

Three Years into the Pretoria Agreement: Where does it stand?

*The Pretoria Agreement
Implementation Report – PAIR*

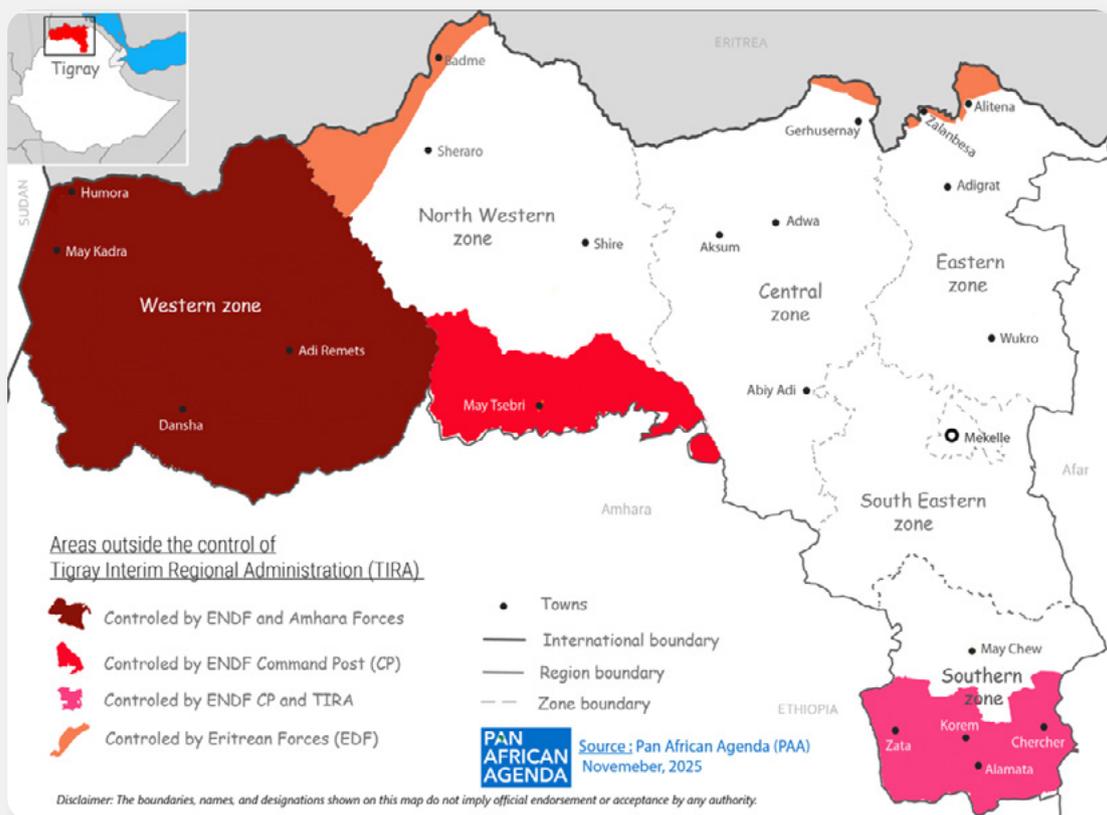


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Executive summary

The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), herein referred to as the Pretoria Agreement or the Agreement¹, was signed on 2 November 2022, and its follow-up, the Nairobi Declaration, on 7 November 2022. On the third anniversary of the Agreement, this report, the Pretoria Agreement Implementation Report (PAIR), evaluates the status of the Agreement's implementation. The PAIR situates its analysis within the broader political and security context of the Horn of Africa, assessing how regional dynamics affect both the peace and the prospect of the Agreement's implementation. This is particularly important in light of the accelerating war rhetoric between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Map 1: Tigray



Key findings

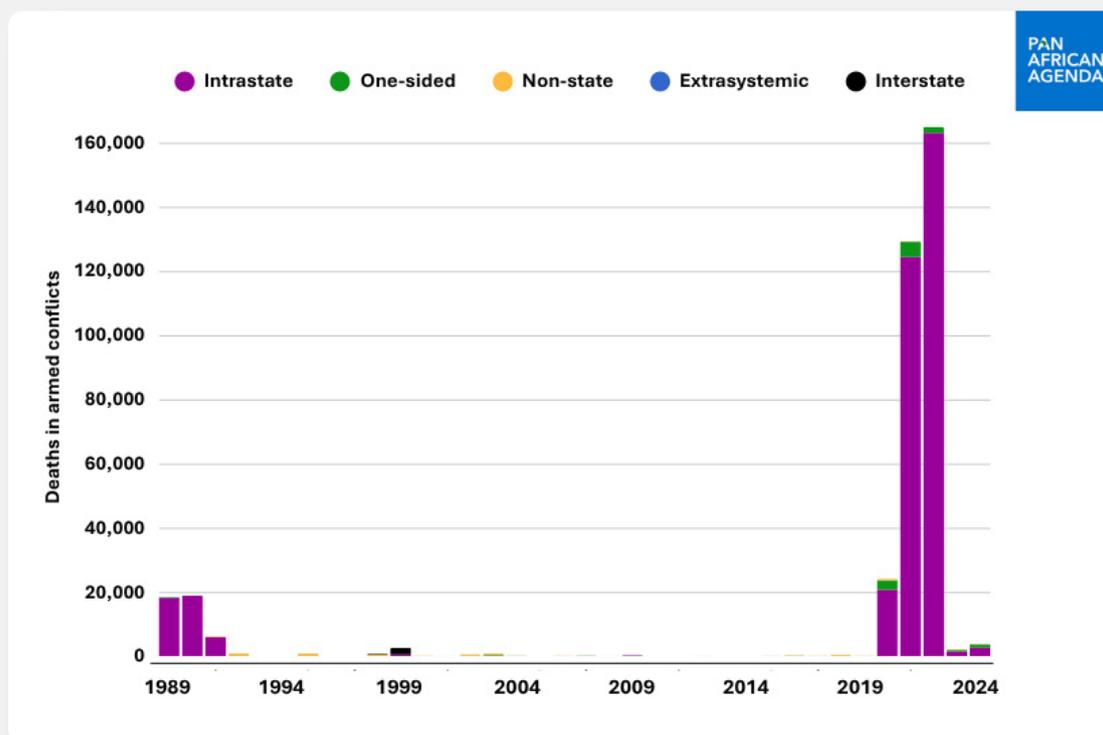
Three years after the Pretoria Agreement was signed, its implementation has led to what scholars refer to as “negative peace” or the cessation of active fighting, while failing comprehensively to deliver “positive peace”, which would encompass constitutional restoration, justice, reconstruction, and sustainable reconciliation. Research involving over 100 participants reveals systematic implementation failures across virtually all substantive provisions of the Agreement.

1 “Agreement for Lasting Peace Through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Between the Government of The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF).” 2022, <https://igad.int/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Download-the-signed-agreement-here.pdf?>

The sole undisputed achievement acknowledged unanimously in all research modalities is the silencing of the guns in the Ethiopia–Eritrea war against Tigray forces (2020–2022), with a conservative estimate of 319,000 deaths due to fighting (61% of the total fatalities in Africa during that period).² When indirect deaths from disease and starvation due to blockades and sieges³ are included, total mortality exceeded 600,000,⁴ making it the world’s deadliest conflict since the 1994 Rwandan genocide.⁵ Following the signing of the Pretoria Agreement, fatalities plummeted, underscoring the power of mediation diplomacy to halt mass atrocities.

Figure 1: Surge in fatalities during the war on Tigray

Source: Compiled by PAAI, Our World in Data, 2024



The Pretoria Agreement is a significant humanitarian accomplishment in that it prevented further catastrophic loss of life and demonstrated the value of diplomatic mediation in resolving complex internationalized conflicts. However, participants overwhelmingly characterized the resulting peace as fragile, reversible, and vulnerable to collapse due to unresolved root causes.

The most significant implementation failure concerns the restoration of constitutional order. Over 83% of survey respondents and all interview and focus group participants reported that constitutional order has not been restored in Tigray. Large parts of Tigray’s constitutional territory remain outside the

2 Uppsala Conflict Data Program. 2022. “UCDP Newsletter #9: THE WAR IN TIGRAY.” <https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/newsletter/issue9.html?>

3 Institute for Economics and Peace. 2025. “Global Peace Index 2025: Identifying and measuring the factors that drive peace.” <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/GPI-2025-web.pdf>

4 Financial Times. 2023. “War in Tigray may have killed 600,000 people, peace mediator says.” <https://www.ft.com/content/2f385e95-0899-403a-9e3b-ed8c24adf4e7>.

5 Uppsala Conflict Data Program. 2022. “UCDP Newsletter #9: THE WAR IN TIGRAY.” <https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/newsletter/issue9.html?>, Uppsala Conflict Data Program. 2022. “UCDP Newsletter #9: THE WAR IN TIGRAY.” <https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/newsletter/issue9.html?>

control of Tigray authorities, under Eritrean forces in the north and Amhara forces in the western zones.

The disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process exemplifies how implementation has been weaponized for political purposes rather than serving peacebuilding objectives. While the African Union (AU) verified the disarmament of the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) in terms of heavy weapons, respondents emphasized that this disarmament was premature and poorly sequenced. It was completed without guarantees that occupied territories would be vacated or that Tigray's population would be protected from renewed attacks. The reintegration component also proved grossly inadequate, with support packages deemed insufficient for a meaningful transition to civilian life and female fighters excluded from programmes and training opportunities.

Transitional justice and accountability represent perhaps the most consequential abandonment of Agreement commitments by all, including the GoE, TPLF, AU, United Nations (UN) and their member states. More than two years after Ethiopia's Ministry of Justice endorsed transitional justice recommendations, nearly 89% of survey respondents stated that neither the GoE nor the TPLF could be trusted to deliver genuine justice and accountability.⁶ The overwhelming majority believed that political interests inevitably hindered justice delivery and that there was no real intent to pursue accountability. Over 75% of respondents were entirely unaware of any transitional justice initiatives and, of those who were aware, most lacked confidence in the process, perceiving it as politically motivated, superficial, and designed to protect perpetrators rather than centre victims.

Economic recovery and reconstruction remain minimal to absent, despite war damages exceeding tens of billions of dollars. Over 70% of informed respondents perceived recovery efforts as either entirely absent or severely ineffective. Despite the magnitude of the destruction, virtually no systematic post-war rebuilding effort has begun. As one respondent stated, Tigray remains in an emergency relief stage focused on immediate survival rather than rebuilding for the future.

The monitoring and verification mechanisms established under the Agreement have proven ineffective. Half of the survey respondents were unaware of any official reports produced by the AU Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance Mechanism (MVCM) three years after the signing of the Agreement. The overwhelming majority of participants characterized the mechanism as weak, lacking meaningful impact on compliance while producing virtually no consequences for systematic non-compliance by signatory parties. Multiple respondents described the monitoring body as closely aligned with federal government positions and thus incapable of providing genuinely independent oversight.

These implementation failures are now compounded by rapidly evolving regional dynamics that threaten to render the Pretoria Agreement obsolete. The increasingly likely prospect of an interstate war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, driven by competing claims over Red Sea access and broader geopolitical tensions, poses an existential threat to the fragile peace. Ongoing conflicts elsewhere in Ethiopia, particularly in the Amhara and Oromia regions, alongside the catastrophic war in Sudan that began in April 2023, create additional sources of instability that could overwhelm local stabilization efforts.

Policy prescription

The first proposal advances the imperative of launching intensive high-level diplomacy to prevent a relapse into conflict between the GoE and TPLF, recognizing that renewed fighting, particularly in the looming Ethiopia–Eritrea war, will render the Pretoria Agreement obsolete. Preventing war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, therefore, must begin with renewed international commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, with mechanisms in place to ensure such. The most urgent task for international actors, particularly the United States (US), which commands significant

6 EHRC/OHCHR. 2022. "EHRC/OHCHR's Joint Advisory Note and Key Findings stemming from Community Consultations on Transitional Justice to inform the development of a Transitional Justice Policy Framework for Ethiopia." <https://ethiopia.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Advisory-Note-TJ-by-EHRC-OHCHR.pdf>.

leverage over the parties, is to deploy credible warnings and engage in sustained preventive diplomacy aimed at the rapid and effective implementation of the Pretoria Agreement. This must be reinforced by substantive, structured, and regular dialogue, complemented by robust monitoring mechanisms.

The second proposal calls for a comprehensive revitalization of the Pretoria Agreement through re-engagement with all stakeholders to account for the new realities and actors that have emerged since the signing of the Agreement. These include the need to reconstitute the Tigray Interim Regional Administration (TIRA), clarify the legal status of the TPLF leadership, and include both established and emerging political parties that now have legitimate standing as stakeholders in the implementation process. Several factors necessitate this revitalization: the implementation impasse and mounting popular frustrations; escalating tensions between the GoE and Tigrayan forces; the Ethiopia–Eritrea confrontation; internal divisions within both the TPLF and TIRA; and the systematic exclusion of key political forces from the TIRA.

The third proposal advances the creation of a “Friends of the Pretoria Agreement” group to provide the international support mechanism necessary for sustained pressure, oversight, and guarantor functions, while imposing meaningful consequences on violators and spoilers through coordinated international action. This Friends of the Pretoria Agreement group should replace the ineffective AU MVCN with stronger oversight structures that establish realistic timelines for all obligations, supported by robust compliance mechanisms, enforcement through punitive accountability measures for spoilers, and transparent reporting structures. The group should include actors with leverage over the parties, namely the US, European Union (EU), AU, and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), among other relevant stakeholders.

The fourth proposal calls for active and urgent mobilization of local constituencies for peace to build agency within communities and establish regional networks capable of resisting war, atrocities, and impunity. Key constituencies at all levels (global, continental, national, and local) are Generation Z and underrepresented minorities. Creating alternative civic spaces for young people, women, and youth organizations to engage proactively in movements for peace and justice is a strategic imperative for long-term conflict prevention and durable peacebuilding.

Methodology

The PAIR study adopted a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the implementation and broader impact of the Agreement. Guided by political economy and multidimensional peace agreement evaluation frameworks, this study examines the Agreement’s provisions, implementation processes, and wider politico-military and geopolitical context. Data was collected from 103 participants through expert interviews, an online survey, and focus group discussions, which also served as peer reviews. The Implementation Assessment Matrix organized provisions into thematic rubrics, while qualitative data underwent thematic coding and survey results were analysed descriptively. Triangulation enhanced reliability and ethical standards such as informed consent and data anonymization were rigorously observed.

Description

PAIR assesses the extent to which the Pretoria Agreement has achieved its objectives, the challenges to implementation, and how affected communities perceive its sustainability. The analysis focuses on five critical areas: the withdrawal of Amhara and Eritrean forces, the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, justice and accountability for atrocities, DDR of combatants, and political dialogue between the GoE and Tigray regional state. Three years later, the Agreement has achieved only a negative peace – the cessation of hostilities – without delivering a positive peace rooted in the protection of lives and livelihoods, justice, and inclusive governance. Implementation remains partial and selective, constrained by federal dominance, power asymmetry, and weak international enforcement. PAIR considers Tigray’s post-war political fragmentation and militarization, which have undermined collective action and

stability. Despite these obstacles, the Pretoria Agreement continues to command public support, and its success or failure will profoundly shape the future of Tigray and of the wider Horn of Africa. PAIR also provides contextual analysis through maps, graphs, figures, and quantitative data as part of its literature review and key findings.

1.

Introduction

The Pretoria Agreement was signed on 2 November 2022, two years after war broke out between the GoE and Tigray regional state. To understand the Pretoria Agreement and its implementation challenges, one must first examine the political trajectory that led to the war. Until 2018, Ethiopia was governed by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition in which the TPLF played a core role. During this period, the country experienced relative stability and rapid economic growth, and was widely regarded as a regional anchor state. Ethiopia's development trajectory and federal structure were regarded as potential models for other African states managing ethnic diversity.

This trajectory shifted dramatically following Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's assumption of office in April 2018. While initially welcomed both domestically and internationally as a reformer who would open political space and address historical grievances, Abiy quickly began pursuing centralizing reforms that fundamentally reshaped Ethiopia's political landscape. These reforms targeted Tigrayan leaders in military and civilian institutions. Tigrayan officials were systematically removed from positions of authority in what many observers characterized as ethnic purges rather than merit-based restructuring. The scale of these removals was unprecedented in Ethiopia's recent history.

In November 2019, Abiy dissolved the EPRDF and announced the creation of the Prosperity Party, a new political formation intended to supersede the ethnic coalition that had governed Ethiopia since 1991.⁷ The TPLF refused to join the Prosperity Party, viewing this dissolution as a unilateral violation of coalition rules and protocols.⁸ More fundamentally, TPLF leaders characterized the move as an assault on Ethiopia's ethnic federal structure, which they had played a central role in establishing. This refusal to join the Prosperity Party effectively placed the TPLF in opposition to the federal government and marked a definitive break in what had been, despite tensions, a functional political relationship.

In parallel with these domestic political shifts, Abiy pursued rapprochement with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki. The July 2018 peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea appeared to end two decades of hostility following the 1998–2000 border war⁹ – a diplomatic breakthrough that contributed to Abiy receiving the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize.¹⁰ However, several aspects of this rapprochement raised concerns among Tigrayan leaders and observers. The agreement's specific terms were never made public or submitted to the Ethiopian Parliament for ratification, contrary to the constitutional requirements for international agreements. Additionally, Eritrean officials made increasingly open statements propagating the dismantling of the TPLF and the rollback of ethnic federalism as necessary components of Ethiopia's "reform" agenda. The silence of the Ethiopian federal government in the face of these statements signalled, at minimum, acquiescence, if not active alignment with Eritrea's objectives regarding the possibility of war on Tigray.

7 Gedamu, Yohannes. 2019. "Ethiopia's new party is welcome news, but faces big hurdles." *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/ethiopias-new-party-is-welcome-news-but-faces-big-hurdles-128551#:~:text=Prime%20minister%20Abiy%20Ahmed%2C%20who,Demeke%20Mekonnen%20have%20been%20breathtaking>.

8 Ibid.

9 European Union External Action. 2019. "Eritrea & Ethiopia sign a peace deal in Jeddah, Saudia Arabia." https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/50642_en

10 BBC. 2019. "Nobel Peace Prize: Ethiopia PM Abiy Ahmed wins." *The Guardian*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50013273>

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic provided a rationale for postponing the national elections scheduled for that year.¹¹ When this postponement was extended to regional polls, Tigray's regional government proceeded with its own regional election on 9 September 2020, while refraining from holding federal parliamentary elections.¹² The federal government declared Tigray's regional election illegal and retaliated via multiple channels. Federal authorities severed ties with the Tigrayan regional administration, eliminated the fiscal transfers the region depended on for basic services, and cancelled the SafetyNet Program, which provided essential support to approximately 1 million vulnerable Tigrayans. These measures, implemented in a region already severely stressed by locust infestations and pandemic-related economic disruption, constituted what many analysts characterized as economic warfare preceding military action.

The 2018–2020 period saw the systematic persecution of Tigrayans throughout Ethiopia. Individuals faced ethnic profiling, mass dismissals from government and private sector employment, forced business closures, evictions, and property confiscations. Media outlets and public figures propagated increasingly dehumanizing rhetoric, depicting Tigrayans as an existential threat to Ethiopia's unity and prosperity. The military dimension of this persecution was particularly severe: more than 17,000 military personnel of Tigrayan origin, including over 6,300 officers, were purged from the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), with many detained or disappeared.¹³ Tigrayan ENDF members serving in AU peacekeeping missions were recalled amid credible fears of torture and execution upon return. These purges served a dual purpose: removing potential internal opposition to military action against Tigray while depriving the Tigrayan region of military expertise.

Military mobilization unfolded simultaneously on multiple fronts throughout 2020. ENDF units moved towards Tigray's borders; Amhara Special Forces and Fano militias massed along Tigray's southern and western borders; and Eritrean forces assembled to the north of Tigray. Subsequent admissions, including Abiy's parliamentary briefing on 30 November 2020, revealed that preparations for military operations had been underway for approximately two years. Reports indicated that the Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) had participated from the onset of hostilities, while a United Arab Emirates (UAE) military base in Assab, Eritrea, provided logistical support for drone operations that proved decisive in achieving air superiority.

International early warning systems registered alarms throughout 2018 to 2020. In January 2020, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum Early Warning Project ranked Ethiopia seventh globally for a risk of mass killings – a dramatic increase from 32nd place in 2018. The country's ranking in terms of its risk of mass atrocities similarly deteriorated from ninth to seventh place between 2018 and 2020, constituting one of the steepest increases globally. Despite these indicators, many international actors maintained what critics characterized as the “reformist narrative” surrounding Abiy's leadership, aided substantially by the halo effect of his Nobel Peace Prize.

The war: Outbreak and atrocities

Hostilities erupted on the night of 3–4 November 2020. The immediate trigger for violence remains disputed, with the federal government claiming that TPLF forces attacked the ENDF Northern Command and Tigrayan authorities maintaining that federal forces initiated coordinated operations. However, extensive evidence of multi-year preparation, pre-positioned forces, and immediate Eritrean involvement supports the assessment that federal and allied forces had planned and initiated military operations. Within hours of the outbreak of conflict, a comprehensive blackout of electricity, telecommunications, internet services, and banking systems descended on Tigray, obscuring subsequent atrocities from international

11 Aljazeera. 2020. “Ethiopia postpones August elections due to coronavirus.” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/3/31/ethiopia-postpones-august-elections-due-to-coronavirus>

12 Kiruga, Morris. 2020. “Ethiopia's parliament votes to sever ties with Tigray region leaders.” The Africa Report. <https://www.theafricareport.com/44916/ethiopias-parliament-votes-to-sever-ties-with-tigray-region-leaders/>

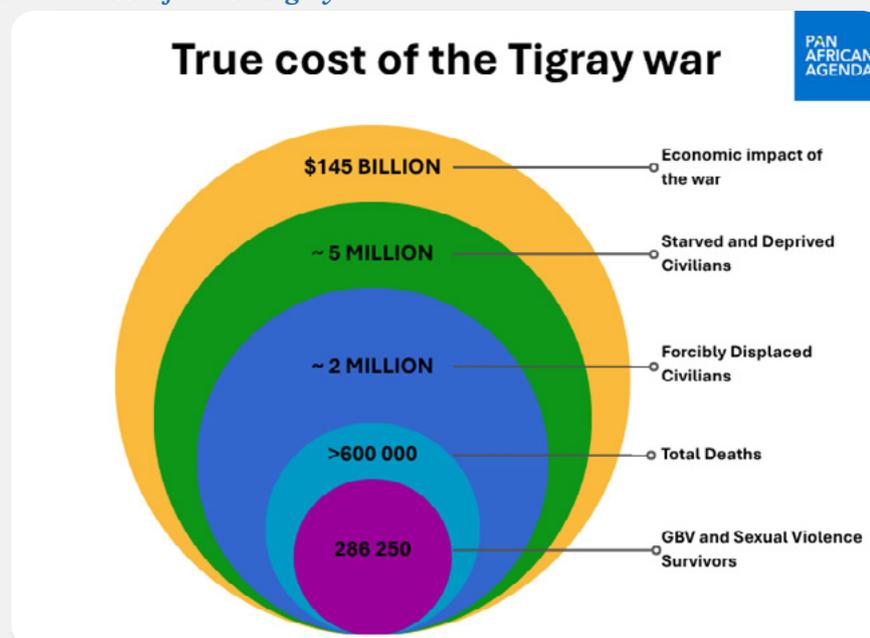
13 Passilly, Augustine. 2024. “Ethiopia. ‘The guards didn't treat us like human beings’. « Afrique XXI. <https://afriquexxi.info/Ethiopia-The-guards-didn-t-treat-us-like-human-beings>

observation and magnifying civilian harm due to the inability to seek help or coordinate a humanitarian response. This communications blackout would persist for extended periods throughout the conflict.

The international community's understanding of events in Tigray initially relied heavily on federal government narratives, as journalists and independent observers were denied access to the region. By March 2021, however, sufficient information had emerged through the testimony of survivors who had reached Sudan, healthcare workers, and the limited humanitarian access. Abiy was compelled to acknowledge Eritrean military participation from the beginning of the hostilities, a fact the government had previously denied despite overwhelming evidence.

The fatalities in and humanitarian toll of the war were catastrophic. According to the Uppsala University Conflict Data (2022), Africa experienced an estimated 368,756 battle-related deaths between 2020 and 2022.¹⁴ Over 300,000 of these deaths, representing over 80% of the continent's conflict mortality during this period, occurred in the Ethiopia–Eritrea's war on Tigray. However, these figures only account for direct battle-related deaths and exclude indirect mortality from disease, starvation, and lack of medical care in the siege of Tigray.¹⁵ During the conflict, over 5 million people were besieged and deliberately subjected to starvation as a weapon of war.¹⁶ According to the Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide, 286,250 survivors were victims of sexual and gender-based violence, and more than 2 million people were forcibly displaced from their homes.¹⁷ The siege of Tigray deprived more than 5 million civilians of essential supplies, including food, medicine, and fuel. When indirect deaths are included in estimates, the total death toll from the war on Tigray exceeds 600,000, rendering the conflict the deadliest on the African continent since the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and one of the deadliest internationalized intrastate wars in recent history.¹⁸

Figure 2: The true cost of war on Tigray



14 Uppsala University Conflict Data Program. 2022. "UCDP Conflict Data." <https://ucdp.uu.se/year/2022>.

15 Ibid.

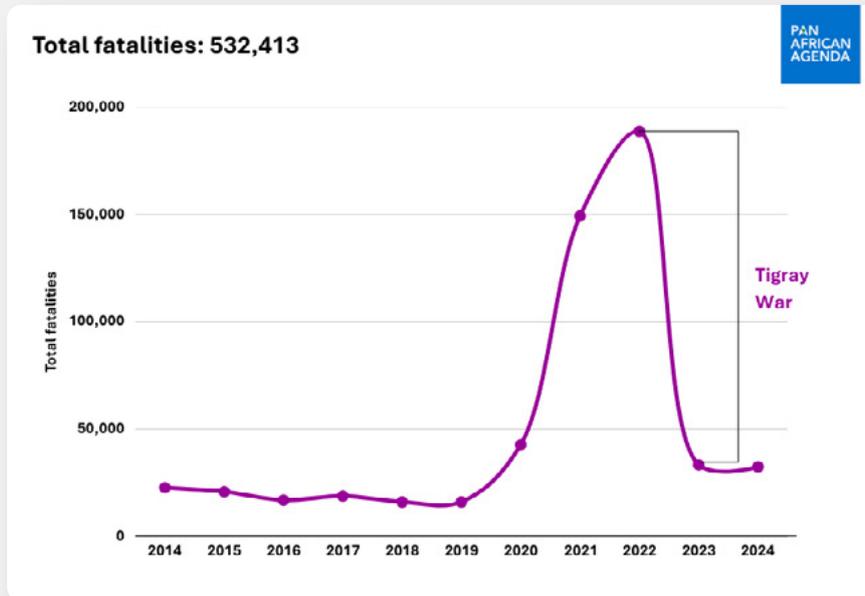
16 Ibid.

17 Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide. The systematic undoing of society: War damage and loss in the social sector of Tigray (Vol. 1). Mekelle, Ethiopia: Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide. <https://citghub.org/war-induced-genocidal-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-in-tigray-ethiopia-vol-1/>

18 Financial Times. 2023. "War in Tigray may have killed 600,000 people, peace mediator says." <https://www.ft.com/content/2f385e95-0899-403a-9e3b-ed8c24adf4e7>

Over 2 million people were internally displaced, while tens of thousands fled to Sudan as refugees. Cultural and religious heritage sites, including ancient churches and monasteries, were systematically targeted for destruction or desecration. Healthcare facilities were deliberately attacked and looted, leaving the region’s medical infrastructure devastated. Agricultural systems were dismantled through the destruction of farming equipment, killing of livestock, and burning of harvests. The combination of these tactics created famine conditions that persisted even after the formal cessation of hostilities.

