Negotiated peace in Africa: a case study on the Pretoria Peace Deal between Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Tigray Peoples Liberation Front

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ABSTRACT

There are many different methods to put an end to a battle, but traditionally, the majority have been settled either by victor's peace or diplomacy. Concessions, consensus building, and mutual trust are all necessary during negotiations to turn a combative scenario into a resolution. To avoid, manage, and resolve conflicts, regional and sub-regional organizations are essential in mediating disputes between disputing parties. This article explores the AU-led mediated peace accord on the bloody conflict between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, using the Pretoria Peace Accord as a case study. Using a technique of content analysis, the research critically evaluates the existing body of literature while exploring the subject in depth. The conclusions of the study indicate that the African Union (AU), through the efforts of Olusegun Obasanjo and other dignitaries, had a fundamental role in facilitating compromise and mutual confidence between the TPLF and the central government of Ethiopia in supporting the Pretoria peace agreement. The article concludes that the Pretoria Accord proves that negotiated peace would most probably give minimum negative peace, where no direct violence is allowed or exists. The article further suggests that regional organizations play an essential role in resolving conflicts, making sure they can, always, really provide effective arbitration of a given conflict between parties. Reaching the agreement and sustaining it entailed continuous

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diplomatic efforts with the involvement of neutral mediation. The findings point to the fact that despite the negative peace that negotiated peace brings in the short term, it sets the foundations for long-term reconciliation as well as positive peace. It also shows the farther effects of the Pretoria Peace Accord. It points out how the involvement of the AU portrays the notion of "African solutions to African problems," underlining the ability of regional organizations to address and resolve internal state conflicts. The report also underlines how indispensable it is for such regional efforts to be continually supported by foreign partners like the United States. This article concludes with an elaborate discussion of the African-negotiated peace process, specifically looking at the Pretoria Peace Accord. It sheds much light on the mechanics of regional mediation and the success of African Union engagement in the war in Ethiopia. A deeper comprehension of how negotiated peace may lead to long-term stability in the area and sustainable conflict settlement is made possible by the research.

Keywords: *Negotiation, negotiated peace, and Pretoria CoHA*.

Introduction

Considering that international groups insisted on dialogue and negotiated peace, there were 231 ongoing armed conflicts in 151 different sites worldwide between 1990 and 2005, following the end of World War II (Harbom et al., 2006). Moreover, the United Nations confirmation, that nearly 50% success rate of conflicts resolution through negotiated peace, precipitated the pledge for negotiated peace (Bell, 2008). This fact intern made negotiated peace to become standard approach for handling conflicts (Wallensteen & Eriksson, 2009). However, ending war through negotiation is not an easy endeavor. Negotiations entail some level of mutual trust, as well as compromises and consensus-building (Ibid). Furthermore, such negotiations, which aimed to ending conflict, the so called "end" may take many forms (Audebert-Lasrochas et al., 2005). For example, in some cases the 'end' may imply ending the killing, in other cases the 'end' could take the form of moving conflict from its violent to its political expression ; and still in other cases the 'end' may bring conflicting parties to a

total settlement of the issues, which is also known as conflict resolution).

Empirically speaking to Wallensteen & Eriksson, (2009), who employed the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) identified 128 large and small conflicts being fought in the world in the 20-year period (1989-2008). And the bulk of these conflicts, being intra-state, ended with negotiated peace. In the same way, Adetula et al. (2018), who used two years of peace agreements from the UN Peace Agreements Database between 2016 and 2018, identified 833 peace agreements worldwide, in which America participated in 124, Europe in 106, the Middle East and West Asia in 76, Asia and the Pacific in 176, and Africa in 351, accounting for 42% with majority of these peace deals ended with successes. Furthermore, according to a recent analysis by the Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, (2023), 39 peace procedures and discussions were recognized on a global scale throughout the year 2022.The investigation of these peace negotiations and their various circumstances discloses a wide range of facts and processes, as an outcome of the various character of the armed wars and socio-political disasters to which they are tied. These peace processes and negotiations include: the National Harmony Agreement for Haiti, which was signed by the government of Senegal and the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) faction led by Cesar Atoute Badiate, which established a peace agreement with various party-political groups, civic society groups, and the private sector for an all-encompassing shift and apparent determinations; the Peace Deal that was signed by the Ethiopian government and the political and armed experts of the Tigray region, which effectively "ended" the conflict between the two main actors in the conflict; and many more (Arı, 2023).

