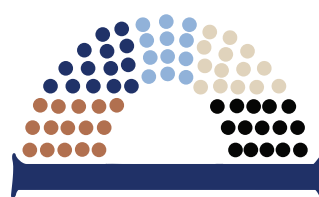


Monthly Digest No. 1
March/April 2025

Ethiopian Parliamentarians' Monthly Digest

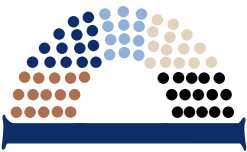


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BRIDGE Research & Innovation -
Parliaments. Peace. Policy



BRIDGE Profile

Bridge Research and Innovation for Democratic Governance and Enhanced Peace (BRIDGE) is an independent, non-profit think tank based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Registered under the FDRE Civil Society Organization Proclamation No. 1113/2019, which specializes in parliamentary affairs, peace, and development in the IGAD region.



Mission

To advance democratic governance and enhance peace through evidence-based research and innovative policy analysis.



Vision

To be a leading research hub and trusted source of analysis on parliamentary affairs, peace, governance, and development in the IGAD region.



Core Values

- ◆ Rigor: Delivering high-quality, evidence-driven research.
- ◆ Innovation: Pioneering creative and adaptive solutions for governance and peace challenges.
- ◆ Trust: Upholding credibility through transparent and reliable analysis



Objectives

It aims to strengthen legislative institutions in federal and local parliaments in Ethiopia and the IGAD region by:

- ◆ Conducting evidence-based research.
- ◆ Providing capacity-building support to enhance the performance of parliamentarians.
- ◆ Monitoring parliamentary activities to ensure accountability and effectiveness.



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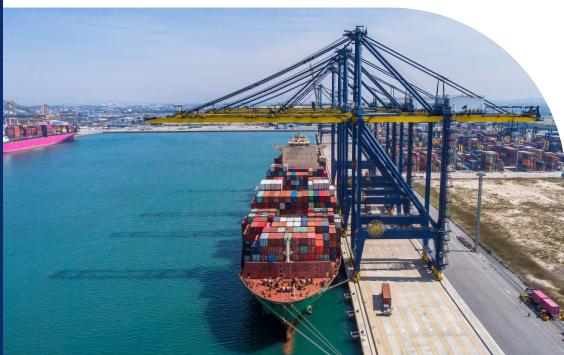
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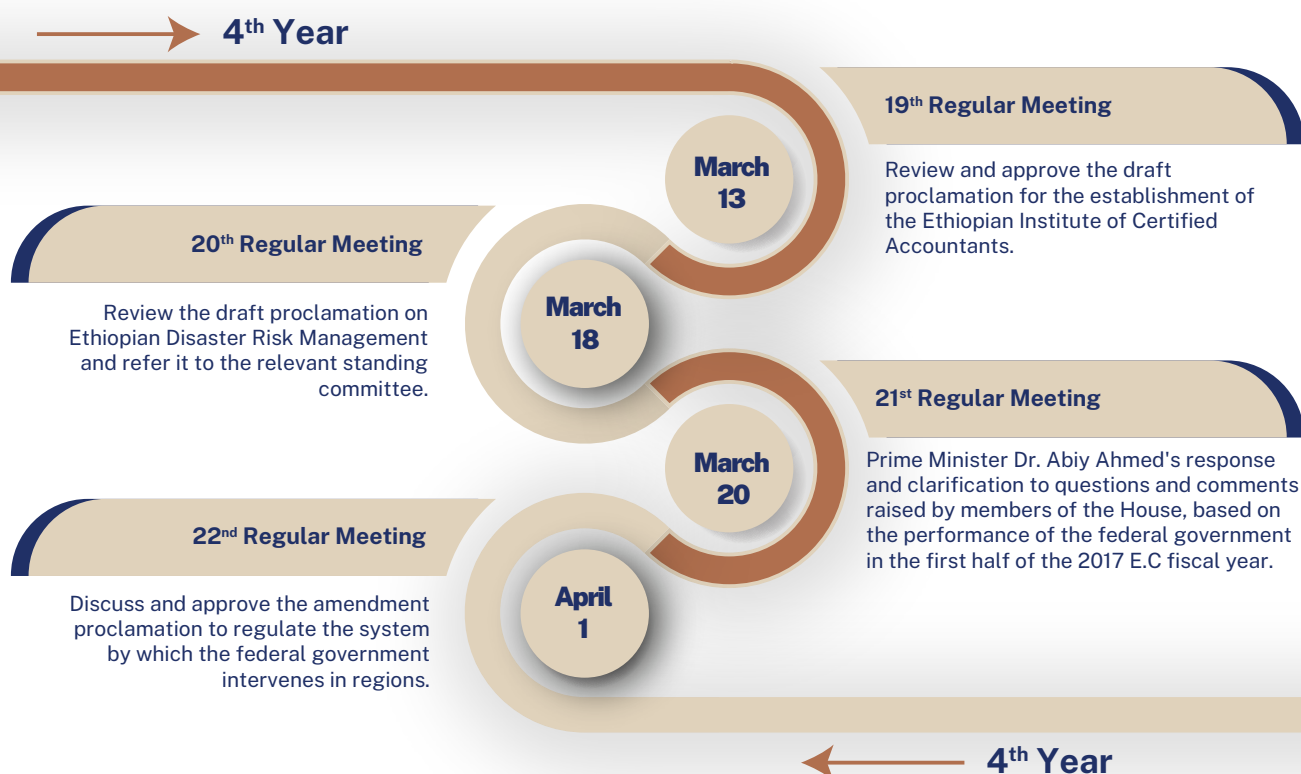
Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Regular Sessions of the House of Peoples' Representatives in February/March..... | 1 |
| The Prime Minister in Parliament | 2 |
| Legislative Activities..... | 4 |
| Voter-Representative Engagements..... | 6 |
| Oversight and Field Visits of Executive Institutions..... | 7 |
| Parliamentary Diplomacy..... | 11 |
| Bridge Research & Innovation's Observational Insight | 12 |
| Recommendations..... | 17 |