Figure 3: Surge in fatalities in Africa during the war on Tigray



Source: Compiled by PAAI, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2024

The UN International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE), established to investigate violations during the conflict, documented abuses “on a staggering scale”.¹⁹ The ICHREE’s reports detailed 49 mass killings; widespread and systematic sexual violence employed as a weapon of war; deliberate starvation²⁰ used as a weapon of war through the destruction of food stocks and agricultural infrastructure; and large-scale arbitrary detention. These violations were perpetrated by the ENDF, EDF, Amhara regional forces, affiliated militias, and Tigrayan forces,²¹ constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity under international law. Western Tigray also experienced mass displacement and ethnic cleansing.²² Abuses extended to the deliberate targeting²³ of civilians and indiscriminate shelling²⁴ of civilian areas. In addition,

19 UN ICHREE. (2023, December). Report of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia. Retrieved from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4041317?v=pdf>

20 Lowenstein, Allard K. Intl Human Rights Clinic. 2023. “All of Us Are in Constant Hunger – Ethiopia’s Responsibility for Starvation in Tigray.” (Yale School of Law). https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/area/center/schell/document/all_of_us_are_in_constant_hunger.pdf

21 Ibid.

22 ICHREE. 2023. “Comprehensive investigative findings and legal determinations.” (UN Human Rights Council). <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/chreetio-pia/a-hrc-54-crp-3.pdf>.

23 Amnesty International. 2021. “The Massacre in Axum.” <https://www.amnesty.org/es/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AFR2537302021ENGLISH.pdf>.

24 Griffith, Emily. 2021. “Airstrike on market kills 64 in Ethiopia’s Tigray region.” Action on Armed Violence. <https://aoav.org.uk/2021/airstrike-on-market-kills-43-in-ethiopias-tigray-region/>.

there was widespread gender-based violence,²⁵ including sexual and reproductive violence, with the explicit intent to damage Tigrayan women's reproductive capacity²⁶ and to destroy²⁷ the Tigrayan ethnicity.

Similarly, the US Department of State determined that “members of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF), Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) forces and Amhara forces committed war crimes during the conflict in northern Ethiopia, and that members of the ENDF, EDF, and Amhara forces also committed crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and persecution”.²⁸ Notably, credible sources reported that the US State Department had drafted, but never released, a declaration stating that atrocities in Tigray constituted genocide.²⁹ The New Lines Institute³⁰ provided “a reasonable basis to believe that EDF, ASF [Amhara Special Forces], and ENDF members carried out at least four acts constituting the crime of genocide: killing Tigrayans, causing serious bodily or mental harm to Tigrayans, deliberately inflicting conditions of life upon Tigrayans calculated to bring about their destruction, and imposing measures intended to prevent births among Tigrayans”. Human Rights Watch³¹ also found that war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed during the war.³²

Despite its identification of grave and systematic violations of international law and documentation of atrocity crimes, ICHREE's mandate was prematurely terminated³³ by the UN Human Rights Council. ICHREE's conclusion³⁴ that “past and current abuses demand further investigation” and that the Ethiopian government “has failed to effectively investigate violations and has initiated a flawed transitional justice consultation process” was ignored. In a similar political move that saw justice undermined, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights' Commission of Inquiry on Tigray was quietly terminated³⁵ following political pressure by the Ethiopian government, without the release of a public report.

The Agreement: Promise and structural limitations

The Pretoria Agreement established an ambitious framework for transitioning from active and large-scale fighting and industrial-scale atrocities to sustainable peace. The Agreement committed both parties

- 25 Physicians for Human Rights. 2023. “Broken Promises: Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Before and After the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in Tigray, Ethiopia.” <https://phr.org/our-work/resources/medical-records-sexual-violence-tigray-ethiopia/>.
- 26 Physicians for Human Rights. 2025. ““You Will Never Be Able to Give Birth”: Conflict-Related Sexual and Reproductive Violence in Ethiopia.” <https://phr.org/our-work/resources/you-will-never-be-able-to-give-birth-conflict-related-sexual-and-reproductive-violence-in-ethiopia/>.
- 27 UN ICHREE. (2023, December). Report of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia. Retrieved from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4041317?v=pdf>
- 28 Conte, Michael and Atwood, Kylie. 2023. “Blinken accuses all sides in Ethiopian conflict of committing war crimes.” CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/03/20/politics/blinken-ethiopia-conflict-war-crimes>.
- 29 Gramer, Robbie. 2023. “U.S. Weighs Offering Economic Lifeline to Ethiopia Despite War Atrocities.” Foreign Policy. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/09/us-ethiopia-war-tigray-aid-peace-agreement/>.
- 30 New Lines Institute. 2024. “Genocide in Tigray: Serious breaches of international law in the Tigray conflict, Ethiopia, and paths to accountability.” <https://newlinesinstitute.org/rules-based-international-order/genocide-in-tigray-serious-breaches-of-international-law-in-the-tigray-conflict-ethiopia-and-paths-to-accountability-2/>.
- 31 Human Rights Watch. 2022. “Crimes against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/06/crimes-against-humanity-and-ethnic-cleansing-ethiopia-western-tigray-zone>.
- 32 Human Rights Watch. 2023. “Ethiopia: Ethnic Cleansing Persists Under Tigray Truce.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/06/01/ethiopia-ethnic-cleansing-persists-under-tigray-truce>.
- 33 Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. 2025. “Ethiopia five years on: Justice eludes victims of atrocities in Tigray and beyond.” <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/ethiopia-five-years-on-justice-eludes-victims-of-atrocities-in-tigray-and-beyond/>.
- 34 Maru, Mehari Taddele. 2023. “UN Human Rights Council Should Extend Investigation Commission on Ethiopia.” Just Security. <https://www.justsecurity.org/89012/un-human-rights-council-should-extend-investigation-commission-on-ethiopia/>.
- 35 Addis Standard. 2023. “AU rights commission quietly liquidates inquiry on Tigray.” <https://addisstandard.com/news-au-rights-commission-quietly-liquidates-inquiry-on-tigray-removes-trace-of-page-from-website/>.

to an immediate and permanent ceasefire, to be monitored and verified by an AU-led mechanism. It provided for the restoration of Tigray's constitutional status within Ethiopia's federal system, including the restoration of the region's territorial integrity. The Agreement mandated lifting the siege conditions and reinstating essential services, including electricity, telecommunications, banking, and transportation networks. It called for unhindered humanitarian access to enable relief operations and the return of IDPs and refugees to their homes.

The DDR of combatants was to proceed according to a specified timeline, with international support for reintegration programmes. Critically, the Agreement also called for political dialogue to address the root causes of the conflict, the advancement of accountability mechanisms and transitional justice processes, and the establishment of a framework for reconstruction and development. These commitments were to be implemented under AU-led monitoring and verification, with provisions for international support.

Ten days after the Pretoria signing, on 12 November 2022, military commanders from both sides met in Nairobi, Kenya, and signed a declaration that added operational specificity to the ceasefire arrangements and DDR procedures.³⁶ This Nairobi Declaration established timelines for disarmament phases and created mechanisms for military-to-military communication to prevent inadvertent violations of the ceasefire.

Purpose, objectives and outcomes of PAIR

The purpose of PAIR is to assess the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, with a particular focus on identifying the challenges and opportunities that influence the Agreement's effective execution. The review is guided by three central questions:

1. What are the principal areas of progress and obstacles in the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement? Which key objectives of the Agreement have been fully or partially implemented, or have not been implemented at all?
2. How do various stakeholders in Tigray perceive the effectiveness of the Agreement's implementation?
3. What pathways exist for more effective implementation and for consolidating peace on firmer and more sustainable grounds?

In pursuit of these main questions, PAIR began with a concept note that defined the purpose, scope, and desired outcomes – specifically, what constitutes a successful evaluation of the implementation of a peace agreement like the Pretoria Agreement. The conceptualization of the review encompassed the analytical framework, methodology, and tools employed for data collection and analysis. Guiding questions for semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, structured survey questionnaires, and an implementation matrix were designed to evaluate the implementation process and its impact on peace, governance, and humanitarian conditions in Tigray.

PAIR takes into account the rapidly evolving political and security landscape in Tigray and the broader Horn of Africa. Recent developments, both in Tigray and in Ethiopia's relations with Eritrea, have raised critical questions about the future of the Pretoria Agreement, particularly as emerging tensions risk undermining the fragile peace gains achieved so far.

As a final part of the research, an expert focus group discussion, bringing together key policymakers and researchers, has peer reviewed the main findings of the PAIR.

36 "Declaration of the Senior Commanders on the Modalities for the Implementation of the Agreement for a Lasting Peace Through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities." <https://www.peaceagreements.org/agreements/wgg/2464/>, 2022.

Objectives

The PAIR initiative pursues three overarching objectives:

To assess the implementation progress of the Pretoria Agreement over the past three years, with particular attention to key achievements, enduring challenges, and emerging opportunities for revitalization and effective implementation of the Agreement.

To analyse Tigray's current politico-security context and examine its implications for the ongoing implementation of the Agreement.

To propose actionable, evidence-based recommendations for the revitalization of the Agreement, aimed at addressing fundamental design and implementation problems that hinder progress and consolidation of peace.

The focus of PAIR is primarily on the implementation of obligations rather than on evaluating the agreement's nature, fundamental flaws, or overall impact. These aspects are addressed only when deemed necessary.

Expected outcomes

The PAIR initiative is expected to yield the following outcomes:

1. Enhanced diplomatic engagement, employing a matrix serving as a scorecard on the current implementation status of the Agreement, and evidence-based policy proposals for action.
2. Increased action by domestic stakeholders in and international partners of the Pretoria Agreement towards its revitalization and effective operationalization.
3. Intensified preventive diplomacy to prevent a relapse into old conflicts in Ethiopia and the greater Horn of Africa.

2.

Methodology

Research design and conceptual framework

The PAIR conceptual framework draws on political economy theoretical frameworks and Call and Cousens's³⁷ multidimensional approach to peace agreement evaluation. This entails examining content (key provisions of the Pretoria Agreement); process (implementation and monitoring mechanisms); politico-military context (Ethiopia's political crisis and regional geopolitics); and outcomes (in key areas of the agreement).

By situating the Pretoria Agreement within Ethiopia's broader domestic conflicts and regional political, economic, and geopolitical developments, PAIR highlights how and why implementation failures threaten to perpetuate instability and impunity in the Horn of Africa beyond Tigray. These failures encompass, in particular, the withdrawal of foreign forces, the return of IDPs and refugees, the restoration of the constitutional status quo ante, and justice and accountability for atrocity crimes.

Mixed-methods approach

PAIR employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data sources to conduct a thorough analysis of both the implementation and impact of the Pretoria Agreement.

In addition, PAIR undertook a systematic review of the literature, including legal instruments (mainly the Pretoria Agreement and subsequent Nairobi Declaration), AU meeting reports, government reports, and open-source data from reputable international and local sources (both published and unpublished materials). Secondary sources were analysed using legal text analysis and rapid policy network mapping (RPNM) methods to trace institutional relationships and implementation. Drawing on comparative power-sharing literature,³⁸ PAIR identified patterns and contextual factors shaping implementation outcomes. Following established approaches,³⁹ PAIR tracked causal mechanisms between peace agreement provisions and outcomes, documenting implementation pathways, obstacles, and adaptations to understand how and why specific provisions were fully or partially implemented – or failed. It employed the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset⁴⁰ to situate the Pretoria Agreement within global patterns of peace agreement implementation, drawing insights from comparative statistical analysis. In this regard, PAIR analysed

37 Call, Charles and Cousens, Elizabeth. 2007. "Ending Wars and Building Peace." Working with Crisis Working Paper Series (International Peace Academy). Retrieved from <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/ending-wars-and-building-peace/>

38 Hoddie, Matthew and Hartzell, Caroline. 2007. "Crafting Peace: Power-Sharing Institutions and the Negotiated Settlement of Civil Wars." (Penn State University Press). https://www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-03207-8.html?srsId=AfmBOopg81JfPl_Db29NT6H_ZniuSH4WyLhaONQ_6p2zgyKu7uM-wdikP; Madhav, Joshi and Quinn, Michael, 2015. Implementing the Peace: The Aggregate Implementation of Comprehensive Peace Agreements and Peace Duration after Intrastate Armed Conflict. *British Journal of Political Science*, 47 (4), pp. 869-892 (published 2017). https://ideas.repec.org/a/cup/bjposi/v47y-2017i04p869-892_00.html

39 Stedman, Stephen John and Downs, George, eds. "Evaluating Issues in Peace Implementation." In *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*. Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner, 2002. <https://dokumen.pub/ending-civil-wars-the-implementation-of-peace-agreements-9781685850395.html>

40 HÖGBLADH, STINA. 2012. "Peace Agreements 1975-2011- Updating the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset." <https://www.uu.se/download/18.123c8df118fa40a14ae43a71/1717159464508/peace%20agreements%201975-2011final.pdf>.

violence levels (battle deaths and civilian casualties) before and after the Pretoria Agreement to assess its impact on conflict reduction and peace durability (see figures 2 and 3).

The literature review allowed the identification of critical gaps requiring further investigation and empirical validation. This informed the design of the guiding questions, survey instruments, interview protocols, and research respondents to reflect local Tigrayan stakeholders' perspectives and assessments of implementation progress after the extensive literature review.

Primary data was collected through semi-structured interview questions, a focus group discussion, focus group discussion guiding questions, and a survey questionnaire. Interviews were conducted both in person and online with key informants.⁴¹

In total, over 103 research participants took part in this study. These comprised 29 key informant interviewees, 18 survey respondents, and participants in two focus group discussions (a combined 56 experts).

The first expert focus group discussion, which brought together 40 participants, examined the PAIR concept note, its objectives, expected outcomes, and methodology, including the Implementation Assessment Matrix. Conducted as an interactive session, the discussion encouraged the exchange of initial thoughts, reflections, and experiences from diverse segments of society on the nature and status of the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement. Insights generated from this dialogue helped shape the overall research process and enrich the matrix, ensuring that it reflected a more locally grounded and nuanced understanding of the key issues. This process also informed decisions on specific aspects of the Agreement requiring further examination, and the selection of appropriate research participants.

A semi-structured interview question with key informants allowed both a focused exploration of specific topics and deeper insights into stakeholders' perspectives, thereby enhancing the qualitative depth of the research. Each interviewee is represented in coded form (In1 to In29). The interviews were conducted in person and online, using interview-guiding questions developed from the matrix (See Annex 1 for the matrix).

An online survey with closed and open-ended questions was also conducted, where 18 of the invitees responded, allowing for the collection of quantifiable perspectives, attitudes, trends, and perceptions, as well as qualitative feedback. The survey data was analysed using descriptive statistics to identify prevailing patterns and correlations, which were then contrasted with and validated against themes extracted from interviews and focus groups.

PAIR developed and employed the matrix as its primary analytical framework for the study. The detailed provisions of the Pretoria Agreement were consolidated into rubrics corresponding to its key objectives, which together formed the core components of the matrix. In addition to guiding the development of the other research instruments, such as the guiding and survey questions, it facilitated the systematic organization of diverse data streams under rubrics aligned with the Agreement's objectives, thereby ensuring coherence, analytical consistency, and focus throughout the research process. The matrix also informed the coding structure used during data analysis.

The matrix was first presented to provide the analytical framework for the development of a scorecard evaluating implementation progress across the principal provisions of the Pretoria Agreement, and was further enriched through an initial expert focus group discussion.

The final expert validation focus group discussion subjected the PAIR study to external peer review, ensuring methodological rigour and enhancing the credibility, validity, feasibility, and policy relevance of its findings and recommendations.

⁴¹ Data collection, including surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, was conducted from April to August 2025.

Participants in the research were selected using a purposive sampling strategy aimed at achieving a comprehensive representation of viewpoints pertinent to the Pretoria Agreement by ensuring diversity in terms of age, gender, institutional affiliation, political views, and social background. The sample comprised members of the Tigray community both residing in Ethiopia and forming part of the diaspora, including government officials, community and religious leaders, civil society representatives and organizations (including those working with victims), and scholars. Selection criteria emphasized participants' proximity to the process and contextual knowledge, and recognized legitimacy in articulating the prevailing political and societal dynamics.

Qualitative data collected from interviews and focus groups was transcribed and thematically analysed. The coding strategies used were based on the matrix and refined through both inductive and deductive methods. Quantitative data from the survey was analysed using descriptive statistics.

The integration of multiple methods and data sources facilitated the triangulation of the data, thereby enhancing the reliability and validation of findings. This mixed-method approach also yielded a comprehensive contextual understanding of the underlying challenges constraining progress, as well as the potential opportunities for enhancing effective implementation and ironing out the hard questions and strategic dilemmas related to the fate of the Pretoria Agreement.

Ethical considerations were a fundamental part of the methodology. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing the data.

Limitations

A key limitation of this report is that it reflects views and perspectives exclusively from Tigrayan stakeholders and actors. The study did not include perspectives from stakeholders in other parts of Ethiopia or those involved in mediation and implementation oversight. Where official reports from the government of Ethiopia and the AU were available, these were incorporated into the literature review. This limitation is acknowledged as affecting the comprehensiveness of stakeholder analysis, although it provides important depth on local perceptions – a critical dimension often overlooked in peace agreement evaluation.⁴²

While this report underscores the structural challenges inherent in the Pretoria Agreement, its primary aim is to evaluate the implementation of the agreement rather than its intrinsic nature. Consequently, this focus may be regarded as a limitation of the study.

42 Leonardsson, Hanna and Rudd, Gustav. 2015. "The 'local turn' in peacebuilding: a literature review of effective and emancipatory local peacebuilding." Taylor & Francis Journals. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/taf/ctwqxx/v36y-2015i5p825-839.html>.

3.

Literature review

This section provides a brief critical review of the literature on the nature, concepts and theories, and significance of peace agreements as crucial instruments in ending armed conflicts. It investigates the motivations behind initiating peace agreements and their success rate, as well as the challenges that might emerge during the implementation process and ways of enhancing such implementation. This is complemented by an examination of literature on the Pretoria Agreement, providing a background to this research process, findings, and analysis of its current state.

Overview of peace agreements in Africa

Peer-reviewed literature reveals several key characteristics and elements that define peace agreements, reflecting their multifaceted approach with regard to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. Peace agreements are generally seen as negotiated settlements aimed at ending wars between conflicting parties and often involve complicated arrangements, such as cessation of hostilities, disengagement, and ceasefires; security, transitional governance, and power-sharing; DDR of combatants; and transitional justice and reconciliation mechanisms. Inclusivity is frequently emphasized as a crucial element; agreements strive to incorporate a wide range of stakeholders, including armed groups, political actors, civil society, and marginalized communities, so as to ensure broad-based legitimacy and ownership. However, despite the intention of inclusivity, the literature suggests that many agreements remain elitist, thus exclusive or partial, which limits their effectiveness and sustainability. Fostering genuine participation across all societal levels continues to be a significant obstacle.⁴³

In principle, regional organizations, particularly the AU, are crucial in mediating, facilitating, and overseeing peace agreements. The AU and its African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)⁴⁴ exemplify efforts to establish systemic regional capabilities for conflict prevention, mediation, peace support operations, and peacebuilding mechanisms. APSA encompasses bodies such as the Peace and Security Council (PSC)⁴⁵ and the African Standby Force,⁴⁶ which are designed for quick preventative action and, when necessary, intervention in an ongoing conflict. The literature regards increasing regional ownership of peace processes as a positive trend, although practical challenges such as political divisions among member states, a lack of political will to act, partiality of institutions and mediators,⁴⁷ a lack of commitment to allocate resources, and limited coordination capability often impede effectiveness.

43 Spears, Ian S. 2000. "Understanding inclusive peace agreements in Africa: the problems of sharing power." *Third World Quarterly* 21 (1): 105-118. <https://library.fes.de/libalt/journals/swetsfulltext/6975456.pdf>

44 African Union. 2002. "The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)." <https://www.peaceau.org/en/topic/the-african-peace-and-security-architecture-apsa>

45 African Union. 2002. "The Peace & Security Council." <https://au.int/en/psc>

46 African Union. 2002. "The African Standby Force (ASF)." <https://www.peaceau.org/en/page/82-african-standby-force-asf-amani-africa-1>

47 Stathopoulou, Kelly. 2013. "Self-determination, peacemaking and peace-building: Recent trends in African intrastate peace agreements." In *Statehood and Self-Determination Reconciling Tradition and Modernity in International Law*, edited by Duncan French, 277 - 301. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/statehood-and-selfdetermination/selfdetermination-peacemaking-and-peacebuilding-recent-trends-in-african-intrastate-peace-agreements/CA6F2BD3413F5ADC6A5F2DB1BC44F6CF>

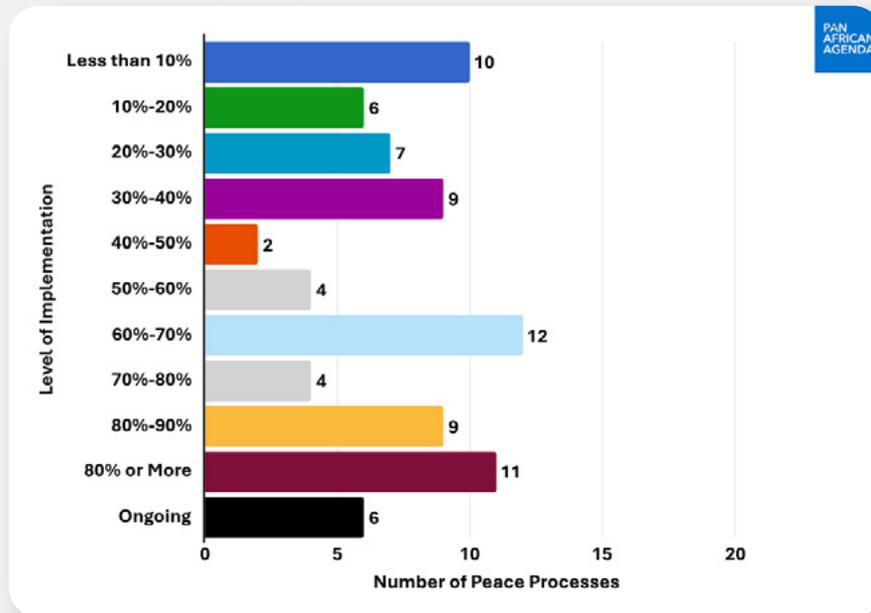
The literature records landmark achievements, such as the peace agreements in Liberia and Burundi,⁴⁸ where comprehensive peacebuilding efforts, supported by international actors, have led to sustained peace and recovery. In contrast, peace processes in countries such as South Sudan and the Central African Republic illustrate the fragility of peace agreements, with recurring violence and political instability undermining the sustainability of peace.⁴⁹ Scholars highlight that many agreements falter during the design and implementation phases due to weak institutions, poor enforcement, and ongoing political rivalries.⁵⁰ A common critique in the literature on design defects is the frequent failure of peace agreements to address fully the structural causes of conflict – exclusive processes that focus on elite power and resource sharing, creating fragmented governance and a lack of accountability that fosters impunity.⁵¹ Transitional justice mechanisms, reconciliation efforts, and community-level peacebuilding are emphasized as essential pillars for lasting peace, yet these are inadequately integrated in many accords.⁵²

Theoretical frameworks

After the Cold War, peace agreements became the most common approach to ending civil wars.⁵³ However, studies show that the success of such agreements largely depends on how they are formulated and on how the peace processes are designed. Four main factors determine their success: inclusivity and political power sharing; a reporting and compliance verification mechanism; inclusion of and compensation for the parties involved (including elites, fighters, and the broader population); and the sequence and steps of implementation.⁵⁴ According to Cil and Huth, 46% of all peace agreements signed between 1989 and 2014 were not fully implemented, leading to a high likelihood of renewed violent conflict. A lack of progress in the implementation of peace agreements results in a 75% probability of relapse into violent conflict. In contrast, studies indicate that successfully implemented peace agreements reduce the probability of returning to violence by 14%.⁵⁵

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- 48 “Liberia Comprehensive Peace; 2003 Agreement.” <https://www.trcofliberia.org/resources/documents/peace-agreement.pdf>
- 49 Azou-Passonda, Mario, Wei Hong, Zéphirin Mobogaina, Ghislain Gervil Kossingou and Serge Kevin Gildas Soule Baoro. n.d. “The Failure of Peace Processes: The Specific Case of the Central African Republic.” Open Journal of Political Science (Central China Normal University). <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paper-id=92855>
- 50 Cebotari, Aliona, Chueca-Montuenga, Enrique, Yoro Diallo, Yunsheng Ma, Turk A Rima, Weining Xin, and Zavarce, Harold. 2024. “Political Fragility: Coups d’État and Their Drivers.” (International Monetary Fund). <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/001/2024/034/article-A001-en.xml#:~:text=propitious%20to%20coups.-,The%20paper%20finds%20that%20the%20destabilization%20of%20a%20country’s%20economic,in-cluding%20in%20the%20Sahel%20region.>
- 51 Marley, Jonathan. 2020. “Peacebuilding in Fragile Contexts.” OECD Development Co-operation Working Papers (OECD Publishing). https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2020/10/peacebuilding-in-fragile-contexts_5193577a/d222bc0a-en.pdf
- 52 Udochukwu, Ikwuoma Sunday, Amaechi Vera Uche and Fanne Haroun. 2025. “Navigating the Nexus of War, Peace, and Development in Africa.” International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science. <https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/navigating-the-nexus-of-war-peace-and-development-in-africa/>
- 53 Wallensteen, Peter. 2015. “Quality Peace after Civil War.” In *Quality Peace: Peacebuilding, Victory and World Order* (Studies in Strategic Peacebuilding), by Peter Wallensteen, 68–101. <https://academic.oup.com/book/26931/chapter-abstract/196047094?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- 54 Pospisil, Jan and Bell, Christine. 2017. “Navigating Inclusion in Transitions from Conflict: The Formalised Political Unsettling.” Wiley Online Library. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jid.3283>; Rettberg, Angelika and Dupont, Federico. 2022. “Peace Agreement Implementation (PAI): What Matters? A Review of the Literature.” (Universidad de los Andes). <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/812/81274511008/html/>
- 55 Cil, Deniz and Huth, Paul. 2019. “Carrot or Stick? Development Aid and the Implementation of Peace Agreements.” (Owl in the Olive Tree Minerva Research Initiative).

Figure 4: Implementation of peace agreements since the end of the Cold War



Source: PAAI 2025, Cil, Deniz and Huth Paul, 2019.

Implementing peace agreements is a complex undertaking, often affected by various factors and hindered by interconnected challenges. Rettberg and Dupont’s intensive literature review reveals two dominant challenges in this regard: insufficient political will and inadequate capacity.⁵⁶ A common pitfall is the failure of parties to fully honour their commitments.⁵⁷ This often arises from the inherent complexities of power-sharing arrangements, where concerns about the political and economic consequences of implementation for each party’s power base and constituencies lead to hesitation or non-compliance.⁵⁸ Prioritizing early implementation is also essential, as delays can erode momentum, create space for spoilers, and deepen mistrust. Moreover, the absence of effective mechanisms to build trust between former adversaries, and to ensure continuous monitoring and follow-up, undermines the implementation process.⁵⁹ Political will is crucial for power-sharing and implementing resource provisions, often involving sensitive concessions such as electoral reforms or integrating former rebels into government. Parties may agree to these terms during negotiations but later resist full implementation, opting for minimal compliance. The incentive to backtrack is substantial, especially when non-compliance costs seem low and violations are not followed by punitive measures.⁶⁰ International donors and organizations can raise the stakes of non-compliance, encouraging progress on politically challenging provisions.

