

## The Global Society of Tigray Scholars and Professionals (GSTS)<sup>1</sup>

### Proposals for Consideration in the Formation of the Interim Administration of Tigray

#### Introduction

1. This proposal builds on GSTS's Position Statement released on January 31, 2023, which underscores the importance of a political transition that is inclusive, transparent, credible, and accountable to safeguard Tigray's vital interests, ensure non-repetition of genocidal war, leverage all capacities, and create a foundation for democracy, good governance, institution building, and development in the region.
2. The purpose of this document is not to dictate the transition process, but to present proposals and options to support the process and help shape the establishment of an effective interim government in Tigray based on successful practices and experiences. As a scientific community, the GSTS emphasizes that the steps taken to form the interim government, its composition and mandate require extraordinary care and consideration. In this spirit, the GSTS outlines below what it considers to be the key principles and pillars that should govern the formation of the transitional arrangement in Tigray. The GSTS believes that these proposals could also feed into an interim charter detailing the nature, mandate, structure, scope, and allocation of powers.
3. Although it is difficult to draw direct parallels, as the particular context in Tigray is different in scope and nature because the transition is occurring at a regional level and power sharing is not among belligerents, the best experiences can be drawn by building upon the successes and learning from the failures of various countries' interim-government arrangements. With this in mind, this proposal is developed through critical consideration of the realities in Tigray and the experiences (both successes and failures) of interim governments in various countries around the world. [See Annex 1](#) for the cases studied.

#### Inclusion and Representation

4. As the saying goes, “How you climb a mountain is more important than reaching the top,” the process of how the Interim Government is established will determine the level of acceptance of its mandate thereafter to establish an elected, functional, and stable government of Tigray. To this end, the committee established to nominate and establish the Interim Government (nomination committee) needs to be transparent, inclusive and accepted by all key stakeholders ([Listed in #8 below](#)).

<sup>1</sup>GSTS is a 501(C) and 33/2011 legally registered non-partisan, not-for-profit network knowledge network operating all over the world. With over 5,000 members, (approximately 1/5 of whom are PhD holders), GSTS is the largest and most active academic and professional association in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Since the onset of the war on Tigray on 4th November 2020, GSTS has been engaged in research-based fact finding; data collection and documentation, legal analysis and interpretation, and humanitarian advocacy surrounding human rights violations, amounting to war of aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide perpetrated against the Tigrayan people.

The mandate of the committee should be stipulated clearly as follows:

- a. Develop a roadmap from the establishment of the Interim Government to an Elected Government and make the roadmap publicly available;
  - b. Engage all key segments of the Tigrayan society, gather their grievances, needs, capacities and aspirations;
  - c. Create a system that engages all key stakeholders to nominate potential candidates for the Interim Administration;
  - d. Outline a timeline for key milestones and deliverables, communicate to all stakeholders and the public regularly, and ensure that concerns raised by stakeholders are addressed timely and transparently;
  - e. Establish and declare the Interim Government according to the agreed procedures.
5. Although a transparent and inclusive process, as detailed above, should have been used to form the Tigray Interim Administration Establishing Committee (hereafter the Committee), the recent formation of the nine-member nominating committee lacked transparency and inclusivity of the involvement of relevant stakeholders. Hence, immediate corrective action needs to be taken to safeguard the legitimacy of the process and ensure public trust.
6. Inclusion in this case is about fair representation of a diversity of views and about ensuring equal opportunity for all political actors and the public at large. Inclusion can be achieved either through the direct participation of individuals and groups in the affairs of the interim government or through the effective representation of different key stakeholders in the structure of the interim administration and its institutions, or both. The institutions including the Council, executive body, judiciary, and others should genuinely reflect the political, social, economic, religious, cultural, and localities representation realities of Tigray.

