

**AFRICAN UNION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS AND ITS IMPACT
ON REGIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE ETHIOPIAN
TIGRAY CONFLICT, 2021-2024**

BY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL
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BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.) DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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DECLARATION

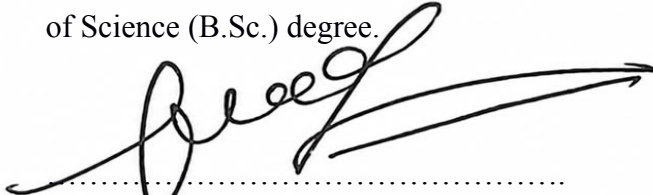
I hereby declare that this research project titled “African Union and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms and its Impact on Regional Conflict Management: A Case Study of the Ethiopian Tigray Conflict, 2021-2024” is my original work and has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, to any institution for the award of any degree or certificate. All sources used in this work have been duly acknowledged.

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APPROVAL PAGE

This research project titled “African Union Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in the Ethiopia-Tigray Conflict from 2021 to 2024” has been read and approved as meeting the requirements of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Godfrey Okoye University Ugwuomu-Nike, Enugu, for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree.



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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to God Almighty for His guidance, protection and grace throughout the period of this study.

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ABSTRACT

This research studied African Union conflict resolution mechanisms in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024. The research was led by three aims. to check how the African Union institutional systems and peace structure influenced the mediation path. to. study the usefulness of the African Union involvement in reaching the end of fighting, helping the peace agreement. and to study how the. problems and limits encountered by the African Union influenced its conflict resolution work. The research used a qualitative documentary and ex post facto research design. Data were collected from other sources, including African Union communiqués, the Pretoria Agreement, United Nations records, humanitarian agency publications, journal articles, books, and trusted media records. The data were studied through thematic documentary content analysis, while Liberal Institutionalism served as the main idea based system. The research found that the of African Union Peace and Security Architecture gave the institutional basis for mediation through the Peace and Security Council, . the Office of the High Representative for the Horn of Africa, AU High-Level Panel,, the Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mechanism.,, the usefulness of these structures was limited by weak enforcement strength, money dependence, slowed early warning response, and political sensitivity arising from the position of Ethiopia as host of AU headquarters. The research also found that AU involvement added with importance to the signing of the Pretoria Agreement of 2 November 2022 and helped to. lower large-scale fighting, reopened humanitarian access, and back limited political normalisation in Tigray., In spite of this, action remained incomplete due to unresolved land disagreements, the kept worry over Eritrean forces, weak checking strength, limited transitional justice progress, and kept movement from homes. The research determined that the African Union played an important but constrained part in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict. It advised stronger AU funding, made better early warning systems, clearer enforcement systems, inclusive mediation paths, and sustained post-agreement checking for future conflict resolution work.

Keywords: African Union, conflict resolution, Ethiopia-Tigray conflict, Pretoria Agreement, mediation, Peace and Security Architecture

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Conflict resolution stays as one main worry in modern international relations as regional organisations now take more responsibility for keeping peace and security in their regions. Franke (2020) states that regional systems have become preferred tools for handling conflicts in agreement with the subsidiarity principle found in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Murithi (2022) states that regional groups hold better knowledge of local settings through close cultural links to the sides included. Engel, Porto (2021) points to examples from the European Union, ASEAN that show useful regional paths for stopping humanitarian disaster and building steady development settings. Tieku (2021) holds that useful conflict resolution needs strong institutional strength, steady political back and working structures able to respond to growing crises with speed suited to the condition.

The African Union was set up in 2002 after the Organization of African Unity. It stands as Africa's main formal system for conflict resolution and peace action. Darkwa and Attuquayefio (2022) show that AU peace structure includes the Peace and Security Council, the Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise, the African Standby Force and the Peace Fund which together form African solutions to African problems as shown by Williams (2020). The Constitutive Act grants AU power to intervene in grave conditions including war crimes genocide as well as crimes against humanity which Badmus (2021) finds as special powers. Abadir (2023) states that AU used this power in Somalia Sudan Mali, the Central African Republic with results formed by political forces, resource shortages and levels of working together as stated by Solomon and Kosaka (2023). The wide Silencing the Guns by 2030 goal

reflects AU aspiration while armed violence remains across many regions through the view of Adebajo (2022).

Conflict resolution methods include different approaches stretching from early peace diplomacy to rebuilding after conflict with each method suited to particular stages and settings. Engel, Porto (2021) draw a difference between peaceful settlement forms such as mediation, talks, coercive actions such as peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Murithi (2022) uses examples from the Arusha Accords and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to show the ability of mediated settlements to end serious violence. Franke (2020) states that early peace diplomacy aims to handle tensions before they rise into violence while peace building centers on main causes and seeks to build peace that endures after conflict. Tieku (2021) holds that judging conflict resolution needs attention to speed, inclusivity, strength of deals and results for civilian safety.

The Ethiopia Tigray conflict began in November 2020 from growing tensions between the federal government of Ethiopia, the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front based on disagreements over constitutional federalism, election acceptance and political power. Bereketeab (2022) links these tensions to the political change that followed the rise of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2018 which weakened the long standing influence of the TPLF as stated by Young (2023). Hammond (2023) states that the direct trigger came from the decision of Tigray to hold regional elections against the federal order that slowed elections due to the COVID 19 pandemic. De Waal (2021) notes that the confrontation brought in Ethiopian forces, Tigrayan fighters, Eritrean troops and Amhara militias. Gebrekidan, Plaut (2022) states that the conflict grew from political disagreement to humanitarian disaster with effects that spread to Eritrea and Sudan.

The African Union power to intervene in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict comes from its Constitutive Act and Peace and Security Council Protocol though the position of Ethiopia as AU headquarters host made the response of the organisation harder. Knife (2022) holds that the role of Ethiopia as a founding member and continental power made diplomatic pressure that formed AU decisions. Badmus (2021) notes that the principles of non interference and non indifference made tension as AU tried to balance sovereignty worries against the need to protect civilians from grave abuses. Mesfin (2023) states that AU can use envoys high level panels or mediation teams to put its conflict resolution power to work. Ani and Oshewolo (2022) describe earlier AU involvement in Ethiopian political crises which informs the current example. Apuuli (2023) notes that AU first response to the Tigray conflict seemed limited when set beside actions in other member states.

The Ethiopia Tigray conflict drew attention from many international and regional groups forming a hard setting for AU leadership in conflict resolution work while also showing internal AU problems. Zondi (2023) shows that the United Nations IGAD, the European Union, the United States played parts in diplomatic pressure, humanitarian aid and mediation back. Fisher, Gebrewold (2023) states that nearby states held different aims with Eritrea joining combat and Sudan receiving refugees. Klem, Thakur (2023) show that humanitarian groups such as UNHCR OCHA, WHO faced barriers caused by movement limits and loss of communication systems. Terlinden and Debiel (2022) describe expectations for African led mediation though actual practice needed joint planning with many groups. Darkwa, Attuquayefio (2022), Solomon, Kosaka (2023) show AU limits including money dependence, weak enforcement, gaps between promises and working strength. Weldesellase (2023), Nganje (2023) show that the Pretoria Agreement of 2022 brought progress through AU mediation, leaving questions about putting it in

place and lessons for future AU conflict resolution systems. This research for this reason looks at how AU systems worked in this hard example and finds lessons for the organisation peace and security architecture.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Ethiopia Tigray conflict made one of the most deadly humanitarian crises of the twenty-first century with death estimates placed between 162, 000 and 800, 000. people, with around 2 million persons forced out of their homes as shown by McGowan et al. (2025) and Wilson Center (2022). Abbink (2023) states that sexual violence linked to conflict became planned with one in ten women in Tigray experiencing such abuse. While more than 5 million persons faced hunger through one federal blockade that limited supply routes. The African Union started mediation steps in answer to this condition through the naming of three former presidents as envoys though these first efforts failed to reach one clear success as stated by Apuuli (2023). The AU then named former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo as special envoy in August 2021. which made the Pretoria Agreement of 2 November 2022 that made one end of fighting through the process described by Gasana (2023). Weldesellasie (2023) states that main problems with putting it in place still remain as Tigray leaders claim that many parts of the agreement remain incomplete. With territories not restored and with 950, 000 in an internal way forced from homes, persons still in camps as of September 2023.

