has agreed to be a candidate along with all evidences

required according to this directive while submitting his application for candidature to the constituency office.

5. Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-article (4) of this article, where in case of force majeure such as serious illness, natural or manmade calamities or other events beyond his control the nominee cannot register in person and documentary evidences or testimony of witnesses proving fulfillment of eligibility for candidature has been submitted the candidate can be registered through the nominating political party or his agent.
6. Upon receiving an application for candidature in accordance with sub-article 4 of this article the constituency election committee shall verify existence of the name of the person in the list of nominees submitted by the political party as well fulfillment of eligibility requirements for candidacy.

Article 20. Application for registration by an independent candidate

1. Any person seeking to contest as an independent candidate shall fill out and submit in person to the form prepared for this purpose by the Board to the constituency of his intended candidature indicating the Council he is contesting for and attaching documents required for independent candidates under article 31 of the Proclamation and this directive.
2. Where in case of force majeure such as serious illness, natural or manmade calamities or other events beyond his control the person cannot register in person he can do so through his legal representative.
3. Where a person is prevented from registering in person during the registration period due to a deliberate act of a third party he can submit his complaint to the constituency grievance hearing committee and get a decision. However, under any circumstance, an application for registration as a candidate shall not be granted if presented less than one month prior to election day.

Article 21. Submission of Photographs by Candidates

1. A photograph of a person seeking to register as a candidate will be taken at the constituency office for the purpose of ballot paper printing and issuance of candidature certificate.
2. Where a candidate is being registered through his agent or brought a photograph taken previously, it must be
 - a. colored;
 - b. Taken with a white background;
 - c. 45 millimeters in height and 35 millimeters in width;
 - d. Taken within the past six months and clearly depict facial structure of the person
 - e. of 200 to 300 pixels;
 - f. of a size not larger than 500 kilobytes
3. Where the photograph submitted by the person does not comply with specifications set under this directive the constituency election officer shall return the application form and inform the person to appear in person have his photograph taken

4. Where the registrant is notified to submit a photograph fulfilling required specifications he shall have his picture taken at the constituency office or bring another photograph fulfilling the required specifications through his legal representative before the deadline set for candidate registration.
5. If the application for registration is submitted on the last day of candidate registration, the person shall be registered provisionally. The registration would be complete and certificate of candidature issued when photograph is taken by the constituency office or upon submission of photograph fulfilling the required specifications. within 48 hours.

Article 22. Issuance of Certificate of Candidature

1. The constituency shall, after entering in the candidate registration form or database the name, photograph and other particulars listed under article 23 of this directive and securing signature issue a certificate of candidature to the registrant or the agent.
2. The registrant or the agent prior to receiving certificate of candidature issued by the constituency verify particulars stated therein as well as quality of photograph and sign confirmation that the information and photograph can be printed on the ballot papers.
3. The candidature certificate under sub-article (1) of this article shall be printed in two copies and one copy will be given to the registrant or his agent while the other copy shall be kept at the constituency office.
4. A candidature certificate issued for elections for seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives and regional and zonal councils shall, as appropriate, have the official stamp of the Board or constituency as well as signed by the head of the constituency office.
5. A candidature certificate issued for elections for seats in Woreda, city, sub-city and kebele councils shall only be signed the head of the kebele election administration office.
6. Candidature certificates for political organizations' candidates may be issued to the candidates or the political organization that had them registered.
7. A document confirming timely receipt of candidature certificate shall be signed by the candidate or representative of political organization and kept as evidence at the constituency office.
8. Candidature certificates shall be valid until the official announcement of election results by the Board.
9. Upon the expiry of the validity of the candidature certificate, candidates shall return it to the constituency that registered them.

Article 23. Contents of a candidature certificate

1. A candidature certificate shall include:
 - a) The name and/or number of the constituency the candidate is contesting in;
 - b) Name of the council for which the candidate is contesting for;
 - c) Year in which the election is to be conducted;
 - d) Full name (including grandfather's name), gender and age of the candidate;
 - e) The full address, including phone number, of the candidate;
 - f) A written indication of type of candidacy-independent or political party candidate- and name of the political organization in case of the latter.
 - g) Photograph of the candidate;
 - h) Date and Signature of the candidate

- i) As appropriate, stamp of the Board or the constituency, and date and signature of the head of the constituency.
2. There shall be a note on the back or at the bottom of the candidature certificate stating it shall be returned to the nearby constituency office, police station or the Board if lost and found.

