



Alliance of Tigray Associations in Diaspora—America

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TO: Interim Administration of Tigray Establishment Committee
Mekelle,
Tigray

Subject: ATAD-America's Recommendations on the Establishment of the Interim Administration Formation Committee

This letter is written to you on behalf of ATAD-America, in regard to the establishment of the Interim Administration Formation Committee. After a briefing given to the diaspora by the recently nominated committee, we have formed a team to address the concerns reflected by both the committee and the general public. We have conducted a thorough review of the situation we are currently facing as a society and have put together our recommendations for a credible, inclusive, transparent, and smooth establishment process.

We hope that the recommendations and demands, which are highlighted in the attached document, will be taken into consideration and address the fundamental concerns expressed in the engagements we have had so far.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
ATAD-America



Background

In the wake of the 2020 Genocidal war declared by the Eritrean and Ethiopian joint forces —and their local, regional, and international allies, the social, political, and economic conditions of Tigray have been deliberately destroyed beyond repair. This resulted in an outright collapse of the Tigrayan sovereign State structure, marking the beginning of the infamous Tigray genocide. Following the collapse of the Tigrayan state, Tigrayans from all walks of life and generational categories took up arms against the Genocidal war and paid remarkable sacrifices for the noble cause of defending the motherland and resurrecting the Tigrayan statehood from its wreckage. What began as a small resistance force in the earlier stage of the war was supported by a formidable social movement forcing the Ethiopian government to seek a negotiated settlement.

In Nov 2022, the “*Pretoria Agreement*,” a landmark historical and legal process for permanent cessation of hostilities was signed. This agreement opened an opportunity to “silence the guns” and for the parties to pursue a negotiated settlement to the war. Unfortunately, the agreement also outlawed the legally elected government of Tigray ending its constitutional mandate and creating a vacuum to properly govern the people of Tigray. Another contentious aspect of the agreement was the article related to the DDR of the *Tigray Defense Forces* (TDF). Despite the concerns with the terms and references in the agreement, the people of Tigray have seized the situation as an opportunity to transform the political future of the Tigray people. As a result, a committee of nine people has been formed to facilitate the establishment of the interim government of Tigray.

With this backdrop, ATAD-America expresses its appreciation of the ongoing efforts of the newly set up “*Interim Government Establishment Committee (IGEC)*” to engage stakeholders to provide feedback on the process and outcomes of the formation of the Interim Government of Tigray. However, the process that led to the formation of the nine people IGEC lacks transparency and inclusiveness of all stakeholders. Thus, we call for an inclusive, transparent, and participatory process in order to remedy the apparent pitfalls of the ongoing process which could delegitimize the outcome. The selection and assignment of the committee would have been well received had it been preceded by thorough public engagement and consultative meetings that involve multiple segments of the society including the general public, the intellectuals, and the diaspora among others. The lack of legitimacy and transparency in the IGEC formation process has left Tigrayans in ambivalence with a conceivable consequential repercussion unless a quick remedial action is taken to address the growing criticisms.

ATAD-America’s Suggestions to Redress the Pressing Concerns of Credibility & Inclusion

In response to the popular demands of the Tigrayan population at home and abroad; and based on the views reflected in the consultative meetings with different sections of the society held by the designated IGEC members, **ATAD-America** calls for an immediate resolution of the concerns expressed in relation to the process and outcomes of the establishment of the committee. Our goal is to make the process credible, transparent, acceptable and inclusive to the maximum potential possible. We believe the interim government that results from this process should not be a mere political exercise among the *Tigrayan elite, specifically the TPLF and TDF leadership*. Instead, it should ensure the representation of all Tigrayans without any discrimination and to prevent any potential to return to conflict and political instability. Therefore, we demand a *broad-based political dialogue* instead of limiting the task to what ostensibly is described as *elites’ bargain*.