### **Inclusivity of the interim Council as a big tent for all Tigray stakeholders**

7. The Council (or whatever name it may take) may serve as the highest authority of the interim administration and is accountable to the people of Tigray. This body requires the highest level of representation where the will and aspirations of the people are exercised at the top level of authority. Political inclusion and active participation of all stakeholders at the Council level are critical for the success of the transition. For this reason, the Council should be constituted from all key stakeholders – so that no single party or group should have a majoritarian power to solely dictate critical decision-making processes. The Council should adopt the principle of “consensus-based decision making” for critical and strategic issues that determine the future of Tigray during the transitional period.

## Primary Responsibilities of the Interim Administration

8. **Primary responsibilities of the Interim Administration shall include, among others,:**
- a. restore peace and stability in Tigray;
  - b. ensure the security of the population;
  - c. expedite the relief, protection, voluntary and dignified repatriation of refugees and return of IDPs and their land, home, and property;
  - d. mobilise and facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid and post-genocide healing and development;
  - e. reconstitute, transform and strengthen the rule of law, justice, and security sector including regulatory, police, and enforcement functions;
  - f. reconstitute administrative structures in all parts of Tigray;
  - g. ensure accountability and effective remedies for victims of and community affected by the atrocity crimes;
  - h. make all necessary preparations for democratic, free, competitive and peaceful elections;
  - i. work closely with local, national, regional and international partners to mobilise resources to consolidate peace and develop Tigray;
  - j. ensure prudent, transparent and accountable management of public affairs and public resources to build Tigray and promote the welfare of the people, particularly women, children, the elderly and IDPs;

## Term of Interim Period

9. The Interim Administration of Tigray shall commence its functions as soon as possible, not later than 30 days after an agreement between representatives of the stakeholders in a constitutive assembly.
10. The term of office of the Interim Administration of Tigray shall be a maximum of forty (40) months. Its mandate and function shall be mutatis mutandis, the same as provided in the Tigray Constitution.
11. The Interim Administration shall hold Elections sixty (60) days before the end of the interim period.

## Key Stakeholders

12. At least, the following stakeholders should be fairly represented at the interim Council:
  - a. **Tigray Defense Forces (TDF):** Tigray's army is believed to be a true reflection of the people of Tigray as it has managed to rally Tigrayans from all walks of life across the political, geographic, faith or social spectrums. Their representation in the Council is key not only for what they have contributed and achieved but also to promoting genuine inclusivity. It is also important that the representation of the army takes into consideration its internal diversity including gender, age, religion, education, geographical aspects within Tigray and any other relevant aspects.
  - b. **Political parties:** All registered political parties that are organized and led by Tigrayans and who have a stake in the interest of Tigray should be represented

in the Council. They should also engage in the process of the Council's formation, and their level of representation should be determined through negotiation among all parties on equal footing/voice.

- c. **Faith Organisations:** Religious leaders and organisations based in Tigray have a significant influence on society and the representation of all faith-based organisations in the Council can promote not only inclusivity but can also play an important role in mobilizing the society towards a smooth and effective transition.
- d. **Communities:** representations of the rural and urban communities, including internally displaced people (IDPs).
- e. **Minority Communities:** Minority communities including the Kunama and Irob who have endured the worst atrocities in the genocidal war need fair representation in the interim Council of Tigray so that their voices are heard, and their interests are duly protected.
- f. **Scholars and professional associations:** Tigray Scholars and professionals associations such as the GSTS and other similar bodies should be represented in the Council to provide thought leadership, research, and technical assistance.
- g. **Civil Society Organizations:** Civil society organisations including civic associations (of specific interest groups such as women, farmers, the youth, and business communities) and others that have a stake in Tigray should be represented in the Council to support the smooth and effective transition of Tigray.
- h. **Tigrayans in the diaspora:** Tigrayans in the diaspora are in the hundreds of thousands and have contributed to the resistance struggle in many ways and a good number of its members have accumulated knowledge, experiences and networks that can benefit the transition of Tigray, particularly in terms of leveraging the diplomatic and international community as well as mobilizing resources. Representation of the Diaspora in the Council is, therefore, of paramount importance.
- i. **Notable/prominent individuals:** These are members of the society who have built good relations with the international community, influence the process with their wise counsel and serve as envoys around the globe. They are likely to have less ambition for power and are often relatively neutral and independent but have breadth and depth of experiences that the Council can benefit from. Appointing figures who will agree not to seek or be eligible to hold political positions after the interim period expires brings extra domestic and external legitimacy to the arrangement.
- j. **Special consideration for communities in all border areas** who have carried the brunt of the war and will continue to suffer its consequences is necessary.
- k. **Tigrayans residing in the rest of Ethiopia:** adequate representation of Tigrayan communities, totalling no less than 1.5 million, across the rest of Ethiopia who suffered and continue to suffer and are directly impacted by policies related to Tigray.