Knife (2022) holds that the African Union worked under important institutional pressure as its headquarters were in Addis Ababa. This made worries about acceptance, political and money weak points that limited the full use of its mediation tools. Nganje (2023) states that AU displayed limited strength for full conflict settlement since the transitional justice agenda became fragile and the Commission of Inquiry on Tigray ended before it completed its task. Fisher,

Gebrewold (2023) notes that the Pretoria Agreement marked movement to peace though very large problems remain including the removal of Eritrean forces and the settlement of land disagreements and the resolution of unclear parts that weaken prospects for long term stability. Mesfin (2023) states that incomplete peace action unresolved tension between Tigray leaders and gaps in AU conflict resolution system show the need for ordered research of these results. This research for this reason looks at African Union conflict resolution mechanisms in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024 through answers to the following research questions.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How did the African Union's institutional frameworks and peace architecture influence the mediation process in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024?
2. How effective was the African Union's intervention in achieving cessation of hostilities and facilitating the peace agreement in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024?
3. How did the challenges and constraints encountered by the African Union affect its conflict resolution efforts in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to examine the African Union's conflict resolution mechanisms in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.

Specific Objectives:

1. To assess how the African Union's institutional frameworks and peace architecture influenced the mediation process in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.

2. To analyze how effective the African Union's intervention was in achieving cessation of hostilities and facilitating the peace agreement in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.
3. To examine how the challenges and constraints encountered by the African Union affected its conflict resolution efforts in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The important finding of this research gives back to many groups that work in African conflict settings. This investigation offers one idea based addition for academia as it adds clear knowledge on regional conflict resolution systems, African peace and security studies through documented evidence. The research makes a stronger idea based understanding of the way regional organisations handle sovereignty worries, strength limits and political pressures. While they lead mediation in member states which helps literature in international relations and conflict management. The research also gives practical insight to policy makers in the African Union Commission and Peace and Security Council. as it states strengths and weak points in present mediation structures that form decisions in crisis conditions. International organisations, development partners gain understanding of working problems in African Union practice which helps them design targeted technical back and money back programs that fill strength gaps. Civil society groups, humanitarian groups working in conflict influenced regions also get knowledge of African Union peace processes which helps them organise advocacy actions and humanitarian responses in regional peace systems.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research studies African Union conflict resolution systems in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict with center on the time from 2021 to 2024 when mediation activity rose with strong

intensity. The research goal seeks to study African Union institutional systems, judge involvement usefulness and study problems that formed the conflict resolution process. The demographic scope covers main groups in the peace process including African Union mediators Ethiopian federal leaders, Tigray People's Liberation Front officials and influenced civilian populations in the Tigray region. The geographic scope remains limited to the Ethiopia Tigray conflict setting with attention on Tigray Afar, Amhara regions where violence took place, where mediation and peace actions happened. The ideological scope connects to the African Union principle of African solutions to African problems which formed the conflict management approach and influenced the style of mediation decisions. The method based scope uses documentary, ex post facto designs that study official notes, peace deals, communiques, humanitarian records and media publications to research the completed peace process through documented evidence.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research met many limits in the research process. Limited time made it difficult for the researcher as the research needed the collection, examination of wide sets of documents that covered three years of conflict and mediation. One ordered document review plan helped solve this difficulty as it centered on main African Union sources such as communiques, the Pretoria Agreement and main records from global organisations. Money limits made further difficulty as the researcher could not travel to Addis Ababa, access paid archives that include specialised literature on conflict resolution and African Union internal processes. This difficulty was solved through the use of open access repositories, government websites, international organisation publications and free academic journals. Missing data also caused problems as confidential mediation discussions, internal decisions and full casualty notes were not available due to

communication failures in the conflict. This difficulty was lowered through triangulation of evidence that used public notes including United Nations records, humanitarian organisation assessments and trusted media information. Research resources were limited to the university library and online databases which limited access to specialised publications on African Union peace work. This difficulty was solved by using library materials in a thorough way by using interlibrary loan services and by using open access archives that give African Union documents and study based records from international research institutes.

1.8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

African Union AU

In working terms, for this research African Union refers to the continental organisation based in Addis Ababa Ethiopia that organised conflict resolution systems in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict through its Peace and Security Council and mediation structures from 2021 to 2024.

Conflict Resolution

In working terms, conflict resolution refers to the particular African Union systems processes, actions used to mediate between the Ethiopian federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, which made the Pretoria Agreement of November 2022, later actions, to secure full end of fighting and lasting peace.

Mediation

In working terms, mediation refers to African Union diplomatic actions led by High Representative Olusegun Obasanjo, former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and former South African Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka who led talks between Ethiopian representatives, Tigray People's Liberation Front officials in Pretoria in October and November 2022 which made the end of the fighting agreement.

Peace Agreement

In working terms, peace agreement refers to the Pretoria Agreement signed on 2 November 2022 titled Agreement for Lasting Peace and Permanent End of fighting. which set conditions for the end of the Ethiopia Tigray conflict through permanent end of fighting, disarmament return of federal power, humanitarian access and checking systems.

Institutional Framework

In working terms, institutional system refers to African Union Peace and Security Architecture with structures that include the Peace and Security Council, the Panel. of the Wise, the Office of the High Representative for the Horn of Africa, the Continental Early Warning System and related rules that backed mediation from 2021 to 2024.

Humanitarian Crisis

In working terms, humanitarian crisis refers to conditions in the Tigray region from 2020 to 2024 with estimated deaths between 162, 000 and 800, 000 movement from homes. above 2 million persons, planned sexual violence blockade related famine affecting 5 million people, the destruction of health, education services which needed African Union involvement and humanitarian access clauses in the Pretoria Agreement.

Peace and Security Council

In working terms, the Peace and Security Council refers to the African Union group that held meetings on the Ethiopia Tigray conflict, and welcomed the High. Level Panel for mediation, got briefings on the Pretoria Agreement in its 1120th session in November 2022 and led action of the end of fighting agreement from 2021 to 2024.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of the research looks at what scholars have written about the African Union and its part in conflict resolution in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024. This chapter is divided into five parts. These are idea based review, thematic review, idea based review, evidence based review, summary of literature and gap. The idea based review states African Union, conflict resolution systems, mediation, humanitarian crisis and peace agreement. The thematic review discusses AU peace structure, the usefulness of its involvement and the problems it faced. The other parts present theories, past studies and the gap this research will handle.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.1.1 AFRICAN UNION

The African Union arose through the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity in 2002 which signalled a main shift in continental governance practice. Engel, Porto (2021) states that AU began through the Constitutive Act that was used in Lome Togo in 2000 so the group moved away from the strict OAU rule of non interference. Murithi (2022) states that AU institutional structure includes the Assembly of Heads of State, Government, the Executive Council and African Union Commission which lead collective action. This structure includes specialised organs through which the Peace and Security Council began formal work in 2004 as a core group for stability efforts. Tieku (2021) notes that AU power extends beyond the limits of the former organisation so the group now holds greater power to intervene in member states in serious conditions. These serious conditions cover war crimes genocide or crimes against humanity as written in Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act.