I. The Interim/Caretaker Government Formation Committee

1. Ensuring Transparency and Representation

Pursuant to the growing criticisms and urgency of the matter, ATAD-America believes the concerns raised by diverse parts of the society are legitimate and require an immediate solution. Experiences from different parts of the world—for example the Interim governments of Egypt, Libya, Sudan, and Belgium— show that the establishment of the interim governments takes serious planning and vigorous public participation. Both the planning and participation aspects of the process should start from the very inception of the idea of formation. This includes the selection of the committee and the bulk of the work that follows afterwards. From the information shared by Tigray authorities and the designated IGEC, it has become abundantly clear that the process has been constrained due to the mere emphasis put on the urgency while disregarding the need to ensure transparency and inclusion. More importantly, the selection of the committee has shown that transparency is yet a major issue that has to be addressed more urgently before dealing with other matters. With this understanding, we urge all concerned bodies to come together and figure out the best approach to address the transparency issue by setting up an elaborate system of communication and a mechanism to draw representatives from all Tigrayans from all walks of life. This task is of high priority to expedite the formation of the interim administration in a conceivable shorter period. Therefore, we call the authorities involved in this process to take immediate remedial action in the way it renders maximum public trust.

2. Revisiting the Composition and Mandate of the Interim Government Formation Committee

The committee is expected to reflect the diversity of the people of Tigray. Although we acknowledge that the people of Tigray are bonded together through a strong national thread of Tigrayan identity, we also reiterate that they also belong to diverse social categories, values, belief systems, and political views. As we call for the reconsideration of the constitution of the committee, we demand the selection template to ensure the representation of women, youth, community representatives, the different educated class, Civil Society organization, faith-based communities, and the internally displaced people (IDPs). The involvement of the diaspora through a mechanism that favors merit-based competency can make the representation meaningful. In general, the committee should ensure broad based representation to the maximum degree possible.

3. Developing a working Document/ Establishment Framework

Prior to the establishment of the IGEC, creating a panel of high-level experts (Advisory Committee) who produce Interim Government establishment frameworks, guidelines, and roadmaps is highly recommended. Without clearly set criteria or guidelines, it is difficult to measure success and ensure compliance to establishment standards.



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The task of the experts is limited to the preparation of documents and presenting it to the Joint Commission (*Indicated below in article 4*) to be used as a reference template for the Establishment of the Interim Government of Tigray that is going to be formed by representatives drawn from political parties, civil societies, and community representatives, whose representation are ensured through democratic nomination.

The experts should provide evidence that they have no political membership or affiliation. The selection/assignment of the IGEC should be carried out through a democratic process administered within 10 days since the documents, frameworks, and roadmaps are approved in the **Joint Commission for the Establishment of the interim government**.

4. Establish the Joint Commission for the Establishment of the Interim Government of Tigray

Given the complexity of the work and the need to hold the establishment of the Interim Government in an inclusive, transparent, and credible manner; Believing the “elected” House of Representatives is dissolved by the agreement signed in Pretoria, we recommend the establishment of a new regulatory body with a mandate to oversee the establishment of the Interim Government of Tigray. The Commission can be called ***The Joint Commission for the Establishment of the Interim Government of Tigray***. The Joint Commission for the Establishment of the Interim Government of Tigray shall be established to oversee the establishment process and monitor the progress of the tasks entrusted to the IGEC, approve the documents produced by the panel of experts (aka advisory committee) and review and approve the nomination of the members of the Interim Government Establishment Committee. This is the highest body that makes decisions with regard to the process for the establishment of the Interim Government and it will have the mandate to verify, amend, and approve all steps in the process including the nomination, appointment, and approval of the Interim Committee Establishment Committee. This Commission shall be established mainly by all Political Parties of Tigray ensuring equal representation of all political parties of Tigray (5 representatives from each party), 5 representatives of the TDF, at least 5 representatives of the Civil Society Organizations, up to 5 representatives of faith-based organizations, up to 5 representatives of the intellectual community, and 7 members from marginalized, displaced and communities highly affected by the genocide.