Capacity constraints are another challenge. Misjudging capacity – including the amount of political will, the available resources, and the time required for implementation – contributes to either over-commitment or an underestimation of challenges, ultimately derailing even the most promising agreements.⁶¹

56 Rettberg, Angelika and Dupont, Federico. 2022. “Peace Agreement Implementation (PAI): What Matters? A Review of the Literature.” (Universidad de los Andes). <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/812/81274511008/html/>

57 Adetula, Victor, Muriithi, Tim and Buchanan-Clarke, Stephen. 2018. “Peace Negotiations and Agreements in Africa – Why They Fail and How to Improve Them.” (Nordic Africa Institute). <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/peace-negotiations-and-agreements-africa-why-they-fail-and-how-improve-them-policy-note#:~:text=The%20cyclical%20nature%20of%20African, stabilisation%20initiatives%20across%20the%20continent.>

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

Many peace agreements require substantial reforms or new programmes that demand significant financial and technical resources. Post-conflict governments tend to lack these, regardless of their willingness to bring about change.⁶² In such cases, implementation depends on acquiring the necessary capacity, with donor aid playing a crucial role. In post-conflict scenarios, for example, where rebel groups typically have disarmed, external pressure and resource availability become vital for ensuring government accountability.⁶³

It is in the context of mobilizing resources and diplomatic support for effective implementation, monitoring, verification, and punitive compliance mechanisms with regard to spoilers, that multilateral bodies such as the UN, the AU and other regional organizations play important roles. Similarly, external actors such as the US and the EU could also play a crucial role by using their leverage on parties to reach agreement. However, excessive reliance on external intervention can inadvertently weaken local ownership and compromise parties' commitment, both of which are essential for long-term peacebuilding.⁶⁴ Forging strong partnerships with donors early on becomes critical in securing the necessary financial, diplomatic, and technical resources. Sustained external support can strengthen transparency, humanitarian aid and human rights; protect civilians; and focus on the root causes of conflict while fostering inclusive power- and resource-sharing structures – a far more likely route to achieving lasting peace. In this regard, a strategic approach involves a careful mapping of partners, their interests, and potential contributions, and defining the scope of external engagement, focusing on areas where they can add the most significant value while empowering local actors.

Rettberg and Dupont argue that donor strategies must be tailored to the specific cause of implementation failure, specifically, lack of political will and/or capacity constraints.⁶⁵ To address the challenges of political will and inadequate capacity effectively and design impactful donor interventions it is essential to have a nuanced understanding of whether political will or capacity is the primary obstacle. This tailored approach – determining the kind of intervention needed and identifying the partner or actor with the required resources for intervention – can significantly improve the chances of a peace agreement succeeding. For example, donors can leverage their influence by suspending or reducing direct budget support, signalling the high cost of non-compliance and deficient political will. On the other hand, donors can increase project aid for health, education, and governance, which will enable progress on capacity-dependent provisions. A critical element of effective implementation is the strategic deployment of phased aid. Aligning aid disbursement with a country's absorptive capacity avoids the pitfalls of frontloading, which can overwhelm fragile institutions and create unintended consequences.

The 1991 Cambodia Accords offer a compelling illustration of this principle, outlining a gradual and phased introduction of international assistance that carefully considered the prevailing political and technical realities. This approach ensured that funding was deployed strategically, maximizing its impact and contributing to the agreement's relative success. The EU-PEACE Funds⁶⁶ in Northern Ireland further

62 Hoddie, Matthew and Hartzell, Caroline. 2007. "Crafting Peace: Power-Sharing Institutions and the Negotiated Settlement of Civil Wars." (Penn State University Press). https://www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-03207-8.html?srsId=AfmBOopg81JfPl_Db29NT6H_ZniuSH4WyLhaONQ_6p2zgyKu7uMwdikP

63 Wang, Vibeke, Suhrke, Astri and Tjønneland, Elling N. 2005. "Governance Interventions in Post-War Situations: Lessons Learned." (Chr. Michelsen Institute). <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/1955-governance-interventions-in-post-war-situations.pdf>

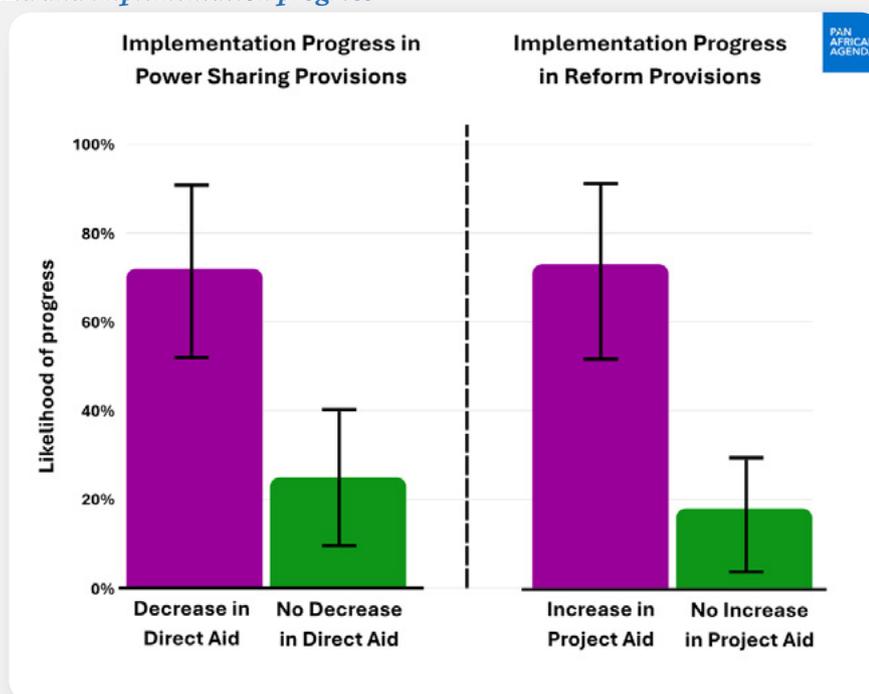
64 Forster, Robert. 2019. "Peace Agreements." In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Global Security Studies*, by Scott Romaniuk, Manish Thapa and Péter Marton. Palgrave MacMillan. <https://www.cmi.no/publications/7096-peace-agreements>

65 Rettberg, Angelika and Dupont, Federico. 2022. "Peace Agreement Implementation (PAI): What Matters? A Review of the Literature." (Universidad de los Andes). <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/812/81274511008/html/>

66 European Parliament. 2021. "Northern Ireland PEACE PLUS programme." [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/102/northern-ireland-peace-plus-programme#:~:text=Objectives%20and%20priorities,Regional%20Development%20Fund%20\(ERDF\)](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/102/northern-ireland-peace-plus-programme#:~:text=Objectives%20and%20priorities,Regional%20Development%20Fund%20(ERDF)).

demonstrate the benefits of flexible funding mechanisms that adapt to evolving needs and circumstances.⁶⁷ An empirical study of the implementation analysis of 80 peace agreements by Cil and Huth indicates, as shown below, the link between an increase in aid and the implementation of power-sharing and reform.⁶⁸ Governments are significantly more likely to make progress on implementation each year if direct aid is reduced to penalize any failure to implement power-sharing provisions the previous year. Conversely, governments are more likely to institute reforms when project aid is increased in response to implementation failures that are the result of inadequate capacity.⁶⁹ Such a phased approach could address capacity constraints effectively.⁷⁰

Figure 5: Aid and implementation progress



Source: PAAI 2025, Cil, Deniz and Huth Paul, 2019.

In essence, the literature emphasizes that the success, effectiveness, and sustainability of a peace agreement’s implementation processes hinge on several vital and interconnected factors. Chief among these is the inclusion of stakeholders’ interests in the design of the agreement, which entails broad consultation of and participation by key stakeholders, consideration of diverse views and positions, the meaningful involvement of women, and equitable representation in public offices. Such an inclusive approach fosters legitimacy, ownership, and collective responsibility for peacebuilding outcomes.

However, inclusivity alone cannot guarantee success if there is not genuine political will from all parties to implement their respective obligations. The literature underscores that durable peace

67 Molloy, Sean. 2019. “Peace Agreements and Trust Funds.” (The University of Edinburgh). <https://peacerep.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Trust-Funds-Report-Digital.pdf>

68 Cil, Deniz and Huth, Paul. 2019. “Carrot or Stick? Development Aid and the Implementation of Peace Agreements.” (Owl in the Olive Tree Minerva Research Initiative).

69 Ibid.

70 Rettberg, Angelika and Dupont, Federico. 2022. “Peace Agreement Implementation (PAI): What Matters? A Review of the Literature.” (Universidad de los Andes). <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/812/81274511008/html/>

agreements require commitment to continued dialogue, dedication to implementation mechanisms, and the allocation of sufficient time, resources, and leadership energy. Political will manifests not only in formal commitments but also in the consistent and coordinated actions of leaders and stakeholders who drive the peace process forward.

Besides goodwill, effective peace agreements must be supported by realistic timelines and robust compliance mechanisms that ensure commitments are translated into concrete actions. Scholars highlight the importance of establishing both coercive and incentivizing mechanisms, agreed upon by regional, continental, and international actors, either before or during mediation. In particular, the rapid deployment of well-resourced peacekeeping or protection forces with clear mandates can play a catalytic role in reinforcing political will and providing the security environment necessary for implementation. Central to this is a commitment by parties to pursue their political objectives through non-violent means, thereby creating a stable foundation for lasting peace.

The international dimension of peace agreement implementation also features prominently in the literature. Unified support by and coordination among regional organizations and international partners are critical to maintaining pressure, coherence, and credibility throughout the process. A unified international stance helps sustain momentum and minimizes opportunities for spoilers to exploit divisions within the international community.

Moreover, strong oversight and enforcement mechanisms are deemed indispensable for translating commitments into tangible progress. The international community can leverage political, economic, and diplomatic tools to encourage compliance, provide credible guarantees, and impose penalties on violators. Such penalties may include targeted sanctions, travel bans, asset freezes, restrictions on participation in transitional or future governments, arms embargoes, and the establishment of accountability mechanisms or special investigative bodies. Such measures, coupled with effective monitoring, verification, and punitive structures, are necessary to hold parties accountable and deter backsliding.

Finally, the literature highlights transparency as an essential component of sustainable implementation. Regular communication with stakeholders, timely public updates on progress, and clearly defined information-sharing protocols help build trust, enhance legitimacy, and maintain momentum throughout the peace process.

Linking the literature to the Pretoria Agreement

Drawing from the above literature, it is evident that the effective implementation of peace agreements relies on inclusivity, political will, realistic timelines, robust compliance mechanisms, and transparent oversight structures. Comparative research demonstrates that a 1% increase in the rate of peace agreement implementation increases peace duration by over 6%, with even more pronounced effects for maintaining stability and enabling economic recovery.⁷¹ Yet these benefits remain unrealized while implementation stalls.

Evaluating the successful implementation of any peace agreement therefore requires analysing the extent to which these governing principles have been adhered to throughout the implementation period.

71 Molloy, Sean. 2018. "Assessing and Influencing Progress in Peace Processes Workshop Report." (Progress in Peace Processes). https://www.politicalsettlements.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Barcelona-Report-DIGI-TAL.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com P. 6; For more, read Madhav, Joshi and Quinn, Michael, 2015. "Implementing the Peace: The Aggregate Implementation of Comprehensive Peace Agreements and Peace Duration after Intra-state Armed Conflict." *British Journal of Political Science*, 47 (4), pp. 869-892 (published 2017). https://ideas.repec.org/a/cup/bjposi/v47y2017i04p869-892_00.html ;

The Pretoria Agreement's end state and objectives

Article 1.1 articulates the Agreement's overarching objective: to “reach an immediate and permanent cessation of hostilities with a view to silencing the guns and creating a conducive environment and laying the foundation for sustainable peace”. This translates into 11 specific obligations, structured in two categories:

Constitutional status quo ante

1. Security for Tigray: Cessation of hostilities and removal of external forces (Articles 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2(d), 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 7.2, 8)
2. Ethiopian sovereignty: Restoration of federal authority in Tigray (Articles 1.2, 2(a), 3.2, 3.5, 7.1, 8)
3. Federal legitimacy: Establishing legitimate federal government control over Tigray (Articles 2(e), 3.4, 3.5, 7.1, 9.1)
4. Territorial restoration: Returning Tigray's administration to all constitutional territories or establishing a constitutional process for “contested” areas (Articles 2(b), 3.4, 9.2, 10.4)
5. DDR: Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes (Article 6)
6. Population returns: Facilitating return of refugees and IDPs (Articles 2(c), 5.3)

Status quo ante plus: War-related transformations

1. Humanitarian access: Lifting the siege and ensuring aid delivery (Articles 2(g), 2(h), 5, 7.2(d))
2. Political dialogue: Addressing root causes through TIRA, resolving “political differences” and “matters arising out of the conflict” (Articles 1.5, 1.6, 1.10, 2(e), 7.2(c), 10.1, 10.2)
3. Justice and accountability: Establishing transitional justice and reconciliation mechanisms (Articles 1.7, 1.8, 2(f), 2(i), 10.3)
4. Reconstruction: Post-war recovery and development (Articles 1.9, 1.8, 2(i), 2(j))
5. Implementation oversight: Good faith compliance with monitoring, verification, and accountability mechanisms (Articles 1.11, 2(k), 11, 12, 13)

The Agreement establishes three binding principles to guide implementation. First, parties must “implement this Agreement in good faith and refrain from any action that undermines and/or is inconsistent with the spirit and letter of this Cessation of Hostilities” (Article 12.1). Second, they “commit not to make any unilateral statement, in any form, that could undermine this Agreement” (Article 13.2). Third, and most fundamentally, they are obligated to cease all hostile communication: “the Permanent Cessation of hostilities shall include the cessation of all forms of hostile propaganda, rhetoric, and hate speech” (Article 3.3).

According to Maru, the goal of the Pretoria Agreement can be summarized as a return to the status quo ante plus matters arising from the war, such as DDR, transitional justice, and post-war reconstruction.⁷² More critically, he argues that the Agreement's promise of a “permanent cessation of hostilities” is conceptually inconsistent, as cessation of hostilities is typically temporary, whereas a ceasefire implies permanence.⁷³ Nonetheless, the Pretoria Agreement goes beyond a mere cessation of hostilities; it encompasses broader provisions such as restoring constitutional order, establishing security arrangements, creating transitional governance and power-sharing structures in Tigray, and developing mechanisms for dialogue and monitoring.

72 Maru, Mehari Taddele. 2024. “Beyond Cessation of Hostilities: Sustaining Peace.” Addis Standard. <https://addis-standard.com/commentary-beyond-cessation-of-hostilities-sustaining-peace/>.

73 Forster, Robert. 2019. “Peace Agreements.” In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Global Security Studies*, by Scott Romaniuk, Manish Thapa and Péter Marton. Palgrave MacMillan. <https://www.cmi.no/publications/7096-peace-agreements>; Maru, Mehari Taddele. 2024. “Beyond Cessation of Hostilities: Sustaining Peace.” Addis Standard. <https://addisstandard.com/commentary-beyond-cessation-of-hostilities-sustaining-peace/>

Building on Maru's overview of the Pretoria Agreement goals, many scholarly works state that the Agreement effectively concluded active hostilities, facilitated the establishment of an interim administration to replace the previous regional government, and reinstated limited federal authority in Tigray. Gebru provides a critical evaluation of its implementation and ongoing challenges. He contends that neither the GoE nor the TPLF has complied fully with the provisions of the Agreement.⁷⁴ Gebru argues that the peace process has achieved four main objectives: the cessation of hostilities, largely silencing the guns and creating a more conducive environment for peace; the delisting of the TPLF from the national terrorist designation; the establishment of an inclusive interim administration in Tigray; and the initiation of a partial DDR programme.⁷⁵ Additionally, trust-building measures have emerged, such as allowing federal government representatives to travel to Tigray without security detail, which is an important symbolic step.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, both parties have exhibited notable shortcomings. The TPLF has failed to protect civilians, demonstrated weak commitment to upholding justice, shown disregard for basic human rights, and misused humanitarian aid. Similarly, the alleged failures of the GoE include disrespect for constitutional norms, inadequate preservation of sovereignty and territorial integrity, insufficient protection of civilians, and improper use of humanitarian aid. External challenges have also undermined implementation, particularly the continued presence of Eritrean forces, which undermines Ethiopia's sovereignty, and the occupation of parts of Tigray by Amhara forces.

Yakob underlines that the Pretoria Agreement has enabled the release of prisoners, the partial resumption of government services, and improved humanitarian access.⁷⁷ Yet, it has failed to address fundamental territorial and political grievances directly, which risks perpetuating instability and unresolved tensions in the parts of Tigray that are claimed by Amhara.⁷⁸ Further literature on the implementation of the Agreement elucidates the fragmented post-conflict governance landscape in Tigray, characterized by ambiguous relationships between local authorities, the interim administration, and the TPLF. These dynamics perpetuate ongoing disputes and insecurity, despite the cessation of overt violence.⁷⁹ This fragmentation poses a significant challenge to efforts aimed at achieving political inclusivity and effective administration.⁸⁰

Gebresenbet and Tariku situate the Agreement as a significant milestone, marking the end of TPLF dominance and the beginning of a new political era characterized by the decline of ethno-nationalism's centrality in Ethiopian politics.⁸¹ They highlight the AU-led mediation's success in facilitating a cessation of hostilities and setting the

74 Gebru, Assefa Leake. 2024. "The Pretoria Agreement: Reflections on its Essence, Implementation Status and the Way-Forward." *Africana Studies Commons*. <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jacaps/vol6/iss1/4/#:~:text=In%202018%2C%20the%20political%20landscape,the%20influence%20of%20external%20forces>.

75 "Declaration of the Senior Commanders on the Modalities for the Implementation of the Agreement for a Lasting Peace Through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities." 2022; <https://www.peaceagreements.org/agreements/wgg/2464/>

76 Berhe, Mulugeta Gebrehiwot. 2024. "Towards a Meaningful Peace for Tigray." *Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (World Peace Foundation)*. <https://peacerep.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Towards-a-Meaningful-Peace-for-Tigray-DIGITAL-WPF.pdf>.

77 Yanete Yakob. (2023). "The Pretoria Agreement for Tigray: One year after." *Heinrich Böll Stiftung Horn of Africa*. <https://hoa.boell.org/en/2023/11/01/pretoria-agreement-tigray-one-year-after>

78 Kifle, Alagaw Ababu. 2024. "Ethiopia's Pretoria Peace Agreement and the Fate of the 'Contested' Areas." (Kujenga Amani). <https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2024/03/20/ethiopias-pretoria-peace-agreement-and-the-fate-of-the-contested-areas/>; Berhe, Mulugeta Gebrehiwot. 2024. "Towards a Meaningful Peace for Tigray." *Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (World Peace Foundation)*. <https://peacerep.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Towards-a-Meaningful-Peace-for-Tigray-DIGITAL-WPF.pdf>.

79 Mamo Blain, & Nesibu Mahider. (2025). *Undefined relationships: Ethiopia's Tigray post-war politics*. *Horn Review*. <https://hornreview.org/2025/07/03/undefined-relationships-ethiopias-tigray-post-war-politics/>

80 Ibid.

81 Tariku, Yonas, and Gebresenbet Fana. 2023. "Debating the implications of the Pretoria Agreement for Ethiopia: countering attempts to silence alternative voices." *Review of African Political Economy*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48814427?seq=1>.

stage for political recalibration, evidenced by the restoration of federal authority in Tigray, removal of the TPLF terrorist designation, re-establishment of government services, and partial normalization of relations.⁸²

In contrast, Gebrehiwot et al. adopt a more pragmatic stance, stating that, despite its complexities and limitations, the Pretoria Agreement represents progress driven by the humanitarian impact of the conflict rather than mere coercion. They advocate a nuanced understanding of its achievements and challenges.⁸³ This critique also underscores the deficiencies of the AU-led mediation in fully adhering to its stated norms and mechanisms.⁸⁴ Monitoring and verification mechanisms have proven weak. The AU MVCMM has been undermined not only by the TPLF and GoE but also by the AU itself and its mediators.⁸⁵ The post-agreement dialogue has not been institutionalized effectively, and report-back on progress and challenges remains insufficient.

The implementation gaps and challenges reveal the depth of these obstacles. Boundary disputes are a critical concern, as Tigray's administrative territory remains under the control of non-ENDF actors, including the EDF in northern Tigray and Amhara forces and militias in the western and southern zones.⁸⁶ Consequently, the Agreement's principal objective – resolving territorial disputes in accordance with constitutional principles and practice – has not been realized. The displacement crisis also persists, with nearly 1 million people remaining in IDP camps, unable to return to their homes in western Tigray.⁸⁷

The DDR process has stalled, as Tigrayan authorities regard disarmament as contingent on the full withdrawal of Eritrean and Amhara forces.⁸⁸ Governance and supply crises have emerged through challenges in forming the interim government, restrictions on fuel⁸⁹ and essential goods, and growing fragmentation within the TPLF.⁹⁰ The persistence of insecurity, infrastructural damage, population displacement, and unmet humanitarian needs complicates the restoration of normalcy and governance. These multidimensional challenges underscore that the cessation of hostilities alone, without addressing the profound social, political, and justice-related legacies of the conflict, is insufficient for achieving durable peace.⁹¹

82 Ibid.

83 Gebrehiwot, Mulugeta, de Waal, Alex, Plaut, Martin, Nyssen, Jan, Mohamed Hassen and Gebrekirstos Gebre-selassie. 2023. "A response to "The Pretoria Agreement: Mere cessation of hostilities or heralding a new era in Ethiopia?" ROAPE. <https://roape.net/2023/06/15/a-response-to-the-pretoria-agreement-mere-cessation-of-hostilities-or-heralding-a-new-era-in-ethiopia/>.

84 Ibid.

85 Tsehay, Yihenew Misrak. 2025. "The African Union (AU) Mediation in the Northern Ethiopia Armed Conflict (2020–2022)." International Journal on Minority and Group Rights. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/391810881_The_African_Union_AU_Mediation_in_the_Northern_Ethiopia_Armed_Conflict_2020-2022.

86 Addis Standard. 2025. "Ethiopia: Up to 40% of Tigray Still Occupied by External Forces, Ensuring Territorial Integrity a Priority: Interim President." AllAfrica. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202505070066.html#:~:text=Addis%20Abeba%20%E2%80%94%20President%20of%20the,safe%20return%20of%20displaced%20Tigrayans>.

87 Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. 2025. "Ethiopia five years on: Justice eludes victims of atrocities in Tigray and beyond." <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/ethiopia-five-years-on-justice-eludes-victims-of-atrocities-in-tigray-and-beyond/>.

88 Feltman, Jeffrey. 2022. "Ethiopia's Hard Road to Peace." Foreign Affairs. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ethiopia/ethiopias-hard-road-peace>; De Waal, Alex and Mulugeta Gebrehiwot Berhe. 2024. "Ethiopia Back on the Brink." Foreign Affairs. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ethiopia/ethiopia-back-brink>; Woldemariam, Michael and Abel Abate Demissie. 2025. "The Risk of a New Ethiopian-Eritrean War Is Growing." Foreign Policy. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/10/21/ethiopia-eritrea-tigray-horn-east-africa/>.

89 Seifu, Batseba. 2025. "The Fuel Embargo on Tigray is a siege." Modern Diplomacy. <https://modern diplomacy.eu/2025/04/04/the-fuel-embargo-on-tigray-is-a-siege/>.

90 Tronvoll, Kjetil and Maru, Mehari Taddele. 2022. "Tigray's precarious transition: On the establishment of an Interim Regional Administration." Democracy in Africa. <http://democracyin africa.org/tigrays-precarious-transition-on-the-establishment-of-an-interim-regional-administration/>.

91 Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide. (2025b). The systematic undoing of society: War damage and loss in

In summary, the literature on the Pretoria Agreement reflects a contested and multifaceted understanding: while it achieved a crucial cessation of violence and some institutional restoration, it also exposed unresolved political sensitivities and governance complexities. Integrating these findings with the extensively documented war damages in Tigray emphasizes the necessity of a comprehensive peace process that prioritizes inclusive transitional justice, reconstruction, and reconciliation to address the pervasive and enduring impacts on Ethiopian society.

According to Maru, obligations that were mutually recognized as shared priorities – such as silencing the guns and establishing TIRA – have fared the best.⁹² Other critical issues, such as the return of Tigrayan territories and IDPs, have faced significant delays, largely due to resistance from the GoE and opposition from Eritrean and Amhara actors. At the same time, some obligations – particularly accountability for wartime atrocities – have not materialized at all owing to a lack of political will, despite persistent demands from victims and the Tigrayan public.⁹³

the social sector of Tigray (Vol. 1). Mekelle, Ethiopia: Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide. <https://citghub.org/the-systematic-undoing-of-society-war-damage-and-loss-in-the-social-sector-of-tigray/>

92 Maru, Mehari Taddele. 2024. “Beyond Cessation of Hostilities: Sustaining Peace.” Addis Standard. <https://addis-standard.com/commentary-beyond-cessation-of-hostilities-sustaining-peace/>.

93 Ibid.

4.

Data analysis

According to the 103 PAIR research participants, the main achievement of the Pretoria Agreement was the silencing of the guns. At the same time, nearly all responses were in agreement that the most important objectives of the Agreement largely remained unmet, revealing a significant disparity between the declared commitments and their implementation on the ground. The quantitative survey data strongly supports the qualitative findings from the interviews: 83.3% of survey participants and all interview and focus group participants stated that constitutional order had not been restored in Tigray. Only 16.7% of survey respondents believed that the constitutional order had been restored to some extent. Except for the cessation of fighting, which resulted in the end of violent conflict, most of the objectives remain unmet. Accordingly, the constitutional order has not been restored, Tigray's territorial integrity is still compromised, hundreds of thousands of displaced people have not returned, the health and education systems are non-functional, and ex-combatants, especially women, are not fully reintegrated.

Silencing the guns

Almost all interviewees noted that “the immediate goal of silencing the guns has been achieved, but longer-term goals such as creating a cohesive environment and sustainable peace remain unfulfilled”.

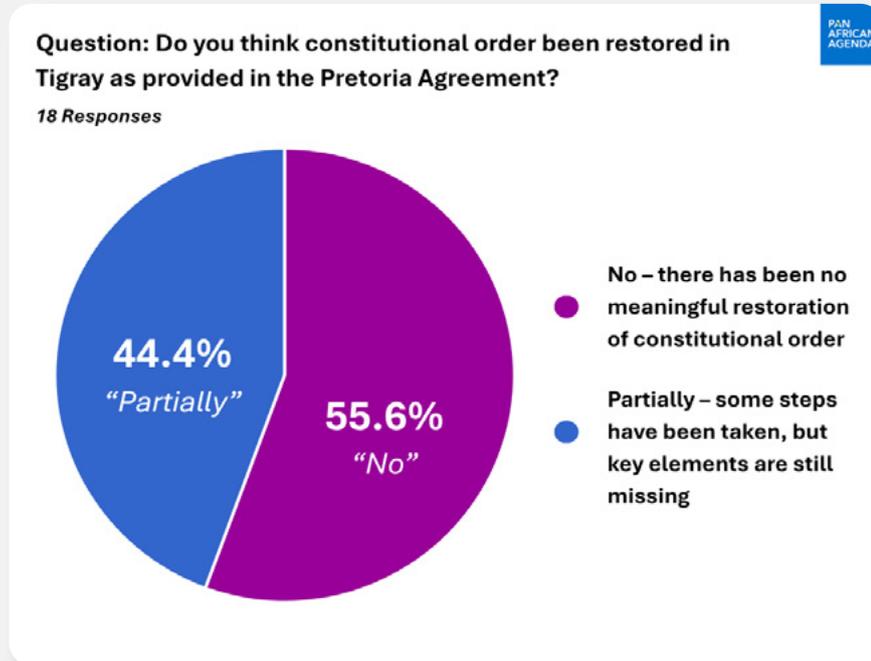
The dominant narrative emerging from the focus group discussions, interviews, and survey data highlights limited progress in tactical or short-term areas that is overshadowed by a lack of progress in implementing the fundamental constitutional, territorial, and justice-related provisions of the Agreement. This reflects a condition of negative peace – a state marked by the absence of overt violence yet characterized by the persistence of unresolved root causes and the absence of structures that sustain peace.

