



The Uplifting Africa Program

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Ethiopian Government and Tigray Peace Agreement to End Two-Year Conflict



Signing the agreement South Africa, to stop the fighting in the Tigray region of Ethiopia were Redwan Hussien, the Ethiopian government's National Security Adviser, and Getachew Reda, a Senior Leader in the Tigray People's Liberation. Photo Credit: Sipiwe Sibeko/Reuters

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Ethiopian National Defense Force Field Marshal Birhanu Jula shakes hands with Commander-in-Chief of Tigray forces Tadesse Werede Tesfay, after signing the cessation of hostilities agreement in Nairobi, Kenya on November 12, 2022. REUTERS/Thomas Mukoya

On November 2, 2022, the Ethiopian Government and representatives of Tigrayan forces signed a peace agreement to end the two-year conflict that has resulted in thousands of deaths and economic turmoil for the country. The Agreement to the Permanent Ceasefire came after the African Union (AU) Chief, Moussa Faki Mahamat, urged for an “immediate, unconditional ceasefire” in October. The peace talks took place at the two-year mark of the conflict, which began on November 3, 2020. Redwan Hussein was the lead negotiator from the Ethiopian Government and Getachew Reda was the negotiator representing Tigrayan authorities. Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who is the AU’s lead envoy, was also present to mediate the negotiations that took place in Pretoria, South Africa.

One of the key provisions of the peace agreement is a permanent ceasefire and restoration of constitutional order. Both parties agreed to fully renounce all forms of aggression, including both

physical forms of violence and verbal hostilities such as propaganda and hate speech. The two parties also ensured that they will not conspire with any third-party force that is antagonistic to either side. In addition, the agreement outlines that the federal government will regain authority and control of federal institutions in the province, while also guaranteeing that Tigray will be fairly represented in federal institutions and parliament.

The agreement also stipulates the terms for disarmament in the Tigray region, specifying that Tigrayan forces should fully disarm within 30 days of the agreement. This disarmament is to be facilitated by enrolling soldiers of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) into a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program. The agreement also states that the Ethiopian federal military will be reinstated in Mekelle, the capital of the Tigray province.

Furthermore, the settlement includes provisions regarding new elections and federal recognition of the Tigrayan political party. While the TPLF was previously classified as a terrorist organization by the Ethiopian government, following the peace talks federal authorities have agreed to rectify any hostilities towards the group. As per the agreement, a temporary administration will be responsible for governing Tigray until the organization of formal elections that will pave the way for Tigray's political participation and representation in the federal government. In addition, a committee that will oversee and monitor the implementation of the agreement will be established. This committee will be led by the AU, while also having representatives from the Ethiopian government, the TPLF, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in East Africa.

As human rights violations were a major issue throughout the conflict, the two sides have also agreed to address the concerns of the international community by pledging to protect civilians and abide by international humanitarian laws. The agreement outlines that a new "transitional justice policy" will be implemented in order to uphold accountability, establish truth, and bring justice to victims of the conflict. Moreover, the Ethiopian government committed to collaborating with humanitarian agencies to facilitate prompt distribution of aid into the Tigray region, restore the civilians displaced by the war, and reinstate essential services to the province.

Following the truce, the first delivery of humanitarian aid to Tigray was reported on November 15th, as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) drove two medical trucks into the capital of the province, Mekelle. Several other convoys of food and medical assistance followed, including deliveries from the World Food Program. ICRC also reported that the first humanitarian plane since the start of the conflict in 2020 successfully landed in the city of Shire in Tigray.

On another note, there are concerns that the peace agreement is not comprehensive enough, as it does not address some major issues. For instance, Reuters reported that Eritrea and other regional forces in Ethiopia were not mentioned in the peace talks or agreement even though they were heavily involved in the conflict. Furthermore, the peace talks did not settle the disagreements about disputed territory that has been claimed by both Tigray and the Amhara region. The full implementation of the agreement is yet to unravel in coming months, revealing how closely the two warring parties have upheld their side of the settlement.

Sources

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