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Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

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## The 6<sup>th</sup> National Elections

Ethiopia's 6th National Elections are scheduled to take place in the month of June 2021 – a mere few weeks away. The highly anticipated elections will arguably be the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's first free and fair elections. Since 2018, the current administration has embarked on a path of democratization with a commitment to widening the political space and enabling a conducive environment for a democratic and informed discourse. Realization of this commitment is not without any difficulties. Nevertheless, the Federal government's will to persevere along the intended path of democratization remains uncompromised.

Following the failure of the previous regime to build a democratic culture, Ethiopia is now confronted with the twin challenges of building the necessary institutions and mindsets to enable a robust democratic culture and practice. Ethiopians are also presented with an opportunity to transition the country into a new era of governance and prosperity befitting its long history and aspirations of its proud people and the ample growth potential our country possesses. To this end, the Federal government's commitment to hold the first free, fair and peaceful elections have been founded on ongoing preparations to meet this goal.

A National Election Security Committee comprising members of the Federal Police, the Attorney General, the National Intelligence and Security Service, and the Ministry of Defence and regional representatives has been established by the government to ensure a peaceful and legitimate election. Discussions have been underway on the role the government must play in ensuring citizens exercise their Constitutional rights to vote freely. Special measures are being taken by the committee to identify areas where there is a risk of conflict. To deal with any election related grievances, the Federal Supreme Court the supreme court has set up dedicated electoral dispute adjudication benches. Political parties are aggressively campaigning across the country. To help voters make informed choices, election debates among contesting parties have begun with active participation of independent media and civil society on topics of national importance.

With a vested interest and commitment to democratization, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed continues to convene Regional Presidents and the Head of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia with the objective of identifying and resolving bottlenecks or challenges in the pre-election phase. Resultantly, on February 25, 2021 and April 17, 2021, the Prime Minister held virtual meetings to follow up on security arrangements and set up of polling stations in each region.

With a few weeks remaining, citizens are encouraged to timely register to vote in exercising their democratic rights and engage constructively throughout the electoral process to collectively ensure free and fair elections.

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