## **Effectiveness, Transparency and Accountability**

13. Unlike the Council, the formation of the Executive Body should be based on effectiveness, efficiency, and merit.
14. The composition of the Executive Body should be determined by the performance of individuals who are capable of leading the transition effectively and efficiently. However, with due emphasis on track-record performance, delivery, integrity, determination, and commitment to the vital interests of Tigray, the Executive Body should also take into account fair representation.
15. The Executive Body should be composed of capable individuals based on objectively measurable meritocratic principles and guidelines. GSTS recommends the composition of members of the Executive Body to be largely technocrats who, preferably, will not seek political power in the upcoming election.
16. The process of forming the transitional arrangement and the performances of the interim administration and its bodies should be transparent. Transparency is key to building public trust and enables an open dialogue during and after the transitional arrangement is in place. To achieve this, continuous public consultation and stakeholder engagement, open public debates, clear communication channels, regular briefings, and public oversight mechanisms should take place. A cascaded system and mechanism for well-planned communication (and feedback loops) need to be set up between the committee, key stakeholders, and the public at large. Moreover, a mechanism for active solicitation of feedback (and ways of using them effectively) and keeping the feedback loop active are of paramount importance.
17. All media outlets should be allowed access to the transitional process, including the Committee, political parties, stakeholders, and other interest groups.
18. The process of the formation of the interim administration should be monitored and reviewed by both internal and public oversight mechanisms.

## **Formula for Allocation of Responsibilities**

19. The key measures for selecting members of the interim government should be inclusiveness of all key stakeholders and potential contribution toward ensuring peace and security, accountability, institution building, democracy, good governance and development for the renaissance of Tigray. In this regard, the selection of participants needs to consider their relative power to influence their respective constituencies as provided [under #4 above](#).
20. To ensure inclusiveness, it is recommended that an independent body maps out the key stakeholders of the Interim Administration in Tigray and develop a proposal for representation. GSTS is ready to contribute to this exercise. As an independent

scientific community, the GSTS has attempted to map the key stakeholders based on stakeholder analysis and by drawing on empirical lessons learned from other successful countries in the subject and tables it for discussion as follows.

- a. Participants in the Interim Administration must express total commitment to ensuring accountability, peace and security, institution building, democracy, territorial integrity, development, and resilience of Tigray. Participants of the IRA should also be competent to secure the vital interests of Tigray and chart a new path for Tigray.
- b. Accordingly, GSTS proposes participants from the following key stakeholders be drawn in the Interim Administration:
  - (i) Tigray Defense Forces (TDF): represented by those who are not members of any political party.
  - (ii) Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF)
  - (iii) Other Tigray-based political parties
  - (iv) Civil society organizations, associations, communities, and eminent personalities (diaspora associations, Tigray scholars and professional associations, faith-based organisations, representatives of CSOs based and registered in Tigray, eminent personalities, representatives of trade unions, representatives of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), representatives of direct victims of the war, minority communities including the Kunama and Irob and border communities, representatives of communities in the rest of Ethiopia such as Addis Ababa, representatives of urban and rural communities, etc.). Nominees from these entities should not be members of political parties.

