Open Letter from the President of the Government of Tigray

To:
H.E. President Macky Sall, Chairperson of the African Union and President of Senegal
H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya
H.E. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates
H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania

cc.
Antonio Guterres, Secretary General, United Nations
Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Ambassador Michael Hammer, U.S. Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa
Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, President of the United Nations Security Council (May 2022)
Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, AU Commission Chairperson’s High Representative for the Horn of Africa
Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission
Members of the United Nations Security Council

Your Excellencies,

I am writing to make crystal clear the position of the Government of the National Regional State of Tigray with respect to peace talks with the Federal Government of Ethiopia and other Ethiopian parties.

Since the outbreak of war in Ethiopia in November 2020 we have been open to good faith peace negotiations convened by an impartial third party, consistent with the Norms and Principles of the African Union and the United Nations. Since our Government resumed authority over the major part of Tigray State in June 2021 we have repeated that call.

We are prepared to negotiate for peace consistent with fundamental principles of human rights, democracy, and accountability, based upon the positions agreed through the deliberations of the Government of Tigray. We are not prepared to make secret deals or bargain away our principles for material inducements.

The silence of the African Union over the war and the atrocities perpetrated by the forces ranged against us was a betrayal of the Foundational Principles of the Union. We have consistently condemned the failure of the African Union Chairperson and his High Representative to take a position consistent with their solemn obligations under the
Constitutive Act of the Union, the Protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council, and a host of other commitments entered into. In the considered view of the People and Government of Tigray the leadership of the African Union Commission has yet to redeem its failures and restore our trust.

Our readiness to go the extra mile for peace must not be misunderstood as a readiness to abandon our principles from weakness or greed.

We received the High Representative of the AU Chairperson in Tigray on the basis of the African principle of hospitality, respect for an elder, and respect for the institution of the African Union. However, the proximity of the High Representative to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia has not gone unnoticed by our people.

We express our confidence in the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and our appreciation to President Samia Suluhu Hassan for her readiness to support peace efforts in Ethiopia.

We express our confidence in the Government of Kenya and our appreciation to President Uhuru Kenyatta, for his sustained, principled, impartial, inclusive, and discreet efforts to broker peace negotiations with a view to a comprehensive resolution of the crisis in Ethiopia. The Government and People of Kenya have demonstrated, over the years, their impartiality, honesty and solidarity towards Ethiopia, and their commitment to the Norms and Principles of the African Union.

On this basis we hold firm to the existing agreement among the Parties to meet in Nairobi for negotiations hosted and facilitated by the President of Kenya.

We welcome the engagement of international partners in support of this agreed initiative. Our position remains that the peace process requires the engagement of a range of international partners, under the leadership of the Government of Kenya. Among those partners are the United States, the European Union, the United Arab Emirates, the United Nations, and the African Union.

Your Excellencies,

The position of the Government of Tigray remains unchanged. We shall participate in a credible, impartial and principled peace process that engages with the Parties to the conflict in Ethiopia in a serious, inclusive and considered manner. Accordingly, we stand ready to dispatch a high-level delegation, fully mandated and briefed, to talks convened and hosted by the Government of Kenya.

Please accept the assurances of our highest regards,

[Signature]
Debretsion G/Michael /PHD/
President