

## FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

### WORKSHOP ON TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE, ADDIS ABABA, 8 DECEMBER 2022

#### Inputs from Professor Tim Murithi, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) Cape Town, South Africa

##### Executive Summary and Key Recommendations:

A key recommendation is for the FDRE to undertake a **nation-wide public outreach and communications campaign**, including the use of social media, to raise the *public awareness* about the contents and provisions of the **Cessation of Hostilities Agreement**.

The Ethiopian government could lead the country-wide efforts to popularise and sensitize all citizens and societies about the **African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP)**, as a first step towards facilitating community engagement and local peacebuilding and healing initiatives across the country.

The FDRE could establish an **Ethiopia Truth and Dignity Commission (ETDC)** which will collect statements from individuals from across the country to establish a historical record that will be utilised to acknowledge the past and lay the foundations for an inclusive society.

The country could develop and adopt an **Ethiopian National Peacebuilding and Psychosocial Support Strategy** which will work with partners to intervene with the intention to improve the psychosocial well-being of individual citizens and communities across the country.

##### **Background and Context:**

A **Cessation of Hostilities Agreement** was signed on 2 November 2022, in Pretoria, South Africa, under an African Union-led process between the **Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the TPLF**. The country will face the challenge of healing divisions and laying the foundations for more a stable country-wide society. The IJR believes that it is necessary to *proactively work* towards developing and sustaining **national processes for peace and reconciliation**.

##### **African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP)**

The **African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP)**, was adopted in February 2019, it is a great innovation for the African continent and for African societies. The AUTJP emphasises the link between **transitional justice, peacebuilding and reconciliation**, specifically relating to the connection between bringing together former enemies in a process

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of sustained community engagement as a pathway towards to developing a common vision to shape a new inclusive future. The AUTJP states that AU “**member states** shall have the *primary responsibility* with respect for **pursuing transitional justice processes**” and that “they *bear the responsibility* for removing political and social impediments to the effective pursuit of transitional justice processes.”<sup>1</sup> The AUTJP also stipulates that member states have the responsibility for “**guaranteeing the space for debate and advocacy on transitional justice and mobilising the support of all sections of society across political lines.**” The AUTJP is an outcome of process that recognised the right of citizens to participate in framing transitional justice processes.

### **Truth Recovery:**

A key element in transitional justice processes is the establishment of a national record, through an institutional process. Consequently, a key recommendation is for the FDRE to establish an **Ethiopia Truth and Dignity Commission (ETDC)** which will collect statements from individuals from across the country to establish a historical record.

### **Communications and Public Outreach:**

The IJR recommends that the FDRE undertakes a **nation-wide public outreach and communications campaign**, including the use of social media, to raise the *public awareness* about the contents and provisions of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

### **Psychosocial Support:**

The IJR recognizes that the work of **mental health and psychosocial support** is vital to peacebuilding in order to **heal and restore the social fabric** that binds and supports people within their communities, is essential for breaking cycles of violence and building sustainable peace. The ability of individuals and societies to cope with such *extraordinarily painful experiences and with the developed mistrust and fear* is severely weakened by violent conflict. The breakdown of **coping strategies** is often related to the mistrust and fear caused by traumatic experiences, the compounding factor of exposure to different types of violence and the duration of the conflict situation. Consequently, a key recommendation for the country is to develop an **Ethiopian National Peacebuilding and Psychosocial Support Strategy** which will work with partners to intervene with the intention to improve the psychosocial well-being of individual citizens and communities across the country.

### **Civil Society Engagement:**

The **AUTJP** states that “it is imperative that **national and local actors take the lead in planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on lessons learned** in all phases of the implementation” of the Policy.<sup>2</sup> In addition, it proposes that “the process for **national dialogue, reconciliation and healing should enable faith leaders, traditional and community leaders**, not only to play an active part in such processes ... but also pursue intra- and inter-community dialogue, reconciliation and healing at local levels.” In

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<sup>1</sup> African Union, *AU Transitional Justice Policy*, (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2019), p.25

<sup>2</sup> African Union Transitional Justice Policy, p.25.

effect, the AUTJP appeals for the engagement of **local actors** including community leaders to play a proactive role in the **implementation of national transitional justice processes** and in the creation of national spaces for dialogue on the approach that will be appropriate for Ethiopia's multiple communities. The provisions of the AUTJP encourages African governments to reach out and engage the wider society, by *assigning specific tasks to non-state actors, civil society organisations, faith and traditional leaders.*

### **About the Expert:**

Professor Tim Murithi is Head of Programme, Peacebuilding Interventions, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, and Extraordinary Professor of African Studies, Centre for African and Gender Studies, University of Free State. He is also Research Associate, Institute for Democracy, Citizenship and Public Policy in Africa, University of Cape Town, and has over 28 years of experience in the fields of transitional justice, peacebuilding, reconciliation and development. He has worked with the **African Union Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AU CPAPS)** as a Consultant and Adviser on a number of Transitional Justice, Peace and Reconciliation initiatives, and is available to provide Technical Support to the Ethiopia's transitional justice processes. He is author and editor of 12 books, including author of *The African Union: Pan-Africanism, Peacebuilding and Development*, published by Ashgate; editor of *Elections, Violence and Transitional Justice in Africa*, published by Routledge; *The Politics of Transitional Justice in the Great Lakes Region of Africa*, published by Jacana Media and editor of the *Routledge Handbook of Africa's International Relations*.

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