5. Representation of the Diaspora in the Joint Commission for the Establishment of the Interim Government of Tigray

The Tigrayan diaspora all over the world have played a significant role in the struggle against the Tigray Genocide. Their contribution was all rounded without which the gains of the Tigrayan resistance would have been problematic. More than the material and substantive support they provided to the struggle; the diaspora played as a rallying force for social justice and anti-genocide struggle at different global settings. Their unique position in the struggle has enabled them to create a cohesive and formidable Tigrayan resistance unchallenged by manifold differences along party lines, political views, religious beliefs, and generational variants. The diversity of views, expertise and experiences in the Tigray Diaspora community have created an opportunity to create a formidable social movement that was able to reach and



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influence several powerful governments, international organizations and international media. ATAD-America believes the experiences and potentials of the diaspora can help first, to translate gained knowledge and experiences into the newly established interim administration and serve as a vehicle to settle differences and disagreements in a mutually beneficial way based on the Tigrayan tradition. It will also help to address challenges in a way that makes sense to all Tigrayans. The involvement of the diaspora in the process can further help to advance reconciliation and redress of existing or past misunderstandings, mistakes, and mishandling in a way that fosters mutual trust and collaboration. Above all the diasporas can bridge the transfer of democratic values from the practices of the countries they live in order to make Tigray's future more inclusive and promising. Based on this, we propose the Tigray Diaspora to be included in the *Joint Commission for the Establishment of the Interim Government of Tigray* (JCEIGT) in the following matrix: 2 from the United States of America, 1 from Canada, 2 from Europe, 1 from Asia and Pacific, 1 from Australia, 1 from the Middle East and Gulf states, and 2 from Africa and the middle east. We demand a total of 9 seats for the diaspora altogether. The Tigray diaspora composed of 9 members representing a broad set of social categories from the cross sections of the Tigrayan societies is recommended to ensure the consideration of international experiences for the smooth transfer of power through a fully Tigray-owned effort. The notable inclusion of the diaspora in the process will enable the JCEIGT to have access to diverse expertise and experiences from the international arena. More importantly, the presence of the diaspora in the process shall demonstrate the ability of the Tigrayan political system to harness the potentials of those outside Tigray under the rubric of shared Tigrayan identity. This is a fundamental move forward to curb any division between various forces operating in Tigray by fostering a meaningful dialogue.

6. Tasks, Responsibilities, and Mandates of the Interim Government Establishing Committee

The IGEC is responsible for leading the processes for the establishment of a credible, inclusive, and democratic interim government using the mechanism outlined by the panel of experts. The IGEC should be accountable to the joint commission and the people of Tigray. Its mandate ends when the interim government is established.

At this historical juncture, we are at the crossroads of changes which opens up the stage for a better future. If we handle the current process of change and succeed to establish an all-inclusive interim government, we believe we can start to move on the path towards healing and rehabilitation from the brunt of genocidal suffering we experienced as a society. This will also pave a path towards a better future that can not be reversed. Therefore, we expect the Interim Government that operates in Tigray should constructively and collectively work to address and transform Tigray into the height it deserves. We aspire for a transitional process that helps to resolve critical public questions and redress grievances by forming credible institutions. It is our hope that the interim government works on the basis of consensus building and reach general agreement on major issues that require serious decision considerations.

-----End of Part One-----



II. The Interim Government

The interim government is the highest authority in the administrative structure of Tigray, and it will be entrusted with all mandates to execute all administrative responsibilities. This body is directly accountable to the council drawn from the diverse societies of Tigray. The composition of the interim administration should reflect the demographic, social, cultural, ethnic, and gender mix of the people of Tigray. Because this position is the biggest job operated under highly complex conditions, competence and commitment are the most cardinal requirements to be considered eligible. Although we demand inclusion of all Tigrayans to the fullest possible, we also demand to conduct this process based on merit and qualification. The details can be worked out by the establishment council in consultation with the Joint Commission for the Establishment of the Interim Government of Tigray.

