

# The extension of TIRA & The appointments of New Tigray President

*This TADAUK editorial commentary is on the Federal Government's Manipulations and Shortcomings in the 8-Point Mandate for Tigray's New President*

09 April 2025

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Congratulations to Lt General Tadesse Worede on his nomination as President of the Tigray Interim Regional Administration (TIRA). This appointment comes at a pivotal yet challenging time for Tigray, as the region navigates complex transitions, external pressures, and attempts to undermine its aspirations. Your leadership will be vital in uniting resilience against intrigue and subversion while steering Tigray toward stability, healing, and equitable progress. May your vision and resolve inspire hope and solidarity as the people of Tigray confront these formidable obstacles with courage and unity

The recent appointment of Lt. General Tadesse Worede as Tigray's interim president and the subsequent 8-point mandate issued by the Ethiopian federal government have sparked intense debate. While the Pretoria Agreement (November 2022) laid the groundwork for peace by addressing territorial disputes, demilitarisation, and accountability, the federal government's latest framework for Tigray's governance glaringly omits critical provisions.

This analysis critiques the federal government's deliberate manipulations, including its evasion of territorial restoration, failure to ensure the withdrawal of non-ENDF forces, and systemic marginalisation of Tigray's constitutional rights.

## **A- Overview of the Pretoria Agreement's Core Commitments:**

The Pretoria Agreement, mediated by the African Union, sought to resolve the Tigray conflict through four pillars:

1. Cessation of Hostilities: Immediate end to fighting, with Tigrayan forces phased disarmament in exchange for federal security guarantees.
2. Territorial Restoration: Recognition of Tigray's pre-war borders, including contested areas like Western Tigray (Welkait).
3. Withdrawal of Foreign Forces: Eritrean troops and Amhara militias were to exit Tigray.
4. Humanitarian Access and Accountability: Unrestricted aid delivery and transitional justice mechanisms.

The 8-point mandate, however, undermines these pillars through omissions and ambiguities.

## **B: Key Missing Areas in the 8-Point Mandate:**

### **1. Silence on Territorial Restoration**

The Pretoria Agreement explicitly required the restoration of Tigray's "constitutional territorial boundaries," which include Western Tigray, a region under Amhara militia occupation since 2020. The 8-point mandate avoids this issue entirely, effectively legitimising Amhara's illegal annexation. By excluding territorial restoration, the federal government violates both the Pretoria terms and Ethiopia's constitution (Article 39), which grants regional states the right to territorial integrity. This omission sets a dangerous precedent for ethnic-based land claims nationwide.

### **2. No mention of the Non-ENDF Force Withdrawal:**

Despite the Pretoria Agreement's demand for the "disarmament and withdrawal of foreign and non-ENDF forces," the mandate fails to address the continued presence of Eritrean troops in Northeastern Tigray and Amhara militias in Western Tigray. Reports from the UN and Human Rights Watch

(2023–2024) confirm Eritrea’s ongoing occupation, which has enabled extrajudicial killings and resource looting. The federal government’s refusal to name these actors—or pressure them to withdraw—exposes its complicity in destabilising Tigray.

### **3. Imbalanced Disarmament Obligations:**

While Tigrayan forces are expected to fully disarm per the agreement, the mandate lacks reciprocal commitments to demilitarise Amhara and Eritrean forces. This asymmetry echoes the federal government’s longstanding bias, treating Tigray as a defeated entity rather than a constitutionally equal region & negotiations equal partners. Without mutual disarmament, Tigray remains vulnerable to security vacuums and reprisal attacks which are confirmed by international justice groups, including the OHRC. The establishment of the Tekeze Birgade in Western Tigray clearly violated the Pretoria Agreement and Tigray constitution.