However, the focus of this article is on the peace agreement that was signed by the Ethiopian government and the political and military authorities of the Tigray region (Ibid.). Hitherto, it is imperative to recognize that "peace is notoriously hard to maintain among deadly enemies, but in some cases, it succeeds and in others it fails" (Analytica, 2024). The Objective of this article is not a

detailed investigation of these 38 negotiated peace treaties for the year 2022, nor is it a continent-specific exploration of peace treaties across Africa. Previously, the article focused on the negotiated peace between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Tigray military and political authorities led by the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) (Gebresenbet & Tariku, 2023b). The article is divided into five sections, the first of which is an introduction, the second of which is a literature review on negotiations and negotiated peace, the third of which is an overview of the Tigray conflict and the subsequent negotiations aimed at 'ending' the conflict, and the fourth of which is devoted to concluding remarks.

Negotiation and negotiated peace: state of the art

Although the name 'peace process' or 'negotiated peace' is relatively new, the principle is as old as conflict or war itself. Long ago, sophisticated links between ceasefires and peace talks were well established and acknowledged (Stepanova, 2023). Yet, there is no legal definition for the term 'peace agreement', 'peace accord', or "peace deal" (Bell, 2008). The term is also "largely undefined and unexplored". Bell further goes to assert that, the phrase "peace agreement," "peace accord," or "peace deal" is a colloquial term that encompasses treaties between two or more governments, agreements between state and non-state groups, and even domestic accords (Bell, 2008). If we solely define 'negotiation' alone and then combine it with peace, it can give us the full essence of negotiated peace, to do so it is vital to quote (Druckman & Wagner, 2017).

> Negotiating, bargaining, haggling, etc. are all terms that describe a similar action, namely seeking to reach an agreement through communication, in order to achieve a desired goal. These actions therefore require at least two persons or parties who desire the same goal, even if they each place a different value on it.

Thus, from this insight negotiated peace can be taken as a negotiation meant for bringing peace via ending conflict or war (Westendorf, 2015).

Historically speaking (Bell, 2008) noted during Roman times Livy talked of three types of agreement as peace agreements. The first type of agreement was that in which the victor-imposed terms on the conquered; the second when states equally matched in war concluded peace on a basis of equality; and the third when states that had never been at war came together to pledge mutual friendship in a treaty of alliance. These three definitions form a useful backdrop to the contemporary peace agreement, and questions of boundary definitions. As a practical matter, the contemporary label 'peace agreement' is most often attached to formally documented agreements between parties to a violent 'intrastate' conflict to establish a ceasefire and new or revised political and legal structures. In short, peace agreements are the codified terms of settlement reached by some or all conflict parties in order to terminate the conflict (Forster, 2019). On his part Pillar (1983) peace negotiation has several turning points and three questions to be answered. These include the when, what and the how questions.

Hitherto, the connection between negotiations and peace processes rests on two apparently straightforward and seemingly persuasive propositions. They are that tangible evidence of a commitment to peace on the part of the major combatants is needed to crate the right climate for negotiations to end violent political conflict and that the pursuit of negotiated settlements is needed to sustain any peace processes (Nilsson & Svensson, 2023). They imply a more or less symbiotic relationship between negotiations and peace itself lies through negotiations culminating in political settlement Overall Peace agreements are arrangements aimed at resolve conflicts and provide a new vision for inter-group and interstate relations at the regional, national, or local level (Turner, 2016). The link is rightly depicted by (Kuzmina et al., 2022):

> "The statement 'he who negotiates does not shoot' certainly contains an element of truth, but the reverse is also true: 'he

> who shoots does not negotiate'. In modern warlike conflicts… it can be observed that even during wartime, negotiations were nonetheless being conducted through third parties …"

Nonetheless negotiated peace does not provide peace in by itself, yet it can better apprehend as an initial step on the way to peace (Lyons, 2018). Furthermore, Hampson supposed "negotiated peace is little more than a road map to the peace process. A settlement indicates the direction the parties must move if they are to consolidate the peace, but it usually does not tell them how to get there, except in very general terms (Quoted in Lyons, 2018). Overall, negotiated peace should be understood and assessed in terms of the extent to which they create stable social, political, and security conditions in which political conflicts are no longer settled through violence (Westendorf, 2015).