While all informants concurred that the primary achievement of the Pretoria Agreement was an end to active fighting that prevented further loss of life, nearly all emphasized that this was a negative peace. It remains fragile, reversible, and vulnerable to collapse due to unresolved territorial disputes and persistent insecurity within Tigray as a result of poor governance and a breakdown of law and order. The same factors that were left unaddressed, such as territorial disputes, occupation, governance failures, and constitutional violations, now threaten to reverse the ceasefire and reignite conflict. This underscores the fragility of an agreement that silenced the guns without resolving the underlying drivers of war, particularly the issue of occupied territories and the return of displaced persons.

Restoration of constitutional order

In almost all the data collected, the majority response was that there had been no restoration of constitutional order in Tigray as per Article 6 of the Pretoria Agreement. While 55.6% of the survey respondents believed constitutional order had not been restored in Tigray, the remaining 44.4% of survey respondents indicated partial implementation with key elements missing (See Figure 6). There is thus a clear belief that Tigray's constitutional sovereignty and territorial integrity remain violated. In addition, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the return to the status quo ante, a key objective of constitutional restoration, had not been achieved, particularly in western and northern Tigray.

Figure 6: Restoration of constitutional order



These quantitative findings are supported by qualitative data. Most interviewees expressed similar concerns, with one respondent noting, “From my point of view, the restoration of constitutional order has been stalled” (In17). Interview participants (In12 and In15) emphasized that Amhara leaders publicly rejected the constitutional boundaries and refused to withdraw from occupied Tigrayan territories. The re-entry of the ENDF into Mekelle is widely perceived as a symbolic assertion of federal presence rather than a genuine reinstatement of constitutional governance.

Survey responses examining specific dimensions of constitutional restoration revealed selective implementation and incomplete progress, corroborating interview findings that described the federal government’s role in Tigray as “symbolic rather than substantive” and “largely ceremonial”. The federal presence is limited to symbolic gestures such as the deployment of police units at airports, without extending effective governance into occupied territories or border areas.

Field observations reinforce these assessments, noting that western and northern Tigray remain under Amhara and Eritrean control, thereby preventing the re-establishment of legitimate local governance structures. This continued occupation is a direct violation of the Pretoria Agreement’s core principles and has perpetuated instability in the region.

Given the lack of progress in restoring constitutional order, several participants described ongoing ethnic cleansing, indoctrination campaigns, and acts of violence in western Tigray and along the Eritrean border. Efforts to facilitate the return of IDPs have largely failed, with many individuals experiencing secondary displacement due to persistent insecurity. Informants consistently characterized these developments as evidence of constitutional failure, asserting that the federal government has not fulfilled its obligations to uphold constitutional principles or to enforce the provisions of the Pretoria Agreement.

Both qualitative and quantitative data shows that territorial occupation is the most significant impediment to the effective implementation of the agreement. For instance, one interview respondent said: “Nearly half of Tigray remains under occupation, with Amhara and Eritrean forces entrenched. Their continued presence obstructs the return of IDPs, undermines federal constitutional order, and perpetuates the humanitarian crisis. Federal authorities have yet to commit to the return of IDPs and the restoration of Tigray’s territories in accordance with the constitution” (In12).

The refusal of occupying forces to withdraw, exemplified by Amhara leaders openly stating their non-recognition of federal authority, constitutes not only a breach of the agreement but also a direct challenge to Ethiopia's constitutional order. This corroborates qualitative observations made by interview participants: "Amhara forces occupying the western zone of Tigray have openly declared that they will never respect the FDRE [Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia] constitution and are unwilling to leave the area" (In15).

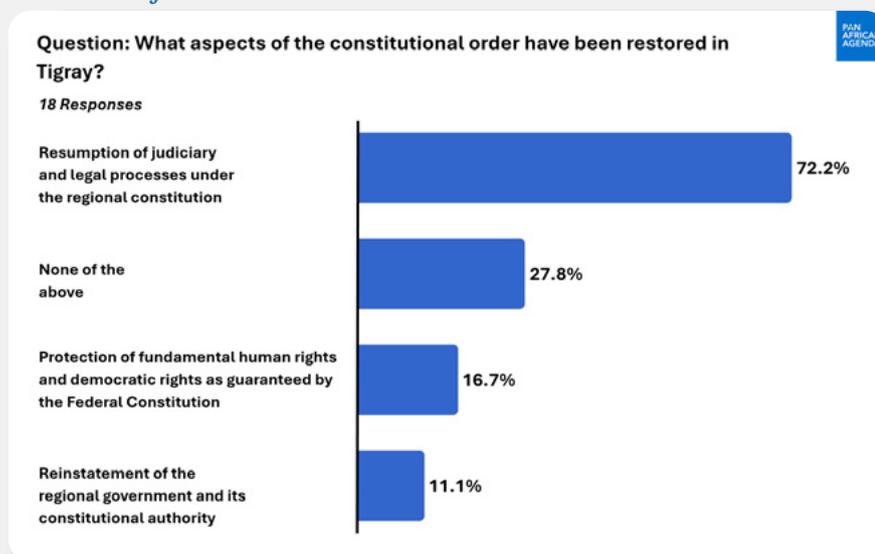
The continued occupation of western and northern Tigray by Amhara and Eritrean forces, respectively, coupled with the absence of rule of law and order within Tigray, has also resulted in organized crime, including violent robbery, migration-related smuggling, and trafficking. In addition, there is widespread poverty and occupation-related violence, particularly in areas such as Alamata and Wajirat, which are frequently cited as flashpoints. Survey responses and open-ended comments corroborate these interview assessments, confirming a critical mismatch between ENDF deployment priorities and the security concerns of the local population. One respondent noted that the continued presence of "non-ENDF forces, including Amhara and Eritrean troops in Tigray, is an indication of failure to restore the constitutional order" (In18). In addition, the fact that "there is no single ENDF unit at the border areas indicates a lack of commitment to uphold the constitution and objectives laid out in the Pretoria agreement" (In15). These testimonies suggest that federal forces prioritize political control over genuine security provision.

Additionally, factionalism within the TPLF, leadership divisions, and uncertainty regarding the party's post-war role have been identified as key internal factors that could further destabilize the situation. Some respondents asserted that the two parties to the Pretoria Agreement, the TPLF and the GoE, are using the occupied territories and the fate of displaced persons as bargaining chips in power politics aimed at maintaining and consolidating their respective positions.

Provision of basic services

The majority of research informants said that some basic services (such as banking, telecoms, electricity, and air travel) have resumed in parts of Tigray, providing temporary relief despite disruptions. However, progress has been selective, confined to "accessible areas", while vast swathes of Tigray remain outside federal control. One expert noted that "services have resumed, but schools are not functioning because they are occupied by refugees or converted to other uses; there is no reconstruction of destroyed facilities and services" (In14). The majority survey response on the restoration of constitutional order indicated "zero" on Tigray's constitutional position in the GoE and the re-establishment of Tigray's administrative control over the full territory of Tigray (See Figure 6). The disconnect between service resumption without the full restoration of constitutional order promised by the Agreement has fuelled widespread frustrations. For many, the federal government's actions remain performative rather than genuine and substantive, offering false compliance while avoiding the harder constitutional and territorial questions at the heart of the conflict.

Figure 7: Dimensions of constitutional order assessment



Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration

A total of 97% of interview respondents indicated that there had been some progress in disarmament and demobilization. They stated that disarmament of heavy armaments and two rounds of demobilization of the TDF had been completed. However, almost all of the interview respondents underlined the flawed nature of the process from the onset, particularly the registration phase, and its failure to adequately address the reintegration pillar of DDR, instead concentrating on disarmament and demobilization.

Most of the interviewees reiterated that, during the registration phase, ex-TDF fighters were required to provide biometric data. This created discomfort and distrust among many owing to concerns about privacy, data security, and potential political or legal repercussions in their future civilian lives, both within Ethiopia and abroad. As a result, the DDR process became widely unpopular. Moreover, the support packages designed to facilitate transition to civilian life were deemed grossly inadequate. Respondents said that the promised reintegration payment of around ETB 90,000 (approximately USD 1,300 in 2024), which in itself was hardly significant in an economically decimated and war-torn state, was not fully disbursed to those who went through the claims process. One of the interviewees expressed their dismay at the amount, stating, “What kind of reintegration package is ETB 90,000 in an inflated, collapsed economy?” (In13). Besides the weak incentive to transition to civilian life, the process, according to In15, was not inclusive. Female ex-combatants were systematically excluded from reintegration programmes and vocational training opportunities, deepening resentment and perceptions of inequality. External experts and TPLF statements corroborated these findings, asserting that “disarmament has been weaponized politically, not implemented equitably” (In5, In12, In15).

In addition, interview respondents pointed out that implementation was not executed in a timely manner. They noted that the disarmament of heavy weapons on the Tigray side was expedited without guarantees that the territories occupied by Eritrean and Amhara forces would be vacated or assurances that Tigray’s territories would be protected from renewed attacks by these groups.

Respondents stated that this premature and poorly sequenced disarmament undermined, and continues to threaten, the peace and security of Tigray in multiple ways. While displaced persons remain unable to return due to security concerns, the continued occupation of territories has broader implications that extend beyond Tigray and its displaced population. This occupation threatens Ethiopia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, as large areas and their inhabitants are still under Eritrean control. To support their claims, some respondents referenced leaked video footage from Irob, showing Eritrean occupying

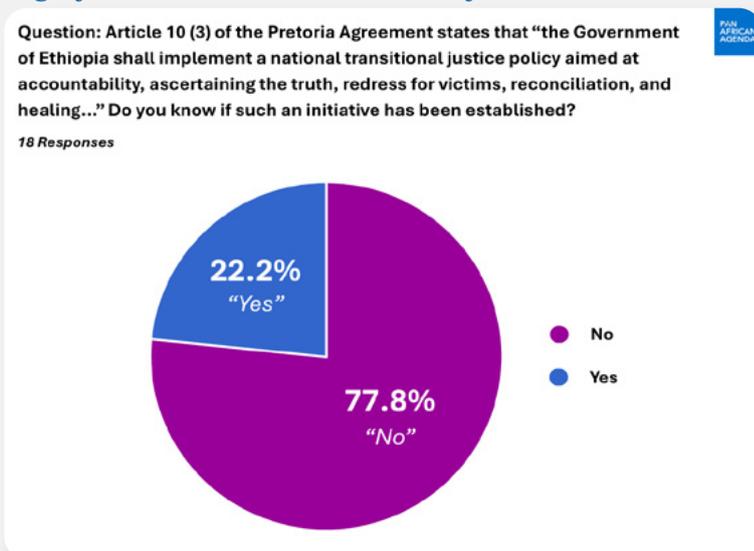
forces engaging in indoctrination and coercion. The footage reveals attempts to pressure Tigrayans living in border areas to accept an Eritrean identity under threat of punishment.⁹⁴

In essence, respondents agreed that the inadequacy, inequity, and poor sequencing of the DDR process were major factors in its widespread rejection by ex-combatants and the broader Tigrayan community. Due to these shortcomings, respondents underscored the urgent need for a transparent, inclusive, and context-sensitive DDR process, jointly overseen by credible national and international actors, to restore trust and advance the objectives of the Pretoria Agreement.

Transitional justice and accountability

As shown in Figure 8, 77.8% of respondents reported that they were unaware of the establishment of any transitional justice initiative, while only 22.2% indicated awareness of its existence. Even among those aware of the initiative, 61.1% expressed a lack of confidence in the process, perceiving it as politically motivated and insincere.

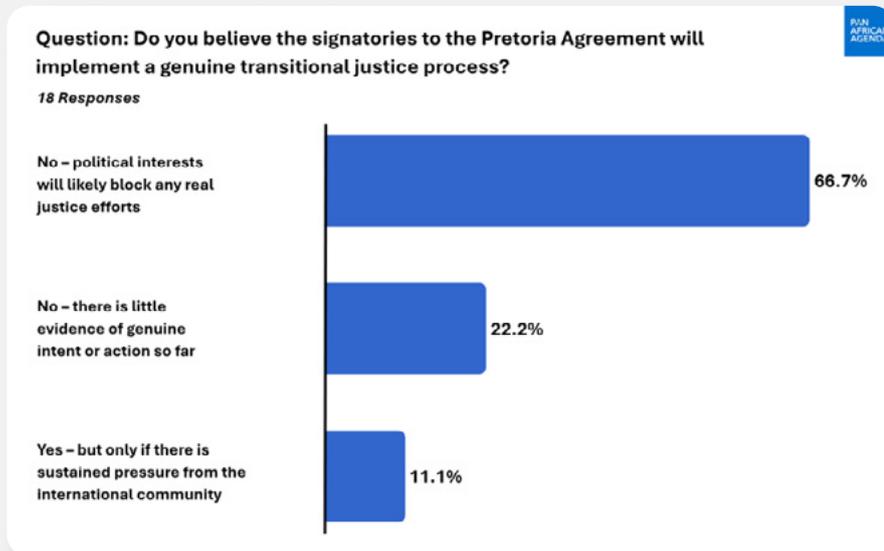
Figure 8: Knowledge of established national transitional justice mechanism



In addition, 89% of survey respondents expressed the belief that neither of the signatories to the Pretoria Agreement could be trusted to deliver justice and accountability. Of the 89% that expressed distrust in the GoE and TPLF’s commitment to justice and accountability, 66.7% believed that political interests would hinder the delivery of genuine justice and accountability, while the remaining 22.2% felt there was no real intent or evidence of efforts to deliver justice (See Figure 9). Thus, respondents overwhelmingly dismissed the credibility of transitional justice mechanisms initiated by the GoE, characterizing the process as symbolic, partisan, and top-down.

94 TigrayUpdate. 2024. Instagram Video. https://www.instagram.com/p/C5TaUs1PQH_/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Figure 9: Securing accountability and justice



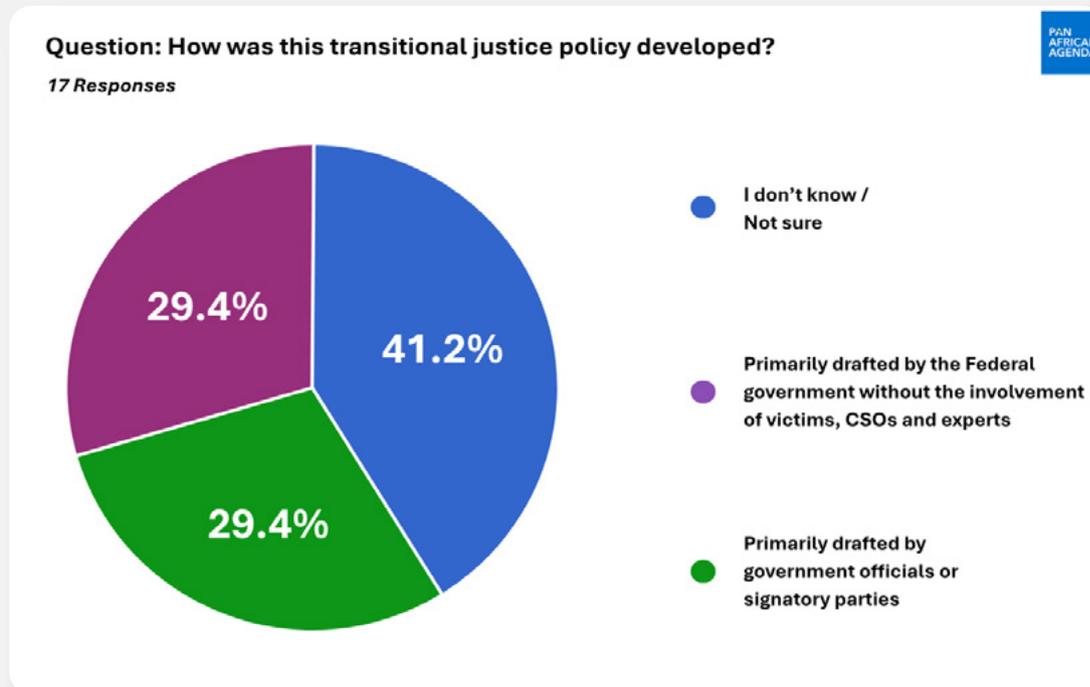
This low level of trust underscores the limited transparency and public engagement surrounding the process. The lack of information flow from the federal government has created an environment of mistrust and exclusion, particularly among communities affected by the conflict. Critically, survey responses and interviews alike reveal perceptions of exclusionary practices in the development of the policy, particularly the systematic exclusion of Tigray and other conflict-affected communities from consultative meetings. This finding aligns with interview assessments that described the transitional justice initiative as an effort that “intends to cripple accountability rather than enable it” (In25). One respondent stated that “the establishment of transitional justice was exclusively superficial, intended to cripple accountability, one of the basic principles of the Agreement” (In12). Survey data corroborates the interview findings, with nearly all participants expressing deep distrust in the transitional justice initiatives undertaken by the GoE. The findings indicate significant deficiencies in public awareness and knowledge of the initiative, including the development and implementation of the national transitional justice policy mandated under Article 10(3) of the Pretoria Agreement.

Figure 10: Accountability and justice measures



The convergence between quantitative survey data and qualitative interview assessments reinforces the evidence of systematic failures in the design and implementation of transitional justice. Survey findings (figures 10 and 11) on the development process of the transitional justice policy corroborate interview observations about its exclusionary and top-down character. A total of 41.2% of respondents had no knowledge of how the transitional justice policy was developed, while the remainder thought it was developed by either the federal government or the signatories to the Pretoria Agreement (thus with no public engagement in Tigray). After the drafting of the policy, the federal government has attempted to hold a conference with select invitees. However, as one interviewee explained, “It was just mere participation, not genuine. No single recommendation of the people was considered to amend the draft policy” (In15). Survey responses mirrored this sentiment, revealing a widespread perception that consultations were superficial, lacked meaningful stakeholder engagement, and failed to incorporate local perspectives.

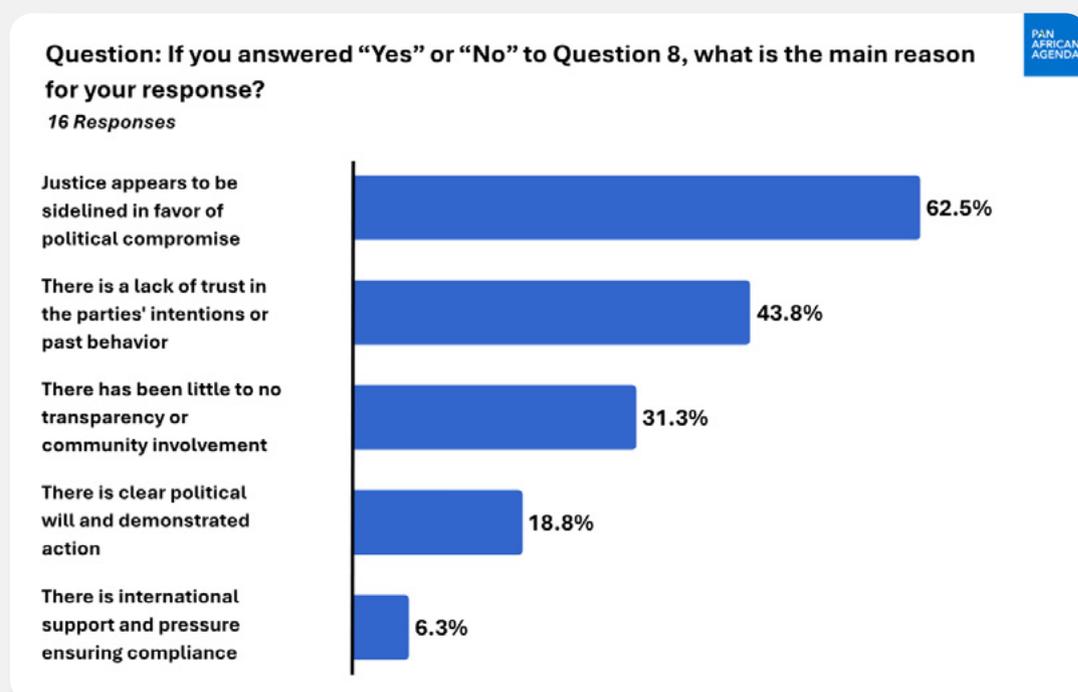
Figure 11: Transitional justice policy development



Another interview respondent elaborated on the policy’s technical and conceptual flaws, noting that it “is flawed in its scope, both temporal and geographical. In its temporal scope, it went back to the military regime and made a false equivalence between the recent genocidal war in Tigray and other crimes alleged to [have been] committed decades ago” (in24). This critique supports interview assessments of the policy’s inadequacy and its failure to contextualize the distinct nature and gravity of recent atrocities in Tigray. Survivors, IDPs, and marginalized groups were not meaningfully included, and the process was widely perceived as protecting perpetrators rather than centring victims.

Many contended that the federal government, itself accused of atrocities, could not lead a credible process, and supported the establishment of independent or international mechanisms. As one respondent stated, the process was exclusionary and imposed from the core (Addis) to the periphery (Tigray): “Tigrayans were excluded from designing justice mechanisms, which were imposed by Addis Ababa. The process lacks safeguards against state interference, ensuring impunity for federal and Eritrean crimes. Without local ownership, transitional justice becomes another tool of oppression” (In23).

Figure 12: Delivery of transitional justice: Follow-up

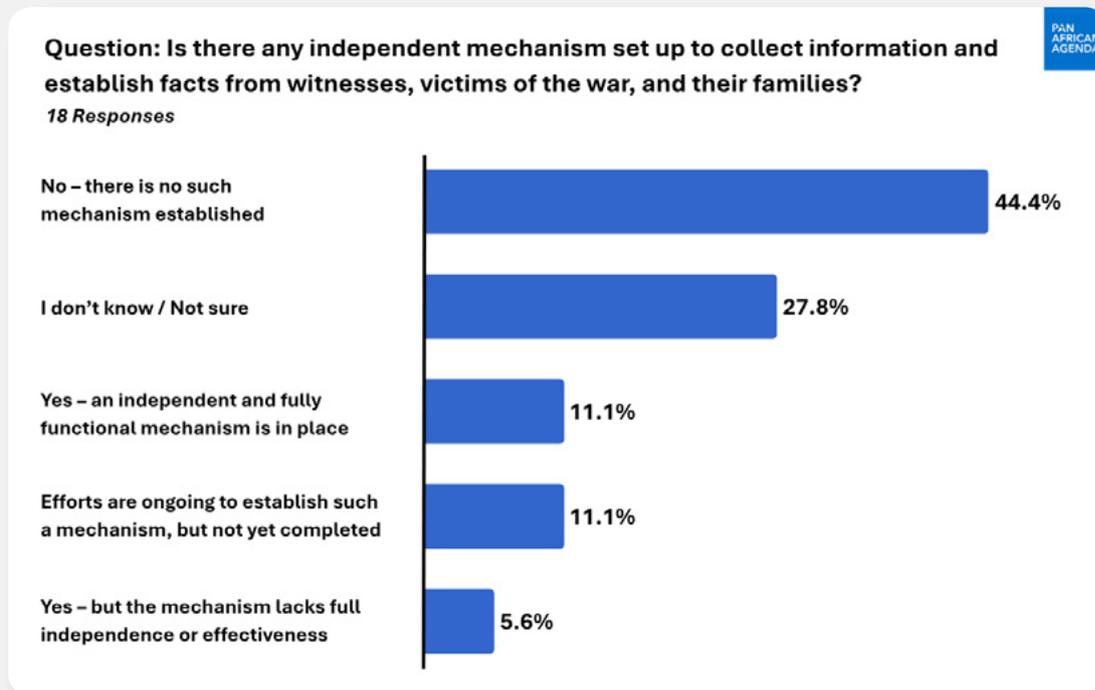


Several respondents noted that none of the parties to the war had taken responsibility for the crimes committed and that there was no genuine prosecution of perpetrators, resulting in continued impunity. In essence, the transitional justice process is widely regarded as non-existent in practice and distrusted in principle. Moreover, several interviewees pointed at the inherent limitations of the transitional justice initiative and the formulation of the Pretoria Agreement itself, emphasizing that, although atrocities were also committed by the EDF, the Agreement made no explicit reference to Eritrean accountability. This omission, they argued, further undermined the credibility and comprehensiveness of the transitional justice framework, reflecting political selectivity and partiality in addressing wartime violations.

Survey findings on perceptions of the transitional justice process reveal profound scepticism among stakeholders regarding the GoE's sincerity and integrity. This mistrust is mostly based on perceived political bias, the exclusion of critical stakeholders, and the absence of independent oversight concerns, all of which were reiterated across interviews. As one interviewee observed, "Despite the official adoption of a transitional justice policy framework, I believe it fails to fulfil its intended purpose. The primary reason is the improbability of achieving genuine transitional justice without any political transition. One of the warring parties – the GoE government – remains in power" (In15). This observation aligns with interview assessments that emphasize the inherent contradiction in expecting justice from a government accused of perpetrating atrocities. As one participant remarked, "It is difficult to expect justice from the government that is itself alleged to be a perpetrator of crimes" (In15).

Survey data shows concerning shortcomings in systems for independent documentation of evidence on the war. As shown in Figure 13, 44.4% of respondents believed that no independent mechanism had been established to collect and verify information from witnesses or victims, while only 11.1% thought that a fully functional independent mechanism was in place. A further 27.8% stated that, while a mechanism existed, it lacked full independence or effectiveness, and 11.1% noted that efforts were ongoing but not yet completed. Another 27.8% of respondents were unsure or unaware of any such initiative.

Figure 13: Independent mechanism to collect and secure evidence



Cumulatively, the figures show that over 70% of participants perceive an absence of or weakness in credible fact-finding systems, underscoring minimal progress in establishing robust, independent documentation processes. This supports interview observations regarding the “manipulation of data related to crimes and violations, particularly for sexual and gender-based violence, by various political factions” (In2). Similarly, responses concerning data verification and witness protection mechanisms highlight insufficient safeguards, corroborating interview findings that data “is not adequately protected from political exploitation, which can lead to harm for survivors” (In2). The lack of strong protective frameworks perpetuates an environment where “survivors face challenges in accessing services due to transportation issues and threats to their lives” (In3).

Throughout the interviews, respondents highlighted the persistent exclusion of victims of war and vulnerable groups from the Agreement’s implementation process, exacerbated by the continued weakness of civilian protection mechanisms, even after its signing. Women, displaced persons, and minority communities such as the Kunama and Irob were reported to be noticeably marginalized in both the decision-making and implementation stages. As one participant observed, “Women-led peace initiatives were ignored in formal negotiations” (In1). Another respondent said, “The agreement primarily benefits elites and systematically excludes rural, female, and minority voices” (In2). Displacement compounds these layers of exclusion. IDPs and refugees, particularly those in Sudan, estimated at being close to 1 million, face significant barriers to participation, with their concerns largely disregarded. IDPs continue to live in camps without access to basic necessities, while rural communities endure devastated infrastructure, severe water shortages, and protracted displacement.

One interviewee noted that “IDPs remain excluded, with no safe avenues for return or for voicing their plight” (In9). Similarly, another respondent stated, “Marginalized ethnic minorities suffer invisibility, and in some cases, active repression and cultural erasure are taking place” (In14).

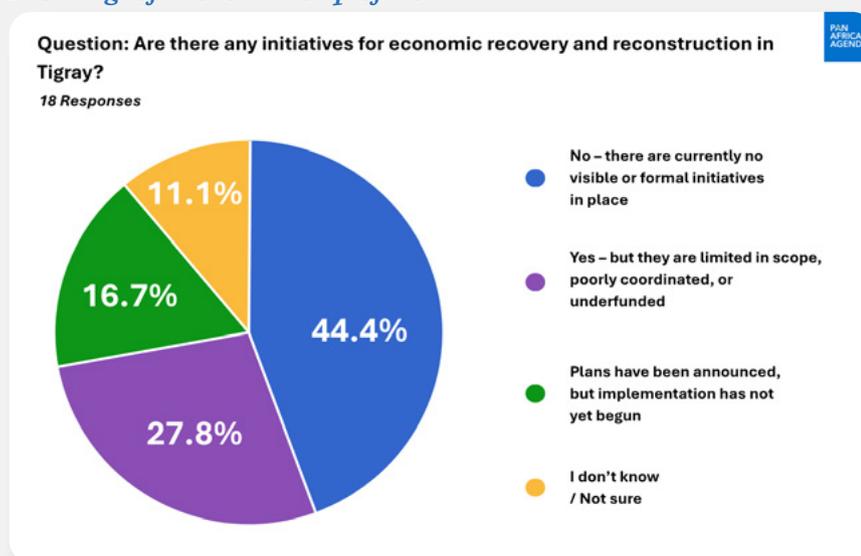
This qualitative evidence is reinforced by quantitative survey data, which also shows that women, displaced populations, and minority groups remain underrepresented and insufficiently protected in the post-agreement context. Collectively, these findings underscore a critical gap between the inclusive commitments articulated in the Pretoria Agreement and the realities of exclusion and inadequate civilian protection experienced by those most affected by the conflict.