This March/April edition of the Enderasie Monthly Digest covers four important issues that represent the core missions of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR). These include lawmaking, constituent representation, oversight of executive bodies, and parliamentary diplomacy. Among the oversight activities of executive bodies, a notable event for March/April was the response and explanation provided by H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of the FDRE, to questions raised by members of the HoPR, based on the federal government's half-year performance of the 2017 Ethiopian Budget Year (2024/2025). Additionally, this edition compiles and presents the laws ratified by the House, activities related to representative mandates, institutional reports they hear, field visits, parliamentary diplomacy efforts they carried out, and finally, Bridge Research and Innovation's insights on selected key issues.

**All dates are in the Ethiopian calendar.*

Regular Sessions of the House of Peoples' Representatives in February/March



The Prime Minister in Parliament

P rime Minister Abiy, as the head of government, attended the 21st Regular Session of the 6th Round of the House of People's Representatives (HoPR), where he responded to questions raised by members of the House. His remarks addressed a range of critical national issues, including the conditions under which the federal government uses force, ongoing efforts to secure Ethiopia's access to the sea, the performance of the national economy, and other pressing matters.



Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed



Is the macroeconomy going well?

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy, in his remarks on economic issues, said that the government has prepared and started implementing a ten-year comprehensive development strategy. He also mentioned that five-year and one-year action plans have been created based on this overall framework, and considerable efforts are underway to achieve these plans. Among the main economic concerns raised by members of the House were problems related to raw material supply in the manufacturing sector, the strategic direction of the ten-year plan, fuel subsidies and illegal fuel sales, stalled national projects, and delays in fertilizer distribution.

In response to these questions, the premier stated that significant progress has been made in key economic indicators over the past eight months. If this momentum continues in the remaining months of the current fiscal year, he assured, Ethiopia will achieve economic growth exceeding the stated 8.4 percent. He also noted that

despite man-made and natural challenges, Ethiopia recorded an 8.1 percent economic growth last year and secured approximately \$3.5 billion USD in debt restructuring. He mentioned that efforts have been made to achieve debt restructuring through negotiations linked to the major economic reform launched in July 2024, emphasizing that Ethiopia's position is in favor of debt cancellation. He further noted that the country is currently working to generate roughly seven percent of its gross domestic product in revenue. If this progress persists over the next four months, he added, it would be an unprecedented achievement in Ethiopia's history.

The representatives, while appreciating the efforts being made to reduce inflation and the cost of living, raised a question: 'Although a report was presented on the reduction in food price inflation, how closely does it reflect reality on the ground?' In response, the Prime Minister acknowledged the efforts to curb inflation and stated that tangible progress has been made. He noted that increased production, macroeconomic reforms, and



other economic initiatives have contributed to the decline of soaring inflation.

| Overall economic outlook for the past eight months | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Projected Economic Growth | Over 8.4% |
| Fuel and fertilizer subsidy | 156 billion ETB |
| Domestic revenue | Over 580 million USD |
| Debt restructuring | 3.5 billion USD |
| Foreign Export | 4.5 billion USD |
| Domestic and overseas job creation | For over 3 million citizens |

The Prime Minister told armed rebel groups, “It’s not worth it; give it up.”

Noting that the practice of resolving political issues through dialogue and negotiation remains limited in the country, the representative asked the Prime Minister to clarify the government’s commitment to addressing political problems through peaceful means. In response, the Prime Minister emphasized that the government must prioritize and pursue peace. He affirmed that, as the only legitimate entity to monopolize force, the government rarely engages in conflict to achieve lasting peace and uphold justice; this use of force would be solely aimed at securing enduring peace, he added.

Referring to alleged negotiations with various armed groups, the Prime Minister emphasized that his government remains committed to peace, stating that it is always ready to address emerging challenges through dialogue and civilized means. He described the groups his government is at loggerheads with as those who ‘dispose of medicine’ and block the delivery of fertilizer to the people they claimed to fight for. He also suggested that these groups show little concern for

the education of their own communities. Abiy described them as ‘violent liberationists,’ entities that first victimize their own people, claiming they send the message: ‘We will kill you because we are fighting for you; everything we do is justified because we are your liberator fighters.’ The Prime Minister concluded by saying that, through lived experience, not just hearsay, they have learned that war doesn’t bring any real benefit. While some support escalating the conflict, citing the overstretched state of the defense forces, his strong advice was: ‘It’s not worth it. It won’t happen. Just leave it.’

The Red Sea

During the same session, Abiy outlined his government’s current stance on the issue of access to the sea. He stated that Ethiopia’s desire for access to the Red Sea should not cause conflict with neighboring countries such as Somalia, Djibouti, or Eritrea. The Prime Minister reiterated to members of the House that the Red Sea is a matter of survival for Ethiopia, emphasizing that 130 million people cannot be confined as if they were in a locked prison.

In his remarks on the Red Sea issue, Prime Minister Abiy repeatedly mentioned Eritrea, calling the Eritrean people brothers, humble individuals who, like Ethiopians, seek development. He shared his government’s current stance with the representatives, saying, ‘Our plan is to develop and work together, not for one to stab the other.’ He also highlighted that Ethiopia has no plans to invade Eritrea to gain access to the Red Sea.