### **4. Weak Provisions of Federal Budget for Tigray and abandoning Reconstruction**

**Commitments:** (read Pretoria Agreement). Though the mandate pays lip service to “accelerating reconstruction,” it offers no concrete plans to address Tigray’s devastation. Over 90% of Tigray’s healthcare infrastructure remains destroyed, and 5.4 million people need food aid (UN OCHA, 2024). The federal government has yet to release funds for recovery by stifling Tigray’s autonomy (Silent siege and encirclement)

### **5. Erosion of Tigray’s Political Autonomy:**

The mandate centralises power by requiring federal approval for Tigray’s legislative and administrative decisions, including appointment of the President from 4 kilo. For instance, Point 3 mandates “close collaboration with federal institutions” for internal security, undermining Tigray’s right to self-rule under Ethiopia’s Regional States Federalist System. This violates Article 50 of the constitution, which grants regions control over local governance.

### **6. Absence of Transitional Justice Mechanisms:**

The Pretoria Agreement called for a “conclusive transitional justice policy” to address atrocities. However, the 8-point mandate reduces justice to vague “reconciliation efforts,” ignoring demands for accountability. The mentioned Peace and reconciliation commission lacks authority to investigate or prosecute war crimes. Its mandate is limited to vague “peacebuilding” and “dialogue,” with no mention of holding perpetrators accountable. This ignores the Pretoria Agreement’s call for a “transitional justice policy” and the demands of Tigrayan survivors, 94% of whom prioritise justice over reconciliation (Tigray Bar Association survey, 2023). Without legal consequences for atrocities, the commission becomes a tool to whitewash history. The people of Tigray never accepted this commission as an independent body. Yet, President Tadesse signed the 8 points document to work with this commission. This is a betrayal to the people of Tigray and the victims of Federal Government atrocities in Tigray and the rest of Ethiopia. Reconciliation Without Justice is a Betrayal. Neither Eritrean commanders nor federal officials implicated in war crimes face scrutiny, perpetuating a culture of impunity.

## **C. Federal Government’s Manipulations**

### **1. Complicity in Eritrea’s Occupation:**

The federal government has consistently downplayed Eritrea’s role, despite evidence of its troops engaging in ethnic cleansing in Western Tigray. By refusing to condemn or expel Eritrean forces, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed prioritised political expediency over Tigrayan lives, betraying the Pretoria Agreement.

**2. Endorsement of Amhara Annexation and Arming the Tekeze Birgade** - Amhara militias, backed by federal forces, have institutionalised their occupation through forced resettlement, land grabs, and exclusion of Tigrayans from Western Tigray. The federal government’s silence legitimises

this annexation, violating international law and inflaming inter-ethnic tensions. Recent mobilisation of the Tekeze Birgade is a clear violation of the Pretoria Agreement.

### **3. Centralisation of Power**

The mandate's bureaucratic hurdles—such as requiring federal approval for regional policies—neuter Tigray's autonomy. This aligns with Abiy's broader agenda of replacing the federal system with a centralized system, marginalising regions like Tigray and Oromia. It is disheartening to see some Tigrayan leaders bowing to Abiy Ahmed, the very person accused of perpetuating Tigrayan genocide!

### **4. Weaponising Federal Budget and Services:**

The deliberate withholding of budget critical for public services, commerce and governance—reflects punitive measures designed to keep Tigray dependent on Addis Ababa. Such tactics contravene the Pretoria Agreement's spirit of reconciliation.

#### **D: Implications**

The 8-point mandate reveals the federal government's bad faith in implementing the Pretoria Agreement. By ignoring territorial disputes, enabling foreign occupation, and eroding Tigray's autonomy, Abiy's administration risks reigniting conflict. The international community must pressure Ethiopia to:

- ❖ Enforce the withdrawal of Eritrean and Amhara forces.
- ❖ Restore Tigray's pre-war borders.
- ❖ Return internally displaced persons urgently
- ❖ Fund reconstruction without political conditions.
- ❖ Establish an independent transitional justice process.

Without these steps, the mandate serves as a tool of subjugation, not peace.. All political parties and civil societies in Tigray must resist this fascistic federal hegemony. Tigray's survival as a constitutional entity hinges on resisting federal overreach and demanding full adherence to the Pretoria Agreement.

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