Article 24. Lost, torn, or damaged candidature certificate

1. Where a candidate's candidature certificate is lost, torn or damaged, he may, starting from the day he become aware of such facts and prior to election day, apply to the constituency office and get a replacement.
2. Upon receiving application for replacement, the constituency office shall check the identity of the candidate, enter a remark on the register and issue a replacement certificate of candidature.
3. The date to be written on the replacement candidature certificate shall be the same date indicated in the original certificate of candidature.

Article 25. Error on candidature certificate or register

1. An application for rectifying errors on the candidature certificate or register shall be made within 7 days of the announcement of the provisional list of candidates.
2. Upon receiving such an application, the constituency shall make the necessary investigation on the basis of documents submitted to verify identity as well as other eligibility requirements and
 - a) If the error occurred on the registry, make the required amendments and record same in a minute.
 - b) If the error occurred on the candidature certificate issue a replacement with the correct information and have the candidate return the previous certificate and having written the note "spoiled" on it attach same to the registry. It shall be recorded in a minute.

Article 26. Official Announcement of candidates to the public

1. In line with the election calendar of the Board, the list of candidates, with information regarding type of election and council they are contesting, shall be publicized to the residents of the constituency.
2. As part of publicizing candidates issued a candidature certificate a form prepared by the Board for this purpose shall be filled out by the constituency and posted in areas where there would be large public gatherings or movements, in the premises of the constituency office and on election day at every polling stations. The following particulars shall be entered on this form
 - a) Full name, including grandfather's name;
 - b) Age;
 - c) Gender;
 - d) Level of education;
 - e) Type of work or profession;
 - f) The name of the nominating political organization or an indication that he is an independent candidate;

- g) Election symbol or designation, and
 - h) Other relevant information.
3. If the election is for seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives, regional, zonal and nationality zone councils, the head of the constituency office shall put his name and signature. The head has to make sure the poster visibly bear at the bottom stamp of the constituency.
 4. Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-article (3) of this article, posters announcing candidates competing for seats in Woreda, city, sub-city and kebele councils may only bear the signature of the head of the electoral office at every level.
 5. The official responsible for making official announcement of registered candidates upon receiving reliable information relating to replacement, cancellation and withdrawal of candidacy shall forthwith announce such state of affairs to the public in same places where the original announcement had been posted.

Article 27. Withdrawal of Candidacy

1. A political organization or an independent candidate may withdraw their candidacy.
2. Any independent candidate who withdrew his candidacy shall submit to the registering constituency original copy of certificate of candidature and withdrawal application.
3. Any political party candidate who withdrew his candidacy shall submit to the registering constituency a written signed application for withdrawal delivered to the appointing political party.
4. A political organization or independent candidate who withdrew his candidacy shall not be required to explain the reason for withdrawal.

Article 28. Death of a candidate

1. A political organization whose candidate has died can make a replacement before the lapse of the candidate registration period.
2. If a registered candidate dies before one-month prior to election day or before the printing of ballot papers, a list of candidates of the constituency excluding such candidate will be officially announced to the public.
3. If the candidate dies after public announcement of candidates, the registering constituency shall publicize such information through posting it in the constituency office.

Article 29. Replacement of a candidate

1. A political organization whose candidate has died or withdrawn his candidacy may make a replacement before the lapse of the candidate registration period.
2. A political organization whose candidate has died or withdrawn his candidacy shall, through a letter signed by the head of the organization, immediately notify the constituency office. In addition, a withdrawal letter signed by the candidate or proof of death, original candidature certificate issued, full name of the new candidate and evidences proving fulfillment of eligibility requirements shall be submitted.
3. The constituency office shall examine the matter and promptly register the replacement candidate; it shall also issue a candidature certificate.
4. If the candidate of a political organization withdraws or dies during the candidate registration period, the organization can replace the candidate with another candidate

within one week starting from the date the party became aware of withdrawal or death of the candidate.