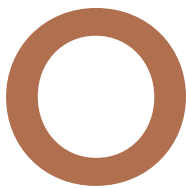
Dr. Abiy Ahmed, who noted that raising the issue of sea access is no longer taboo, further explained to the parliament that the international community recognizes that no large country in the world remains without access to the sea. Therefore, he argued that Ethiopia’s pursuit of sea access should be based on mutual benefit and the principle of give-and-take.

Legislative Activities

During the specified period, the House approved two proclamations and forwarded one draft proclamation to the appropriate standing committee for thorough review. It also hosted three explanatory forums on the draft laws.



Ratified Laws



One of the laws ratified by the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives in March was the proclamation establishing the Institute of Certified Accountants. In its 19th regular session, the parliament reviewed and unanimously approved the draft as Proclamation No. 1372/2025. Presenting the report and recommendation to the House, the Chairperson of the Planning, Budget, and Finance Affairs Standing Committee, Honorable Dessalegn Wedaje, explained that the proclamation aims to build capacity to produce internationally certified professionals in Ethiopia. He emphasized that the legislation will not only help prevent financial mismanagement in the sector by strengthening the capacity of accountants but also serve to protect public and national interests. Dr. Eyob Tekalign, State Minister of Finance, added that the draft was informed by international and continental experiences. He underscored its importance in enhancing financial capacity and promoting accounting, auditing, and financial reporting practices that support greater transparency and accountability.

Secondly, the House amended the 2003 proclamation that established the framework for federal government intervention in regional states. Government Chief Whip in Parliament, Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige, and Minister of Justice Hanna Araya Silassie explained to the representatives the various reasons necessitating the amendment. During its 22nd regular session on March 31, 2025, the House approved the amendment proclamation with a majority vote and two abstentions. This amendment replaced the previous Proclamation No. 359/2003 and was ratified as Proclamation No. 1373/2025, titled 'Proclamation to Amend the System for the Intervention of the Federal Government in the Regions'. Dr. Tesfaye Beljige, Minister in Charge of Government Affairs to Parliament, who presented the amendment recommendation, emphasized the need for the change by citing the Interim Administration of the Tigray Regional State as an example. He noted that the time limit set for the administration's term in the previous proclamation was inconsistent with the region's actual situation, creating a gap in implementation. (For a detailed review of this proclamation, please see page 18.)

Draft Laws

During its 20th regular session, held on March 18, 2025, the House unanimously referred the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Draft Proclamation No. 16/2025 to the Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee for detailed review. The Chief Government Whip in Parliament, Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige, gave an explanation regarding the draft law.

In his remarks, the Minister emphasized that the proclamation is essential for building the internal capacity of federal and regional administrative institutions to effectively manage activities before, during, and after a disaster within Ethiopia's disaster risk management framework. Furthermore, he explained that the draft is crucial for establishing and implementing an emergency declaration system to respond swiftly to immediate and overwhelming disasters.

According to the draft proclamation, an Ethiopian Disaster Risk Response Fund will be created to support disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery efforts across all phases, before, during, and after a disaster. It was also clarified that the fund's income will come from various sources, including contributions from employee salaries, banks, financial and service organizations, charitable institutions, the federal government, the two city administrations, and a portion of the total annual budget.

Briefing Forums

In March and April, the parliament conducted three briefing forums on draft legislation: on the draft proclamation concerning solid waste management and disposal, on the Ethiopian disaster risk management draft proclamation, and another on the draft regulation for establishing the Ethiopian Construction Industry Think Tank, aka policy advisory group.

On March 24th, regarding the draft proclamation

amendment on dry waste management and disposal presented to the Standing Committee on Water, Irrigation, Lowland Areas and Environmental Development Affairs, and the Standing Committee on Urban Development, Infrastructure and Transport Affairs, the evidence presented by Engineer Lelise Neme, the Director General of the Environmental Protection Authority, and her colleagues to the standing committee explained that the existing Proclamation No. 513/2007 necessitated amendment due to the increased volume of waste generated in line with urban expansion, and because the existing law was enacted 18 years prior and did not give sufficient attention to the rural parts of the country.¹

Regarding the aforementioned Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission Draft Proclamation presented to the Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee on March 26th, Ambassador Shiferaw Teklemariam (PhD), the Commissioner General of the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission, and his colleagues explained that its purpose is to create transition, strengthen institutional standing, and enhance financial capacity.²

The briefing presented on April 7th to the Standing Committee on Urban Development, Infrastructure, and Transport Affairs was to develop a draft regulation for establishing the Ethiopian Construction Industry Think Tank Group. State Minister of Urban Development and Infrastructure, Ato Yetimgeta Asrat, stated that establishing a think tank to conduct problem-solving studies and make the construction sector more effective is necessary and beneficial.³

1 House of Peoples' Representatives; "Explanatory Forum held on the Draft Proclamation on Dry Waste Management and Disposal" <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/14tC-8C6ZSd/>

2 House of Peoples' Representatives; "It was explained that the draft proclamation can liberate the country from dependence and the public from a dependency mind-set" <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1ANTRpQ4wu/>

3 Reporter; "It was stated that the construction industry is facing complex problems that lack direct solutions." <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/140101/>



Voter-Representative Engagements



One of the primary responsibilities of the House members is to conduct periodic consultations within their constituencies. In line with that, the representatives travel to their electoral districts to engage with constituents and address their questions, a task they undertake biyearly. In this regard, members carried out these consultations in March, continuing from February.

