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Office of the National Regional State of
Tigray Electoral Commission

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 Ref. No _____
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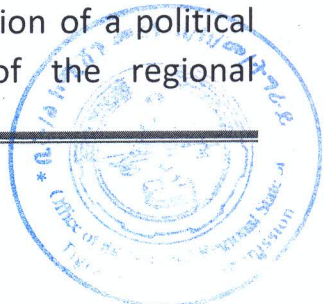
The unconstitutional decision of the government of the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia to indefinitely cancel this year’s election will surely render all federal and regional state institutions illegitimate. The decision was neither legal nor politically consensual. The Prosperity Party unilaterally chose this dangerous route in spite of a near total opposition from other political stakeholders. The government’s decision has already started to negatively impact the fast deteriorating security situation and has further polarized the already volatile politics of the country.

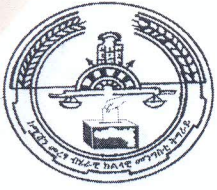
The government of the National Regional State of Tigray, like many of the opposition groups in the country, has publicly stated its opposition to the decision of the group in power and has on its part decided to hold its regional elections as scheduled by the federal and regional constitutions and in line with the rules and regulations of the Electoral Board of Ethiopia.

In this spirit, an official letter was written to the Federal Election Board regarding the decision of the National Regional State of Tigray to hold regional election and requesting the Board to preside over the regional election and provide the necessary resources and personnel for running the election. Unfortunately, the Electoral Board wrote a letter dated 24 July 2020, stating that our decision to exercise our constitutional right to choose our leaders is illegal and will neither preside nor provide the necessary support to the process.

The National Regional Government of Tigray had no any other option but to organize the regional election even under serious financial and logistical limitations. The alternative of not holding the election will be an authoritarian denial of the people’s right to self-administration and the creation of a political and governance vacuum after the expiry of the term of the regional

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administration at the end of next September. The consequence of failing to hold the election is not simply a transgression of constitutional provision but also a matter of plunging our region into a state of anarchy. Holding the election is not, therefore, a matter of respecting the constitution but also of maintaining peace and security in the region.

We believe that the Federal election Board is an administrative unit mandated by the federal Parliament to administratively facilitate the constitutionally enshrined rights of the Ethiopian people to periodically elect their leaders. The Board has no right to deny the substantive right of our people to elect their leaders. The Board has clearly over stepped its mandate.

The preparation for the regional election in Tigray is now in full swing. The first task was to legislate our own electoral law with due consideration of the Ethiopian electoral law and best models of democratic elections. Opposition parties and civic societies have also been given the opportunity to comment on the draft electoral law and their opinion was duly considered.

The regional council enacted the proclamation into law on 06 July 2020 and as per the provisions of the proclamation a ten member selection Committee was formed with a mandate to select members of the regional Electoral Board. The ten number selection committee was composed of representatives from the civil society including the Chamber of Commerce, Religious leaders, and other civic organizations.

The selection Committee made every effort to make sure that all Tigreans living at home and abroad are given the opportunity to nominate their preferred candidates to the commission. The committee established clear criteria a candidate should meet to be considered. It opened a twenty four hours operational phone line and in a span of three days 775 candidates were nominated from every corner of the world. The selection committee considering the criteria set, selected the ten best possible candidates and presented the list to Dr. Debresion Gebremichael, vice President of Tigray National Regional State. The vice President on his part took the list of ten to all the opposition parties and

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presented it for further scrutiny. The parties accepted all but two. At the final stage, the Vice President selected five out of the eight agreed upon candidates and the regional Council eventually endorsed the members of the electoral Commission on 16 July 2020.

The Electoral Commission has since its establishment been closely working with all political parties and stakeholders and has so far taken measures that are believed to contribute to conducting a free and fair election. In this context,

1. An air time is allocated to political parties on the basis of the following new and equitable criteria.
 - 40% of the total air time on public media is equitably distributed to all political parties.
 - 40% of the air time is allotted on the basis of the number of candidates each party has. On this basis Baytona, Salsay Weyane, TIP, TPLF have equal share from the 40% of the air time. Assimba is running for 13 seats, and therefore will have an air time proportional to the number of its candidates.
 - 15% of the air time is allotted according to the number of women and disabled candidates each party has.
 - Only 5% of the air time is allocated to the incumbent. In the first five elections held since 1995, 55% of the air time was used to be allocated to the incumbent.

2. Tigray National Regional Government has allocated 15 million birr to fund the parties run their campaign. The money was allocated to the five parties according to the following criteria.
 - 20% of the total amount is shared equally.
 - 60 % of the total amount is shared according to the number of candidates each party has.
 - 15% of the budget is allotted according to the number of women and disabled candidates each party has.
 - Only 5% the total budget goes to the incumbent.





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3. The commission, in close consultation with all political parties, has finalized and announced the schedule of the electoral calendar.
The Tigray Regional Electoral Commission will continue to work with all stakeholders to make sure that the Tigray Regional election is free, fair and transparent.

Sincerely,

Attachment; 2 pages

