

Statement of the Government of Tigray on the African Union's Invitation for Peace Talks, Annotated

October 5, 2022

Statement on the African Union's Invitation for Peace Talks

Dear Chairperson Faki,

On behalf of the Government of Tigray, I would like to thank you for your letter, dated October 1, inviting the Government of Tigray to South Africa to attend talks convened by the AU. The Government of Tigray is ready to participate in the proposed peace talks in South Africa. [1] We are committed to a peaceful resolution of the current conflict. In fact, in a statement issued on September 11, 2022, we had reaffirmed our readiness for an immediate, negotiated cessation of hostilities. You welcomed our statement that same day and urged both Parties to urgently work towards an immediate and mutually agreed-upon ceasefire. [2] Unfortunately, because you have not gone beyond this initial statement, it would be helpful to the peace process to know if cessation of hostilities is part of your substantive agenda. [3]

We are ready to send our negotiating team to South Africa. Even so, considering that we were not consulted prior to the issuance of this invitation, [4] we need clarification to some of the following issues to establish an auspicious start for the peace talks, such as whether there will be additional actors to be invited as participants, observers, or guarantors; [5] what roles

[1] The FGE and AUC Chairperson may have expected the Government of Tigray to refuse to attend or demand preconditions. Tigray raises reservations by way of asking for clarifications but does not place preconditions on participating.

[2] This refers to the outcome of the Djibouti talks. All international partners identify a cessation of hostilities as the first step. Only the AU (which is hereby reversing its position of September 11) supports the FGE position that fighting may continue while the talks proceed.

[3] In addition to point [2], the AU has not included this on its agenda.

[4] A breach of standard procedure. The norm of the AU, as with any mediation, requires prior consultation with both parties prior to any formal negotiations.

[5] A particular Tigrayan concern is whether the AU will invite Eritrea, as Gen. Obasanjo proposed on August 3.

you envisage for the international community; [6] and logistics, such as travel and security arrangements for our negotiating team. [7]

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest esteem.

Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael
President, Government of Tigray

cc.

Pres. Uhuru Kenyatta

Deputy Pres. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

Hanna Tetteh, UNSE

Michael Hammer, US SE

Annette Weber, EU SR

Mohamed Guyo, IGAD SE [8]

[6] The formula for an “AU-led” process to which the Government of Tigray agreed implied a role for the UN and international partners including the US, EU and others.

[7] Security guarantees are particularly important for the Tigrayan leadership, travelling in and out of their blockaded region without a cessation of hostilities.

[8] The Government of Tigray follows the standard procedure of copying those who would expect to be fully informed.