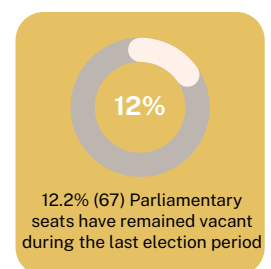
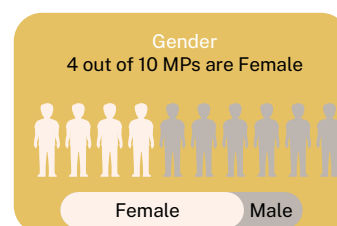
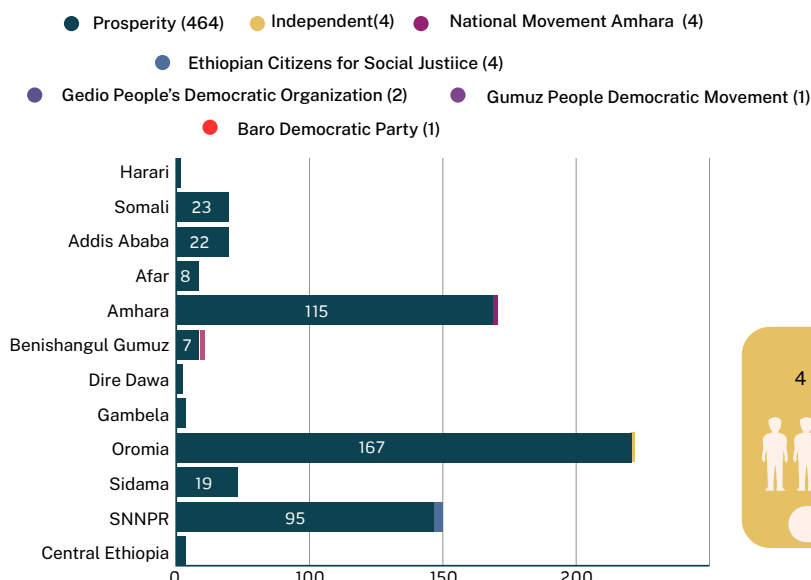
Among the main issues repeatedly raised at these forums, women's constitutional rights and violence against women and children took precedence. In discussions held in Oromia (West Wollega), North Shewa, Wolayta, Amhara (Awi), and Dawro zones, constituents consistently highlighted the need to safeguard women's constitutional rights and benefits, promote their economic, social, and political empowerment, and collectively prevent gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices. Notably, the forums emphasized the importance of awareness-raising activities to increase women's participation in the national dialogue, a point strongly underscored by the Representatives.

In the discussion forums held in March and April, lack of peace and security, along with delays in infrastructure development, were the second most frequently raised national issues. Forums in Oromia (North Shewa, Buno Bedele), Somali, Southern Ethiopia (Wolayta, Ari), and Benishangul-Gumuz regions featured extensive discussions on the reconstruction of schools and

other institutions, such as health facilities, damaged by conflict, interruptions in water supply, shortages of banking services, and the need to prevent illegal cross-border trade. Peace and security emerged as an urgent concern, with participants emphasizing the government's responsibility to establish lasting peace and protect citizens' rights.

In addition to these two core issues, discussions addressed challenges related to good governance, the situation of displaced persons returning to their homes, delays in implementing development plans, and setbacks in road construction, all concerns raised by voters. Moreover, a wide range of other issues were frequently brought up in the more than forty electorate forums, including medicine shortages, deficiencies in electricity and telephone services, unemployment, the high cost of living, fertilizer price inflation, limited agricultural input supply, human rights concerns, and delays in development-related tax payments.

HOUSE OF PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES





Oversight and Field Visits of Executive Institutions

Members of the House of Peoples' Representatives of the F.D.R.E. are expected to oversee executive institutions in addition to their representational, legislative, and parliamentary diplomacy responsibilities. Notable activities in this regard include listening to reports from executive institutions, physically assessing institutions, and conducting field visits.



Institutional Reports

Various federal government institutions presented their performance reports to the various Standing Committees of the House, to which they were summoned in March and April.

On March 24, Ethiopian Investment Holdings, the newest institution, presented its eight-month performance report for the 2017 E.C. (Ethiopian Calendar) fiscal year to the House. Dr. Brook Taye, the CEO, presented the institution's report to the House's Standing Committee for Development Organizations Affairs, stating that the institution he leads generated 901 billion Birr in revenue within the half-year. The CEO added that 14.5 billion Birr in government profit share was remitted to the Ministry of Finance.

On March 24, 2025, the Ministry of Education was the second to present its report. The Ministry submitted a study to the House's Standing Committee for Human Resource Development, Employment, and Technology Affairs, which it conducted in collaboration with partner organizations, investigating the causes behind the low performance in the 12th-grade national exit examination.

Professor Birhanu Nega, Minister of Education, who presented the findings, cited multiple factors contributing to the decline in student performance. He explained that administering the 12th-grade exit examination within universities exposed previously concealed systemic

deficiencies. He also pointed to corruption among various stakeholders as a contributing factor to students' poor results.

The Minister further highlighted that some students had advanced to 8th grade without being able to read, underscoring the depth of the problem. He emphasized that the core of the country's educational crisis, beyond what the study could fully capture, lies in a broader moral decline within society.

While acknowledging that improving teachers' living conditions is critical to addressing the issue, Professor Birhanu noted that the country's economic capacity is currently insufficient to manage such reforms. He also revealed that Ethiopia is facing a shortage of over 100,000 teachers.