The AU Peace and Security Architecture works through linked systems that back conflict prevention management and resolution across the continent. Williams (2020) describes the APSA as including the Peace and Security Council, the Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise, the African Standby Force and the Peace Fund. which work through a shared pattern to handle security pressure. Darkwa and Attuquayefio (2022) hold that though these structures remain functional through their institutional design AU faces grave problems that influence performance. These problems cover money dependence upon outside donors, strength weak points in institutional groups and political division across member states which form uneven results. Franke (2020) notes that organisational usefulness alters through the degree of members working together and the level of available resources. Badmus (2021) states that despite these limits AU has used its involvement power in Somalia, Sudan and Mali. which shows a commitment to African solutions to African problems in hard sovereignty settings and working strain.

2.1.2 CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

Conflict resolution systems refer to structured ways that global groups, local groups use to handle disagreement violence and unsteady conditions through peaceful means. Abadir (2023) defines conflict resolution as a set of processes that use discussion mediation arbitration and forms of third side involvement to lead disputing sides to solutions. These steps help sides in conflict reach results that both sides accept, the results handle core aims and important complaints. Engel and Porto (2021) state that these systems range from diplomacy that centers on preventing trouble to peace building that arises after conflict ends. Diplomacy seeks to settle tensions before trouble grows worse while peace building aims to handle main causes to secure lasting peace. Franke (2020) describes a difference between Track I diplomacy that relies upon

government talks and Track II approaches. Track II brings in civil society groups who are unofficial so these groups make multi track methods that blend various layers of engagement. The strength of conflict resolution practice depends upon many points which include the timing of involvement. The credibility of mediators, the political settlement of fighting sides and the presence of sufficient resources also form important aspects of this practice.

Many different groups take part in conflict resolution processes, each one brings particular mandates, strengths and helpful strengths to mediation work. Murithi (2022) states that global groups such as the United Nations, African Union give institutional structures and lawful backing that form trusted involvement. Local groups like IGAD, ECOWAS offer knowledge of the particular condition and close presence in influenced areas which backs timely engagement. Darkwa, Attuquayefio (2022) notes that states acting as mediators, civil society organisations and named envoys perform parts that back one another. These parts work to make open discussion and build trust among the groups in conflict. Tieku (2021) states that judging conflict resolution usefulness needs the use of standards that include whether fighting has stopped and whether deals stay in place. Other standards include the level of process inclusivity, the protection of civilians and the handling of main main causes of the conflict. Abadir (2023) holds that successful conflict resolution needs strong mediation skills, political influence together with enough money resources. Further commitment from the global community across extended times is needed to back the practical action of negotiated settlements.

2.1.3 MEDIATION

Mediation represents a flexible process that groups accept through free choice where impartial third sides lead communication and structured discussion between sides in conflict. This guidance aims to back the creation of results that both sides regard as acceptable. Gasana

(2023) defines mediation as diplomatic involvement by neutral groups who hold credibility, influence so they steer holding sides to compromise through persuasive effort. This method relies upon influence instead of coercing sides into unwanted agreement. Apuuli (2023) states that vital parts include voluntariness where groups decide to take part and fairness where mediators remain neutral in every stage. Confidentiality backs open discussion while side ownership ensures that those in disagreement form the final results. Engel, Porto (2021) show differences between facilitative mediation where mediators assist open communication and evaluative mediation where mediators share expert judgments. Transformative mediation exists as another type as it seeks to reshape relationships between groups through deeper shifts in understanding. Fisher, Gebrewold (2023) states that the mediator's usefulness depends upon points like legal acceptance, cultural understanding, diplomatic skill and the ability to reach conflict sides with ease. Mediator influence also includes the strength to give positive incentives or make pressure that can form side decisions.

The mediation path includes particular stages that demand structured actions, careful supervision of group behaviour together with attention to outside pressures. Mesfin (2023) describes a sequence that begins with check before mediation followed by initial contact that opens the path to further engagement. This sequence leads to opening meetings that set leading rules and exploring positions that uncover core aims. Talks need the creation of possible options while agreement includes completing the terms that form the settlement. Weldesellasi (2023) states that mediation plans include shuttle diplomacy joint meetings caucusing with sides in separate rooms offering package solutions and using constructive ambiguity to pass through deadlock. Nganje (2023) notes difficulties that appear in global mediation which include power imbalance between sides and limited political settlement. Further problems arise through spoilers

outside interference and limits on institutional resources. Knife (2022) holds that mediator bias whether perceived, real influences acceptance and usefulness through a high degree of effect. Terlinden and Debiel (2022) stress the main gap that exists in putting in place deals where signed documents fail to become lasting peace. This problem needs kept checking, sufficient resources, firm political backing from included groups and the global community.

2.1.4 HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Humanitarian crises describe conditions where basic human requirements cannot be met as conflict, natural disaster or structural failure breaks normal back systems. This breakdown causes widespread death, large movements of people, so an urgent global response becomes necessary. Koshe, Sewonet (2023) defines humanitarian crises as conditions marked by widespread death, large movement, food insecurity, destruction of buildings, collapse of health and social services. These harsh conditions move beyond the ability of influenced populations to handle them in any stable way. Hammond (2023) states that crises appear in forms that include conflict driven emergencies and terrible results caused by natural disasters. Hard emergencies join many causes together in hard patterns. Klem, Thakur (2023) states that weak points raise the crisis effect as existing poverty, weak governmental structures and marginalisation make communities more likely to suffer harm. Reid (2023) notes that conflicts make layered effects that include violent deaths, hunger movement from homes, destruction of structures and psychological harm that influences whole generations.

Global humanitarian response works in defined structures that follow humanitarian principles and rely on organised systems to give essential assistance for influenced populations. Young (2023) states that the humanitarian system includes UN agencies such as OCHA, UNHCR WFP, WHO, the International Committee of the Red Cross and global NGOs. Weldehaimanot

(2023) states that principles of humanity, fairness, fairness and independence lead every stage of humanitarian response. Joint planning systems like cluster structures and humanitarian response plans back delivery in a manner aimed at useful action. Tesfaye and Brühl (2022) note that global humanitarian legal rules including the Geneva Conventions protect civilians in armed conflict. These rules forbid targeting persons who are not fighting or using hunger as a tool of war. Abbink (2023) holds that current problems include deliberate violations of humanitarian legal rules and violent acts against humanitarian workers. Other barriers include tactics that surround areas, limit movement or block access for humanitarian purposes. Bereketeab (2022) stresses that humanitarian access remains necessary for giving assistance, conflict sides limit access for political and military reasons. This restriction raises suffering for civilian populations.

2.1.5 PEACE AGREEMENT

Peace deals stand as written instruments that set formal rules for ending fighting, forming long term peace through steps that fix urgent security problems and deep rooted political matters. As the idea begins to take form Welde-sellase (2023) states peace deals as written notes signed by fighting groups that hold clear promises about ending. fighting, removing weapons, setting political systems, building justice structures and making pathways that prepare societies for normal relationships. As the concept expands in scope Gasana (2023) states that such arrangements shift across many areas in complexity through truce contracts that form temporary breaks. in conflict through limited deals that fix short term matters in lasting talks, through wide peace settlements that center upon basic causes and political arrangements. As the pattern becomes clearer Fisher and Gebrewold (2023) describe normal parts of these arrangements. as security rules that cover disarming movement of fighters, their return political rules that handle shared power and changed basic laws and justice structures. need people to answer for their

conduct humanitarian rules that help forces from homes persons return and economic planning that backs rebuilding. As the debate keeps Mesfin (2023) shows a structural struggle that appears between long detailed deals that handle every main worry and short deals that. aim most with force at ending violence in the earliest stage.