## 21. Organs of Interim Administration

- a. The Council (Legislature) – big tent with 150-200 seats:
  - i. A Speaker and two Deputies, of which at least one should be a woman
  - ii. Guarantee at least 30% of members are women (also based on merit and fair representation within)
- b. Executive Body – lean, merit-based, effective, and efficient
  - i. 21-25 Cabinet Members
  - ii. A President and a cluster-based multi-vice president
  - iii. Equitable gender representation in the leadership
  - iv. Independent Commissions (Accountability and Remedies; Humanitarian and Post War Rehabilitation and Reconstruction; Return and Reintegration of IDPs and Refugees; Youth Training and Employment, Science and Technology, Women Empowerment and Support, Institutional Building, Constitutional Amendment and Democratic Institutional Development)
  - v. President, Vice President, Speakers, Bureau Heads, Commissioners and directors of special institutes will be selected by the members of the Interim Council based on merit.
- c. Interim Judiciary
  - i. 9-member supreme court with a President and two Vice Presidents



- ii. Supreme court judges and the presidents shall be selected based on merit among notable and independent jurists by the Cabinet and appointed after the confirmation vote of the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority from the Interim Council.
- d. Gender consideration: Guarantee that at least 30% of those nominated by stakeholders are women. However, this should also be based on merit.

## 22. Rationale: basis for the formation and allocation of responsibilities

### a. Basic Principles

- i. Ensure the establishment of an all-inclusive interim administration reflective of the new realities on the ground and the Tigrayan political community created in response to the resistance to the genocidal war.
  - ii. Ensure decision by consensus by denying any party a majority in key decision-making bodies and, simultaneously, avoid paralysis in administration.
  - iii. Encouraging a culture of democratic pluralism and deliberative democracy by including new political and military actors and reducing unnecessary power politics.
  - iv. Contribution to sustainable peace and security in Tigray and beyond.
  - v. Relative representation and power to influence their respective constituencies.
- b. Adopting a uniform ratio with respect to each branch and tier of government will help unify the region and is simpler to apply.
  - c. Accommodate all Tigrayan societies to be represented in all administration tiers.
  - d. Address concerns related to the financial implications of the interim administration.

## 23. Representation in the Interim Administration

- a. Responsibility sharing 25:25:20:30 formula will be applied as follows ([see Annex 2 for justifications](#)):
  - i. TDF will nominate 25%. TDF is more representative of Tigray (in demography, political affiliation, religion, age, and gender than any other entity)
  - ii. TPLF will nominate 25% considering its recent past and reality on the ground.
  - iii. All other political parties will nominate 20%.
  - iv. Civil society organizations, minorities, associations of various types and constituencies, communities, and eminent persons will nominate 30%.
- b. Representatives from TDF or CSOs should not be affiliated with any political parties and need to be sworn in under oath.
- c. This formula will apply to the Interim Council (legislative) and executive body at all administrative levels, including Woreda and other lower tiers.

## ANNEX

**Annex 1: List of countries and regions reviewed** include Spain (1975-1976), Fiji (1987), Romania (1989-1990), Lebanon (1989-1992), Bangladesh (1997-1999, 2007-2008), Albania (1991), Cambodia (1991-1993), El Salvador (1992-1994), Burundi (1992-1993, 2000-2005), Mozambique (1992-1994), Guatemala (1997), Tajikistan (1997-2000), Kosovo (1999-2000), South Africa (1993-1994), Indonesia (2005-2006), East Timor (1999-2002), Peru (2000-2001), Angola (2002-2008), Afghanistan (2001-2002), Liberia (2003-2005), Iraq (2003-2005), Togo (2006-2007), Nepal (2006-2008), Kenya (2008-2013), Zimbabwe (2009-2013), Guinea (2010), Kyrgyzstan (2010-2011), Tunisia (2011, 2013-2015), Libya (2011-2012), Egypt (2011), Ukraine (2014), CAR (2014-2016), Haiti (2016), Pakistan (2018), Sudan (2019), Bolivia (2019-2020), and South Sudan (2020-2023). Recent experiences of the caretaker government in Addis Ababa (2005) and the Prosperity Party-imposed transitional government in Tigray (2020) were also reviewed, and lessons were drawn from these experiences.