When we look at the literature on theoretical viewpoints on the success of negotiated peace, we find that Westendorf (2015) identified bifurcated theoretical frameworks. The dichotomy encompasses the minimalist and maximalist approaches on opposite extremes, and Westendorf advocated a midway ground between the two and dubbed it "Minimalist + Politics." According to Westendorf's observations, a minimalist conception of success concentrates on physical security and the absence of war, or, in other words, the construction of a negative peace. The maximalist approach, on the other hand, judges' success by the extent to which a peace process generates a positive peace. This strategy comprises addressing the underlying causes of conflict, which necessitates a far broader spectrum of political, economic, social, and structural changes.

A closer examination of Westendorf, (2015) "Minimalist + Politics" approach necessitates a genuine engagement with the questions of what is actually required to consolidate peace in each specific context, and it may result in a more abstracted focus on establishing security and some basic governance parameters within

which institutions can be constituted and shaped by the community itself. In this article, chose neither the minimalist nor maximalist techniques in this essay, but we used the "Minimalist + Politics" approach to ensure the success of the negotiated peace between the two actors in the next sub-section. However, before entering into a negotiated settlement between these two parties, it is critical to understand a synopsis of the conflict in Ethiopia's northern region, and the following section is intended for such debate.

The Tigray conflict: An overview

Beginning in November 2020, Ethiopia's northernmost region has been the battleground of a civil war involving ethnic-regional militias, the central government, and Eritrean troops (Gebrewahd, 2023). According to the ISS-PSC Report (2022), the conflict has plunged the country into severe destabilization, resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians and military personnel. Gebresenbet & Tariku, (2023a) recounted that "the Ethiopian state has never been threatened in recent decades in the way that the war in the north is threatening it." This is partly due to the fact that between 70% and 80% of the Ethiopian National defense Forces (ENDF) were either neutralized or dispersed within the Northern Command. Additionally, a faction chose to fight on the TPLF's side.

Dimtsi Woyane TV (2020) reported that, at the height of the crisis, the ENDF was not only divided but also overstretched and ill-prepared for the existential threat it faced (Gebresenbet & Tariku, 2023a). Following this bewildering crisis, the FDRE government launched the "law-and-order operation" (Gavin, 2021). This operation quickly escalated the situation in northern Ethiopia into a bloody internal conflict. Shay, (2022) depicted dynamism of the conflict in the following manner:

- At first, the federal government, backed by Eritrea's military and Amhara forces, moved into Tigray in response to the attack on the northern command and subsequently, captured Mekelle and forced TPLF to escape to mountainous locations.

- Then, months later, TPLF soldiers regrouped to begin a guerilla campaign that defeated the EDF and recaptured Mekelle.

- In July 2021, the TPLF launched a dislodge against Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government, pushing in many directions and into Addis Abeba.

- Lastly the federal government, armed with new drones and supported by a strong popular mobilization, then defeated Tigray's forces, who returned to their home region in December.

- "The conflict has been characterized by shifting alliances, territorial gains and losses, and a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions. Initially, the Ethiopian federal forces, supported by Eritrean troops, gained the upper hand, capturing key cities and regions held by the TPLF.

- However, the TPLF forces regrouped and launched a counteroffensive, regaining control of significant territories and threatening the stability of the central government. This back-and-forth battle has resulted in widespread destruction, displacement, and a severe humanitarian crisis, with millions in need of aid and protection."

- The United Nations (2023) further pointed out the serious crimes of human rights violations, which consist of mass killings, sex-based violence, and use of starvation as a method of war (Bellizzi et al., 2024; Luciano, 2023). The Brookings Institution says that the Tigray conflict is not just another regional crisis, but it reflects broader concerns for the future of the Horn of Africa (Tazo, 2023).

- The protracted conflict puts regional stability at risk, threatening to spill over into neighboring states like Sudan and Somalia. The internal displacement of more than 2 million people has complicated the crisis, rendering it one of the most

demanding humanitarian emergencies in the world today (Munikwa et al., 2023).

- In a nutshell, the Tigray war has come to assume a complex and multidimensional nature, which poses grave threats to the stability of Ethiopia and the larger region.