The process of action becomes the part that decides whether peace deals become real long term peace or remain written papers without practical influence on changing conflict conditions. As the practice unfolds Nganje (2023) states action structures as joint committees systems for oversight procedures for checking timelines for action and the key part of guarantors who follow the entire execution. As closer research keeps Apuuli (2023) notes that successful action needs political desire from the sides, enough resources, proper linkages among groups who put plans. into place and steady international back that makes the process stronger. As problems grow Kiefe (2022) notes that failure in action becomes common when signed deals remain inactive as spoilers weaken progress, competition for power grows, important groups are left out or needed resources remain missing. As reflection deepens Okeke and Aniche (2023) hold that deals that fix surface matters without touching main causes seldom bring lasting peace. As the shift to stability keeps Ani and Oshewolo (2022) stress that movement from peace deals to normal politics needs resolution of deep grievances, construction. of governance structures with inclusive parts and continuation of international engagement beyond the moment of signing. As the discussion reaches its close, Terlinden and Debiel (2022) state that the order of action. which means sides must agree upon which rules take effect first exerts strong influence on the durability of the agreement and the extent to which sides obey its terms.

2.2 THEMATIC REVIEW

2.2.1 AFRICAN UNION INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND PEACE ARCHITECTURE IN CONFLICT MEDIATION

Peace and security structures formed the early stage of the Ethiopia Tigray mediation as Murithi (2022) stated the part of the Peace and Security Council, which held many meetings in the time from 2021 to 2022 to authorise assistance and to lead the full talks path. The Council 1115th gathering in October 2022 welcomed the High Level Panel and expressed support for the Pretoria discussions, which showed that the institution offered strong leadership as it tried to push the conflict to a peaceful settlement. These meetings made a controlled setting in which the Council used formal procedures to direct the talks, while forming expectations for kept diplomatic action which made the institution main to the early movement to structured talks.

As the talks space widened Apuuli (2023) studied the naming of Olusegun Obasanjo as High Representative and found that his position carried diplomatic weight. While giving him few practical resources for intensive field activity which limited direct influence on daily events. His status as a former Nigerian president, as a figure with experience in AU made trust among both international partners and conflict groups, which opened doors for essential meetings though contact with Ethiopian authorities remained delicate as of the strong protection of national power. His presence made a symbolic centre of gravity that allowed AU to claim leadership while offering a personality with enough stature to keep the process trusted.

When back activities became necessary Mesfin (2023) described the part of AU Commission as one that offered office help, arranged travel for Pretoria, meetings and supplied technical teams that backed the mediators in essential stages of the process. Resource shortages formed the scale of this back which made AU depend upon the South African government for meeting space and equipment, which kept the process working even though the Commission

could not supply complete technical coverage. This joint effort showed the structural reality that AU mediation needed host government backing to match institutional gaps with practical assistance that sustained the flow of talks.

As signs of conflict grew in the early months of Darkwa, Attuquayefio (2022) studied the Continental Early Warning System and found weak prediction of the speed at which violence raised as limited information gathering and limited access to conflict zones weakened its ability to make timely warnings. Diplomatic teams for this reason entered the mediation stage without an accurate picture of rising fighting, which made early diplomatic planning much harder and lowered the strength of the System to give direction before the condition became in an extreme way serious. This weak point exposed a structural limit that formed later decisions since poor early detection placed more pressure on later talks stages.

Institutional wisdom systems gained attention through the research of Engel, Porto (2021) who studied the Panel of the Wise and found little direct involvement in the Ethiopia Tigray process, though informal advice did reach AU leaders at the time. The talks power stayed with the High Level Panel which meant that the Panel of the Wise did not work as a main advisory engine even though its members held long experience in conflict matters. This arrangement showed a pattern in which formal talks groups took priority while wisdom systems remained in the background with modest effect on active mediation.

Turning to the structures that secured the Pretoria Agreement Weldesellasi (2023) studied the Monitoring Verification and Compliance Mechanism and stated that the system included representatives from both sides with IGAD participation and ten specialists chosen by AU. The system faced working limits as access to certain zones remained limited and available funds were scarce which lowered the influence it hoped to exert over obedience. The weak point

of its enforcement power meant that it relied on persuasion rather than force which formed its strength to back the agreement in sensitive stages of the truce.

As mediation principles led to decision making Badmus (2021) reviewed how AU used its system of principles and found that rules in the Constitutive Act. formed whether involvement seemed justified under the norm of non indifference which backed involvement despite worries about national power. The strong timetable in Silencing the Guns made hopes that did not match available institutional strength since actual working strength stayed far below the stated ambition. The distance between principle and practice exposed the structural weight of AU limits which formed how the mediation unfolded.

The relationship between AU and regional organisations became harder through the findings of Franke (2020) who noted that IGAD sought early leadership. though power at continental level rested with AU which made friction between the two groups. IGAD later joined checking structures which brought regional insight into the process though mismatched parts caused repeating duties and gaps in communication. This pattern showed that continental, regional groups worked through layered structures that needed clearer alignment to lower confusion and to make stronger overall cohesion.

Williams (2020) then explored the money base for mediation and noted dependence on external back.. Member state contributions as AU Peace Fund offered few resources while the Pretoria discussions needed important spending on checking teams and technical tasks. The need for outside funds limited AU freedom and made it hard to plan flexible work which limited institutional choice in critical moments. This dependence formed the structure of the mediation system by tying AU to donors who gave resources without controlling the talks.

As the location and structure of the mediation came under review Gasana (2023) noted that Pretoria offered neutral ground away from the conflict zone. which removed immediate pressure from the sides and encouraged direct engagement in a structured space. Face to face meetings replaced distant exchanges which allowed negotiators to keep steady communication in an intense ten day setting that made drive which earlier efforts had lacked. This concentrated setting helped reach a breakthrough by placing the sides in a controlled space that placed time pressure on the discussions which encouraged clearer decisions.

Moving to the qualities of the mediators Fisher, Gebrewold (2023) studied the High Level Panel and found that combining Obasanjos AU link with Kenyatta's regional knowledge and Mlambo Ngcuka's peace building experience made a balanced team that met the African solutions principle. The African identity of the panel gave political acceptance which made stronger acceptance among regional groups though gender balance remained incomplete despite Mlambo Ngcuka's presence. The mixture of backgrounds allowed the panel to present power that blended political experience with technical understanding which made better the structure of the overall mediation.

The movement to talks needed frequent engagement which was described by Ani and Oshewolo (2022) who stated that shuttle diplomacy formed the early pre-talks. stages through repeated trips by Obasanjo to Addis Ababa along with private meetings with Tigrayan forces which helped gather worries and build trust. These quiet discussions allowed sensitive matters to surface away from public attention which prepared both sides for eventual contact in the Pretoria process. This behind the scenes stage made the final breakthrough possible as it made a foundation of communication that could back formal talks.

Institutional strength became a subject of center when Kinfu (2022) studied AU strength, found that the organisation had few tools beyond diplomatic persuasion, moral guidance and partnership with international groups who applied economic pressure. With no military force to enforce the rules AU relied on voluntary working together from the sides which made consensus building crucial. This limit formed the plan used in Pretoria since AU could not force obedience and for this reason needed voluntary agreement backed by international partners.

The composition of the talks formed another critical matter in the work of Nganje (2023) who found that the Pretoria talks included only Ethiopian government representatives and TPLF figures, which excluded civil society women's groups and local communities whose voices could have made the agreement more complete. This narrow approach made speed as fewer sides sat at the table though it raised questions about acceptance of the final agreement among groups left outside the process. The need for broad inclusion for this reason remained a future problem for long term political settlement.

As decisions about matter priority took form Terlinden, Debiel (2022) studied sequencing and stated that AU centered on the immediate end of fighting before pushing for wider political settlement which made a phased approach. Matters such as Western Tigray, the presence of Eritrean forces were postponed so that humanitarian relief could begin as soon as possible while deeper political matters waited for later talks. This structure helped stabilise urgent conditions though it slowed full resolutions that would need more time.