The convergence of qualitative and quantitative evidence suggests that the current transitional justice initiative is poorly articulated, non-inclusive, and fundamentally distrusted. It falls short of the principles of transparency, participation, and victim-centred justice envisioned in the Pretoria Agreement. The data also reveals a systemic failure to institutionalize credible, independent mechanisms for evidence collection, leaving survivors vulnerable and documentation processes open to manipulation. In a nutshell, these findings point to a profound distrust of and lack of legitimacy and credibility within Ethiopia's transitional justice framework, emblematic of a broader pattern in which political control supersedes genuine accountability and the structural foundations of peace remain tenuous.

Economic recovery and reconstruction

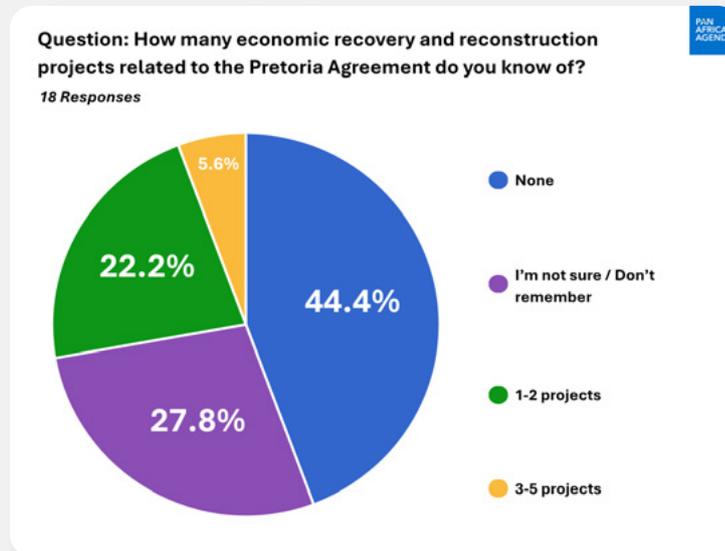
While interview respondents referenced a World Bank allocation and limited restoration of basic services such as telecommunications and banking, the majority emphasized the absence of comprehensive reconstruction programmes in Tigray. Survey data (figures 14, 15, and 16) quantifies these shortcomings. As illustrated in Figure 14, 44.4% of respondents indicated there were no visible or formal initiatives for economic recovery and reconstruction in Tigray, while 27.8% acknowledged that some initiatives existed but described them as limited in scope or poorly coordinated, and 16.7% indicated that plans had been announced but not yet operationalized. Combined results show that over 72% of respondents perceive recovery efforts as either absent or ineffective, reinforcing the conclusion that reconstruction remains in its infancy.

Figure 14: Knowledge of reconstruction projects



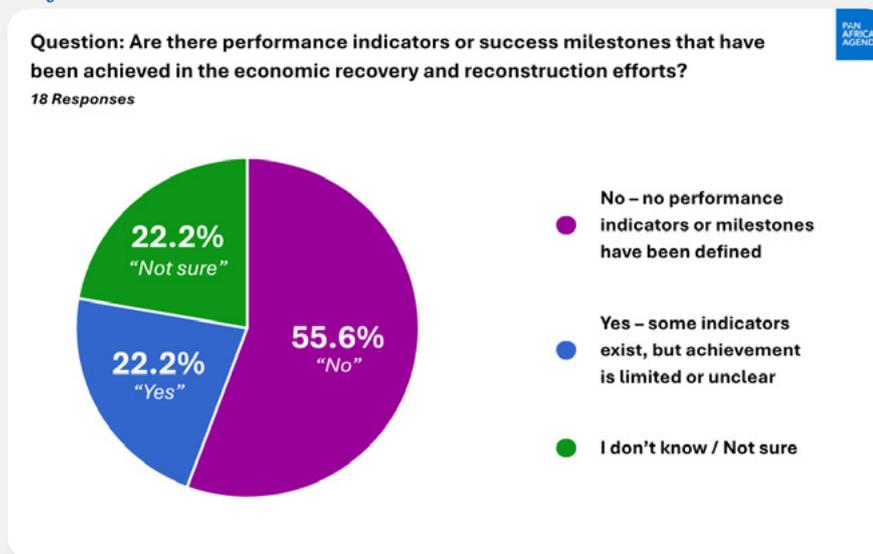
While the survey (Figure 15) indicates that 22.2% know of one to two small-scale economic recovery projects and another 5.6% are aware of three to five economic recovery projects that have been initiated, experts in the validation workshop dispute the existence of such economic recovery projects. Reinforcing this divergence of views, 72 % respondents do not know of any ongoing economic recovery initiatives in Tigray (see Figure 15). This suggests a lack of economic recovery projects, validating interview assessments that describe current recovery initiatives as fragmented, symbolic, and uncoordinated.

Figure 15: Number of economic recovery projects



Survey responses regarding performance indicators and milestones (Figure 16) highlight this stagnation. More than half of respondents (55.6%) stated that no performance indicators or milestones had been defined or achieved, while 22.2% acknowledged only partial or unclear indicators and another 22.2% admitted to not knowing of any measurable progress. This pattern reflects not only a lack of tangible outcomes but also systemic failures in institutional planning, monitoring, and transparency.

Figure 16: Performance indicators and success milestones



Interview respondents also highlighted the lack of transparent reconstruction planning and implementation systems in Tigray and noted a decline in donor support, the absence of small-scale reconstruction programmes, and instances of aid mismanagement.

In October and November 2025, the Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG) published three comprehensive reports that elucidated the consequences of the conflict in Tigray and indicated the urgent need for reconstruction planning.

In total, the reports provide an estimate of damage and loss exceeding USD 145 billion, constituting USD 84 billion in the productive sector (manufacturing, trade, productive services, agriculture, financial institutions, and households);⁹⁵ USD 47 billion in forestry and environment,⁹⁶ and USD 5 billion in infrastructure.⁹⁷ Another report underscores extensive destruction of well over USD 10 billion, with extensive damage to healthcare (USD 3.59 billion), education (USD 5.38 billion), and cultural heritage (USD 1.6 billion) reflecting the systematic dismantling of social infrastructure.⁹⁸

Pre-war achievements, such as near-universal enrolment rates and high literacy levels, have been significantly compromised, with over 1.2 million children currently out of school and thousands of teachers either displaced or dead. The destruction of educational infrastructure and the disruption of access to education underscore the long-term socio-economic consequences of the conflict, which impede peacebuilding efforts and societal reconstruction. Reports document damage to over 97% of health facilities, the looting of essential medicines and the destruction of health records, highlighting the catastrophic collapse of the health system. There has been a marked deterioration in maternal mortality, immunization coverage, and the management of chronic diseases. Prior to the conflict, Tigray had strong community-based systems, such as Edir and Equb, that fostered social cohesion and resilience. The war, intensified by a systematic siege and blockade, directly targeted these elements of the social fabric. The destruction of social institutions, cultural heritage, and religious sites through looting, vandalism, and deliberate destruction has resulted in cultural erasure, displacement, and loss of identity. State accountability remains limited due to the erosion of trust in Ethiopian institutions and the compromised nature of the transitional justice process. These factors are critical considerations when evaluating peace and reconciliation following the Pretoria Agreement.

Participants attributed this reconstruction paralysis to a combination of factors, including federal conditionalities; donor fatigue; the disbanding of US Agency for International Development (USAID) programmes, particularly in relation to assistance to IDPs; and corruption scandals involving humanitarian and development agencies. Consequently, economic normalization remains aspirational rather than actual. Limited funding and ongoing initiatives that are often politicized and insufficient show that Tigray remains in an emergency relief phase rather than transitioning toward recovery or reconstruction.

As one interview respondent stated, “Generally speaking, post-war reconstruction has not started yet. Tigray is still in the emergency relief stage” (In17). Another added, “Compared to the total damage inflicted on Tigray’s economy, recovery is unmatched. The estimated damage recovery is USD 20 billion. Nearly a million IDPs remain in crisis, facing hunger, disease, death, and displacement” (In12).

In summary, these findings reveal that economic recovery and reconstruction efforts in Tigray are minimal, fragmented, and politicized, characterized by weak institutional coordination, limited accountability, and negligible progress towards sustainable rebuilding.

95 Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG). 2025. “Report on Tigray’s Productive Sector and Livelihood: Effects and Impacts of the War, Siege, and Blockade – Volume 1.” <https://citghub.org/report-on-tigrays-productive-sector-and-livelihood-effects-and-impacts-of-the-war-siege-and-blockade-volume-1/>

96 Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG). 2025. “Reversed Decades: War and Siege Damage and Loss of Tigray’s Natural Resources and Environment – Volume 1.” <https://citghub.org/reversed-decades-war-and-siege-damage-and-loss-of-tigrays-natural-resources-and-environment-volume-1/>

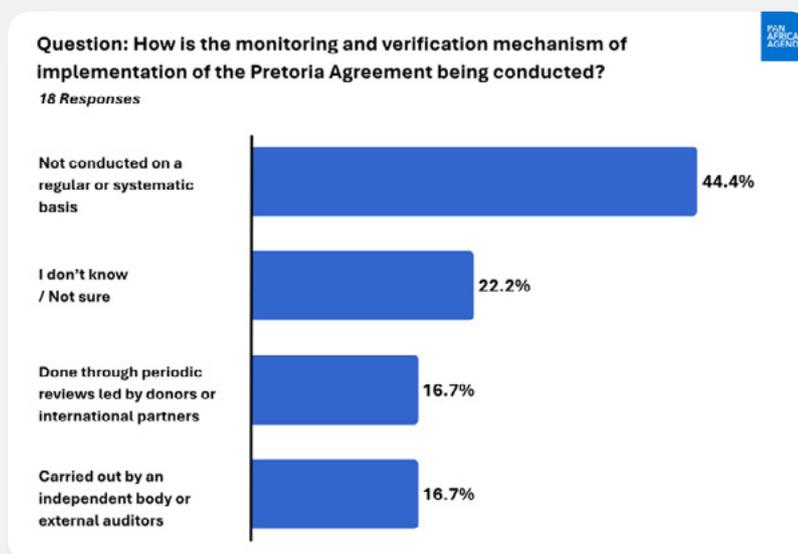
97 Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG). 2025. “Targeted Destruction: Damage and Loss Assessment on Tigray’s Public Infrastructure Sector.” <https://citghub.org/targeted-destruction-damage-and-loss-assessment-on-tigrays-public-infrastructure-sector/>

98 Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide. The systematic undoing of society: War damage and loss in the social sector of Tigray (Vol. 1). Mekelle, Ethiopia: <https://citghub.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/The-Systematic-Undoing-of-Society-War-Damage-and-Loss-in-the-Social-Sector-of-Tigray-2.pdf>

Monitoring and verification mechanism

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the AU MVCM for the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement is weak, with little to no accountability for non-compliance. Multiple interview respondents described the AU and AU MVCM as “manipulative and not fully independent, closely aligned with the Ethiopian Federal Government” (In2). Another respondent said that “monitoring and verification mechanisms are weak; the AU’s mission is perceived as compromised and heavily influenced by federal politics, limiting independent oversight” (In24). The survey data in Figure 17 reinforces these views, showing that 44.4% of survey participants indicated that the AU MVCM did not conduct monitoring on a regular or systematic basis. Only 16.7% indicated that there was periodic monitoring, while 22.2% stated they did not know or were unsure whether the AU MVCM mechanism had conducted any monitoring. Both survey and interview evidence points to the fact that even the most active part of the Tigrayan community lacks information on the work of the AU MVCM. This could be attributed to the lack of public reporting and communication, credibility, transparency, and enforcement within the AU and MVCM, resulting in ineffective oversight of the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement and therefore holding no consequences for non-compliance.

Figure 17: Monitoring and verification



5.

Key findings

Based on the research data presented and considering the patterns of convergence and divergence observed across different participant groups, this section synthesizes the objectives of the Pretoria Agreement into six overarching goals. These are:

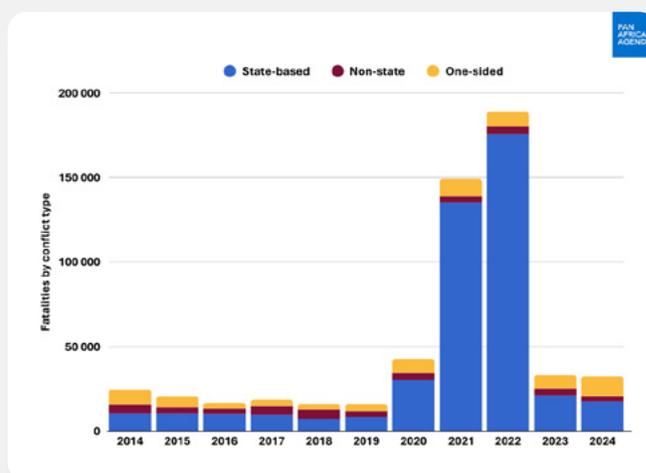
1. Security, including the cessation of hostilities and the removal of external forces from Tigray;
2. Restoration of constitutional order and federal authority, encompassing territorial integrity, DDR, and the return of IDPs and refugees;
3. Humanitarian aid and civilian protection;
4. Transitional justice and accountability;
5. Post-war reconstruction and economic development; and
6. The establishment of inclusive political dialogue and effective monitoring through the AU MVCN.⁹⁹

Security: Cessation of hostilities and removal of non-ENDF forces

The primary achievement of the Agreement has been silencing the guns. Across all research modalities, interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions, participants unanimously agreed that its most significant success was the cessation of hostilities. The magnitude of this achievement cannot be overstated. Between 2020 and 2022, the Ethiopia–Eritrea war against Tigray accounted for approximately 319,000 of Africa’s 378,000 conflict-related deaths where states are active participants, representing well over 80% of the continent’s total conflict fatalities due to fighting during this period. When indirect mortality from disease, starvation, and lack of medical care is included in the assessment, total fatalities exceed 600,000 lives lost, making it the deadliest conflict in Africa since the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

These figures (Figure 18) establish the war as one of the deadliest internationalized intrastate conflicts in recent history, with most atrocities being committed by the Ethiopian and Eritrean states. This underscores the increasing prevalence of state-based conflicts worldwide, including in Africa since 2014.

Figure 18: Surge in fatalities in active state-based conflicts (African states)



Source: Compiled by PAAI, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2024

⁹⁹ Maru, Mehari Taddele. 2024. “Beyond Cessation of Hostilities: Sustaining Peace.” Addis Standard. <https://addis-standard.com/commentary-beyond-cessation-of-hostilities-sustaining-peace/>.

According to reports, the humanitarian catastrophe was compounded by widespread sexual violence, ethnic cleansing, and the deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure. Against this backdrop, the Agreement's success in halting active combat operations is a crucial achievement. Respondents repeatedly emphasized that "silencing the guns" prevented further catastrophic loss of life and demonstrated the critical value of diplomatic mediation in resolving complex internationalized conflicts. The dramatic decline in fatalities following the signing of the Agreement validated the effectiveness of mediation when pursued with commitment and when supported by states with leverage over the warring parties, in this case the US.

However, despite this critical achievement, respondents in all research modalities described the resulting peace as fundamentally fragile, conditional, and vulnerable to collapse. The majority of participants characterized the current situation as negative peace – a condition where active fighting has ceased while the root causes of conflict remain unresolved. This assessment aligns with established peace studies literature that distinguishes between negative peace (absence of direct violence) and positive peace (presence of justice, reconciliation, and structural stability).

Participants repeatedly warned that unresolved territorial disputes, widespread insecurity stemming from a governance vacuum, persistent lawlessness, and the proliferation of organized crime continued to threaten the sustainability of peace. Insecurity in border zones was frequently cited as evidence of deteriorating conditions. The ceasefire is maintained not through the resolution of underlying grievances but because of exhaustion and international pressure – conditions that could rapidly deteriorate if circumstances were to change.

Restoration of constitutional order

The restoration of constitutional order emerges as the Agreement's most significant and consequential implementation failure. The quantitative evidence is unambiguous and striking: 83.3% of survey respondents reported that constitutional order had not been restored in Tigray, with only 16.7% expressing a contrary view. This finding was corroborated by 100% of interview and focus group participants, creating a powerful convergence of evidence across multiple research methods.

One such critical failure in implementation that may cause a relapse into war is the presence of non-ENDF forces in Tigray territories. The Agreement's security provisions explicitly mandate the complete withdrawal of all external forces from Tigray. Article 4 stipulates that the ENDF shall "safeguard the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of the country from foreign incursion". In practice, these provisions have systematically been violated with apparent impunity. More than two administrative zones and dozens of kebeles [lowest administrative unit of neighbourhood], representing approximately 40% of Tigray's constitutional territory, remain under military occupation by Amhara regional forces and the EDF.

Despite clear commitments under the Agreement, the GoE has neither publicly called on Eritrean forces to withdraw from Tigrayan territories nor taken concrete action to compel their departure. Similarly, administrative authority over areas occupied by Amhara forces has not been restored to Tigray's legitimate regional government.

Multiple respondents described ongoing human rights violations in occupied territories, including systematic indoctrination campaigns, forced identity changes, and concerted attempts by occupying forces to alter demographic and cultural realities. Article 6 of the Pretoria Agreement explicitly mandates the restoration of constitutional order, yet respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the return to constitutional status quo ante, a foundational objective of the Agreement, has not been achieved. Qualitative data reinforced these quantitative findings, with the majority of interviewees expressing similar concerns. As one participant noted, "from my point of view, the restoration of constitutional order [has not happened], particularly in western Tigray, where the federal constitution is simply not respected or implemented" (In17).

Particularly disturbing reports emerged from areas such as western Tigray and Irob, where respondents referenced leaked video footage showing Eritrean occupying forces engaging in indoctrination efforts, attempting to pressure Tigrayans in border areas to accept Eritrean identity under threat of punishment or expulsion. This enduring occupation is not only a violation of the Agreement but also a sustained assault on Ethiopia's constitutional integrity and the fundamental principle of territorial sovereignty. The implications extend beyond Tigray itself. The continued presence of Eritrean forces in Ethiopian territory challenges Ethiopia's sovereignty as a state and creates the potential for the conflict to reignite. Recent rising tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea over Red Sea access raise the alarming possibility that both parties may weaponize the presence of EDF and Amhara forces in Tigray for a broader geopolitical confrontation, further jeopardizing the fragile peace.

The GoE has indicated its intention to hold a referendum in these territories to determine their administrative status, a proposal that contradicts both the Agreement and constitutional principles. TIRA has publicly dismissed this proposal as unconstitutional and in direct breach of the Agreement's core principles, noting that, as an interim administration lacking electoral legitimacy, it has no mandate to negotiate fundamental constitutional issues such as regional boundaries.

The GoE referendum proposal exemplifies a troubling pattern identified by Bell, namely the transformation of binding legal obligations into negotiable political issues, subject to processes that favour maintaining the status quo. This represents what Bell calls the "credible commitment problem",¹⁰⁰ where opaque implementation practices enable parties to assert formal compliance while victims experience continued deprivation and denial of rights. The proposal effectively converts a constitutional guarantee into a political bargaining chip, undermining the very foundation of rule of law that the Agreement sought to restore.

Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration

DDR, like IDPs, has been weaponized in the power politics between the GoE and TPLF, as well as within the TPLF. Survey data indicates that a significant percentage of participants acknowledged some tangible progress in the disarmament of heavy weaponry within the Tigray armed forces. The AU officially verified and confirmed the disarmament of the TDF, with tens of thousands of combatants surrendering heavy weapons through a process monitored by the AU verification mission. This is a substantial military demobilization. However, most respondents observed that DDR had not been implemented according to internationally recognized standards nor executed in a timely manner, disregarding the security needs of the disarmed population. Critically, participants noted that disarmament of heavy weapons on the Tigray side was rapidly expedited and completed, without corresponding guarantees that territories occupied by Eritrean and Amhara forces would be vacated. Nor were there any assurances that Tigray's territories and population would be protected from renewed attacks by these external forces.

Respondents emphasized that this premature and poorly sequenced disarmament was undermining the peace and security of Tigray in multiple interconnected ways. The Agreement's sequencing is a fundamental departure from established best practices in peace agreement design. Unlike other peace agreements that successfully addressed root causes and security arrangements before disarmament, the Pretoria Agreement placed DDR before the resolution of territorial disputes and the establishment of credible security guarantees. Multiple respondents questioned how the security of Tigrayans could be guaranteed without the removal of the EDF and Amhara forces from all Tigray's constitutional territories.

The reintegration component proved equally problematic. The support packages meant to facilitate transition to civilian life were deemed grossly inadequate by virtually all respondents. The continued existence of the TDF, albeit with a different political profile and alliances than during the war, alongside reports of new armed formations such as the Tigray Peace Force and a mounting regional arms race amid

100 Pospisil, Jan and Bell, Christine. 2017. "Navigating Inclusion in Transitions from Conflict: The Formalised Political Unsettling." Wiley Online Library. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jid.3283>.

hostile propaganda, suggests that the DDR process has stalled dangerously and may be contributing to remilitarization rather than sustainable demobilization.

Efforts to facilitate the return of IDPs have largely failed, with many individuals experiencing what respondents termed “secondary displacement”, being relocated multiple times due to renewed violence, a lack of basic services, or the occupation of their home areas. IDPs and refugees, particularly the Tigrayan refugees in Sudan, face significant barriers to meaningful participation in decision-making processes, with their concerns largely disregarded by federal and regional authorities. The return of IDPs and refugees has also been weaponized by the GoE and within the TPLF for power politics, where both fear a loss of control over the population if IDPs were to return without their being able to regulate the process. A section of the TPLF demands that its structures and those of TIRA need to take charge of the return of IDPs and refugees, with the restoration of Tigray territories as a redline for cooperation, while the GoE insists the IDPs should return outside administration and TPLF structures.¹⁰¹ In August 2025, the GoE announced plans to return about 1 million IDPs, but TIRA rejected the move as a unilateral decision made without consulting TIRA or the IDPs themselves. TIRA reaffirmed that any return should align with the Pretoria Agreement provisions, ensure security in return areas, and follow comprehensive consultations, with territorial sovereignty and reintegration remaining non-negotiable.¹⁰² The failure to secure the safe and dignified return of IDPs is one of the Agreement’s most visible and tragic implementation failures. For the vast majority of IDPs in Tigray camps, return remains impossible because their places of origin are occupied by Eritrean or Amhara forces, or because their homes and villages were systematically destroyed during the conflict and their agricultural lands appropriated by occupying authorities, or because they face credible security threats should they return.

Humanitarian aid and public services

Following the signing of the Agreement, humanitarian aid improved significantly and limited and uneven progress was achieved in restoring some basic services such as banking operations, telecommunications networks, electricity supply to urban centres, and commercial air travel. These partial improvements brought temporary relief to urban residents and demonstrated that some level of service restoration was technically possible. However, most respondents emphasized that the overall humanitarian situation remained dire, particularly in rural areas and occupied territories where federal services had not been restored.

Survey data paints a troubling picture of the education sector’s collapse. For instance, in the 2024/2025 academic year, only 47% of students (1,222,166 out of 2,574,818) returned to school, while 53% were forced to remain out of school or were unable to attend.¹⁰³ As shown in the figure below, more than 411 schools are non-operational due to occupation and damage, of which 356 are closed as they are in occupied territories and 55 serve as a makeshift IDP shelters.¹⁰⁴ A total of 320 schools located in areas under Amhara or Eritrean occupation are entirely inaccessible to education authorities, teachers, and students. Approximately 36 of these are yet to start operations or are damaged, closed, and out of use. These conditions have resulted in millions of school-age children being unable to access education, with devastating long-term consequences for Tigray’s human capital development and the prospects of an entire generation. Alarming, during the Grade 12 Matriculation examination, only 9% of students managed to pass, 48 government schools had no passes, and 22 had only one student pass. In addition, the region faces a curriculum crisis, as students are forced to study outdated syllabi due to a lack of textbooks

101 Tigray People’s Liberation Front. 2025. “Peace Process at Risk: Rising Tensions Between the Federal Government and Tigray.” <https://martinplaut.com/2025/06/06/aide-memoire-concerns-about-deteriorating-relations-between-the-federal-government-and-tigray/>

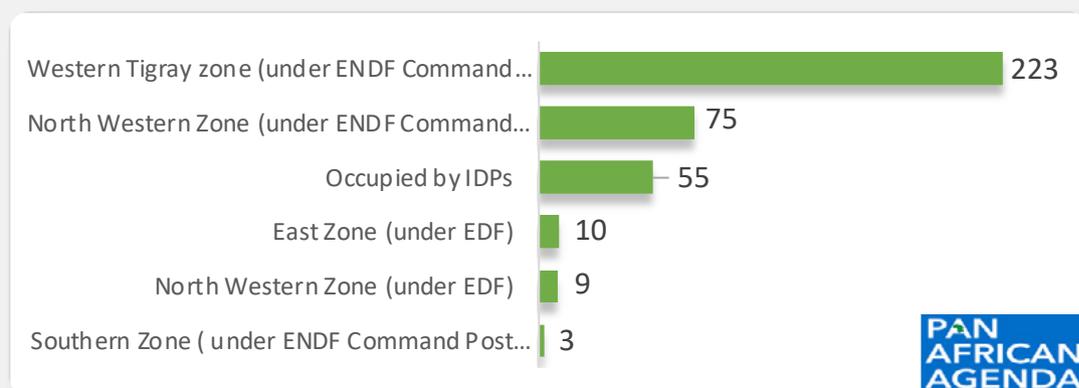
102 Ibid.

103 Interim government of Tigray Education Bureau. 2018 (Ethiopian Fiscal Year). “Education performance update For Education Cluster.” October.

104 Ibid.

(publishing new textbooks will cost an estimated USD 16 million).

Figure 19: Schools that are out of operation



Source: PAAI Compiled, data from BoSAR September 2025

According to September 2025 data from the Tigray Bureau of Social Affairs and Rehabilitation (BoSAR), there are 891,500 IDPs in Tigray, approximately 230,000 more than the 760,000 reported by the International Organization for Migration’s (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) for IDPs in January 2025.¹⁰⁵ The Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC) reports an even higher figure. According to EDRMC estimates, there were 1.06 million IDPs in Tigray in August 2025, constituting 39% of Ethiopia’s total IDP population.¹⁰⁶ Of these Tigray IDPs, 391,500 are currently living in makeshift collective sites within public service facilities, primarily schools. Compared to September 2024, this represents a 36% increase (103,500 individuals), indicating that many IDPs have returned to congested informal sites in search of dwindling humanitarian assistance following the freeze of USAID funding.¹⁰⁷ A total of 531,420 (approximately 50%) are living outside collective sites. As illustrated in Figure 20, 48.5% of this population is situated in the north-western zone, with 60% living in collective sites in north-western Tigray (Figure 21). According to Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster reports for September 2025, 391,000 IDPs are in 68 collective sites that do not necessarily meet the standards to be called camps. A total of 60.3% and 27.25% are in north-western and central Tigray, respectively.¹⁰⁸

The CCCM monthly service monitoring assessment documented 68 IDP sites in 21 woredas [districts] and identified 391,481 displaced individuals, including 9,545 individuals with disabilities, 28,867 female-headed households, and 61,000 vulnerable children.¹⁰⁹ The assessment revealed significant gaps in humanitarian service coverage, and shelter and food remain a top priority for both IDPs and returnees.¹¹⁰ According to the IOM assessment of multisectoral needs in Tigray, food was reported as one of the top three necessities in 91.6% of IDP sites.¹¹¹ The preferred modality for receiving assistance is a mix of cash

105 Tigray Bureau of Social Affairs and Rehabilitation. 2025. “September 2025 Data.”

106 Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission. 2024. “Sector-Based National Rehabilitation Plan for Fiscal Year 2018: Prepared Based on Regional and Sector Institutions’ Plans.” (EDRMC Recovery and Rehabilitation Directorate).