In the sequence of monthly report presentations, the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia was the third to present its report. On April 03, 2025, CBE's President Abe Sano presented the bank's eight-month performance report to the House's Standing Committee for Government Development Organizations. He stated that the bank recorded a profit of 32.6 billion Birr during this period. According to the report, out of the total 264.65 billion Birr in loans disbursed over the eight months, more than 88% was allocated to the private sector, while the share of loans to government institutions decreased to 7.2%.

Abe also noted encouraging performance across all revenue-generating sectors, announcing that the bank ►



Ethiopian Investment Holdings CEO, Dr. Brook Taye while presenting the report

achieved total revenue of 109.32 billion Birr, a 26 percent increase compared to the same period last year. The report further highlighted that total deposits reached over 1.54 trillion Birr, raising the bank's market share to 49.3%.

Honorable Mohammed Abdo, Chairman of the Standing Committee, commended the bank's efforts to maintain industry stability and provide 80% of loans to the private sector, stating that these initiatives will help facilitate trade.

In March, the Ministry of Mines became the fourth institution to present its report. The Ministry submitted its eight-month performance report for the 2017 E.C. fiscal year to the House's Standing Committee for Industry and Mining Affairs. Minister Engineer Habtamu Tegegn, who presented the report, stated that while the highest amount previously recorded in the mining sector was 800 million USD, the Ministry had generated 1.88 billion USD in foreign currency during the reporting period. He noted that gold accounted for the largest share of its total.

The final report presented in March was an audit report evaluating the effectiveness of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation's (EBC) radio and television news and current affairs service delivery. The report, covering the period from 2013 to 2015 E.C., was submitted to the House's Standing Committee for Government Expenditure Management and Control Affairs. During the session,

Federal Auditor General Meseret Damte noted that EBC had undergone a significant transformation compared to its previous state. She also highlighted the positive impact of disseminating information through various social media platforms. EBC CEO Getnet Tadesse added that the reforms had created opportunities for the public to express their views in multiple ways, transforming the institution into a platform of diverse ideas.

Institutional and Field Visits

In March and April 2025, beyond visiting their constituents for discussions, various standing committees and officials of the House of Peoples' Representatives conducted approximately 32 field visits across Ethiopia, inspecting the current state of various federal and regional institutions

Institutional Visits

Among the institutions visited by the representatives was Berhanena Selam Printing Enterprise. On March 3, 2025, during a visit organized by the House's Standing Committee for Government Development Organizations Affairs, it was reported that the enterprise had enhanced its competitiveness by introducing new technologies and machinery. Shitahun Wale, the General Manager of the printing house, told committee members that while the printing industry is characterized by rapidly evolving

technology, much of the equipment currently used by the enterprise remains outdated and struggles to keep pace with these changes.

Another federal institution visited by the representatives during the same month was the Federal Civil Service Commission. In mid-March, a delegation led by the Chairperson of the Standing Committee for Human Resource Development, Employment, and Technology Affairs, Honorable Dr. Negari Lencho, visited the Commission to assess the progress of its reform initiatives. Mekuria Haile, Commissioner of the Civil Service Commission, explained that several activities have been undertaken to elevate the civil service to a level befitting the country. He also informed the visiting members that efforts are underway to implement an organized data management system.

During the visit, the Standing Committee also reviewed the Commission's office arrangements, including its modern administrative courtrooms, training halls named after notable national figures, and the current state of its one-stop service delivery system.

Kombolcha Industrial Park was also among the institutions visited in March. During the visit, conducted by the House's Standing Committee for Government Development Organizations Affairs, it was noted that the industrial park had successfully recovered from the challenges it faced during the northern conflict. The park has since created employment opportunities for 10,000 citizens and generated substantial revenue from the export of its products.

However, the Standing Committee emphasized the need to address ongoing issues related to employee salaries and other associated concerns. In response, Park's General Manager, Ahmed Seid, informed the Committee that since the park's establishment, a

significant number of investors have joined, leading to the creation of employment opportunities for nearly 7,000 citizens over the past seven years.

Field Visits

Members of the House also conducted extensive field visits in March and April. The House's Standing Committee for Water, Irrigation, Lowland Areas, and Environmental Development Affairs visited the Harari region to inspect a clean drinking water project located in Miya Woreda. The delegation's leader, the Honorable Weldeyes Debebe, emphasized the urgency of addressing the clean water shortage affecting the city and surrounding areas. The committee expressed concern to regional officials that, although 98 percent of the project's construction had been completed, it had not yet begun operations as scheduled.

In addition to the drinking water project, the committee also raised issues regarding the wastewater disposal construction project, noting that it was only six percent complete. The committee stressed that the delay was alarming and urged corrective measures to expedite progress.

A notable field visit conducted in March involved the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Honorable Lomi Bedho, along with representatives from East Shewa, who visited Lome and Bora Woredas. The Deputy Speaker and the delegation inspected both completed and ongoing agricultural development activities, including summer wheat and banana cluster farming initiatives. They also visited newly established rural kebele administrative offices.

Another significant project visited was the Koysa Hydroelectric Power Dam. The visit was led by Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige, Government Chief Whip in the House,



Visit at Berhanena Selam Printing Enterprise



Visit at Kombolcha Industrial Park



Visit at Lome and Bora Woredas

accompanied by other senior government officials. During the visit, it was reported that construction of the Koysha Hydroelectric Dam had reached 65 percent completion.

According to information gathered during the visit, the dam, being constructed at a cost of 2.5 billion euros, is located between Konta Koysha Woreda in the Konta Zone of the Southwest Ethiopia Peoples' Region and Melo Koza Woreda in the Gofa Zone of the South Ethiopia Region. The development is designed not only to advance the country's power generation capacity but also to address the socio-economic needs of communities in both regions.