Zondi (2023) then explored international involvement, and found that the US , UN and EU offered diplomatic backing. While AU kept control of the talks which protected African ownership even though international partners supplied technical and money help. Joint planning needed careful handling to prevent mixed signals as competing actions might have weakened the

mediation path if supervisors had not led the work with effect. This working together made a blended setting in which AU leadership remained clear even though outside groups played important backing parts.

Information control became essential in the study of Okeke and Aniche (2023) who stated that AU protected confidentiality in the discussions, while issuing chosen public messages to handle pressure from political groups and to counter harmful narratives. Negotiators engaged with the media in a careful manner that balanced openness with the need to secure a calm atmosphere for compromise. This measured approach lowered tension and helped protect the integrity of the process by preventing damaging public disagreements.

In the final part the lessons of past failures formed new choices through the research by Abadir (2023) who noted that AU changed its plan. After the first three mediator models had no success which led to the naming of Obasanjo and a more centered system. Stronger joint planning with international partners and clearer division of duties backed this new start while better battlefield conditions made both sides more open to talks which made a window for progress. This adaptive approach offered proof that mediation structures made better when institutions studied earlier weak points and adjusted their methods to changing conditions.

2.2.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF AU INTERVENTION IN ACHIEVING CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND PEACE AGREEMENT

Gasana (2023) studied the level of success in the mediation and found that AU negotiators brought both groups to an agreement after ten steady days of discussions in Pretoria. Which showed that the structure of the talks helped the sides sit through each session with grave purpose. The signing on November 2 2022 became a main turning point after two painful years of fighting that weakened communities across Tigray and neighbouring regions. As the agreement

forced both sides to accept a path to peace. Ethiopian government representatives and TPLF officials made promises for a lasting end to armed conflict. which showed that AU diplomacy carried enough influence to lead the sides to an organised settlement that made a basic foundation for recovery.

Weldesellasie (2023) studied the depth of the Pretoria Agreement and found that the document covered urgent security matters. which included ending active fighting, disarming fighters and opening paths for humanitarian aid in areas that had suffered serious destruction. Political rules made a structured process for returning federal power and for setting up temporary justice systems that formed the early steps of peace rebuilding in a careful manner. Hard matters such as the status of Western Tigray, the presence of Eritrean forces got limited attention as these matters were postponed or showed in unclear terms which weakened the completeness of the agreement.

Mesfin (2023) studied the immediate peace results, showing that large-scale military actions stopped after the agreement took effect which lowered overall levels of violence across Tigray, neighbouring Afar and Amhara regions. Small clashes happened in scattered communities and these tensions made worry as the presence of Eritrean troops kept despite the main truce which placed stress on local populations. The drop in fighting made better conditions for movement and relief work even though the presence of armed groups in some areas meant that stability remained fragile.

Klem, Thakur (2023) judged humanitarian access after the agreement and found slow progress in delivering aid. As paths reopened in a gradual manner which allowed raised supplies of food and medical items to enter Tigray in the early months. Essential services such as electricity, communications returned in limited ways though full service return remained blocked

by structural hurdles and safety worries which slowed the work of agencies. These mixed conditions formed the pace of relief as some regions got steady back while others faced slows that weakened recovery.

Abbink (2023) explored the action of disarmament and found mixed working together from TPLF forces as heavy weapons collection began in the agreed time frame though checking became hard in areas with limited institutional reach. The thirty day schedule for complete disarmament faced problems due to logistical weak points, absence of deep trust and worries about reintegration which limited confidence among fighters. The process remained unfinished by early 2024 which meant that disarmament stayed open and uncertain even while the agreement held on a basic level.

Hammond (2023) studied the progress in political measures and found the naming of Getachew Reda. as head of the Tigray Interim Regional Administration in March 2023 made an important political step after months of tension which formed the start of political rebuilding. Federal power returned at a slow pace as land disagreements kept in many communities and this slowed peace rebuilding across different groups. Temporary justice systems formed with difficulty as few examples moved to prosecution which made disappointment among victims who sought answering for actions for grave abuses that happened across the conflict time.

Nganje (2023) studied the reaction of the international community, found wide diplomatic backing from the UN Secretary General US EU and African governments. which made a strong sense of international backing for the Pretoria process. Partners promised technical, money help for action, actual delivery of these resources remained weaker than the early promises which slowed rebuilding and checking activities. This gap between promise and reality limited progress

on sensitive aspects of the agreement as local institutions needed more back to handle large scale tasks.

Fisher, Gebrewold (2023) studied early action problems and discovered weak joint planning among groups who worked on the agreement. as resource shortages slowed essential responsibilities while long standing distrust between the two sides made repeated hesitation. Spoilers in both groups resisted compromise and the absence of Eritrean participation made main gaps in enforcement structures which weakened the power of the agreement. These problems threatened the long term sustainability of the deal even though early progress raised hopes for a more stable future.

Apuuli (2023) studied the commitment of each side, found uneven patterns as the Ethiopian government showed stronger early action by restoring some services and. releasing official statements that backed the agreement while TPLF leaders cooperated with disarmament but expressed worry about postponed territorial matters. Both sides kept enough commitment to prevent collapse even though distrust remained and formed talks between representatives. This cautious working together allowed the truce to hold through the early months which kept the possibility of long term peace open despite unresolved points.

Reid (2023) checked the durability of the truce across 2023, early 2024 and found that main fighting remained absent though tensions stayed in many border regions which made lasting risks of renewed fighting. Small clashes happened in disputed areas between Tigray, Amhara regions and a February 2024 incident near Korem showed how easily tensions could rise again despite fast ENDF involvement that prevented escalation. This pattern showed moderate, incomplete stability as the underlying sources of conflict kept to influence local behaviour and limited the full consolidation of peace.

Koshe, Sewonet (2023) documented the return of in an internal way forced from homes persons and discovered that over one million people returned to Tigray by 2024. while about seven hundred fifty thousand remained forced from homes due to hard security conditions and unresolved land disagreements. Returning communities faced destroyed homes, limited public services and lasting fear in some districts which limited smooth reintegration. These harsh conditions made recovery uneven and made pressure for more structured back to assist families facing hardship.

Young (2023) described rebuilding efforts and found slow improvement as infrastructure repair faced huge money needs estimated at twenty billion dollars. While humanitarian needs remained serious across many districts with an estimated four million people needing aid. Education, health services reopened in limited ways though they faced shortages of supplies and trained workers which made services weak. Farming activity struggled due to drought, limited seed distribution which lowered food production and slowed economic recovery.

Bereketeab (2022) studied transitional justice, discovering almost no progress as Ethiopian authorities limited international participation which removed independent eyes from the process and weakened public trust. The ACHPR ended its Commission of Inquiry in 2021 and this early closure lowered space for strong investigation which influenced victims who hoped for justice. Prosecution for war crimes remained absent which made fear that answering for actions would remain ignored for many years and weaken stability across influenced communities.

Tesfaye, Bruhl (2022) looked at political peace rebuilding, and found that official relations between federal government, Tigray authorities made better in limited ways though deeper political arguments stayed unresolved and made main friction. Disagreements remained

over power sharing, constitutional interpretation, regional self rule while inner disagreements between Getachew and Debretsion made tensions in Tigray. These internal, external disagreements limited progress to lasting peace rebuilding and made uncertainty about long term political arrangements.

Zondi (2023) studied unresolved threats and found that Western Tigray remained the most grave flashpoint as Amhara forces held control of contested land which prevented forced Tigrayan communities from returning. Eritrean troops kept a partial presence which broke terms of the agreement and raised tension. These matters left important risks for renewed conflict as territorial grievances remained active and in an emotional way charged across influenced communities.

Weldesellasie (2023) studied the checking system, found that the MVCMM worked with limited funding, limited access and weak enforcement power which lowered its strength to supervise action with effect. Reporting structures existed yet information flowed in an inconsistent way which made oversight uncertain in critical stages of action. The system gave some transparency yet it lacked strong tools to handle violations which limited answering for actions among sides.

