



February 28, 2023

 **Government of Tigray**

Re: **Call for an Immediate Attention and Action**

We, members of the Security and Justice for Tigrayans (SJT), a global organization of diaspora Tigrayans, were profoundly moved, pleased, and relieved when we learned the signing of the permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in Pretoria on November 2, 2022. The news had lifted a heavy weight from our shoulders. We greatly appreciate the efforts that the delegates of Tigray Government have made in reaching such a testing and momentous agreement that stopped the deadliest genocidal war and the planned misery of the people of Tigray. And SJT recognizes and appreciates the steps taken following the signing of the CoHA. The silence of guns gave the people a peace to sleep without perturbation. There is an incremental increase in the delivery of humanitarian aid to save the lives of millions who have been on the brink of death. And the reinstatement of basic services including air transportation, telephone, electricity, and banking gave a hope to many of us that the peace agreement is progressing in the right direction. However, SJT still has a lot of grave concerns and discontent. Among which is the ongoing preparation and process to establish the interim government.

SJT's Board of Directors convened a special meeting on February 27, 2023, to seriously discuss and assess the matter to a great length. In the end, the Board has unanimously agreed that the interim government's roles are decisive. The responsibilities to be bestowed upon it will have consequential outcomes as far as a durable peace, security and justice are concerned and thus, requires our collective deliberations, thoughtful decisions, and concerted efforts. Importantly, we found this to be a step that lays a foundation to Tigray's future political and democratic culture.

Therefore, the preparation and formation of the interim government requires an all-inclusive participation, transparent and honest discussion, and our collective efforts and critical thinking in analyzing and understanding the complexity of the ideological and geopolitical dynamism.

SJT's observation is that the ongoing preparation and the process that the government of Tigray is pursuing to establish the interim government lack transparency, inclusiveness, and openness. For example, the way and criteria used to select the 9 member committee wasn't transparent which has eroded SJT's confidence in the process. The political motive behind why Tigray's competitive parties, civic societies, capable ordinary citizens etc. were excluded from this committee/task force, is not clear to understand and hard to explain. On this note, it is very important to know that SJT has no doubt and question about the capability of each one of the 9-member committee. It is our strong belief that they all have more than necessary qualification and experience to assume such a responsibility. What we are trying to convey here is the significance of entertaining and representing different political views in cultivating and building the values of democratic principles and practices and the merits of being transparent in building constituents' trust and confidence. If the foundation is shaky, there is no way that the anticipated result will bear fruit and bring durable peace, security, and justice in Tigray.



Therefore, SJT requests the government of Tigray to seriously consider and address our concerns and implement a transparent and inclusive process that respects the values of democratic principles; and appreciates the significance of different views in cultivating an accommodative practice.

SJT also would like to take this chance to bring some salient issues that immensely and gravely concern us on a regular basis. We feel that there are many outstanding matters that need our collective efforts and actions for the CoHA and the reconciliation process to produce a lasting peace for the people of Tigray. The atrocious genocidal crimes that have been committed with impunity deserve an independent investigation, and perpetrators be held accountable to serve the victims with justice. The perpetrators of the genocidal crime are desperately working day and night to eliminate the mandate of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) to bury the crime they have committed underearth. Moreover, a chunk area of Western Tigray, Northwest, Eastern Tigray, and Southern Tigray are still under the control of the Amhara illicit forces and the Eritrean forces who continue to subject the people to barbaric massacres and sexual assaults and gang rapes.

Particularly the people of Irob and Kunama are subjects of decimation. The school system in Tigray is dysfunctional and has denied millions of children their right to education for almost four years. Over 17,000 Tigrayans, members of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), are languishing in prison without due process. Over 2 million people who have been internally displaced and close to 60, 000, of people who fled to Sudan are leading miserable lives in squalid places and shelters.

SJT has the feeling that the efforts of addressing and demanding i) the need for an independent investigation; ii) the withdrawal of Amhara illicit forces and the Eritrean forces; iii) the release of Tigrayans who are languishing in prison; and iv) the return and rehabilitation of our displaced people etc., seem fading away from the radar and prior responsibilities of the government of Tigray.

Therefore, SJT earnestly implores:

1. the government of Tigray to pay serious attention to these matters and to urgently demand the Federal government and to mediators of the peace negotiation and other stakeholders to take swift actions to remediate these detrimental issues according to the CoHA.
2. the government's unreserved efforts in considering these cornerstone issues seriously not only to build the confidence and trust of the people on but also to produce lasting peace, security, and justice for the people of Tigray.

We await your considered response.

Respectfully,

Teka Neguse, PharmD
President, Security & Justice for Tigrayans (SJT)
Tel: 443-537-3910 Email: sjte.info@gmail.com