During their March field visits, the various Standing Committees of the House assessed the progress of development plans and examined the conditions of citizens displaced by natural disasters by visiting the affected areas. A delegation from the House's Standing Committee for Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs, led by Honorable Representative Fantaye Legesse, received a briefing from the Kefa Zone Disaster Risk Management Commission on the damage caused by recent natural disasters and the mitigation efforts undertaken.

Following the briefing and on-site inspections, the Standing Committee underscored the urgent need to support infrastructure for displaced citizens. The Commission also informed the committee about the landslides that occurred in Decha and Adiyo Woredas in the Kefa Zone of the Southwest Ethiopia Region in July 2024 and October 2024, which resulted in significant displacement.

During the visit, displaced residents appealed to the federal government to prepare a permanent settlement area and facilitate their resettlement in the near future.



Speaker of the House Tagesse Chafo with the Cuban Ambassador Maylín Suárez Álvarez

Parliamentary Diplomacy

The House engaged in two parliamentary diplomatic activities during the month of March. Early in the month, the Speaker of the House, Honorable Tagesse Chafo, held discussions with a delegation led by Cuban Ambassador Maylín Suárez Álvarez. During the meeting, held at the Speaker's office, Honorable Tagesse highlighted the strong and longstanding friendship between Ethiopia and Cuba, which spans over fifty years.

The Speaker expressed gratitude for Cuba's contributions to Ethiopia in areas such as education, health, and military support. He emphasized Ethiopia's commitment to further strengthening this historic relationship through parliamentary diplomacy and enhanced people-to-people ties. Additionally, he encouraged Cuban investors to explore opportunities in Ethiopia across sectors of interest to them.

Ambassador Maylín Suárez Álvarez, for her part, reaffirmed the deep and historic bonds between the two nations, noting that Cuba is committed to deepening its cooperation with Ethiopia across all sectors.

The second parliamentary diplomatic engagement undertaken by the House toward the

end of March was an international forum in Asia. A delegation composed of members from both the House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of Federation, led by the Speaker of the House of Federation, Honorable Agegnehu Teshager, participated in the 150th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly held in Uzbekistan. Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige, Chief Whip at the House of Peoples' Representatives, who also attended the assembly, stated that Ethiopia's delegation effectively utilized the opportunity to present the country's experiences and expertise on key international issues to the global community.

Also participating in the same forum was Honorable Professor Miretu Shanqo, Deputy Government Chief Whip of the House, who delivered a speech titled "Empowering Tomorrow's Global Leaders." In his address, he emphasized that any political or economic system excluding youth participation is unsustainable and highlighted the urgent need to significantly increase youth involvement and leadership. Key topics discussed at the assembly included good governance, peacebuilding, sustainable development with equitable benefits, and climate change.



Bridge Research & Innovation's Observational Insight

The House approved an amended proclamation granting the Federal Government authority to intervene in regional states. On April 1, 2025, during its 22nd regular session, the House passed the amendment by a majority vote with two abstentions. This new proclamation, numbered 1373/2017, replaced the previous Proclamation No. 359/1995.

A Brief Observational Insight on Proclamation No. 1373/2017

It plays a crucial role in addressing legal and political gaps to resolve administrative and political challenges. However, based on the situation encountered in the Tigray Region, Bridge Research & Innovation has noted that it remains unclear how similar issues, such as the dominance of armed political groups, the role of provisional administrations in development and administration, and related matters, would be handled in interim administrations.

Therefore, this brief publication examines the limitations of the previous proclamation, the legal and political realities and gaps revealed in the Tigray Region, as well as the amended provisions and their implications thereof.

Limitations of Proclamation 359/1995

As detailed in the 1987 Constitution, Ethiopia's federal structure is founded on the principle of self-administration for nations, nationalities, and peoples. The cultural identity and right to self-administration of these groups are fundamental pillars of the Constitution, which granted the highest level of protection. The primary reason for amending the old Proclamation No. 359/2003 was to address situations where the constitutional group right to self-administration was at risk of violation, and when political developments threatened to destabilize the constitutional order. The overarching purpose of the old proclamation was

to ensure that members of the federation returned to constitutional compliance and to safeguard the system from potential instability. Undoubtedly, the establishment of a provisional administration, as outlined in the proclamation, is necessary to address the arising problems and restore the political system to its proper constitutional state.

However, by limiting the duration of the provisional administration to only two years, the proclamation assumed that all underlying issues necessitating its establishment would be resolved within this timeframe. This assumption resulted in certain limitations. Article 15, Sub-article 3 of the proclamation grants the House of Federation the authority to extend the provisional administration period by no more than six months if the problems in the specified region remain unresolved. As demonstrated in the Tigray Region, this provision does not align with the prevailing realities.

The fact that the House of Federation, constitutionally empowered to decide on extending the duration of provisional administration in regions facing constitutional crises, meets only twice a year increases the risk that the problems the proclamation seeks to address may worsen or spiral out of control during the intervals between sessions. This situation could result in significant gaps in constitutional implementation.

These and other related issues, previously theoretical, became clearly evident during the operation of the Tigray Regional interim administration, which concluded its term two months ago. Thus, the amendment of the proclamation is imperative.



The Tigray case

Since the Federal Government accused the TPLF of instigating war to forcibly overthrow the constitutional order, removing the TPLF-led regional government, and establishing a provisional administration, numerous legal questions have arisen. If the provisional administration completes its term without achieving its objectives, such as holding elections, which constitutional body can make decisions until the House of Federation convenes? If the problems that led to the administration's establishment worsen, what constitutional grounds exist for taking swift action? How can a democratic system be restored in Tigray amid ongoing political conflict? What legal and administrative exit strategies are available if the administration's term expires and the region remains in crisis? These are some of the key questions.