Millions of people are impacted by the fighting and in desperate need of aid due to the enormous humanitarian cost. A negotiated peace agreement is desperately needed to stop the conflict's ongoing escalation and suffering because of its dynamic nature, which is marked by shifting power dynamics and grave violations of human rights.

This dynamic and violent intrastate conflict has caused irrevocable impacts. For instance Gesesew et al., (2021) argued that:

> As a result of the war, it is estimated that more than 52000 civilians have been killed, 2.3million people displaced, while 70000 people have crossed to the neighbouring Sudan in the first 3months of the war. In addition, 7months into the war, the World Food Programme reported that 91% of the region's population required emergency humanitarian assistance…

Weldemichel, (2022), who studied the conflict on the same year stated the impact of the conflict in Tigray by quoting Brown (2021), who alleged "Businesses [in Tigray] have been destroyed. The economy has been destroyed. Crops have been destroyed. Farms have been destroyed. There [is] no banking services anymore; there are no telecommunications services anymore." While Gebresenbet & Tariku, (2023a) contend that "The war affected the three regions [Tigray, Amhara and Afar], yet disproportionately harmed Tigray and Tigrayans". Correspondingly Blinken, (2023), the 71st U.S. Secretary of State stated actors and impact of the conflict in the following manner:

After careful review of the law and the facts, I have 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. Members of the ENDF, EDF, and Amhara forces also committed crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and persecution.

Apart from socio-economic and security catastrophe, the Tigray conflict and the subsequent negotiated peace has polarized academicians, analysts, and policy researchers. To comprehend this, it is vital to quote (Gebresenbet & Tariku, 2023a):

The war in northern Ethiopia has had two major effects on Ethiopian and foreign experts of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. First, it has been a divisive issue among Ethiopian scholars and experts, and eventually most had to pick sides. It also divided foreign experts, who also picked sides in the conflict …Their tweets and opinion pieces easily show whose side they are on and the extent to which they are willing to defend that side's actions. As such, most scholars (both Ethiopians and foreigners) were reduced to mere activists rather than voices of reason and resolution.

To summarize, the Tigray War, sometimes known as the war on Tigray, law enforcement in Tigray, and so on, is Ethiopia's bloodiest intra-state conflict (Abbink, 2023; Gebrehiwot et al., 2023; Gebresenbet & Tariku, 2023a). And it is debated from a variety of perspectives, beginning with conflict causation, particularly triggering causes to conflict actors, conflict impact, and the eventual negotiated peace between the two key conflict's actors. Furthermore, what, why and who directed Pretoria negotiated peace is also contested. Nevertheless, there is one consensual issue that is the FDRE and the TPLF, signed the Pretoria negotiated peace and 'finished' this bloody conflict, at least for one year. And it is AU-lead one year negotiation process, which engage Ethiopian parties and consistently maintaining calls for them to embrace an immediate and unconditional comprehensive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, engage in political dialogue without any preconditions and to ensure immediate and unhindered humanitarian access. Built upon it, this

article in general and the forthcoming sub section in particular, is designed for detailed discussion on this negotiated peace

Negotiated peace between FDRE and TPLF: CoHA

The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), also known as the Pretoria Accord, was a critical turning point in the peace process between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). Regarding hostile propaganda, hate speech, civilian protection, humanitarian access, and the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of fighters, among other important problems, this accord sought to usher in a new era (Abbink, 2023; Gebrehiwot et al., 2023). Both the FDRE and the TPLF were subject to specified measures established in the negotiated peace deal. By sending troops around the nation and interacting with international forces, the TPLF pledged to uphold the FDRE's constitutional authority. The TPLF further promised not to assist or participate in any armed opposition. While the FDRE administration pledged to suspending all military operations against TPLF combatants, restoring critical services for Tigrayans, and allowing parliament to remove the TPLF's terrorist designation. According to Africa Union, (2022):

> The [Pretoria] agreement marks an important step in efforts to silence the guns and provides a solid foundation for the preservation of Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the immediate cessation of hostilities, the resumption of unhindered humanitarian access, the restoration of services as well as healing and reconciliation.