107 Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster’s monthly service monitoring

108 Tigray Bureau of Social Affairs and Rehabilitation. 2025. “September 2025 Data.”

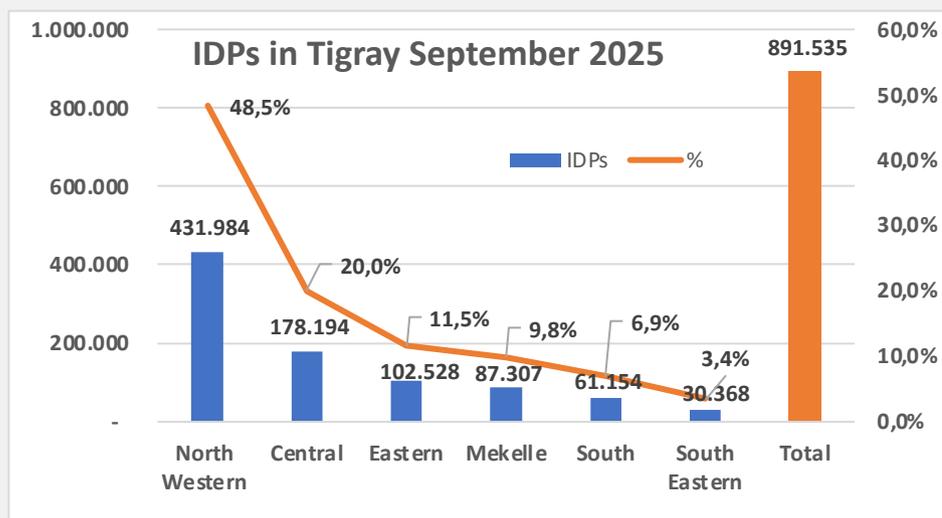
109 Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster. 2025. “Service monitoring summary dashboard: Tigray [Dashboard].” (CCCM Cluster Ethiopia).

110 Bureau of Social Affairs and Rehabilitation. 2025. “Return Area Assessment - Recent Assessment Report on Returned IDPs. In Northwest, Central and Eastern zones.”; Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster. 2025. “Service monitoring summary dashboard: Tigray [Dashboard].” (CCCM Cluster Ethiopia); International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2025. “Ethiopia: Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) – Data and Research Unit (DRU) report, November 2024-January 2025.”

111 Tigray Emergency Coordination Center. 2025. “Operational update.”

and in-kind support (60.4%), followed by in-kind distributions (31.5%) and cash (8.1%). Around 22.4% of IDP households are living in shelters that do not provide adequate protection from the elements, and 41.3% of sites identified bedding sets as the most needed non-food items. Support from humanitarian organizations remains the primary way IDPs sustain themselves in 41.9% of sites, while a lack of money and high market prices were reported as the most significant barriers to food access in 96.3% of sites.¹¹²

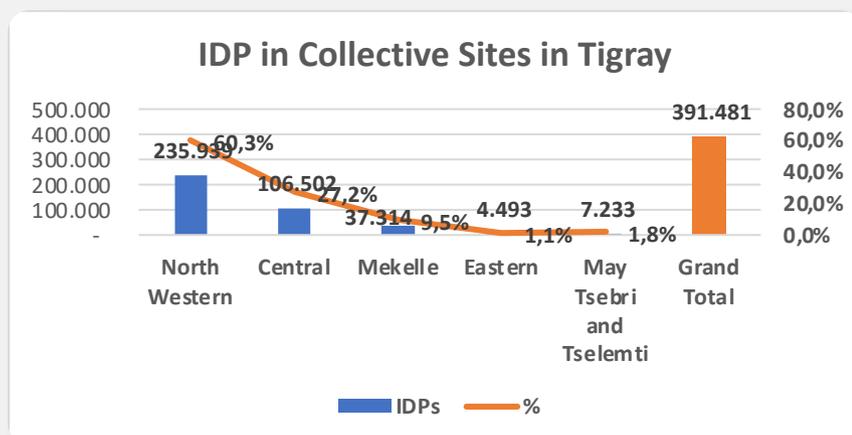
Figure 20: Share of IDPs by zone



Source: PAAI Compiled, data from BoSAR September 2025

An IOM DTM site assessment conducted between November 2024 and January 2025 indicates that 83% of IDPs in Tigray have been displaced for more than three years, with the majority (82%) displaced for three to four years.¹¹³

Figure 21: Share of IDPs by site and zone



Source: PAAI Compiled, data from CCCM cluster (IOM and UNHCR) - September 2025

112 Ibid.

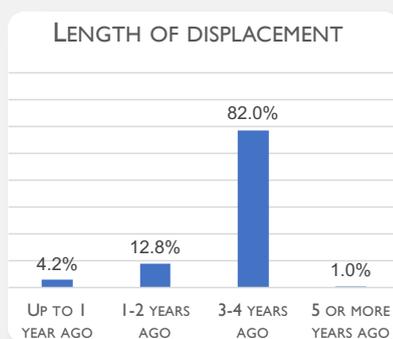
113 Tigray Emergency Coordination Center. 2025. "Operational update."; International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2025. "Ethiopia: Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) – Data and Research Unit (DRU) report, November 2024–January 2025."

When asked about their preferred long-term solutions, an overwhelming 95.6% of IDPs expressed a desire to return to their places of origin, while 4% preferred to integrate locally and only 0.4% opted for relocation.¹¹⁴ This explains why, despite the high risks associated with returning to areas occupied by non-Tigrayan forces in the southern, western, and north-western zones, as well as areas bordering Eritrea, many people have chosen to do so.

These findings highlight the protracted nature of displacement in the region and underscore the urgent need for conditions conducive to safe, voluntary, and sustainable return, alongside support for reintegration and recovery efforts in areas of origin.

As of January 2025, 1,149,680 IDPs had returned spontaneously, receiving little to no return assistance to support their reintegration. There was a slight female majority (52%), while most returnees were aged 18–59 years.¹¹⁵ The government-led return plan (1 June 2024), based on Tigray BoSAR figures, indicates that there are plans to return 688,828 IDPs to southern, north-western and western Tigray, with the majority (82%) returning to western Tigray.¹¹⁶ An IOM assessment conducted in April–May 2025 also confirmed that 71.3% of IDPs are displaced from the western zone of Tigray (Zone 1), with 94.8% preferring long-term support at their place of origin.¹¹⁷

Figure 22: Protracted Displacement



Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM), January 2025

Figure 23: Composition of IDPs returned



Source: International Organization for Migration, January 2025

114 Intention Survey, IOM, Preliminary findings as of April 25, 2023; see similar figures at Tigray Emergency Coordination Center. 2025. “Operational update”.

115 International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2025. “Ethiopia: Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) – Data and Research Unit (DRU) report, November 2024–January 2025.”

116 Tigray Bureau of Social Affairs and Rehabilitation. 2025. “September 2025 Data.”

117 IOM, Data for sustainable support to persons displaced by conflict and disasters and their host communities household level survey (HLS) selected woredas in Tigray region, Ethiopia (April - May 2025).

Between August and December 2024, more than 143, IDPs returned to their places of origin, constituting over 80,000 to the north-western¹¹⁸ and southern zones¹¹⁹ and over 63,000 to areas bordering Eritrea.¹²⁰ Close to 30,000 IDPs in May Tsebri and Laelay Tselemti possibly face re-displacement, and their initial return to these areas has resulted in further victimization. In the north-western zone, thousands of IDPs were returned to Endabaguan and Shire collective centres shortly after the return process was halted due to a disagreement among ENDF and TIRA representatives on the process of return. IDPs also feel unsafe due to the continued presence of non-ENDF armed groups. Many individuals have had their possessions confiscated by Amhara forces, and some were compelled to cultivate their land on behalf of these forces. According to an interviewee, a few IDPs have returned to southern Tigray, specifically Alamata, but remain displaced because their homes and land are occupied. There is no system or authority to facilitate their effective return, due to the presence of Amhara forces. As a result, these individuals are forced to go back to IDP centres. The security situation in these Amhara-occupied areas is also precarious, with reports of forced disappearances, sexual violence, and extrajudicial killings.

The security situation in newly accessible areas has improved following the repositioning of EDF checkpoints, enabling civilian returns and limited agricultural activity. However, civil administration remains largely absent in Tahetay Adyabo, Zalambessa, Gulemekeda, and Erob, with no electricity, telecommunications, or banking services. Communities have appointed local leaders to fill governance gaps, but protection and coordination remain weak.¹²¹ Food insecurity is widespread, with most households able to meet only half or less of their food needs. Agricultural practices are severely disrupted by land restrictions, livestock losses, and high fertilizer prices, while widespread shelter destruction has displaced families and limited safe housing. Healthcare systems are near collapse, with over 90% of facilities damaged and two-thirds non-functional, along with severe shortages of medicines, fuel, and staff.¹²²

Malnutrition and lack of essential services are critical concerns. Global acute malnutrition rates among children and pregnant or lactating women far exceed emergency thresholds. Most water systems are non-functional, forcing reliance on unsafe sources and a resultant increase in disease risks.

Education is largely suspended, exposing many to child labour and early marriage.¹²³ Protection risks remain high and there are many instances of gender-based violence (21% of reported cases), compounded by the absence of formal services. Meanwhile, unexploded ordnance and limited transportation restrict the safe movement of farmers, market access, and emergency response.

Interviewees also highlighted the impact of extensive and ongoing gender-based violence against women in Irob, which is compounded by the lack of healthcare services. In addition, they noted the financial burden of crossing the border to Adigrat to seek emergency medical attention and the potential repercussions for families if Eritrean forces detect the women's absence as unauthorised travel outside their areas of occupation.

In the same vein, the western zone of Tigray, currently under Amhara and GoE control, faces extensive infrastructure destruction, mass displacement, and critical shortages of basic services.¹²⁴ Over 224,849 crisis-affected people – including conflict-affected populations (57,473) and vulnerable host communities

118 Northwestern Zone Contested Areas Assessment Report Aug 2024

119 Tigray and Amhara Inter-regional Contested Areas Assessment Report 2024

120 Tigray Bureau of Social Affairs and Rehabilitation. 2025. "September 2025 Data."

121 ICCG and DSWG. 2025. "Multi-sectoral Rapid Need Assessment and Protections Solutions Assessment in newly accessible areas of Eastern and Northwestern Zone." <https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/2025-09/Multi-sectoral%20Rapid%20Need%20Assessment%20and%20Protections%20Solutions%20Assessment%20%20in%20Eastern%20and%20Northwestern%20Zones%20of%20Tigray%20Region.pdf>

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid.

124 International Medical Corps & Norwegian Refugee Council. 2025. "Joint multi-sectoral rapid need assessment: Western Zone – Contested areas of Ethiopia (Wolkait, Setit Humera, and Tsegede)."

(179,968) – were identified as being in urgent need of assistance.¹²⁵ Access to their own homes, land, and property has proven difficult, and essential services such as healthcare, water, sanitation, and education remain extremely limited, with most facilities damaged or non-functional.

Agriculture, once the backbone of local livelihoods, has been devastated by insecurity, lack of inputs, and displacement, leaving families without stable sources of food or income. Health and nutrition conditions are dire, with most facilities lacking medicines, equipment, and trained staff. Malnutrition rates are rising, particularly among children and pregnant or lactating women, while access to safe water and sanitation is critically low, exposing communities to disease outbreaks. The International Medical Corps and Norwegian Refugee Council call for urgent multi-sectoral interventions to restore essential services, strengthen protection mechanisms, and support early recovery through livelihood and infrastructure rehabilitation across the affected woredas.¹²⁶

Current provision of humanitarian assistance

According to the Federal Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC), aid has shrunk rapidly, particularly with the disbanding of USAID and the overall decline in aid, leading to increased competition for limited resources. The suspension of USAID funding in Tigray halted 37 projects and 295 activities, affecting 20 partners and 1.5 million people in 83 woredas.¹²⁷

In January 2025, the World Food Programme (WFP) and partners planned to assist 385,644 people through in-kind food distribution and cash support, while the Joint Emergency Operation Program (JEOP, a US emergency food assistance programme) and partners aimed to reach 839,579 people.¹²⁸ Ultimately, the WFP and partners reached 246,605 people (94% of their allocated target), while JEOP and partners assisted 706,443 people (84% of the target). Overall, the WFP, JEOP and their partners collectively assisted 1,081,367 people (86%), distributing a total of 13,085.86 metric tonnes of food and ETB 429.71 million in cash transfers, making significant progress toward meeting humanitarian targets.¹²⁹

In contrast, in November 2025, the food distribution report for Tigray shows that 125,146 quintals (approximately 12,515 metric tonnes) of food aid was allocated to 746,037 people, and 725,839 (97%) beneficiaries were reached, of whom 94.3% were IDPs, with the remaining being returnees and other members of society, through five partner organizations.¹³⁰ The Relief Society of Tigray (REST/MARET) distributed the largest share, reaching 282,224 people (38% of total beneficiaries) with 47,182 quintals, followed by World Vision International, CARE, Food for the Hungry Ethiopia (FHE), and Adigrat Diocese Catholic Secretariat (ADCS).

Recent social media reports by activists have brought the starvation facing IDPs in Tigray into the spotlight. Earlier media reports revealed that more than 300 IDPs have died of starvation and lack of medical care at Hitsats IDP Camp in Northwestern Tigray since 2022,¹³¹ with over 50 additional deaths occurring since July 2025 alone,¹³² leaving at least 1,700 displaced people currently at risk of death.¹³³ A

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.

127 “Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC) Letter.” 2025.

128 Tigray Emergency Coordination Center. 2025. “Operational update.”

129 Ibid.

130 “Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC) Letter.” 2025.

131 Tigray TV. 2025. “More Than 50 Western Tigray IDPs Die of Starvation and Lack of Medication at Hitsats IDP’s Camp in Northwestern #Tigray.” <https://tigraytv.com/en/more-than-50-western-tigray-idps-die-of-starvation-and-lack-of-medication-at-hitsats-idps-camp-in-northwestern-tigray/>

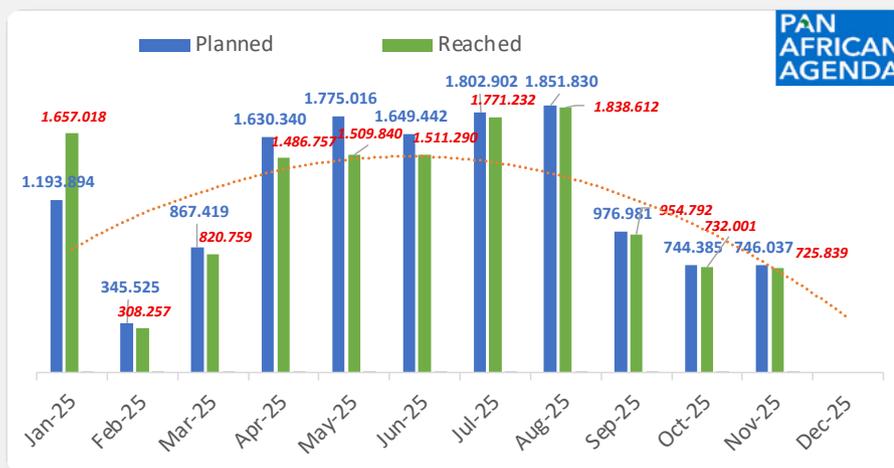
132 Ibid.

133 Hadnet, Nebar. 2024. “Ethiopia’s Tigray Region Is Now Peaceful, But Extreme Hunger Afflicts Its Children.” Voice of America. <https://www.voanews.com/a/ethiopia-s-tigray-region-is-now-peaceful-but-extreme-hunger-afflicts-its-children/7522188.html>

recent academic study covering the period from November 2022 to August 2023 found that starvation was the leading cause of death across all ages in Tigray, accounting for 49.3% of verified deaths, with children under five and females at particularly high risk.¹³⁴ Of the 169,750 IDPs assessed, only 62% had received emergency food assistance, leaving 38% without support.¹³⁵

This partially attributable to the dramatic fall of over 50% in humanitarian food aid after the suspension of USAID operations. The number of beneficiaries receiving food assistance dropped from 1,657,018 in January 2025 to just 725,839 in November 2025, a decline of 56.2% (or 931,179 fewer beneficiaries) within an eleven-month period. The decline in food aid became severe in 2025. As shown in Figure 24, by October 2025, overall aid provision had dropped by more than half, reaching only 44.2% of the January 2025 levels.

Figure 24: Food aid decline



Source: PAAI 2025 data from Tigray DRMC

As one research respondent stated:

“The Tigray interim administration is unable to provide assistance. My research in IDP centres reveals that funerals occur daily due to a lack of food and medical services. The living conditions are suboptimal; the tents, initially intended for one year, have been used for three to four years, adversely affecting quality of life and existence. Although hostilities have ceased, humanitarian assistance remains insufficient. The infrastructure is lacking, as these sites were established in urban areas without essential amenities such as electricity and water. Humanitarian organizations initially provided water, but these services were discontinued upon their departure. When we inquired with the interim administration, they indicated a lack of budget and inability to pay, while the federal government has not provided assistance. The latrines are overflowing, rendering the sites uninhabitable.”(InIO)

Numerous media reports have confirmed the high levels of physical insecurity in IDP camps in Tigray.¹³⁶ The Shelter and NFI Cluster assessment indicates an “extremely severe” shelter risk classification and deteriorating shelters.

During the 2025 rainy season, over 4,000 shelters in Sheraro, Hitsats, Shire, Axum, Abyi Adi, Mekelle, and Adigrat were damaged by wind, rain, flooding, and structural degradation, leaving more than 20,000

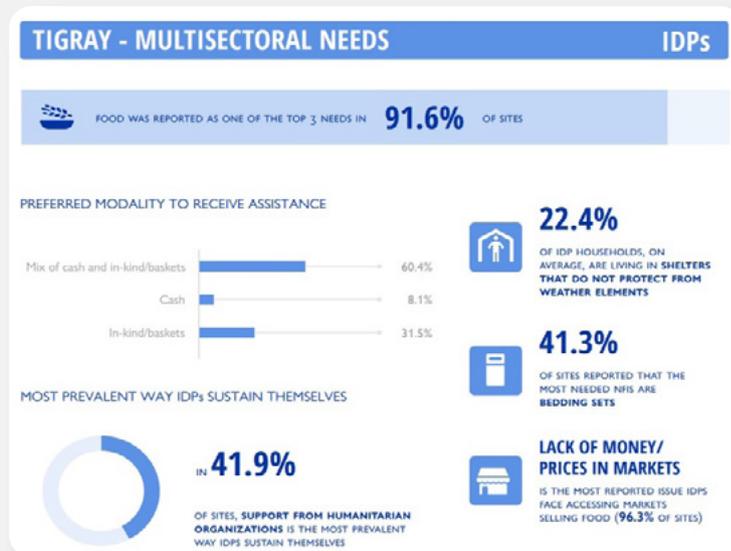
134 Haileselassie, Mekonnen, Hayelom Kahsay, Tesfay Teklemariam, Ataklti Gebretsadik, Ataklti Gessesse, Abraham Aregay Desta, Haftamu Kebede, et al. 2024. “Starvation remains the leading cause of death in Tigray, northern Ethiopia, after the Pretoria deal: a call for expedited action.” BMC Public Health. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39696083/>

135 Education Action Plan – Situational Analysis and Action Plan for Emergency Education Response.

136 Tigray TV. 2025. “Two-Year-Old Naod Haileselassie Killed by Hyena in #Mekelle IDP Camp.” <https://tigraytv.com/en/two-year-old-naod-haileselassie-killed-by-hyena-in-mekelle-idp-camp/>

households without protection from harsh weather. This exposed them to multiple risks, including attacks by hyenas that led to the death of a child, compromising both their safety and dignity.¹³⁷

Figure 25: Needs of IDPs



Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM), January 2025

The situation of Tigrayan refugees in Sudan remains complex and highly precarious. Many who fled to Sudan have been caught in a new wave of displacement following the outbreak of conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

According to the UNHCR, as of August 2024, 57,568 Ethiopian nationals had returned from Sudan, including 11,771 Tigrayans who were unable to return to their places of origin in western Tigray and had previously been registered refugees in Sudan.¹³⁸ Their return is driven by the collapse of their protection in Sudan, yet they are doing so without formal support or safe conditions in Tigray. Since the start of war in 2023, 16,600 individuals have returned from Sudan yet are unable to access their places of origin due to insecurity. The majority are forced to live in congested IDP sites without any assistance, facing high protection risks and severe humanitarian needs. Of these, 55% are male and 45% female. Many are in dire straits, requesting urgent food support, shelter, documentation, health services, and education for children.¹³⁹ Those returning voluntarily and without adequate assistance or protection have to cross dangerous and hostile regions in Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz. This situation highlights a serious protection gap: not only are these returnees navigating high-risk areas but the humanitarian and governance infrastructure in their place of origin in Tigray is mostly unable to support them. They are displaced persons yet, in most cases, their existence is not recognized by the UNHCR systems.

Fuel Restriction and the provision of humanitarian assistance

Tigray continues to face a persistent fuel shortage that seriously impacts humanitarian operations, driven by restrictions imposed by the GoE and compounded by corrupt practices in fuel distribution within Tigray. According to a statement issued by the Trade and Export Agency of the TIRA in June 2025, fuel

137 Ethiopia ES/NFI Cluster Priority Woredas and Activities - Quarter 1 – Jan 2025; Tigray - Regional Emergency Coordination Center PPT 01 Aug 2025.

138 UNHCR. 2024. “Population Movement from Sudan to Ethiopia - Ethiopian Refugee Returnees (As of 31 August 2024).” <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/population-movement-sudan-ethiopia-ethiopian-refugee-returnees-31-august-2024>

139 New Arrivals Update: Refugee Returnee from Sudan - Protection cluster April 2025.

shortages are critically disrupting humanitarian operations and public services in Tigray. Only 5.02 million litres (33.5%) of the monthly 15 million litres of fuel were supplied in May, dropping to 2.09 million litres (27.9%) in mid-June, with cities like Mekelle, Shire, and Maichew receiving almost nothing for a week. By October, deliveries had fallen to one truck per day, compounded by new security clearance requirements on the Semera–Mekelle corridor, with humanitarian partners reportedly facing challenges to move fuel.¹⁴⁰ This situation underscores the urgent need for stronger regulation, oversight, and management of fuel supplies and administration. However, a lack of clarity about the underlying causes complicates effective intervention, highlighting the necessity of a comprehensive assessment and evidence-based, targeted solutions.¹⁴¹

Recent assessments show that 35% of respondents reported the negative impact of the ongoing fuel shortage on humanitarian operations. It has resulted in severe disruptions to aid delivery, transportation, and logistics, further constraining the overall response capacity across the region.¹⁴²

In addition, partners have identified several expected risks arising from the continued fuel crisis and operational constraints. These include the return of budget to donors (reported by 23 partners), the death of children and other vulnerable people (21 partners), other programmatic risks such as reduced service coverage or operational standstills (19 partners), and the expiry of food supplies due to delays in distribution (11 partners).¹⁴³

Figure 26: Impact of fuel shortage on humanitarian partners



Source: Tigray Emergency Coordination Center, February 2025

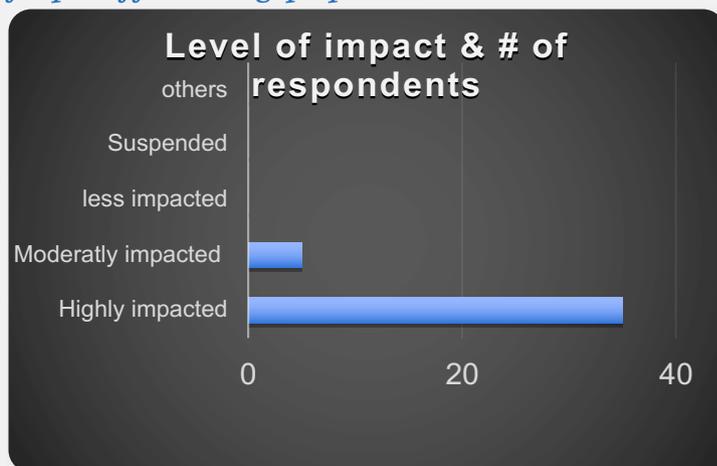
140 Letter Issued on Fuel shortage and its impacts by the TIRA – Trade Export Agency. June 2025

141 Tigray Emergency Coordination Center. 2025. “Operational update.”

142 Ibid.

143 Ibid.

Figure 27: Level of impact of fuel shortage per partners



Source: Tigray Emergency Coordination Center, February 2025

The healthcare system, devastated by systematic looting and destruction during the conflict, remains largely non-functional, particularly in rural areas and occupied territories. The sector continues to face major challenges related to human resources, medicine shortages, and weak governance, which significantly hinder effective healthcare delivery.

Chemical Contamination from Gold Mining in Tigray

Gold-mining areas have also become hotspots for cholera and other health problems in the north-western zone, intensifying these challenges amid limited access to essential healthcare services. Following the end of the war in Tigray, illegal gold mining has surged dramatically across the region, fueling a multibillion-dollar industry.¹⁴⁴ Artisanal gold miners who used traditional tools for centuries have increasingly resorted to toxic chemicals such as mercury and cyanide, posing a serious threat to the health and safety of local communities.¹⁴⁵ The World Health Organization identifies mercury as one of the top 10 chemicals posing public health concerns, yet cyanide is used at all mining sites operated by Chinese nationals, and mining operations contain wastewater with very high concentrations of cyanide, caustic soda, heavy metals, and salts.¹⁴⁶ The humanitarian impact is devastating. Children in Asgede and Tsimbla districts are suffering from skin conditions similar to measles, possibly linked to mercury exposure, two children have died from illnesses attributed to cyanide exposure, and drinking water sources have been contaminated with toxic chemicals.¹⁴⁷ Cattles have died due to chemical contamination, while deforestation and soil erosion have degraded agricultural land, threatening food security. Multiple districts across northwestern and central Tigray are affected, including Asgede, Tsimbla, Sheraro, Shire, and numerous others.¹⁴⁸ This crisis represents a severe humanitarian and public health, environmental, and security

144 Endale, Ashenafi, and Claire Wilmot. 2025. "How gold tarnished Tigray." The Globe and Mail. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-illegal-gold-mining-tigray-ethiopia-east-africa-metals-canadian/>

145 Ibid.

146 Mitiku, Molla. 2025. "In-depth: Gold Rush Gone Toxic: Illegal mining in Tigray endangers lives, environment as authorities turn a blind eye to cyanide and mercury use." Addis Standard. <https://addisstandard.com/gold-rush-gone-toxic-illegal-mining-in-tigray-endangers-lives-environment-as-authorities-turn-a-blind-eye-to-cyanide-and-mercury-use/>

147 Endale, Ashenafi. 2024. "Deadly gold rush: military commanders, former combatants, foreign players scramble for Tigray's bullion." The Reporter Ethiopia. <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/41076/>

148 Kaleab, Adhena Abera, Abriha Berhane, Gebreyohannes Tesfamichael, Hussien Abdelwassie, Hagos Miruts, Gebremedhin Berhane, and Kristine Walraevens. 2023. "Natural constraints and the damaged Meli gold mining: forecasting impact on the water resources quality of the Meli area and the surroundings, Tigray." (25th EGU

threats to the population.¹⁴⁹

Healthcare facilities are overstretched, serving populations nearly three times their standard capacity of 5,000 people, which places increased pressure on higher-level facilities and leads to operational inefficiencies.¹⁵⁰ The assessment also found limited performance in terms of availability, access, and infrastructure, with none of the assessed tabiyas meeting minimum readiness standards for adequate service delivery.