The tangible manifestation of these and other related problems, which could be further elaborated, made it clear that the legal responses that could be provided for these problems fell outside the framework of the old proclamation, thereby forcing the federal government to take immediate action. When we consider these matters from this perspective, it highlights the gaps between the spirit of the old proclamation and the prevailing political reality.

Therefore, Proclamation 1373/2025 is an amended law formulated with an understanding of the political and institutional problems that prior measures taken to resolve issues had failed to address. While such legislative processes are infrequent and used to prevent the exacerbation of problems, it is important to note that care must be taken not to erode the predictability of the law and constitutional processes. When laws are enacted, they should consider the future and be open to amendment based on changing circumstances, and they should also encourage both federal and regional governments to appropriately discharge the powers vested in them by the constitution.

Contents of the Amendment



Article 15, Sub-article 3 of the proclamation grants the House of Federation the authority to extend the provisional administration period by no more than six months if the problems in the specified region remain unresolved. As demonstrated in the Tigray Region, this provision does not align with the prevailing realities.

Regarding Granting Additional Power to the Speaker of the House of Federation.

Given that the House of Federation convenes only biannually, the Speaker of the House has been granted the authority to order federal government intervention when urgent situations arise in any region. This provision addresses the limitations found in Proclamation 359/2003 and strengthens the capacity of federal institutions to respond promptly, marking a significant improvement in the proclamation.

From this perspective, as members of the House of Federation review and decide on the Speaker's rulings during their sessions, the amendment upholds and reinforces the constitutional collective decision-making authority of the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples represented in the House.

Time Limit for Provisional Administrations

The previous proclamation stipulated that the term of provisional administration, established to protect the constitutional order from imminent danger, could not be extended beyond six months. However, the experience in the Tigray Region has shown that an additional six months is insufficient for provisional administrations dealing with large-scale violent conflicts and complex political situations. In response, Proclamation 1373/2025 allows the term of such administration to be initially extended for up to one year, with a possible further extension of no more than an additional year if necessary.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Amendment

Strengths

- ◆ Strengths: It establishes an immediate legal basis for the central government to fulfill its constitutional duty to uphold constitutional

rights, addressing potential delays caused by the infrequent sessions of the House of Federation.

- ◆ It permits the extension of the provisional administration's term beyond six months when necessary, allowing it to complete remaining constitutional responsibilities if it faces challenges in resolving the legal and political issues for which it was established.
- ◆ It acknowledges the difficulty of convening the House of Federation on short notice for urgent discussions and decisions, given its broad constitutional responsibilities, when an extension of the provisional administration's term is required.
- ◆ The amendment includes a provision requiring that the specific issues demanding the provisional administration's focused attention be clearly outlined in the decision issued by the Speaker or approved by the House.
- ◆ A key strength of the amendment is its responsiveness to current realities, exemplified by its ability to address the evolving situation in the Tigray Region.

Weaknesses

- ◆ While the amendment's provision granting the Speaker authority over the duration of the provisional administration, addressing the challenge of urgently convening the House of Federation and making timely decisions, is a positive development, the requirement that the House must subsequently approve the Speaker's decision raises concerns. The time gap between the Speaker's ruling and the House's meeting could potentially weaken accountability.
- ◆ Extending the administrative period of provisional administrations may create a perception of undermining Ethiopia's federal structure, which is founded on the linguistic identity and self-governance of its peoples.

Even if legally justified, such extensions risk provoking political sensitivity.

Implications

This brief review of the amended Proclamation 1373/2017, which addresses the limitations of the old Proclamation 359, has been in effect since its approval on April 1. It is believed that the proclamation will continue to serve as a problem-solving mechanism to some extent when Ethiopia faces political crises. If the proclamation is implemented in the spirit of its amendment, there is a belief that it will also help to properly uphold the constitutional order. However, if not, there is a concern that it could erode the constitution, which was established with a focus on inclusivity and multi-nationality. Like any other law, it is clear that this amended law alone will not resolve emerging political crises; for the law's implementation to achieve its intended purpose, institutional changes aligned with the law are essential. Further extensions of the provisional administration can only be avoided when certain political and institutional measures are taken to prevent such occurrences. Additionally, it will be necessary to develop a means to ensure that the potential for extending the provisional administration's term does not distract the executive from working with urgency. Moreover, designing and implementing monitoring and oversight mechanisms, along with clearly defining performance criteria for provisional administrations, will make a crucial contribution to achieving the proclaimed goal.

Conclusion

The approval of Proclamation 1373/2025 highlights the need to amend existing laws to strengthen national unity and the constitutional order, and to ensure diversity and decentralized administration. While the proclamation aims to address previous gaps, its effectiveness depends on the political stance promoted by society. It is essential to protect the core values of the constitution, such as the right to self-administration and shared decision-making, and to limit the interventions of provisional administrations and the central government to temporary measures. To achieve this, we believe power and accountability must be inseparable responsibilities and obligations; only then can a strong federalism, grounded in democratic multinational principles, be realized!

Fieldwork Observational Review

Members of the House have conducted field visits by traveling to their respective constituencies and directly engaging with the voters they represent and local institutions. Through these visits, they obtained concrete information by assessing ongoing and completed development activities and challenges in the areas they visited. In doing so, beyond fulfilling their constitutional responsibilities, they fostered events that improved the relationship between the government and the community.