Weldehaimanot (2023) studied regional effects, found mixed results as relations between Ethiopia, Eritrea remained uncertain even though the two sides worked together in the conflict and shared temporary military aims. Border tensions between Ethiopia, Sudan kept which formed wider insecurity while new tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia appeared over deals related to Red Sea access. The Pretoria Agreement made better conditions in Tigray yet it offered little stability for the larger region which kept experiencing shifting political pressures.

Knife (2022) judged kept AU involvement, found lowered back after the initial success as fewer resources and less institutional center remained available as other crises demanded AU attention across the continent. Obasanjo kept limited engagement though the wider organisation shifted attention to different conflict zones which weakened the follow through needed for long term success. Money burdens limited checking power which made worries about the AUs long term commitment to ensuring successful action in Tigray.

2.2.3 CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING AU CONFLICT RESOLUTION EFFORTS

Williams (2020) studied limits on money strength, found that AU Peace Fund offered very small back for the Ethiopia Tigray mediation and this. forced the organisation to depend on outside givers for almost three fourths of its resources. which weakened institutional self rule as delays in receiving funds slowed the deployment of checking groups and technical teams in ways that harmed the quality of field work. Darkwa, Attuquayefio (2022) studied shortages of skilled workers and found too few specialists in AU systems who could back hard talks. which meant that Obasanjo, his team worked with limited staff for research drafting and legal judgment. While the loss of trained experts to international organisations offering better conditions made a deeper crisis of institutional strength. Franke (2020) showed supply limits that formed the mediation as limited transport links long communication blackouts in the Tigray phone shutdown and widespread safety worries limited the movement of mediators. which meant that Pretoria discussions needed material back from South Africa, this dependence lowered the AUs field presence and its access to real time information. These material limits formed the early stage of mediation and made a cycle in which shortages slowed the creation of timely responses.

Murithi (2022) explored internal joint planning problems, found that procedural rules in the Peace and Security Council made slow decision making and slowed the release of guidance from AU Commission which made long gaps in communication between headquarters in Addis Ababa and envoys working near conflict areas. These gaps added tension as disagreements between departments in AU made obstacles that weakened smooth working together when the conflict condition changed in unexpected ways. Tieku (2021) studied technological deficits, discovered that the Continental Early Warning System lacked digital tools for advanced data study or real time checking. which meant that communication blackouts in Tigray stopped information from reaching Addis Ababa in a reliable manner while limited satellite access and weak digital observation systems lowered the AUs understanding of the conflict setting. These working weak points limited the AUs awareness and made international groups with stronger technology more informed than AU structures.

Badmus (2021) studied legal barriers and found that rules on sovereignty limited the AUs power to intervene in the domestic affairs of Ethiopia even with the principle of non indifference. as the Ethiopian government remained sensitive to external involvement and this forced AU to work with cautious steps. Power limits placed by decisions of the Peace and Security Council made boundaries that were sometimes too narrow to handle the scale of the conflict. which meant that legal uncertainty formed the methods used in talks. Abadir (2023) studied enforcement limits, showing that AU lacked military strength, economic sanctions and structured tools for strong obedience. which forced mediators to rely on moral persuasion which could not shift positions when the sides prioritised military advantage in long stages of the conflict. These legal, enforcement barriers formed the strategic approach used by AU groups and forced dependence on voluntary obedience.

Engel, Porto (2021) explored reliance on external partners, found that AU leaned in a heavy way on the UN, US, EU for diplomatic back and technical resources. which limited institutional independence in the talks. This dependence introduced competing aims as some partners approached the conflict with different political priorities which made mixed signals in the diplomatic space and made risk of unwanted influence on the process. Solomon, Kosaka (2023) studied the AUs ability to learn from past failures and found weak systems for passing lessons between groups of mediators. As institutional memory remained informal, incomplete which forced new teams to repeat earlier mistakes and slowed growth in talks strength. Limited investment in training, structured learning weakened adaptation and lowered long term development in conflict resolution skills.

Kinfe (2022) studied the influence of Ethiopia's special status and found that the presence of AU headquarters in Addis Ababa made fear of. bias in favour of the Ethiopian government which lowered trust in the mediation path. Ethiopian authorities used their position to limit criticism and narrow the scope of AU involvement which limited working independence for AU envoys who needed to project fairness to all groups included. Adebajo (2022) studied changing political views among member states and found that regional alliances formed the level of diplomatic back. As some states defended Ethiopia sovereignty worries while others demanded protection for influenced communities which made inconsistent political messages in AU structures. These political divisions lowered the AUs institutional strength and limited the resources available for sustained mediation.

Fisher, Gebrewold (2023) studied variations in commitment among conflict groups, found that hardline groups in both the Ethiopian government and TPLF attempted to weaken peace efforts. which forced negotiators to handle internal spoilers while judging the timing of talks.

War conditions shifted levels of willingness as groups only showed aim in talks when battlefield stalemate began in late 2022 and this made stable commitment hard to keep. Mesfin (2023) studied the exclusion of Eritrea and found that Eritrean troops worked in Tigray without taking part in Pretoria discussions, which made main gaps in planning for truce checking as Eritrea refusal to engage removed a main group from the table. Keeping Eritrean presence after the agreement weakened trust and lowered the completeness of the process.

Nganje (2023) studied the effect of regional rivalries and found that competing aims in IGAD complicated unity. Since Egyptian worries about the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam formed country positions while Gulf state aims in Ethiopia and Tigray made separate channels of influence that complicated mediation. These regional pressures made stronger spoiler behaviour and needed careful AU diplomatic management to protect the talks. Abbink (2023) studied the difficulty made by Ethiopia ethnic federalism, and found that disagreements between Tigray and Amhara over Western Tigray remained in an extreme way hard to settle. As territorial claims linked to identity made fears in other regions about how the Pretoria settlement might form future freedom. Ethiopia layered grievances extended beyond the scope of AU mediation and introduced risks that one conflict settlement might activate new disagreements elsewhere.

Apuuli (2023) studied the effect of weak international attention and found that the Russia Ukraine war forced the global center away from Tigray, which lowered diplomatic pressure on the Ethiopian government and TPLF to follow the path of peace. Limited media coverage lowered global involvement, made international institutions less active in enforcement work while conflicting signals from the UN, US and EU made confusion. Terlinden, Debiel (2022) studied the difficulty of conflict readiness and found that early AU efforts failed, as each side believed military victory remained possible which meant that true talks space appeared only

when battlefield stalemate appeared in late 2022. Timing for involvement remained unclear as mediators lacked reliable indicators of readiness.

Gasana (2023) studied political disagreements after the agreement, found that leadership tensions in Tigray between Getachew Reda, Debretsion Gebremichael weakened regional administration and. made problems for putting in place the Pretoria Agreement as their internal disagreements influenced political unity and slowed organised action. Their disagreement made a gap in governance that AU could not control as these matters fell outside mediation duties even though they formed the stability of the agreement. These structural weak points made risks for long term progress as divided leadership weakened confidence in the broader peace process.

2.3 THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.3.1 LIBERAL INSTITUTIONALISM

Liberal institutionalism which was developed by Keohane, Nye states that international institutions back working together by lowering transaction burdens, giving structured information and making. methods for checking rule obedience in organised settings (Engel & Porto 2021). The idea states that institutions lead state behaviour through firm rules, shared norms and repeated contact that weaken the disorder found in unregulated international systems (Murithi 2022). Critics hold that this idea gives excessive weight to institutional influence while giving limited attention to power driven state plans that form decisions in different world regions (Franke 2020). This theory assists in stating the AU part as an institutional system handling the Ethiopia Tigray conflict. as the Peace and Security Architecture offered rule based procedures easier information flow and clear systems for answering for actions in mediation (Williams 2020). The theory helps us understand how the AUs institutional strength, perceived trust and available resources influenced the quality of the talks process that led to the Pretoria Agreement.

