

Letter from Former President Uhuru Kenyatta to AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki, Annotated

October 7, 2022

Excellency

I wish to convey my warmest regards to you and the African Union (AU) team that is working hard to organize the AU-Convened Peace Talks on Ethiopia. It is my hope that both the Ethiopian Government and the Tigrayan Regional Leadership will take part in this Pan-African effort [1] to end the conflict in their country.

My attention has been drawn to a communique Ref: CCP/Y695.10.22 [2] dated October 1, 2022 regarding the Ethiopian Peace Process scheduled for October 8, 2022 in South Africa.

Regrettably, I wish to notify your good office that I will not be able to attend the AU-Convened Peace Talks scheduled for October 8, 2022 in South Africa owing to conflicts in my schedule. [3] However, in the interim and as you consider the possibility for another date for the peace talks, I would be grateful to receive further clarity on the structure and modalities of the talks, including but not limited to the rules of engagement for all the interlocutors invited. [4] This clarification would greatly help in preparations for my engagement and participation.

[1] Pres. Kenyatta avoids opening the door to an African initiative convened by the AU but without the AU Commission in the lead.

[2] This is devastating. The reference is Faki's invitation to Debretsion (document 1). This indicates that Kenyatta was not consulted in advance, and (even worse) that he learned of the proposal, and his proposed role in it, from the publication of that document. The AU error was compounded by its October 6 press release—evidently, Kenyatta had *still* not been consulted.

[3] Had the AU done the necessary preparations, the schedule of the named members of the mediation panel would of course have been agreed in advance.

[4] This is another indication that the AU's normal procedures and protocols had not been followed.

Furthermore, as we discuss the agenda for the talks, it is my hope that among the most urgent issues high on that agenda will be the immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities. [5] This silencing of the guns [6] is particularly important in order to avail the right conditions for the consultations and negotiations while alleviating human suffering and allowing for continued access to humanitarian assistance. [7]

I thank you for your dedication to the Pan-African call for peace in our Continent.

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

Uhuru Kenyatta, CGH.
Peace Envoy-The Republic of Kenya

[5] Here, Kenyatta is underling the obvious point about a cessation of hostilities.

[6] The AU adopted a program of "silencing the guns" as its flagship peace and security initiative. In citing this, Kenyatta is making the point that Faki is betraying the AU's own commitments.

[7] The issue of humanitarian assistance is nowhere mentioned in Faki's letter.