In addition, water supply systems and road infrastructure remain in a state of severe disrepair throughout much of the region. Food insecurity persists across large areas, with many households dependent on humanitarian assistance for survival.

Respondents noted that aid delivery has been heavily politicized and remains inconsistent in different areas. Humanitarian access to territories under occupation is still severely restricted, with aid agencies having to deal with red tape that appears designed to limit assistance flows. Food distribution for 49,000 beneficiaries in Alamata and Korem was suspended for several months due to registration conflicts and security issues, according to the Food Cluster. For many respondents, the GoE's approach amounts to what they term "performative compliance", a carefully managed façade of progress that masks persistent deprivation and systematic exclusion from basic services.

Transitional justice and accountability

Most tellingly, almost 89% of survey respondents stated that neither of the signatories to the Pretoria Agreement could be trusted to deliver genuine justice and meaningful accountability. Among this majority expressing distrust, 66.7% believed that narrow political interests and self-preservation would inevitably hinder delivery of genuine justice and accountability, while the remainder felt there was no real intent or credible evidence of a serious effort to deliver justice. Respondents dismissed the credibility of transitional justice mechanisms initiated by the GoE, characterizing the process as symbolic, partisan, and top-down, without genuine community input or ownership.

Multiple interviewees underscored that although well-documented atrocities were committed by the EDF operating on Ethiopian territory, the Agreement made no reference whatsoever to Eritrean accountability. This omission undermines the credibility and comprehensiveness of the entire transitional justice framework, reflecting political selectivity that prioritizes diplomatic relations over accountability and justice.

The cumulative evidence, spanning quantitative survey data, qualitative interviews, and focus group discussions, shows that the current transitional justice initiative is poorly articulated, systematically non-inclusive, and fundamentally distrusted by those it purports to serve. It falls catastrophically short of the principles of transparency, meaningful participation, and victim-centred justice envisioned in the Pretoria Agreement and that constitute international best practices. None of the parties to the war has taken meaningful responsibility for crimes committed under their authority or control, and there has been no genuine prosecution of perpetrators at any level of command. The result is continued impunity. Victims and survivors have virtually no access to justice processes that might provide accountability and there is no true victim participation mechanism or reparations programme, even at a conceptual stage.

Civil society organizations in Tigray have painstakingly documented thousands of cases of violations, including massacres, sexual violence, torture, and destruction of property. Yet there is no credible mechanism through which these cases can be independently investigated, adjudicated, and prosecuted. The transitional justice process is, in essence, regarded as non-existent in practice and distrusted in principle.

General Assembly). <https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2023EGUGA..25.1724A/abstract>

149 Demissie, Abate Abel, and Ahmed Soliman. 2024. "Illicit gold is exacerbating Ethiopia's conflicts." (Chatham House). <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/09/illicit-gold-exacerbating-ethiopias-conflicts>

150 Tigray Emergency Coordination Center. 2025. "Operational update."

One of the most consequential implementation failures concerns the systematic abandonment of international accountability mechanisms. The termination of ICHREE's mandate by the UN Human Rights Council in October 2023 effectively abandoned victims to impunity. This decision came despite the Commission's extensively documented findings of widespread war crimes and crimes against humanity and its explicit call for continued international investigation, given the absence of credible domestic mechanisms. The termination was widely interpreted as political capitulation to intense pressure from the Ethiopian government and its regional allies, rather than a good-faith determination that justice had been achieved or that adequate national mechanisms were in place.

Similarly, the AU's Commission of Inquiry into atrocities committed during the conflict was terminated prematurely, and the AU Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights quietly ended its related inquiry, removing all related materials from its official website. These terminations occurred not because credible justice mechanisms had successfully been established at the national level but because of political pressure and diplomatic calculations that prioritized state-to-state relations and organizational politics over the rights and needs of victims. Many respondents contended that the GoE, itself accused of systematic atrocities, including possible genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, could not credibly lead a legitimate justice process. They advocated for the establishment of independent international mechanisms with investigative and prosecutorial authority. Thus, the parties to the agreement, the AU and the international community were conducting performative rather than substantive justice when they endorsed and supported the Pretoria Agreement's provisions related to transitional justice.

Economic recovery and reconstruction

As one interview respondent said of the situation, "generally speaking, post-war reconstruction has not started yet; Tigray is still fundamentally in the emergency relief stage, focused on immediate survival rather than rebuilding for the future" (In17).

Although Tigray has seen the industrial-scale destruction of its economy and infrastructure, currently, three years after the Agreement, there are no visible recovery and reconstruction efforts. Despite the staggering magnitude of the destruction and the massive recovery needs, virtually no systematic post-war rebuilding effort has commenced, primarily due to severe resource constraints, lack of political will, and continued insecurity. Cumulatively, the findings demonstrate that over 70% of informed respondents perceive recovery efforts as either entirely absent or ineffective. According to the Global Peace Index and Institute for Economics and Peace, the economic impact of the war in Ethiopia from 2020 to 2023 totalled well over USD 106 billion.¹⁵¹ In 2021, Ethiopia recorded one of the largest increases in military expenditure, while the economic cost of the war in Tigray increased by 90% from 2020 to reach 7% of GDP.¹⁵² The GoE's estimate of total war damages and loss exceeds USD 28 billion.¹⁵³

In an estimate similar to that of Global Peace Index and Institute for Economics and Peace, the total sum of damage and loss from the war, according to the Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide, exceeds

151 Institute for Economics and Peace. 2021. "Economic Value of Peace: Measuring the Global Economic Impact of Violence and Conflict." <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EVP-2021-web.pdf>; Institute for Economics and Peace. 2020. "Global Peace Index 2020." https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/GPI_2020_web.pdf; Institute for Economics and Peace. 2023. "Global Peace Index 2023." <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/GPI-2023-Web.pdf>; Institute for Economics and Peace. 2022. "Global Peace Index: Measuring Peace in a Complex World." <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/GPI-2022-web.pdf>.

152 Institute for Economics and Peace. 2021. "Economic Value of Peace: Measuring the Global Economic Impact of Violence and Conflict." <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EVP-2021-web.pdf>.

153 Government of Ethiopia. 2023. "Ethiopia Resilient Recovery and Reconstruction Planning Framework (2023–28) - Volume B." <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099062223114014041/pdf/P1786960f38c-8d051096ac0d915ec0d710a.pdf>.

USD 145 billion. This includes USD 84 billion in damage to the productive section (manufacturing, trade, productive services, agriculture, financial institutions, and households);¹⁵⁴ USD 47 billion to forestry and environment;¹⁵⁵ and USD 5 billion to infrastructure.¹⁵⁶ Another report lists destruction of well over USD 10 billion to health (USD 3.59 billion), education (USD 5.38 billion), and cultural heritage (USD 1.6 billion), reflecting the systematic dismantling of social infrastructure.¹⁵⁷

The worst damage was deliberately inflicted on the health, education, and industrial sectors – the foundations of long-term human development. The war destroyed or severely damaged vast swathes of the region’s critical infrastructure, including road networks, bridges, electrical power systems, water supply networks, healthcare facilities, schools, and government administrative buildings. Agricultural systems saw the deliberate destruction of farming equipment, irrigation infrastructure, grain storage facilities, and livestock. Industrial facilities in multiple sectors were looted of machinery and equipment or burned and destroyed.

Ongoing recovery and reconstruction initiatives that are often politicized (as in the case of the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray, or EFFORT) and insufficient in scale result in Tigray remaining trapped in an emergency relief phase (largely conducted by REST and other NGOs) rather than transitioning toward genuine recovery or sustainable reconstruction.

Respondents further noted a troubling decline in international donor support and engagement, an almost complete absence of large-scale reconstruction programmes, and disturbing instances of aid mismanagement and diversion by various actors. Within Tigray itself, only minor cement production for construction and basic road maintenance work has tentatively resumed, and these modest activities are concentrated almost exclusively in the regional capital, Mekelle, leaving rural areas unaddressed.

Participants attributed this comprehensive reconstruction paralysis to a complex combination of interrelated factors, including federal government conditionalities that politicize reconstruction assistance; donor fatigue, as international attention shifts to other global crises; the disbanding or severe reduction of USAID programmes that previously supported development; and corruption scandals, involving both humanitarian and development agencies, that have eroded trust and accountability.

The international community’s attention has moved to other crises, leaving Tigray without the sustained external support necessary for reconstruction at the required scale.

Political dialogue and AU monitoring mechanisms

AU follow-up has been inadequate, and meaningful political dialogue between the GoE, TPLF and TIRA is almost absent. The TPLF has been turned into a supplicant and the GoE has instrumentalized this power asymmetry to dictate results and frustrate demands.

154 Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG). 2025. “Report on Tigray’s Productive Sector and Livelihood: Effects and Impacts of the War, Siege, and Blockade – Volume 1.” <https://citghub.org/report-on-tigrays-productive-sector-and-livelihood-effects-and-impacts-of-the-war-siege-and-blockade-volume-1/>

155 Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG). 2025. “Reversed Decades: War and Siege Damage and Loss of Tigray’s Natural Resources and Environment – Volume 1.” <https://citghub.org/reversed-decades-war-and-siege-damage-and-loss-of-tigrays-natural-resources-and-environment-volume-1/>

156 Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG). 2025. “Targeted Destruction: Damage and Loss Assessment on Tigray’s Public Infrastructure Sector.” <https://citghub.org/targeted-destruction-damage-and-loss-assessment-on-tigrays-public-infrastructure-sector/>

157 Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide. The systematic undoing of society: War damage and loss in the social sector of Tigray (Vol. 1). Mekelle, Ethiopia: <https://citghub.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/The-Systematic-Undoing-of-Society-War-Damage-and-Loss-in-the-Social-Sector-of-Tigray-2.pdf>

Since the Agreement's signing in November 2022, only three major formal follow-up meetings have been convened to monitor and advance implementation – a remarkably sparse engagement given the Agreement's complexity and the severity of ongoing violations. The first meeting, held on 1 December 2023, more than a year after signing, was the Third AU Joint Committee Meeting of the MVCM. During this session, participants agreed to expedite DDR processes, facilitate IDP resettlement, and launch sustained political dialogue to address outstanding contentious issues. They also resolved to convene additional strategic reflection sessions and formally extended the MVCM's mandate through December 2024.

The First Strategic Reflection Meeting on Agreement Implementation, convened on 11 March 2024, produced disappointingly few concrete results or binding commitments, as did the Second Strategic Reflection Meeting held on 9 July 2024. The most recent known high-level engagement occurred on 14 April 2025, when TPLF chairman Debretsion Gebremichael met with Major General Samad Alade, head of the MVCM, in Mekelle. During this meeting, the TPLF chairman called on the AU to convene emergency talks regarding the rapidly deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, but no substantive commitments or concrete action plans emerged.

Despite these sporadic meetings, MVCM committee proceedings remain largely undisclosed to the public and affected communities, and there is no independently verifiable evidence of substantial progress regarding any of the Agreement's substantive provisions. Most troublingly, a planned AU PSC field mission to the Tigray region, scheduled for 17–18 May 2024, was cancelled without adequate explanation. Consequently, three years after the conflict's formal end, the PSC, based in Addis Ababa – the very country in which the systematic atrocities occurred – has yet to visit the site of one of the most devastating wars and atrocity zones in Africa in 30 years.

The absence of regular, institutionalized, and inclusive political dialogue is another significant structural gap in implementation. The Pretoria Agreement envisioned ongoing, sustained dialogue as the principal mechanism for addressing contentious issues, building mutual trust between parties, and collaboratively resolving disputes and implementation challenges. Without such structured dialogue, the parties lack a functional forum for negotiating implementation obstacles and building the political relationships necessary for sustainable peace.

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the MVCM, established to oversee the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, had proven weak, lacked meaningful impact on compliance, and produced virtually no consequences for non-compliance by signatory parties. A total of 50% of respondents were completely unaware of any official reports produced by the MVCM being made publicly available. These figures underscore the widespread distrust, profound lack of visibility, and absence of confidence surrounding the MVCM. The evidence converges to reveal a comprehensive lack of credibility, transparency, and enforcement capacity within the AU and MVCM framework. Together, the quantitative and qualitative data highlights a troubling pattern of institutional weakness and pervasive political interference, where monitoring mechanisms lack genuine autonomy, public accountability is minimal to non-existent, and confidence among stakeholders is critically low. The absence of regular, detailed, and publicly accessible reporting undermines accountability and enables parties to the Agreement to avoid consequences for non-compliance.¹⁵⁸

158 Maru, Mehari Taddele. 2024, "Beyond Cessation of Hostilities: Sustaining Peace." Addis Standard. <https://addis-standard.com/commentary-beyond-cessation-of-hostilities-sustaining-peace/>.

6.

Conclusion and recommendations

Five years since the war on Tigray and three years after the signing of the Pretoria Agreement, the latter has achieved its most immediate objective: ending the active warfare that claimed over 600,000 lives. However, implementation has stalled at the threshold of genuine transformation. This analysis synthesizes data to characterize implementation patterns and explain why certain provisions succeeded while others failed. The evidence reveals a stark dichotomy: the Agreement delivered negative peace (cessation of hostilities) while positive peace (restoration of constitutional order, justice, reconstruction, and sustainable reconciliation) remains elusive. Understanding this divergence requires examining implementation through the analytical framework proposed by Maru (2024), which demonstrates that progress correlates strongly with whether obligations represent shared priorities supported by both parties or whether priorities diverge and are thus dependent on limited political will.

Main shared obligations

The sole undisputed achievement of the Pretoria Agreement, acknowledged by all informants in every research modality, is the cessation of hostilities. This outcome succeeded because it served the immediate interests of both parties. The GoE achieved its primary wartime objective of ending active military resistance and reasserting federal authority over Tigray. The Tigrayan leadership gained a desperately needed respite from military operations that had devastated the region and threatened the survival of its population. Both parties faced war-weary populations demanding peace over continued bloodshed, creating powerful domestic political incentives for compliance.

Similarly, the establishment of TIRA represented another area of convergent interests. For the federal government, TIRA provided a governance structure to dismantle Tigray's government elected during COVID-19 and restore federal authority in the region. For Tigray, it offered an opportunity to exercise autonomy through a government mainly composed of Tigrayan political forces with administrative functionality. The relatively swift implementation of these provisions, compared to the comprehensive failures documented in other areas, demonstrates that when obligations align with parties' strategic priorities, compliance occurs even amid broader implementation deficiencies.

This pattern reveals a fundamental characteristic of the Pretoria Agreement: it functions effectively as a framework for ending warfare but struggles as a mechanism for post-conflict transformation.

Obligations that required only a cessation of active combat and implementing basic governance structures were successful because they demanded no fundamental shift in power relations or accountability for past actions. They represented what conflict resolution scholars characterize as a negative peace – the absence of direct violence without addressing the underlying structural inequalities, historical grievances, and systems of injustice that fuelled the conflict.

In contrast, obligations prioritized primarily by Tigray but requiring GoE action have encountered systematic obstruction. Converging data streams show what multiple respondents characterized as an implementation failure rate systematically exceeded by two-thirds across virtually all substantive provisions of the Agreement. This is not a pattern of slow but steady progress – it is a fundamental stagnation and, in some areas, active backsliding from commitments made in Pretoria.

The obligation to restore Tigray's constitutional boundaries exemplifies an implementation failure driven by active resistance from multiple actors. Substantial Tigrayan territories remain under external military occupation by Eritrean and Amhara forces, with approximately 1 million IDPs unable

to return to their homes. This reflects calculated strategic choices rather than administrative capacity constraints. The federal government benefits from continued territorial ambiguity, which weakens Tigrayan political and economic capacity while avoiding confrontation with Eritrean and Amhara actors whose cooperation the government values for broader political reasons. The referendum proposal enables claims of democratic process while ensuring outcomes favourable to the occupation forces through the protracted displacement of the population and the settlement of new communities with different political allegiances.

The systematic failure of justice and accountability mechanisms is another consequential implementation gap. This pattern reflects a fundamental political calculation: accountability for wartime atrocities threatens the political interests of multiple powerful actors, including senior government officials, military commanders, and allied forces. The 89% of respondents expressing an inability to trust any party to deliver justice speaks not to cynicism but to an accurate assessment of the political reality. Notwithstanding widespread demands from the conflict-affected population, documented through focus groups and surveys, and comprehensive evidence of mass atrocities, including genocidal sexual and gender-based violence, the GoE and TPLF, as well as the AU, UN, US and EU, have demonstrated not merely a lack of implementation but active obstruction of accountability processes. The termination of international investigative mechanisms, including the UN Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia and the AU Commission of Inquiry on Tigray, illustrates this dynamic. When independent international mechanisms produced findings of documented systematic atrocities by Ethiopian federal forces, Eritrean forces and allied Amhara militias, the GoE shut down these investigations rather than cooperate with accountability processes. In a political move in support of the GoE, the US and EU member states decided on the fate of ICHREE and the AU Commission leadership followed suit to terminate its inquiry. Without credible independent mechanisms backed by international enforcement, domestic accountability processes led by the GoE remain subject to political manipulation and selective prosecution that shields perpetrators while failing to provide justice to victims. Impunity for yesterday's atrocities breeds tomorrow's war.

Thereconstructionandeconomicrecoverydomainrevealsanotherdimensionofimplementation failures. Despite the documented economic impact of the conflict – over USD 145 billion in damage and loss – more than 70% of respondents characterized recovery efforts as absent or ineffective. This assessment reflects not only inadequate resources but also the absence of transparent planning, defined performance indicators, and meaningful financial commitments. The minimal international financial support compounds this problem but does not fully explain it – even limited resources could be deployed more effectively with transparent planning and genuine political commitment to reconstruction.

The implementation patterns described above reflect a deeper structural problem: the fundamental power asymmetry between the GoE and Tigray authorities embedded in the Agreement itself. The federal government controls implementation mechanisms, timelines, resources, and verification processes. The absence of effective international enforcement creates conditions where federal discretion determines what is implemented and when, transforming binding commitments into discretionary concessions subject to political calculation. This asymmetry manifests through what conflict resolution scholars term the “credible commitment problem”. Written agreements alone cannot guarantee execution when the stronger party lacks incentives to uphold compromises after achieving its primary objectives. The GoE secured its main goal of ending active military resistance. Obligations requiring GoE action to benefit Tigray can be deferred indefinitely without immediate cost to federal interests, particularly given the absence of international enforcement mechanisms with real leverage.

The opacity of oversight processes by the AU MVCAM exacerbates this failure of implementation. The finding that 50% of respondents remain unaware of any MVCAM reports, three years after the Agreement's signing, suggests that monitoring mechanisms lack independence and the transparency necessary for credible verification. Multiple respondents characterized the AU and MVCAM as partisan, closely aligned with GoE positions and interests, and thus systematically weakened by the AU, GoE and TPLF from the beginning. This results in profoundly ineffective oversight of implementation and an absence of meaningful consequences for parties that fail to comply with their obligations. Punitive measures aside,

the AU has not issued a report outlining a credible warning to the spoilers or about the possible war that could undo the Pretoria Agreement.

As Bell's research on peace agreements demonstrates, waning political will is the primary cause of implementation failure. The Ethiopian case exemplifies this pattern: demonstrating genuine political will requires tangible actions on key commitments: full territorial restoration, credible accountability mechanisms, substantial reconstruction financing, and sustained political dialogue rather than rhetorical affirmations and selective compliance.

Lack of progress on implementation is now compounded by rapidly evolving regional dynamics that threaten to render the Pretoria Agreement obsolete. The increasingly likely prospect of interstate war between Ethiopia and Eritrea – driven by Ethiopia's claim to Red Sea access via the Port of Assab, as well as broader geopolitical tensions – poses an existential threat to the fragile peace. Ongoing wars elsewhere in Ethiopia, particularly in the Amhara and Oromia regions, and the catastrophic conflict in Sudan create additional sources of instability.

Afwerki has effectively rejected the Pretoria Agreement's core premises by maintaining military positions in northern Tigray and continuing to frame Tigray as an existential threat to Eritrea. Eritrea's reported cultivation of ties with the TPLF, the Tigray armed forces and Fano militias in the Amhara region suggests a broader strategy of proxy war in Ethiopia. Regional alignments involving Eritrea, Egypt, the SAF of Sudan with the support of Saudi Arabia on one side, and Ethiopia, the RSF and the UAE on the other, create the potential for localized conflicts to escalate into broader regional confrontations.¹⁵⁹ Such a conflict would inevitably play out in Tigray, exploiting its vulnerable neutrality and once again transforming the region into a battlefield.

This means that even the successful implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, which remains far from being achieved, may prove insufficient to ensure sustainable peace if broader regional conflicts overwhelm local stabilization efforts. Within this complex environment, Tigray faces what might be termed a "neutrality trap": any attempt to find balance among adversaries' proxies is interpreted as hostility by all sides, an inherently unstable posture that magnifies existential risk. History too, including the 1998–2000 Ethiopia–Eritrea border war,¹⁶⁰ warns that peace agreements without strict implementation render peace unsustainable, and impunity creates conditions that breed the return of war and atrocity. An unimplemented Pretoria Agreement risks stoking the gathering clouds of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, with all its proxy conflicts. Such a conflict would inevitably exploit Tigray's vulnerability and render the Agreement obsolete.

The first proposal advances the imperative of launching intensive high-level diplomacy to prevent a relapse into conflict between the GoE and TPLF, recognizing that renewed fighting, particularly as part of an Ethiopia–Eritrea war, would render the Pretoria Agreement obsolete. Preventing war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, therefore, must begin with renewed international commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, with mechanisms in place to ensure such. The most urgent task for international actors, particularly the US, which commands significant leverage over the parties, is to issue credible warnings and engage in sustained preventive diplomacy aimed at the rapid and effective implementation of the Pretoria Agreement. This must be reinforced through substantive, structured, and regular dialogue, complemented by robust monitoring mechanisms.

159 Maru, Mehari Taddele. 2023. "Beyond the 'Race to the Bottom': Africa on the Global Chessboard and the Call for Renewed Pan-African Agency." (UNU-CRIS). <https://cris.unu.edu/beyond-%E2%80%99race-bottom%E2%80%99-africa-global-chessboard-and-call-renewed-pan-african-agency>.

160 Joreiman, Sandra F. 2001. "Ethiopia and Eritrea: Border War." In *History Behind the Headlines: The Origins of Conflicts Worldwide*, by Benson, Sonia G, Matuszak, Nancy and Appel, Meghan. Detroit: Dale Group. <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/polisci-faculty-publications/140/>

The second proposal calls for the comprehensive revitalization of the Pretoria Agreement through re-engagement with all stakeholders to account for new realities and actors that have emerged since the signing of the Agreement. These include the need to reconstitute TIRA, clarify the legal status of TPLF leadership, and include both established and emerging political parties that now have legitimate standing as stakeholders in the implementation process. Several factors necessitate this revitalization: the implementation impasse and mounting popular frustrations; escalating tensions between the GoE and Tigrayan forces; Ethiopia–Eritrea tensions; internal divisions within both the TPLF and TIRA; and the systematic exclusion of key political forces from TIRA.

The third proposal advances the creation of a “Friends of the Pretoria Agreement” group to provide the international support mechanism necessary for sustained pressure, oversight, and guarantor functions, while imposing meaningful consequences on violators and spoilers through coordinated international action. This Friends of the Pretoria Agreement should replace the ineffective AU MVCM with stronger oversight structures that establish realistic timelines for all obligations, supported by robust compliance mechanisms, enforcement through punitive accountability measures for spoilers, and transparent reporting structures. The group should include actors with leverage over the parties – the US, UN, EU, AU, and IGAD, among other relevant stakeholders. These actors would support implementation by establishing clear, measurable benchmarks and timelines for key obligations, conducting regular reviews with transparent public reporting of progress and gaps, and providing resources for formalized and institutionalized political dialogue.

The fourth proposal calls for active and urgent mobilization of local constituencies for peace, to build agency within communities and establish regional networks capable of resisting war, atrocities, and impunity. Key constituencies at all levels (global, continental, national, and local) are Generation Z and underrepresented minorities. Creating alternative civic spaces for young people, women, and youth organizations to engage proactively in movements for peace and justice is a strategic imperative for long-term conflict prevention and durable peacebuilding.

The third anniversary of the Pretoria Agreement and the fifth anniversary of the war mark not a conclusion but a critical juncture, where a renewed commitment to implementation or the continued drift toward non-compliance will determine the future not only of Tigray but also of the broader Horn of Africa. Whether the lessons of implementation failure are heeded will be measured not in diplomatic communiqués but in human lives – in the return of displaced families to their homes, in the provision of justice to victims, in the reconstruction of shattered communities and, ultimately, in the ability (or not) of one of Africa’s oldest political communities to transition from the trauma of war to the promise of sustainable peace. Without a fundamental course correction, the Pretoria Agreement risks becoming not a celebrated blueprint for peace and reconciliation but rather a sobering historical record of solemn promises made, documented, and unfulfilled.