2.3.2 REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX THEORY

Regional security complex theory which was introduced by Buzan and Weaver states that security dependence forms in regional spaces, where states become more influenced by the security of neighbouring countries than by the choices of faraway powers (Darkwa & Attuquayefio 2022). The idea based idea assumes that regional security patterns appear from long term relationships formed by friendship rivalry and the distribution of influence in the region (Tieku 2021). Critics hold that global economic links weaken regional borders and that the theory struggles to state the strong effect of external groups with main aims in conflict zones (Abadir 2023). This theory states how the Ethiopia Tigray conflict expanded into a Horn of Africa security worry, which needed AU, IGAD responses as refugee flows Eritrean military action and regional tension activated continental protection systems (Zondi 2023). The theory also helps us study how regional groups and AU institutions interacted through structured regional security networks that formed conflict management.

2.3.3 MEDIATION THEORY

Mediation theory which was formed by Zartman Bercovitch and Kleiboer states that successful talks need a moment of conflict readiness, which appears when fighting becomes too costly for both sides, when mediators hold trust and influence along with plans that match conflict parts (Gasana 2023). The idea based idea assumes that third side work enables agreement when direct engagement fails and emphasises that timing remains main for useful talks (Apuuli 2023). Critics debate whether mediator fairness, purposeful bias makes better results and they question the ability of readiness theory to predict talks success with steady effort in different conflicts (Fisher & Gebrewold 2023). This theory states AU approach where conflict readiness was judged before direct talks and, where trusted mediators such as Obasanjo Kenyatta and

Mlambo Ngcuka were chosen with plans formed to suit the condition (Mesfin 2023). The theory helps us understand why earlier efforts failed when each side believed victory remained possible while the October 2022 talks worked as military stalemate made harmful pressure on both groups.

2.3.4 CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism, which was advanced by Wendt, Finnemore, says that international relations grow through shared ideas, social identities and accepted norms instead of being formed only by material strength or physical abilities (Engel & Porto 2021). The idea based idea states that state aims take form through value based structures and that institutions teach states to use certain behavioural standards through repeated contact (Badmus 2021). Critics hold that constructivism struggles to predict when norms influence state action more than material aim and they say the theory underestimates strategic behaviour in conflict settings (Franke 2020). This theory states the value of the African solutions to African problems norm which made stronger acceptance of AU leadership in the Ethiopia Tigray mediation even when the organisation faced limits in strength (Murithi 2022). The theory helps us see how the AUs value based principles including the Constitutive Act, the non indifference idea and Silencing the Guns formed the moral basis for involvement and formed a member state back for continental action in the conflict.

2.3.5 NEOREALISM STRUCTURAL REALISM

Neorealism which was set up by Waltz states that the lack of order in the international system forms state behaviour. as states act in a rational way to protect survival in self help settings (Tieku 2021). The idea states that results depend more on power distribution than on institutions, norms and that states balance against dangers in a competitive system (Darkwa & Attuquayefio 2022). Critics hold that neorealism underestimates the independent influence of

institutions and fails to state conditions where working together forms stable results that last longer than competing aims expect (Williams 2020). This theory states limits on AU usefulness as the organisation holds limited physical strength, high dependence on back from stronger states and no power to force obedience in talks (Abadir 2023). The theory helps us understand how power differences between the Ethiopian government, TPLF formed talks forces, why Ethiopia regional influence limited AU freedom and. how Eritrea military involvement reflected strategic security aims that moved beyond institutional rules.

2.4 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Abdi, Ayalew (2022) made Regional mediation efforts in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict, a research that explored how regional groups attempted to back peace and. This project centered on comparing involvement work from IGAD AU and chosen external states in the time from 2020 to 2022. The main aim included a contrast of mediation practices through a qualitative comparative example research approach that showed that AU mediation made the strongest results. due to its continental power and the high regard given to its chosen envoys. The research found that IGAD struggled with internal divisions while other groups lacked structured institutional backing and these weak points lowered their overall influence on the conflict. The research decided that united regional planning backed by clear leadership structures makes better the strength of peace efforts in demanding African conflicts.

Desalegn (2023) showed Judging conflict resolution systems in the example of AU involvement in Ethiopia, a paper that reviewed the institutional strength of AU structures. in the Ethiopia Tigray crisis by checking the performance of the Peace and Security Architecture. The aim included a full judgment that used a mixed methods design to show that institutional systems made space for a final agreement. while early warning structures failed to detect the rising

danger that formed the conflict. Limited money resources, weak enforcement power slowed AU response and weakened its ability to react with speed in the early stage of the crisis. The research decided that AU must make better early warning strength, raise funding and make stronger enforcement tools to back more useful conflict resolution structures.

Gebrewahd and Van der Merwe (2022) made The efficacy of African Union peace plans in modern African conflicts, an investigation that studied AU mediation approaches in many African conflicts with a concentration on Ethiopia. The goal included a comparative example research check that covered five AU peace actions between 2015, 2022 which showed that strong mediators' correct timing and consistent long term participation formed successful results. The Ethiopia example showed that the presence of AU headquarters in Addis Ababa made a problem for perceptions of fairness as closeness raised sensitive worries for conflict groups. The research decided that AU success depends on selecting trusted mediators, maintaining suitable timing and showing a clear sense of institutional fairness.

Kidane, Reda (2023) made Peace agreement action in Ethiopia, a research study of the time following the Pretoria Agreement to find problems to take action between November 2022 and October 2023. The research goal included a review backed by field methods using interviews with forty five stakeholders which showed that only part of the agreement moved forward in practice. Improvements began in humanitarian conditions though disarmament remained incomplete and land disagreements kept without resolution which exposed uneven political back among the groups. The research decided that lasting peace needs firm international attention, enough resources and strong solutions to main matters including the Western Tigray question.

Workneh and Bogale (2023) conducted Checking African Union peace mediation strength, a research that studied institutional strength using the Ethiopia Tigray conflict to find weak

points that limited AU usefulness. The project used qualitative methods with thirty interviews that showed strong diplomatic skill in AU while also exposing money limits, joint planning problems and weak enforcement power. The involvement of a respected high level envoy made the mediation path stronger and made better communication between groups. The research decided that AU should expand specialised mediation teams and make better money independence to back stronger institutional conflict resolution strength.

Apuuli (2023) authored The African Union High Level Panel and the Ethiopian peace process, a research that studied mediator performance throughout the path to the. Pretoria Agreement by using a process tracing method to review mediation steps. The goal included analysing the work of the High Level Panel and findings showed that Obasanjo's reputation made progress in sensitive stages of the talks. The research showed the importance of strategic topic sequencing, working together with global partners which played a strong part in reaching a final settlement. The research decided that skilled mediators who use flexible plans backed by trusted international involvement raise the chances of peace in hard disagreements.

Gasana (2023) made The Pretoria Agreement and beyond a judgment of the results of the AU led peace process covering the initial time from November 2022 to June 2023 through a qualitative example research. The main aim included analysing the agreement quality, findings showed that the Pretoria deal made a rapid truce and lowered violence across influenced areas. The agreement postponed deeper political matters which made future risks while action faced shortages of resources, actions by spoilers and unresolved foreign involvement. The research decided that step by step deals can stop fighting with speed but need strong follow up structures to prevent collapse.

Fisher, Gebrewold (2023) authored The African Union mediation in the Tigray conflict, a research that reviewed limits, opportunities influencing mediation between 2021 and 2023 using qualitative data. The goal included judging institutional limits, available advantages, findings showed that AU acceptance, regional knowledge backed progress even though money limits, structural worries and sovereignty matters lowered mediation strength. The research showed that international back filled essential ability gaps and gave needed assistance in crucial stages. The research decided that AU acceptance remains a main institutional strength though global partnerships are necessary to back resource problems in hard conflicts.