Framework for the Establishment of the Interim Government of Tigray:

- The parties involved in the establishment of the interim government shall agree to accomplish the creation of a caretaker administration within a period not exceeding 30 days from the beginning of the establishment task.
- The Interim government establishment Committee can set up an advisory legal Sub-Committee to assist and follow-up on the establishment process. The Committee shall define the structure, powers, and duties of both the legal sub-committee and the establishment committee.
- In the situation where the 30 days deadline stated in the first bullet of this section ends before the establishment of the interim government, the Joint Commission for the Establishment of the Interim Government of Tigray takes the responsibility of extending the mandates of the committee and the sub committees.
- The establishment shall fully ensure equality of all Tigrayans and foster a political space where all Tigrayans participate regardless of political views, gender, and political membership.
- The process shall ensure compliance with internationally accepted norms and practices.

The Structure and Composition of the Interim Government

- The Tigray interim/caretaker government shall consist of the **caretaker government** and the **Tigray People's National Council**
- The Caretaker government shall consist of the president of the interim government, cabinets, and major institutions such as the Bureau of Justice
- The **Tigray People's National Council** shall consist of members selected or delegated from grassroots social organizations, diverse social groups, and political forces.
- These representatives serve for the duration of time the interim government exists in session and are entrusted with the tasks of coordinating and facilitating the service delivery, security, and renegotiation of the political space by different political actors in Tigray.
- The Caretaker government shall select the President, Vice President of the interim government, and the president of Bureau of Justice on the basis of a mechanism agreed and approved by the **Tigray People's National Council**



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- In the formation of the Tigray Interim Government, the establishment committee shall pay greater attention to competency, merit, and fair representation all Tigrayans.
- Representation shall reflect the inclusion of minority groups, and merit-based representation of women shall be taken as top priority.

Duties and Powers of the Interim/Caretaker Government

- The interim government shall begin reconstituting the path to the reconstitution of the government of Tigray.
- Deliver efficient, effective and timely service to the people.
- Oversee and execute the proper allocation of resources, government budgets, expenditures, and reestablish the business and financial systems of Tigray.
- Ensure that the genocide and human rights abuses experienced over the past two years are fully documented and see the light of justice.

POLITICAL PARTY ENGAGEMENT

The establishment committee shall hold consistent meetings with political parties and grassroots movements to ensure inclusion of voices and choices in the process. Tigrayan political parties, although they adhere to some standard of peculiarity, they can be characterized in two ways. The first category is the normative political party that is dominated by TPLF and the other is the national political parties represented by the opposition. In Tigray political parties are gatekeepers to public office. Therefore, ensuring the engagement of political parties in dialogue is of greater significance to transform our political process. Without active participation and consistent engagement of political parties, it is difficult to expect an outcome that can satisfy the interest of every Tigrayan.

CIVIL SOCIETY IN TIGRAY

The role of civil societies in Tigray has remained to be marginal in African standards. Although civil society organizations showed steady growth in recent years, their participation in the political process has been too sketchy. Currently, vibrant civil society organizations are emerging and are populating the social and political space in Tigray. The number and diversity of CSOs in Tigray, although inadequate, is showing remarkable development with organizations focusing on a range of issues from good governance, liberation movements, charity organizations, rights and advocacy groups, gender and disability societies, and other concerns. Despite the diversity however, their activities have been seriously regulated and their contributions limited. This is due to mainly lack of conducive political ground in Tigray and secondly lack of financial and material resources. One of the main contributions of the civil societies should be to create a balance on the political process that is yet evolving towards participatory democracy. They create this balance by putting governments on check and providing spaces for the general public to engage their leaders in multiple ways. In the current effort to transform the political space in Tigray, civil societies can play a greater role mobilizing societies to demand their rights and assisting the interim government address the concerns of society. Serving as interfaces between the people and the interim government they help the crafting of policies that address the pressing demands of the people. Civil societies should be seen not as competitors or spoilers in the processes. Instead, they should be treated as platforms that provide alternatives to government mishandlings.