### **Annex 2: Stakeholders Inclusivity Matrix and Implementation Plan (to be developed if demanded)**

### **Annex 3: Justification for the proposed figures**

The stakeholder mapping exercise and responsibility-sharing formula take an approach based on a deep understanding of the region's political context and the objectives of the transition. The ultimate goal of this exercise is to ensure non-repetition of the genocidal war and to transition towards a more democratic political system that encompasses all political views and capacities in the region. As with any formula for responsibility-sharing, it is important to acknowledge that methodologically it may have limitations and is being proposed for consideration.

**TDF:** To some extent, the TDF is the closest approximation of an entity representing Tigrayans from all walks of life. First and foremost, it serves Tigray, not a specific political organization. Individuals can have their political preferences, but as an organized force it does not belong to a particular political organization. TDF is a popular resistance army of hundreds of thousands of members that grew fast to defend the people of Tigray from genocide. With experienced leadership, its iron discipline and tight command, control and communication make it an effective security force in the region. Like similar developments in military politics, the TDF had evolved and also represents the young generation. Not to mention the fact that key TDF leaders could be well-versed in the literature on civil-military relations. TDF is also Tigray's resistance force without which there could not be security which is the most overriding agenda for Tigray under the present circumstances. It is also a force for peace both due to its place in the implementation matrix, unavoidable interoperability with the ENDF and because of its peculiar location in the post-Pretoria Security Arrangements and the balance of forces underpinning the current contestation. In short, it is the custodian of Tigrayan security. Besides, its leadership somehow manages the 'Ethiopian file' in all its forms. It can arbitrate differences and keep the balance between the political forces. Short of dictation, the TDF could potentially be the guardian of the transition as well. TDF also potentially represents a new phase in the



consolidation of Tigray as a political community, created over the years by blood and soil, by signifying its latest reincarnation.

**TPLF:** TPLF is not only a major political force in Tigray. It is also an embodiment of the Tigrayan struggle for self-determination. A repository of Tigrayan gallantry and the quest for equality. Such a force cannot be easily ignored or side-lined short of violent confrontation which Tigray cannot afford and should be avoided at any cost. Tigray needs a change that is relatively predictable, given the enormous crisis of the two years of war. Approaches to the leadership should be in a manner that encourages a desire to support change and acceptance of a new role in the changing political dispensation.

Tigrayans would be equally mistaken to heed the siren calls in favour of legitimizing the failed status quo. The current status quo is untenable and undesirable. Likewise, seemingly rejectionist and confrontational agendas adopted by other political parties merit attention. Experience shows that many political leaders are not as good as they pretend particularly those that are not tested. There is a powerful maxim that “resisting or opposing is not the same as governing.” But that still does not change the fact that Tigray’s other parties deserve to be heard, supported, included in the new government or governance of Tigray in general, and given all the chance to prove themselves.

**Other political parties:** Representing diverse, young generation, and fresh ideological and policy options in Tigray, the Tigray other parties have been a part of the recent popular resistance struggle and remain a key stakeholder in Tigray representing their own constituency. Their inclusion in the interim government ensures an injection of new blood and a broad spectrum of political views, promotes political inclusivity and provides an opportunity for diverse and marginalized voices to contribute to the rebuilding of the region. The participation of other parties in the interim government can also contribute to strengthening democratic institutions.

**Civil society organisations, associations and various community sectors and eminent personalities:** often represent marginalized or underrepresented groups, such as women, minorities, or other marginalized groups. Their inclusion in the transitional government ensures that these groups have a voice in the rebuilding process and that their needs and concerns are taken into account. It is also the case that these sectors often have specific expertise and experience in areas such as human and civil rights, development and governance that are very useful in the region's transition to a more democratic and meritocratic system.

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