5. If withdrawal or death happened after the end of the candidate registration period the organization shall be allowed to replace the candidate provided the remaining period before election day is not less than one month.
6. If a political organization whose candidate has withdrawn or died is unable to replace him within the time specified under sub-article (5) above, the election shall be conducted in accordance with the timetable amongst the remaining candidates.
7. If the candidate that died or withdrew was the only candidate contesting in a given constituency, the election will be conducted by registering new candidates on the basis of a timetable set by the Board.
8. The application for replacement of a candidate shall be similar to and have all annexes required for registration as a candidate except that it shall bear the title for replacement.

Article 30. Revocation of Candidature

1. Certificate of candidature shall be revoked where
 - a) It is proved that the candidate does not fulfill eligibility criteria for candidacy;
 - b) A complaint submitted against candidacy has been granted;
 - c) The candidate is found guilty for a *falgranto delicto* commission of a serious crime or a crime entailing rigorous imprisonment and his rights to vote and be elected has been stripped off by the decision of the court. judgement
 - d) The person has intentionally registered in two constituencies;
 - e) The person has declared withdrawal from the election
 - f) If misrepresentation of endorsement signatures submitted by the candidate is proved
2. Where proof of misrepresentation of endorsement signatures is discovered after the election the Board shall report to
 - a) The council if the candidate was a winner of a particular constituency
 - b) The concerned body with mandates to investigate crimes along with all evidences if the candidate lost the contest.
3. Where the candidature of a political party candidate had been revoked, without awareness of the political party or there being any possibility it could become aware of such circumstances, due to the fault of its candidate and provided this happened at least a month ahead of election day, the political organization shall be allowed to make a replacement.

Article 31. Duty to contest in a single constituency

1. A person can be a candidate in only one constituency.
2. Where it is proved that a person deliberately registers as a candidate in more than one constituency, his candidacy shall be revoked from all constituencies;
3. Where multiple registration is discovered, after the announcement of the election result, the result shall be annulled and the candidate with the second highest votes shall be declared the winner.

Article 32. Transfer to contest in another constituency

1. A candidate may, within candidate registration period, transfer his candidacy to a different constituency if allowed to contest in that constituency in accordance with the proclamation.,
2. If the request for transfer is submitted to the registering constituency by the political party

it shall be made through a letter bearing the signature and the official stamp of the organization.

3. Where the request for transfer of candidacy is submitted to the registering constituency by an independent candidate, it shall be made through a written letter signed by himself.
4. The candidate shall return together with certificate of candidature all documents relating to previous registration to the constituency and have it cancelled. He shall be issued a document verifying this fact by the constituency office.
5. The transferring candidate shall submit the registration document given to him by the constituency that previously process his registration to the one he is transferring to. The latter constituency shall, after ascertaining fulfilment of eligibility criteria, register the candidate as well as issue a candidature certificate and other registration documents.
6. The request for transfer of candidacy shall be made and granted if submitted during the candidate registration period.

Article 33. Complaints lodged against the registration of candidates

1. A person objecting or denied registration as a candidate shall have a right to lodge a complaint, along with the necessary evidences, with the Constituency Grievance Hearing Committee .
2. The Constituency Grievance Hearing Committee shall entertain and render a decision upon the complaint in accordance with Board's directive on the organization and working procedure of Grievance Hearing Committees.

Chapter Three Candidature Symbols

Article 34. Selection of candidature symbols

1. The order in which candidature symbols appear on the ballot paper shall be determined through a lot administered by the Board.
2. The Board shall prepare an album containing a variety of candidature symbols to select from.
3. A candidate may submit his own symbol or select one from the album prepared by the Board. A symbol submitted by a candidate must comply with the technical specifications of the Board.
4. Any political organization shall, on the basis of the election timetable of the Board, shall select from or submit its own symbol to the Board's Headquarter.
5. The Board's headquarter shall provide list of symbols selected and have not been selected to each constituency.
6. Independent candidates shall
 - a) In accordance with Board's electoral calendar select their symbols from constituency offices.
 - b) Select symbols in the constituency office in which they intend to contest form Board's album of candidature symbols or submit their own to the same office.
7. Candidates can use own symbols provided a certificate verifying usage is issued to them by by the Board or regional branch office.
8. Political party candidates shall use the same symbol at all levels of election.
9. Political party Candidates shall use the same symbol for each councils' election andin all constituencies.