Scorecard for the Pretoria Agreement

Article	Sub	Agreed contents as per CoHA	Implementation Status	Recommendation
1	Objectives			
	1	Reach an immediate and Permanent Cessation of Hostilities with a view to: a) Silencing the Guns and b) Creating a conducive environment and laying the foundation for sustainable peace;	Met - Guns silenced Unmet - No conducive environment and laying the foundation for sustainable peace	A conducive environment and laying the foundation for sustainable peace requires: - Public services and humanitarian assistance - Withdrawal of Eritrean and Amhara forces - Respect for constitutional boundaries - Return of IDPs and refugees - Political dialogue, security of civilians, DDR - Reconstruction, economy, and development - Transitional justice process
	2	Restore the constitutional order disrupted due to the conflict in the Tigray Region;	Met - Federal forces placed in federal institutions such as in airports and parts of Tigray – see Map 1 Partially met - TIRA established but not inclusive Unmet - Constitutional territories of Tigray not restored - Tigray is not represented in Federal Institutions - No Accountability - Restricted freedom of movement and residence for IDPs - Restrictions on services essential for livelihood and humanitarian particularly fuel restriction	Restoration of constitutional order will demand: - respect for the constitution, and constitutional boundaries and provisions of the constitution on boundary disputes <i>According to Black's Law: Constitutional order entails: supremacy of the constitution; organization of government powers; recognition and protection of fundamental rights; and accountability and the rule of law</i>
	3	Reject violence as a method of resolving political differences;	Met - Declarations of intent made by both TIRA and GoE Partially met - Both sides are yet to implement the declarations Unmet - Hostile propaganda of war continues both sided - Reports of clashes between splinter wings of the TDF	To prevent violence: - Structured political dialogue between the signatories, and between the armed and security forces of the two sides - Take confidence and trust-building measures between the two sides and jointly announce the same publicly - GoE and TPLF should desist from use and being used as a proxy force
	4	Guarantee security for all;	Met - No progress Partially met - Most Tigrayan in detention were released Unmet - No security for Tigrayans within the occupied areas IDPs and Refugees are unable to return to safety	To guarantee the security for Tigrayans: - Return to status quo ante - Remove Eritrean and Amhara forces - Return IDPs and refugees to their HLP - Release political prisoners, prisoners of war, and those forcibly made to disappear, issue information on those killed - Supply of essential services for security, aid, and fuel

5	Ensure a lasting settlement of the conflict;	Met No progress Unmet No political settlement	For lasting settlement of the conflict: - Commence political dialogue between Tigray and the GoE on the causes and consequences of the war - Respect for constitutional order, including the self-determination and self-governance of the people of Tigray - Genuine justice and accountability process - Release of the budget allocated for Tigray
6	Provide a framework for addressing matters arising out of the conflict;	Met - Siege lifted Partially met - humanitarian aid Unmet - IDPs and refugees unable to return to their HLP - Limited humanitarian aid - No genuine justice accountability process - No sincere dialogue to address the root causes - No serious reconstruction and recovery efforts	To address matters arising out of the conflict: - Cease to weaponise IDPs, refugees and victims for power politics - Provide more aid especially for IDPs and victims of war - Initiate regular political dialogue between TIRA and the GoE - Develop a roadmap for Post-war reconstruction - Launch a genuine justice and reconciliation process
7	Provide a framework to ensure accountability for matters arising out of the conflict;	Partially met - GoE launched transitional justice policy Unmet - Transitional justice process rejected by stakeholders - No mechanism for international or regional scrutiny	To provide an effective and inclusive framework for accountability: - Acknowledge the atrocity crimes committed in Tigray - Established hybrid regional accountability mechanism supported by all victims and is internationally scrutinised - Provide effective remedies and support for victims
8	Foster reconciliation and the rehabilitation of social bonds;	Partially met - GoE launched transitional justice process Unmet - No credible reconciliation effort	To foster reconciliation: - Launch a genuine reconciliation process
9	Facilitate economic recovery and reconstruction;	Partially met - Limited federal government release of the budget Unmet - No official recovery and reconstruction effort - Delays of release of arrears and budget allocated for Tigray - Significant cut of federal budget compared to other regions	For recovery and reconstruction to happen: - Use Gold and other minerals of Tigray for reconstruction and development - Develop a roadmap for Post-war reconstruction and development - Release budget of Tigray withheld during or after the war
10	Commit to addressing the underlying political differences	Partially met - Strategic reflection meeting with AU conducted - Unstructured, irregular meetings between GOE and TIRA Unmet - There are no structured, transparent, credible, and regular political dialogue between TIRA and the GoE	To address the underlying causes: - With a view to prevent relapse to war and addressing the consequences of the war, revitalise the Pretoria Agreement - Conduct structured, regular meetings between GOE and TIRA officials

	11	Provide a framework for monitoring and verification of the implementation of the Agreement.	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -MVM established but not able to visit many areas under the occupation of non-ENDF forces -MVM issued press conference and photos with TIRA officials - AU issued a report on Lessons Learned <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No regular and transparent public report issued by MVM - No proper public report on progress and shortcomings of implementation issued 	<p>For effective MVM;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revitalise the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement - Establish new mechanism for monitoring and verification
Principles Underpinning the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities				
Article 2	a	Respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE);	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sovereignty and unity of Ethiopia <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some areas remain under Eritrea's occupation, see Map 1 	<p>To ensure respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove EDF from occupied areas - Return territories to status quo ante - Prevent repeat of invasion and attacks on civilians
	b	Legality and respect for constitutional norms and principles enshrined in the FDRE Constitution;	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Federal authority reinstated in Tigray <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tigray constitutional territories respected - Tigray remains unrepresented in Federal institutions 	<p>Respect for the FDRE constitution would demand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Return to status quo ante mainly return to pre-war boundaries - Reconstitute the Interim Council and allow to represent Tigray in Federal institutional in ad interim basis
	c	Respect for fundamental human rights and democratic norms and principles;	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDPs returned in some parts - Release of arbitrarily arrested Tigrayans - Release of Tigrayan former members of security sector - Restrictions on free movement of persons <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDPs and refugees are unable to return to their HLP - Tigrayan remain dismissed from their employments - Access to essential services including fuel restricted 	<p>Respect for fundamental human rights and democratic norms would demand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete return of IDPs and refugees to their home, land and property with safety - Ending arbitrary arrest of Tigrayans in Addis Ababa - Release of Tigrayan former members of the security sector - Reinstate those fired arbitrary front their position - Remove all restrictions on free movement of persons - Ensure access to essential services including fuel limited
	d	Protection of civilians;	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tigrayans within under TIRA face insecurity <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tigrayans in occupied areas particularly those under EDF and <i>Tekeze Zeb</i> - IDPs and refugees - Civilians in landmines and unexploded ordinance 	<p>Respect for the FDRE Constitution would demand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End arbitrary killing, violence, arrest and intimidation of political parties, CSOs and the press - Remove non ENDF and non-Tigrayan security forces - Protection to civilians in the occupied areas - Return to status quo ante including TIRA administration - Return of IDPs and refugees to their HLP - Demining and removal of explosives

e	Respect for the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance;	<p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violations of human rights in Tigray and outside Tigray - No democratic dispensation in Tigray - No credible, inclusive and sincere dialogue - No preparation for free, fairs, credible, peaceful election - No measures to improve good governance in Tigray - No representation of Tigray in the federal institutions 	<p>Respect to the Charter would require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain democratic dispensation in Tigray and beyond - Create enabling environment for free, fair and credible election - Reconstitute Tigrayan and Ethiopian human rights institutions - Launch governance transformation programme in Tigray - Ensure protection of independent CSOs and the Press
f	Accountability and justice in accordance with the FDRE Constitution and the AU Transitional Justice Policy Framework;	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TJ policy developed without meaningful participation and support of Tigray <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TJ process rejected by the public for lack of trust on GoE - TJ process simply a quasi-compliance as per the ICHREE - TJ does not meet international standards - No genuine political will from GoE and TPLF for justice - Ethiopia lacks jurisdiction on EDF - No recognition of the atrocities committed in Tigray - No clear policy criminal prosecutions - No meaningful victim representation in TJ process 	<p>To ensure effective and inclusive justice and accountability mechanism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledge the atrocities committed in Tigray and other parts - Demonstrate genuine political will by establishing hybrid mechanism for accountability - Relaunch TJ process to fully align with AU and international standards and under an independent body composed of technocrats with representatives from Tigray - Establish a phased approach to transitional justice that accounts for ongoing conflicts in various parts of the country - Establish clear protocols for international/regional scrutiny of national accountability mechanisms, including independent monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
g	Unhindered humanitarian access to all in need of assistance;	<p>Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to humanitarian aid improved - Siege and blockage removed <p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spontaneous return of IDPs and refugees - Dismantling of USAID's has led to less aid <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No access occupied areas - Restrictions on access to fuel 	<p>To ensure humanitarian access,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove non-ENDF and non-Tigrayan security forces from - Provide more humanitarian aid organisations - Remove restrictions on fuel
h	The use of humanitarian aid exclusively for humanitarian purposes.	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aid has been digitalised in most areas - Improved public and media coverage on aid <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corruption around and politicisation of aid persists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strictly implement the latest UN and USAID investigation report and its recommendations ¹
i	Reconciliation and rehabilitation:	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GoE's reconciliation launched but with little credibility <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GoE's dialogue process boycotted by Tigray community - No serious and comprehensive rehabilitation programme - No budgetary allocation for rehabilitation 	<p>For effective reconciliation and rehabilitation work,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relaunch the national dialogue process with credible hybrid body of eminent Africans - Launch a standalone rehabilitation programme as part of post war reconstruction and development plan

	j	Relief and Reconstruction;	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few projects and token support from GoE and Oromia regional state - Cut of annual federal funding for Tigray continues <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No comprehensive plan for reconstruction effort 	<p>To ensure effective reconstruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft and adopt comprehensive post war reconstruction and development plan - Organize a standalone donors and partners conference focused specifically on rehabilitation funding and implementation strategies - Timely release of the federal budget of Tigray
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No budgetary allocation for reconstruction - No standalone donors or partners conference for recovery - Restriction of budget allocated for Tigray 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allocate recovery budget based on damage and losses report
	k	Good faith commitment in the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities and all subsequent stages of the peace process.	<p>Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ceasefire achieved and active fighting ended <p>Partially Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some aspects of CoHA partially met (discussed in above) <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of the provisions of CoHA not met 	<p>For good faith implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convene urgent trust and confidence building dialogue between GoE and TIRA - Pressure GoE to take confidence building measures such as return to status quo and restoration of TIRA in occupied areas - Revitalise the CoHA implementation mechanisms with enforceable timeline to be overseen by Friends of the Pretoria Agreement - Establish technocratic transitional government in Tigray that prepares the environment for free, fair and competitive election
The Permanent Cessation of Hostilities				
Article 3	1	The Parties commit to and declare an immediate and Permanent Cessation of Hostilities, and undertake to disengage forces or armed groups under their control;	<p>Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete adherence to ceasefire - Complete disengagement <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued hosting groups that serve as proxy 	<p>To this effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement the above-mentioned recommendations - Establish a new robust Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) to produce regular, transparent reports on violations
	2	This Permanent Cessation of all forms of hostilities shall include, among others; the cessation of overt and covert acts of violence; laying of mines; sabotage; airstrikes; direct or indirect acts of violence; and subversion or use of proxies to destabilize the other party or collusion with any external force hostile to either party;	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cessation of overt acts of violence - Limited demining - No drone attacks except one reported on Tigray forces <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covert acts of violence - Proxy skirmish between splinters of Tigray forces - Reports of Tigray forces supported by ENDF - Reported alliance between TPLF and EDF 	Apply above mentioned recommendation under article 1.

¹ https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/E-000-25-002_M%20Evaluation%20of%20USAID%20Oversight%20of%20Emergency%20Food%20Assistance%20in%20Ethiopia.pdf

	3	The Permanent Cessation of hostilities shall include the cessation of all forms of hostile propaganda, rhetoric, and hate speech;	Unmet - Hostile propaganda particularly from the GoE through its official media and press agencies and production of films, supporters and activists continues, and to a limited hostile propaganda from Tigrayan generals and activists witnessed - Hostile rhetoric and hate speech continue	To end all forms of verbal hostilities: - Implement a joint monitoring system to track and take action on hostile content by both the GoE and TIRA - Develop a media observatory of independent press experts and lawyers to oversee hostile propaganda, rhetoric and hate speech and report the same to the public for correction - Establish a multi-stakeholder peace communication forum
	4	The Permanent Cessation of Hostilities shall pave the way for the restoration of the constitutional order in the Tigray Region and political dialogue between the Parties;	Met - GoE institutions placed in Tigray - TIRA established Unmet - Constitutional territories of Tigray not restored - No regular political dialogue for sustaining peace	- Established regular political dialogue between Tigray and GoE - Implement a clear timetable for return to status quo ante – territories, IDPs, refugees and return to federal institutions
	5	The Parties agree to restore the presence of federal authority in Mekelle in order to create a conducive environment for the resumption of public services in the region as well as to ensure the safety of the inhabitants of the city. To this effect, the Parties agree that the ENDF and other relevant Federal Institutions shall have an expeditious, smooth, peaceful, and coordinated entry into Mekelle, which shall be facilitated through the open communication channel to be established between the senior commanders of the Parties as per Article 6 (c) of this Agreement.	Met - Presence of federal authority in Mekelle restored - Open communication channels between senior commanders of GoE and TIRA Partially met - Conducive environment for resumption of public services - Reports of the killing and kidnapping civilians	
Protection of Civilians				
Article 4	1	The Parties shall protect the human rights of the civilian population and commit to upholding applicable international humanitarian law instruments to which Ethiopia is a party;	Partially met: - Mass atrocities and fatalities have ended Unmet - Violation of human rights of IDPs and refugees continues - Mines continue to kill civilians including children - Criminal killings of civilians in towns and rural areas reported due to weak enforcement mechanisms	To ensure effective protection of civilians: - Implement the recommendations on justice and accountability - Support CSOs to monitoring and issue report on violations - Launch a comprehensive demining and UXO clearance - Allocate adequate budget for protection of human rights - Take punitive measures on those involved in criminal activities

	2	The Parties shall, in particular, condemn any act of sexual and gender-based violence, any act of violence against children, girls, women and the elderly, including recruitment and conscription of child soldiers, and support family reunification	Unmet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No official condemnation - Recruitment and conscription of child soldiers continues - No adequate leadership effort and allocation of resources made to support family reunification 	To this effect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issue immediate and unequivocal official condemnations - Support CSOs to monitoring and issue report on violations - Work with ICRC and UN agencies to protect and unify families - Budget support for victims of sexual violence and vulnerable
Article 5	Humanitarian Access			
	1	The Government of FDRE shall expedite the provision of humanitarian aid in collaboration with humanitarian agencies taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable groups including women, children and the elderly; The Parties shall cooperate to this effect;	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to humanitarian aid in areas under TIRA - Inadequate provision of humanitarian aid for IDPs Unmet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of humanitarian aid for people in occupied areas - No specific humanitarian aid provision for vulnerable 	TIRA and GoE need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call international aid agencies to increase aid in Tigray - Mobilise more aid from the diaspora for those in need - Facilitate the return of Tigray territories and IDPs and refugees - Aid priority to on vulnerable groups including children
	2	The Parties undertake to cooperate among themselves and with the relevant humanitarian agencies to assist in reuniting families;	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many families remain separated in occupied areas - Cooperation with ICRC is ongoing - Many orphans and child led IDP household in many sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement comprehensive family tracing and reunification programme - Address orphans and child led IDP households - Implement above-listed recommendations on status quo ante
	3	The Government of FDRE undertakes to facilitate the return and reintegration of internally displaced persons and refugees, whenever the security situation permits;	Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Return facilitated where security has been fully restored 	To ameliorate these issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depolitise the return of IDPs and refugees to their HLP
			Partially Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spontaneous return of many IDPs without reintegration support or to insecure areas - Inconsistent support services and limited humanitarian aid (healthcare, education, livelihoods) for returnees Unmet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close 1 million IDPs still remain displace and in sites due to lack of security particularly in occupied areas - No HLP restitution for many returnee IDPs and refugees - Use of IDPs as pawn for political competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement above-listed recommendations on status quo ante - Ensure respect for international standards in the return process - Collaborate with local communities to prevent renewed displacement - Provide reintegration support for those returning includes restitution to their HLP or compensation thereof - Collaborate with the UN and humanitarian actors, NGOs, and displaced communities

	4	The Parties shall ensure that humanitarian aid is used only for humanitarian purposes.	<p>Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Humanitarian aid delivery monitored - Ended aid suspension after reports of aid diversion <p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less reported use of aid for political and military gain <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Occupied areas remain in accessible and humanitarian aid used for political purpose - Political based fuel restriction impacting aid access 	<p>Ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect principles and laws governing humanitarian aid - Prosecution of diversion of aid - Lift restrictions on fuel access to civilian work - Work closely with the UN and other international and local humanitarian work agencies
Article 6	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)			
	a	Agree and recognize that the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has only one defence force;	<p>Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ENDF recognised by TDF and TIRA <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ENDF has expunged Tigrayans from all its file and ranks 	<p>To establish a single national defense force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure Tigray representation in the security sector - Establish strict oversight and monitor - Promote transparency in military operations and civilian control
	b	Shall design and implement a comprehensive DDR program for TPLF Combatants consistent with the Constitution of the FDRE;	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DDR begun though discontinued after the first rounds <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No DDR with adequate reintegration package - No DDR for Amhara forces occupying Tigray territories 	<p>To realize a meaningful DDR, parties need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commence the DDR with focus on the reintegration packages - Provide clear timelines for DDR process - Secure sustained funding for DDR
	c	Agree that within 24 hours of the signing of this Agreement, an open channel of communication between senior commanders of both sides will be established;	<p>Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Channel formally established between senior military commanders right after the agreement - Initial meetings or calls held <p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication established but lacks clear 	<p>To promote open communication, parties should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop communication protocols for secure operations - Establish joint security mechanism with representatives from ENDF and Tigray forces - Revitalize the Pretoria agreement to provide peace guarantors
	d	Agree to organize a meeting of senior commanders within 5 days from the signing of this Agreement to discuss and work out detailed modalities for disarmament for the TPLF combatants, taking into account the security situation on the ground;	<p>Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings of senior commanders conducted <p>Partially Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modalities discussed without written protocol - Initial site visits and on-ground assessments done <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DDR interrupted due to political differences and mistrust 	<p>To objectify meeting of senior commanders, parties should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain the communications and trust building meetings - Resume DDR with verifiable milestones and timelines - Conduct joint security assessments before finalizing locations

	e	Agree to undertake the disarmament of the heavy armaments of the TPLF combatants as a matter of priority based on a detailed schedule to be agreed upon between the senior commanders of the Parties. The disarmament activities in the schedule should be completed within ten days from the conclusion of the meeting of the senior commanders. The ten-day period could be extended based on the recommendation of the senior commanders, to be endorsed by the Parties.	<p>Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disarmament schedule drafted - Some heavy weapons handed over <p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See above on DDR interruption and inadequate package - Implementation remains incomplete due to insecurity and logistical issues <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disarmament without securing stalled implementation - Lack of reliable monitoring mechanism hindering trust 	<p>To this end:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjust sequencing based on stability needs - Address political and security problems before resuming DDR - Set new monitoring and verification mechanisms with realistic timeframes and clear benchmarks as part of revitalised CoHA
	f	Agree to finalize the overall disarmament of the TPLF	Partially met	<p>To effect disarmament of light weaponry, parties should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commence political dialogue to address DDR delays
		combatants, including light weapons within 30 days from the signing of this Agreement;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disarmament delays occurred due to technical and political issues. <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Light weapons disarmament remained incomplete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revitalise implementation mechanism for CoHA including DDR - Agree on security guarantees and reintegration incentives - Ensure Tigrayan safety and disarmed combatants
	g	Agree that the demobilization and reintegration plan will consider the Tigray Region's law-and-order needs.	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In paper, DDR takes law-and-order needs into account <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In practice, DDR failed to take security threats to Tigray from Eritrea and Amhara forces in occupied areas - Limited resources allocated for reintegration - No clear mechanism to ensure transition of fighters to regional security forces functions. 	<p>To ensure Tigray law-and-order needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement the above listed recommendations - Conduct independent security needs assessment in Tigray - Build the capacity of regional security forces in human rights - Conduct security screening for those joining security forces - Ensure civilian and non-partisan nature of the security forces
Article 7	Confidence-building measures			
	1) The TPLF shall:			
	a	Respect the constitutional authority of the Federal Government, all constitutional bodies and organs of the Federal Government, the Federal Government to control all federal boundaries of the country;	<p>Partially met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition declared yet tensions remain high - Unmet - Occupation of Tigray areas in violation of the constitution - Reported alliance between Tigrayan commanders and TPLF with EDF 	<p>To ensure Constitutional authority acceptable to both sides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commence political dialogue on all aspects of CoHA - Revitalise implementation mechanism for CoHA - Return to status quo ante

	b	Refrain from aiding and abetting, supporting, or collaborating with any armed or subversive group in any part of the country;	Unmet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both parties continued in proxy subversive activities - TPLF and Tigray commanders accused of alliance with EDF and Fano - GoE supporting Amhara armed groups such as Tekeze Zeb and the TDF splinter group called TPF 	To minimize and avoid subversive activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement the above listed recommendations - Revitalise implementation mechanism for CoHA
	c	Respect the constitutional mandate of the Federal Government to deploy the Ethiopia National Defence Force as well as federal security	Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GoE deployed forces in Federal institutions Unmet	Key actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement the above listed recommendations - Revitalise implementation mechanism for CoHA - Ensure Federal and Tigrayan forces comply with humanitarian law and the constitution
		and law enforcement agencies to discharge their responsibilities under the Constitution, relevant laws, and regulations;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GoE failed to defend Tigray population in border from EDF - GoE failed to discharge its duties removing armed groups in occupied areas 	
	d	Refrain from conscription, training, deployment, mobilization, or preparation for conflict and hostilities;	Unmet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On both sides, there are conscription, training, deployment, mobilization, or preparation for conflict and hostilities 	Key actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address security dilemma through trust building measures - De-escalate through confidence building actions - Cease mobilisation of forces including conscription
	e	Halt any conduct that undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia including unconstitutional correspondence and relations with foreign powers;	Unmet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TPLF and Tigray commanders accused of unofficial communications and visits to Eritrea and Fano 	Key actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement the above listed recommendations - Revitalise implementation mechanism for CoHA
	f	Cease all attempts of bringing about an unconstitutional change of government.	Unmet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On both sides, war propaganda and deep distrust reflected - On both sides are in politico-military mobilisation 	To encourage constitutionalism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement above listed recommendations - Revitalise implementation mechanism for CoHA
	2) The Government of the FDRE shall:			
	a	Halt military operations targeting the TPLF combatants;	Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No military operation against TPLF or Tigray forces Unmet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drone attack on Tigray forces camp 	To ensure hostilities are halted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement above listed recommendations - Revitalise implementation mechanism for CoHA
	b	Expedite and coordinate the restoration of essential services in the Tigray region within agreed timeframes;	Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many public services restored Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restrictions on fuel access continues affecting all sectors - Some public services are yet to be restored due damages 	Key actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restore all services - Lift restrictions on access to fuel - Rebuild infrastructure for public service - Implement above listed recommendations
	c	Facilitate the lifting of the terrorist designation of the TPLF	Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GoE lifted TPLF's "terrorist" designation 	Key actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrate TPLF into political process through dialogue

		by the House of Peoples' Representatives;	Unmet - No transparency in the process of reintegration of TPLF into legal politics	
	d	Mobilize and expedite humanitarian assistance for all those in need in the Tigray Region and other affected areas, and ensure unhindered humanitarian access.	- See article 7(d)	Key actions: - Redouble and mobilise humanitarian aid - Ensure access for sustained humanitarian aid - Lift fuel restriction
Article 8	International Boundaries and Federal Facilities			
	1	The ENDF shall be deployed along Ethiopia's international boundaries.	Partially met - The Federal authority is placed in key federal institutions in TIRA controlled and occupied areas Unmet - No ENDF in border areas of Tigray with Eritrea	Ethiopia's international boundaries. - Deploy ENDF in international boundaries - Return to status quo ante
	2	The ENDF shall safeguard the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of the Country from foreign incursion and ensure that there will be no provocation or incursion from either side of the border;	Met - No progress Partially met - Federal authorities placed in key federal institutions Unmet - No ENDF in Tigray areas bordering Eritrea - No end to ENDF Command Posts in occupied areas	Key actions as above - Deploy ENDF in international boundaries - Return to status quo ante
	3	The ENDF, the Federal Police, and other federal security organs shall take full and effective control of national airspace, aviation safety and security, and all federal facilities, installations, and major Infrastructure such as airports and highways within the Tigray Region.	Met - Federal control of airspace and federal institutions Partially met - Highways face serious security disruption in border areas of Tigray with Eritrea, Afar and Amhara	Key action - Ensure continued safety federal facilities
Article 9	Restoration of Federal Authority in the Tigray Region and representation in federal institutions			
	1	The Parties agree on the restoration of Federal Authority in the Tigray Region, including control of federal institutions and agencies;	See article 7 above	

	2	The Federal Government shall ensure and facilitate the representation of the Tigray region in the federal institutions, including the House of Federation, and the House of Peoples' Representatives, in accordance with the FDRE Constitution and applicable laws.	<p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No representation of Tigray in any of the federal institutions - Appointment of Tigrayans in GoE with no constituency or legitimacy in Tigray 	<p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement recommendations under 2(e)
Article 10	Transitional Measures			
	1	Within a week of the implementation of Article 7 (2) (c) and until elections for the Regional Council and the House of Peoples' Representatives are held under the supervision of the Ethiopian National Election Board, the establishment of an inclusive Interim Regional Administration will be settled through political dialogue between the Parties;	<p>Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TIRA has been formed <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TIRA was and still remains exclusive of political parties - TIRA cabinet was dislodged by TDF commanders aligned to a faction of TPLF 	<p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reconstitute TIRA to reflect new political realities in Tigray - Implement recommendations under 2 (e) - Create internationally recognised independent electoral body
	2	A week after the implementation of Article 7 (2) (c) the Parties shall start a political dialogue to find lasting solutions to the underlying	<p>Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media reports of meetings between GoE, TIRA and TPLF <p>Unmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No sincere, regular and structured political dialogue to address the root causes 	<p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement recommendations under article 10 (2) above - Commence sincere and regular political dialogue to address the political root causes of the war and reconstitute TIRA

		political differences between them;	- Reconstitute TIRA need to be after such dialogue	
	3	The Government of Ethiopia shall implement a comprehensive national transitional justice policy aimed at accountability, ascertaining the truth, redress for victims, reconciliation, and healing, consistent with the Constitution of FDRE and the African Union Transitional Justice Policy Framework. The transitional justice policy shall be developed with inputs from all stakeholders, and civil society groups through public consultations and formal national policy-making processes.	See above on articles 1(7) and 2(f)	See above on articles 1(7) and 2(f)
	4	The Parties commit to resolving issues of contested areas in accordance with the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Met - No progress in return of areas occupied by Eritrean and Amhara forces Unmet - Tigray constitutional territories remain under the occupation of Eritrean and Amhara forces	Key actions: - Return to status quo ante mainly return to pre-war boundaries
Article	Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance			
11	1	The Parties agree to institute a monitoring, verification, and compliance mechanism for the effective implementation of the Permanent Cessation of	Met - AU Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mission (AU MVCAM) was formed and deployed to Mekelle on January 4, 2023. ²	
		Hostilities. For this purpose, the Parties agree to establish a Joint Committee comprising a representative from each part representative from IGAD and chaired by the African Union through the High-Level Panel. The Joint Committee shall be assisted by a team of African Experts;	Partially met - Media report issues on the work of MVCAM Unmet - No official and public report was issued by MVCAM and its fate not known now	

² <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/the-african-union-successfully-deploys-the-full-team-of-its-monitoring-verification-and-compliance-mission-in-mekelle-tigray-region-of-ethiopia>

2	The AU, through the High-Level Panel, shall appoint a team of African experts to monitor the implementation of the permanent cessation of hostilities agreed upon under Article 3 of this Agreement. The Parties shall appoint one expert each to work with the team of African Experts;	- Same above	For effective mentoring and oversight of compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a new robust Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) to produce regular, transparent reports on violations - Set new monitoring and verification mechanisms with realistic timeframes and clear benchmarks as part of revitalised CoHA
3	The AU, through the High Level Panel shall consult with the Parties regarding the terms of reference and the profile of the Experts;	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AU deployed African military and civilian experts from Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa to monitor the Tigray COHA implementation. 	Same as above
4	The specific functions of the experts, including those with a military background, shall be agreed upon between the Parties and the AU, through the High-Level Panel;	No ToR was publicised	Same as above
5	The number of experts shall not exceed ten (10). If additional experts are needed, this shall be agreed upon with the Parties;	Same as article 11 (5) above	Same as above
6	The duration of the mandate of the experts shall be six months from the date the experts are deployed. This period could be extended upon agreement with the Parties;	Met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mandate of MVCM was extended twice until December 2024. 	Same as above
7	The AU, through the High-Level Panel may, in agreement with the Parties, augment the work of the experts with satellite imagery;	No official report so far made on this.	Same as above
8	Whenever the team of experts finds instances of violation of the cessation of hostilities, they will inform the concerned party to take immediate measures to rectify the violation;	Unmet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - So far no official report on violations was made public, 	Same as above

	9	They will also inform the other party and a Joint Committee of any communication under the preceding sub-article. If the violation is not rectified within 24 hours, the AU, through the High-Level Panel, will convene the Joint Committee to resolve the problem.	- So far no report on submission on unrectified violations	
Article 12	Good Faith Implementation			
	1	The Parties undertake to implement this Agreement in good faith and to refrain from any action that undermines and/or is inconsistent with the spirit and letter of this Cessation of Hostilities;	See above on article 2(k)	Same as on article 2(k)
	2	The Parties shall promote the objectives of the Cessation of Hostilities.	See above under article 3(2)	See recommendations under article 1, 2 and 3
Article 13	Joint Statement and communication			
	1	The Parties shall issue a joint statement on the importance of this Agreement and their joint commitment to work towards peace and stability in the country;	Met - Both parties and TIRA later on issued their commitment and the need to implement the Pretoria Agreement Unmet: - No joint statement was issued publicly	Key actions: - Structured political dialogue between the signatories, and between the armed and security forces of the two sides - Take confidence and trust-building measures between the two sides and jointly announce the same publicly - GoE and TPLF should desist from use and being used as a proxy force
	2	The Parties commit not to make any unilateral statement, in any form, that could undermine this Agreement;	Unmet - Both sides continue to make statements, broadcast shows and movies that contravene the CoHA	Same as article 3 (2)
		All public statements, in any form, by the Parties shall support the Agreement and prepare the ground for implementation.	Unmet - Both sides continue to violate this provision by engaging hostile propaganda	Same as above.