For example, during the field visits conducted by representatives in March, their visits to the Koysa Hydroelectric Dam and Kombolcha Industrial Parks stand out. Their observations covered a variety of areas, including agriculture, infrastructure, disaster prevention, and improving government services. Since their field observations ranged from the nearby Addis Ababa to the distant Kefa and Gamo Zones, these observations by the standing committees greatly help provide the representatives with a complete understanding.

In this first edition of Bridge Research & Innovation's observational review, we highlight the representatives' visit to Kombolcha Industrial Park. While representatives are fulfilling their duties through such visits, it is essential to establish a follow-up system to address the issues identified during these field observations. If such a system already exists, we believe it should be made transparent to the public.

Furthermore, Bridge Research & Innovation asserts that whether or not the representatives' observations lead to tangible changes, particularly within the visited institutions, plays a critical role and should be publicly disclosed. For example, Kenyan representatives maintain multiple platforms to connect with the public, including constituency offices staffed to receive complaints and monitor development projects. In addition to these channels, they actively engage constituents through digital and social media. Some representatives also conduct baseline studies to gather structured feedback



Given the recent depreciation of the Ethiopian currency and sharp rise in food prices, it is clear that the Standing Committee's visit would have been more effective if they had conducted a preliminary field assessment beforehand to better understand how the livelihoods of industrial park workers have been impacted.

on socio-political and economic needs or on community acceptance of ongoing projects.

Refocusing on our national context, we would like to provide several recommendations regarding the representatives' visit to Kombolcha Industrial Park, which was previously used as an example. During their visit, members of the House's Standing Committee for Government Development Organizations Affairs raised concerns such as low wages and poor living conditions with the park's management. From Bridge Research & Innovation's perspective, beyond merely pointing out these issues, the Standing Committee should establish a formal system to monitor the implementation of their recommendations and ensure continuous follow-up.

A World Bank study conducted four years ago found that wages in industrial parks were comparable to those in other domestic economic sectors when measured against the cost of basic needs in the area. Although other studies have shown conflicting results regarding wages, the World Bank's report indicated that the average total compensation for workers was roughly four times higher than the local poverty baseline. However, the study also highlighted significant variations in pay and compensation structures across industries, as well as a lack of sufficient data.

Given the recent depreciation of the Ethiopian currency and sharp rise in food prices, it is clear that the Standing Committee's visit would have been more effective if they had conducted a preliminary field assessment beforehand to better understand how the livelihoods of industrial park workers have been impacted.

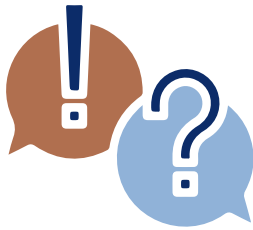
Furthermore, it is noted that, regarding the northern conflict, the US government suspended Ethiopia from benefiting from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a duty-free trade program available to sub-Saharan African countries. As is well known, this suspension severely impacted industrial parks, especially those like Kombolcha Industrial Park. In this context, Bridge Research & Innovation believes that the representatives who visited the park should have conducted a thorough assessment of the negative effects of this suspension on the current employment situation of the park's workers,

as well as on issues such as foreign currency losses incurred by the park and worker dismissals. Additionally, it is crucial to remember that field visits should include detailed analysis of the local poverty levels, workers' wage income tax status, government protections for the industrial sector, and workers' rights to organize and advocate. Moreover, it should be transparent to voters how and why representatives select the individuals and institutions they visit during field trips. We hope this brief observation, based on the representatives' visit to the park, will lead to future visits to other institutions including similar considerations.

In conclusion, since the representatives, given their current scope of observation, will not be able to fully cover all positive and negative aspects, their contribution to policy evaluation and improvement will inevitably be limited. Nonetheless, Bridge Research & Innovation believes that field observations conducted at federal and regional institutions, which yield different results from those with grassroots communities, will provide enough data to help shape and improve nationally significant policies and laws by balancing and coordinating their observational scope.



Visit at Kombolcha Industrial Park



Recommendations

Based on these brief observations, Bridge Research & Innovation presents the following recommendations.

- ◆ Representatives need structured monitoring frameworks that help them strengthen their institutional oversight and enhance their influence on policy and law-making. Furthermore, beyond just reporting on the policy, procedural, and legal amendments they propose, we believe they should fulfill their constitutional duty by actively shaping the practical implementation of these proposed amendments.
- ◆ Representatives should organize community discussions, which can generate numerous ideas alongside their regular field observations. These discussion forums will help include the voices of the grassroots community in policy and legal amendments or formulations. As Bridge Research & Innovation believes, representatives should properly integrate these voices into both new and amended laws.
- ◆ It is clear that the House of Peoples' Representatives should work to expand projects that promote social accountability. In this regard, development-focused feedback gathered through public participation clearly enhances transparency, accountability, and trust among all levels of government and relevant segments of society. However, beyond this, we believe that representatives are expected to ensure that this feedback is used as input in policy making and law creation processes. To achieve this, it is necessary to strengthen their partnerships with international, continental, and regional institutions, as well as with non-governmental organizations.

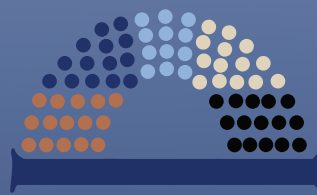
Field observations conducted by representatives are complex and offer valuable insights for policy development and law-making by highlighting different sectors. To maximize the benefits of these observations and greatly improve the impact of the representatives, it is crucial to strengthen their connection with grassroots communities, increase their influence on policy and legislation, and establish an effective monitoring system. Only through these measures can Ethiopians, through their elected representatives, genuinely express their hopes and concerns and work together toward peace and development.



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