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## AEUP

News Conference Brief  
On  
23 May 2010 Election  
Of  
House of People's Representatives  
And  
Regional State Councils

### Executive Summary

Over the last nine months, since the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) invited All Ethiopia Unity Party and other opposition parties to negotiate the Code of Conduct for Political Parties, AEUP has been doing everything possible under its control in order to make the political playing field level for all opposition parties and the election genuine. Today, AEUP is in a position to inform newsmen, the Ethiopian people and the world at large that its efforts have been a futile exercise, because EPRDF has proven itself ones again not a law abiding government. It has broken every bit of the major parts of the Code of Conduct. Following is a brief statement to this effect.

One, as expected and normal for Ethiopia, 23 May 2010, the Election Day, was peaceful, proving as ever that the Ethiopian people, even in spite of one of the worst conditions leading up to an important milestone in their lives, are the most peaceful people on earth.

Two, as is well known the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) was not neutral on the voting day as it was all along the process of the election.

Three, the election process of about three months as well as the voting day was full of harassment, intimidation and beating of party observers, candidates and some voters. There was hardly a free environment in most parts of the country for candidates, party observers and for neutral voters or those who allegedly may not vote for the EPRDF.

Four, the campaign process lacked a level playing field for the opposition parties. Until the election process started about four months ago the opposition parties could not freely recruit members, open or rent offices and organise conferences and seminars throughout the country to educate the public on their rights and obligations as well on the opposition parties programmes. Even then candidates could not freely campaign in most parts of the country, particularly in Amhara, Oromiya, Benishangul-Gumuz, Afar and the Southern Nationalities.

Five, as indicated in one of our earlier letters of grievance to the NEBE, not enough people who wanted to vote were registered because NEBE placed obstacles on certain voters and candidates. Local observers were not properly elected by voters either. Voter registration, local observers' registration and candidate registration were either discriminatory or did not follow the proper procedure. Hence, voters could not have adequate choices of candidates.

Six, campaign materials were destroyed across the country, mainly those of the opposition parties. The Ruling Party campaigned including in churches and market places, although these are prohibited places by law.

Seven, too many polling stations, over 43,000 sites, made it very difficult for the opposition parties to provide party observers for all polling stations. The complaint was made to NEBE, in one of the earlier discussions in the run-up to the Election Day, although AEUP's argument fell on deaf ears. Hence, it made the voting and vote count doubtful or in favour of the Ruling Party who has provided party observers in all polling stations.

Eight, the polling stations were not organized well to ensure privacy of voting. Voters could see and talk to each other in adjacent voting booths, if they wanted to. Other irregularities were also observed in a number of polling stations. Some voters were caught red handed with two or more voting cards and were expelled from voting.

Nine, the Ruling Party was rampantly using public resources for its campaign. The worst of this happened in its free use, as if by right, of Kebele (local) offices to recruit, harass and intimidate voters and to send its misleading messages about candidates.

Ten, the police force and the prosecution have not been neutral and independent of the Ruling Party, both during the election process and on the voting day. There were rampant imprisonment and beating of our candidates and party observers leading up to the run-up to the voting day, also preventing them from observing the voting process and vote counts. As a result all our candidates could not be registered or were forced to resign from candidacy, and our party observers were refused to witness matters surrounding voting in various parts of Ethiopia.

Eleven, the public media was evidently biased in favour of the Ruling Party, both in terms of reporting as well as in the allocation of air time to opposition parties. AEUP was by design not given reasonable time to inform the public or voters of neither its activities nor its programme. As a result, we believe the public did

not have the opportunity to make an informed choice. We, however, wish to thank the private media in its effort to inform the public, in spite of all the difficulties it has to go through in order to obtain information.

In view of the fact that both the election process and the voting day was not free and fair and because in most polling stations throughout the country our party observers were beaten and driven away from observing the voting process, AEUP has decided not to accept the results of the election as announced by NEBE, which we have informed it Yesterday afternoon, 24 May 2010. We have asked NEBE to conduct both national and regional re-election of people's representatives as soon as possible.

Thank you. You may now ask questions or you may comment!