The Pretoria accord, in the opinion of the African Union (AU), is a critical step in the right direction toward putting an end to gun violence and offers a strong framework for maintaining Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. A military pact known as the Declaration of the Senior Commanders on the Modalities for the Implementation of the deal for Lasting Peace, which was signed on November 12 in Nairobi, Kenya, served as further support for the peace deal (Akamo & Fisseha, 2023). The advantages of the peace

reached in Pretoria for Ethiopia and the parties involved in the war are emphasized in this supplemental agreement. The realization of the African Union's goal to "silence the guns" and highlight the significance of "African solutions to African problems" is a noteworthy accomplishment (Gebresenbet & Tariku, 2023a). Gebresenbet & Tariku, (2023a) contend that in addition to examining AU officials at a higher level, an analysis of the AU's role in the negotiated peace process should consider the early envoy nomination process and Olusegun Obasanjo's shuttle diplomacy. The United States and the AU-led team were instrumental in enabling the negotiated peace (Akamo & Fisseha, 2023). Nonetheless, there are still issues with the CoHA and the negotiated peace. According to Abbink, (2023), in order for the peace process to be completely successful, three important concerns must be resolved:

- Inadequate Disarmament of the TPLF: The TPLF did not completely give up its weapons or abandon all the territory they had taken. The TPLF is also making an effort to regain control over the people of Tigray. Concerns over the TPLF's commitment to the peace process and the likelihood of more hostilities are raised by this partial disarmament.

- Lack of stability and ongoing armed insurgencies: Long-term peace and stability in the northern area are still unattainable. An important question is still how the subversion of the TPLF is related to other military insurgencies like the Oromo Liberation Army. The continuous unrest jeopardizes regional security as a whole and weakens efforts at peace.

- Insufficient Rehabilitative Measures for Tortured Citizens: There has been a lack of resolute action taken toward the rehabilitation of victims in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray. A great deal of the conflict's victims are still suffering from its effects, and the process of rapprochement and community reconstruction is hampered by the absence of adequate rehabilitation programs. In conclusion, even though Ethiopia

and the parties involved in the conflict have benefited much from the Pretoria Accord and it has set the foundation for peace, resolving the remaining issues and securing the continuous commitment of all parties are necessary for the agreement to reach its potential. Implementing the agreement's provisions effectively and resolving the important problems raised by Abbink, (2023) are prerequisites for the negotiated peace to succeed.

Concluding remarks

By using the violence in Tigray as a case study and the ensuing post-conflict negotiated peace in Pretoria, the paper seeks to analyze negotiated peace in Africa. The essay has examined several contentious topics, such as the relationship between conflict and its consequences, reporting on conflicts, the impact of conflicts, and the negotiated peace that followed. We contend that the Pretoria peace agreement benefitted Ethiopia generally and the two main warring parties specifically, notwithstanding the discussions and debates centered on the conflict in general and the negotiated peace that followed. The TPLF's attacks and diplomatic retreats called into question Ethiopia's territorial integrity, which the Pretoria Accord helped to assure. Through their agreement to a cessation of hostilities, both parties made it possible to restore vital services and humanitarian aid, thereby improving the lives of those affected by the fighting. Relief has come for the people of Tigray, who have endured much suffering from the continuous bloodletting and military incursions. In addition, the negotiated peace by the African Union (AU) and their partners has achieved a great deal. The success of this agreement shows the worth of "African solutions to African problems," which highlights the role of regional institutions in solving conflicts. Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo utilized shuttle diplomacy to bridge differences among the warring parties for the long-lasting accord.

According to Salemot & Matshanda (2023), this diplomatic effort that was supported by the US was key in the negotiations of the peace deal. While the article acknowledges the success stories above, it also points out that CoHA is yet to be fully implemented

and that Tigray is yet to witness true peace. There are still issues to be resolved, especially the occupied territories and the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of fighters. These unsolved challenges stand as major obstacles to the long-term stability and peace of the region. Despite these obstacles, the research argues that, when analyzed from the perspective of our suggested "minimalist + politics," the peace that the CoHA negotiated is successful. This perspective prioritizes immediate, tangible gains such as security from bodily harm and the cessation of open hostilities, which are key components of what is referred to as "negative peace." Unlike positive peace, which involves addressing deeper structural issues and creating a sustainable peace, negative peace is characterized by the absence of explicit violence and fighting. Although tremendous strides have been made with the Pretoria Preserving and expanding upon the gains achieved so far will need continued international support and efficient execution of the agreement's provisions.

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