10. A political organization or independent candidate shall be given priority to choose a symbol used during previous election, if necessary it shall be redesigned so as to meet the technical specifications of the Board.
11. The Board shall, in accordance with article 37 of this directive, render decision on disputes relating to candidature symbols.
12. The Board may, if it believes a symbol of a political party or an independent candidate violates the provisions of the Proclamation and this directive, order it be changed.

Article 35. Particulars of candidature symbols

Any candidature symbol shall:

1. Fulfill the Board's quality specifications;
2. Not be similar to the symbols previously registered by other political parties or independent candidates;
3. Not have any connection to a matter or a situation that could directly or indirectly incite hatred and conflict amongst nations, nationalities, race or religions;
4. Not reflect negative attitude towards a certain religion, specific group or section of society, gender, nation and nationalities or race.
5. Not conveying messages of war or other illegal activities;
6. Not be similar to flags or emblems of federal and regional states, registered emblems of other political organizations; flags and emblems of various international organizations or symbols of religious organizations;
7. Not have a distinct meaning in sign language;
8. Not be similar with an emblem of a legally registered private company, governmental or non-governmental institution
9. Not contravene public morals, ethics and similar principles of the public.

Article 36. Changing and replacing candidature symbols

1. The Board may, in accordance with article 34(12) of this directive, order the symbol of a political organization or an independent candidate to be changed.
2. Where the Board decides that a candidature symbol should be changed, the decision shall be communicated to the political organization or the independent candidate within 15 days after the end of candidate registration and they would be ordered to submit or select a replacement symbol
3. Where a political organization or independent candidate wishes to change a symbol they had earlier chosen they shall, in writing as well as attaching the previous and the new replacement symbol, notify the same to the Board or the constituency within ten days after the conclusion of candidate registration.

Article 37. Complaints lodged on candidature symbols

1. Any independent candidate or political party claiming that their symbol has been unlawfully taken by another, denied usage or ordered to make changes on same may present his complaint to the Board within five consecutive days from the day of occurrence of the act giving rise to the complaint and get a decision.
2. The Board shall, after making the necessary examination, , render its decision in writing to the complainant within five days from the day of receipt of the complaint.
3. The decision under sub-article (2) of this article may as appropriate reject the complaint, grant it or orders the submission of additional evidence.

4. A person aggrieved by the board's decision may appeal to a court having jurisdiction.

Chapter Four Miscellaneous Provisions

Article 38. Special rights of candidates

1. Candidates shall not be arrested except in the cases of *flagrante delicto* for a serious crime until the end of the election.
2. Where candidates have committed unlawful acts outside of the circumstances specified under sub-article (1) of this article, legal measures can be taken against them only after official announcement of election results by the Board.
3. Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-article (2) of this article, if the person is declared winner of the election he will be not be held liable for crimes committed during the election period unless the concerned council decides to set aside his immunity.

Article 39. Responsibilities of the Board

1. The Board shall announce in advance and in all media accessible to the public the rights of everyone fulfilling eligibility requirements stipulated under the proclamation and this directive to register as a candidate during the timetable set for candidate registration.
2. The Board shall, while discharging its responsibility under sub-article (1) and disseminating such information duly takes into consideration the need to ensure accessibility to women as well as those having limited access to information and citizens that require special assistance such as persons with disability and the like

Article 40. Duty to cooperate

Every person or organ has the duty to cooperate in the implementation the provisions of this directive.

Article 41. Repealed and inapplicable practices and directives

Any directive or customary practice which contradicts this directive shall not be applicable on matters covered by this directive.

Article 42. Effective date

This directive shall come into force from the date of its adoption [January 6th,2021]

**Addis Ababa
Birtukan Mideksa
Chairperson of the National Election Board of Ethiopia**