

COALITION OF TIGRAY DIASPORA ASSOCIATIONS

DMV TASK FORCE

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Press Release

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We have noted from the readout dated March 6, 2024, that the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa (SEHOA), Mike Hammer, will embark on a trip to Addis Ababa, London, and Rome from March 7-20. The statement mentions that "during March 7-13, he will attend a strategic review hosted by the African Union regarding the implementation of the Pretoria Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). It further underscores "the importance of expedited progress on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, alongside efforts for transitional justice and facilitating the return of internally displaced persons, to achieve lasting peace".

This statement has raised significant concerns among Americans of Tigrayan origin, as it does not specifically address a critical element of the Pretoria deal—the restoration of Tigray's constitutional territories and full respect for the federation's constitution.

Pursuing any method other than the constitutional process would not only violate the spirit of the constitution, particularly the right to self-determination, but also risk altering boundaries through conflict and ethnic cleansing, potentially leading to further instability within the country. Furthermore, endorsing the occupation of Tigrayan territories would imply condoning the ethnic cleansing and atrocities committed in Western and Southern Tigray, where an estimated 1.2 million people have been displaced and subjected to violence.

The notion of a referendum by the Federal Government is viewed as premature and unacceptable by Tigrayans and the Interim Government, especially considering the ongoing challenges and atrocities faced by the Tigrayan population. The actions of the Amhara regional state forces, supported by the Federal government, have exacerbated the situation by altering the demographic structure in Tigray, committing acts of ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, and erasing Tigrayan cultural values.

The Pretoria agreement emphasizes the FDRE Constitution as the authoritative document in the country, outlining procedures for conflict resolution. However, it is evident that neither the Federal government nor federal institutions, including the House of Federation and its subsidiary bodies, can impartially or effectively address this issue, given Tigray's lack of representation in these institutions. Additionally, as a transitional government, the current Interim Government of Tigray lacks the mandate to make lasting decisions on behalf of the Tigrayan people.

We are deeply concerned about both the content and tone of the readout. While the US government has previously advocated for the full implementation of the agreement, including the withdrawal of all non-ENDF forces, the return of internally displaced persons, and accountability for crimes committed, it is imperative that this stance remains unwavering. The agreement also specifies concurrent DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration) with the withdrawal of Amhara and Eritrean forces. Therefore, we urge the Special Envoy and the US Department of State not to undermine the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) signed in Pretoria on November 2, 2023, and to remain committed to its full implementation.

We ask your continued Support for the Victims of Tigray.

Sincerely

Union of Tigreans in North America
Security and Justice for Tigrayans
Tigray Center for Information and Communication
Tigray Women's Association DMV Area
Tigray Community Association
DC
Woman to Woman
DMV