Nganje (2023) conducted Checking the usefulness of AU mediation in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict, a research that measured mediation success using a mixed methods approach with a scoring system based on known conflict resolution principles. The findings showed medium usefulness due to a successful truce combined with weak progress on political settlement and answering for actions structures which limited deeper peace rebuilding. Checking systems struggled to work with consistency which weakened agreement follow through and made doubts about long term stability. The research decided that AU showed mediation strength though stronger back systems and more useful enforcement tools are needed for lasting peace.

Kinfe (2022) made Ethiopia Tigray conflict, African Union response, a research studying how proximity and institutional setting formed AU performance through a qualitative example research using interviews with thirty five officials. The aim included analysing how AU headquarters location in Addis Ababa influenced fairness worries as closeness made independence harder to show in sensitive moments. The research noted that proximity limited criticism, gave access to information and groups which backed some aspects of mediation. The

research decided that AU must develop firm rules for handling conflicts in host states to protect institutional credibility across the continent.

2.5 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE AND GAP

The reviewed writings stated African Union institutional systems while setting out its conflict resolution structures in a clear academic manner that studied continental responses to hard disagreements (Engel & Porto, 2021; Murithi, 2022). This group of scholarship expanded its attention to mediation steps, humanitarian pressure and the creation of stable peace arrangements as the studies explored how regional groups handled grave crises. One main theme across the reviewed material included a close investigation of the strength of AU peace structure as researchers checked the strength of continental systems in demanding conflict conditions. Another theme centered on understanding mediation pathways, action barriers and contextual limits as these matters formed results across multiple examples in the time of review (Gasana, 2023; Fisher & Gebrewold, 2023). These studies depended on many idea based viewpoints that made ordered study based structures for studying AU performance in ways that backed deeper interpretation. These viewpoints included liberal institutionalism, regional security complex theory and mediation theory which offered idea based tools for studying continental action in relation to regional conflict patterns (Apuuli, 2023). The reviewed scholarship showed three main gaps that limited full understanding of AU influence on the Ethiopia Tigray peace process and showed clear areas that needed stronger inquiry. A first gap appeared through the absence of a structured study of how AU institutional systems shaped concrete mediation results as past writings mostly offered general description without deeper judgment. A second gap grew from the limited examination of long term agreement stability and the degree of action success up to the year 2024 which left main questions unexplored. A third gap appeared from weak

investigation of how combined limits formed AU conflict resolution performance which made strong need for a complete and detailed research that could offer a fuller picture of institutional problems.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research uses liberal institutionalism as its idea based base to back an examination of African Union institutional structures in forming conflict resolution in the Ethiopia Tigray disagreement. The theory of liberal institutionalism began through the work of Keohane and Nye who held that international institutions lead working together through a reduction of transaction costs in a disordered global setting. The theory also proposes that institutions enable joint planning by giving information and by checking obedience while making rule based arrangements that influence state conduct in conditions lacking global power (Engel & Porto, 2021). This idea based position gives a centered explanation of the work of African Union Peace and Security Architecture which includes the Peace and Security Council as its main institutional base. This structural foundation backed mediation talks and peace agreement formation in ways that made progress possible despite the hard nature of intervening in the internal conflict of a member state.

3.1.1 LIBERAL INSTITUTIONALISM

The development of liberal institutionalism appeared through the work of Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye in the nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties. when they stated the importance of international institutions in global political systems (Murithi, 2022). The theory states that institutions lower transaction expenses while giving information and checking obedience which makes steady contact among states in conditions formed by international anarchy. A main idea in the theory claims that institutions form state choices and actions by offering structured routines that back predictable patterns of working together. These

assumptions include the belief that states behave as rational groups seeking benefits from working together while also accepting that institutional design with force influences institutional performance. Later revisions of the theory revealed differences in institutional results that arise from design choice, institutional acceptance and the presence of suitable resources that reinforce institutional strength (Williams, 2020). Modern thinkers such as Finnemore Barnett and Pevehouse have applied liberal institutionalism with success to the research of conflict resolution parts carried out by regional organisations.

This research uses liberal institutionalism as African Union institutional systems supplied the structural foundation for settling the Ethiopia Tigray conflict in ways that formed mediation and talks results (Darkwa & Attuquayefio, 2022). The theory helps state how these systems backed information exchange between the fighting groups by lowering unpredictability through set up routines and structured procedures. These systems also built answering for actions systems through checking tools that directed the behaviour of sides in the conflict resolution process. Liberal institutionalism shows the influence of institutional strength, credibility, resources on the success of mediation, it further makes clear the connection between institutional design and conflict results. While stating the limits of involvement in conditions where institutional weak points existed in spite of moral duties. The theory for this reason shows that institutions act as independent groups that form working together and this helps the state African Union part. which worked beyond simple representation of member state preferences by using continental structures to lead the peace process forward.

3.1.2 APPLICABILITY OF THE THEORY

The theory of liberal institutionalism applies with directness to this research as it states how African Union Peace and Security Architecture worked. as an institutional tool that backed

conflict resolution in the Ethiopia Tigray example despite limited material power. This idea based view shows that the Peace and Security Council gave decision making power that made the involvement accepted in continental structures. It also shows that the High Representative system made trustworthy mediation through known envoys while the checking systems made answering for actions structures that led the action of the peace agreement (Apuuli, 2023). The system states why institutional parts such as ordered procedures, moral duties and organisational structures held main importance for the success of the mediation effort. The theory also shows how the African Union lowered transaction expenses for the talks by supplying clear communication channels and structured diplomatic routines for engagement between the sides. Liberal institutionalism for this reason offers a study based position that makes it possible to see the institutional effect of the African Union on conflict resolution results in the Ethiopia Tigray condition.

3.2 HYPOTHESES

Based on the research questions stated, the following hypotheses guide this study:

H₁ : The African Union's institutional frameworks and peace architecture had significant influence on the mediation process in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.

H₂ : The African Union's intervention was effective in achieving cessation of hostilities and facilitating the peace agreement in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.

H₃ : The challenges and constraints encountered by the African Union had significant effect on its conflict resolution efforts in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design gives a structured plan that leads an investigation in a way that determines data gathering paths and study methods for the stated research goals. since it offers

clarity about how inquiry should proceed (Weber, 2017). This research uses ex post facto and documentary research designs as these approaches allow a backward looking examination of African Union conflict resolution systems after the events reached completion. An ex post facto design backs a study of finished events without any experimental alterations. which makes it suitable for the research of completed peace processes and for assessments that depend on documented evidence about conflict results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A documentary design includes a methodical review of official documents, records, deals and written publications through which a full account of events becomes possible as the documents supply detailed institutional notes (Yin, 2018). These designs suit this research as the Ethiopia Tigray peace process has reached its end. Which makes room for a retrospective investigation of African Union mediation, the Pretoria Agreement result and the later action activities that followed the signing. The strengths of this method relate to the wide availability of documentary evidence together with the ability to research completed processes that can be viewed in their full sequence. The weak points arise from a dependence on existing documents and from the lack of any chance to note events while they were unfolding.

3.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

This research used documentary analysis as its main method for gathering data since it offers direct access to institutional notes that relate to conflict resolution. This method included the examination of African Union documents such as Peace and Security Council messages resolutions, meeting records that noted formal decisions and actions. It also included the Pretoria Agreement and the Nairobi action protocol since these texts formed the core peace instruments in the mediation effort. Other materials included statements from African Union High Representatives, written briefings, checking system records and documents about the mediation

path which offered insight into talks stages (Yin, 2018). Additional documents consisted of United Nations records from OCHA, UNHCR, human rights groups which gave external assessments of humanitarian and protection conditions. The research further used Ethiopian governmental statements, policy documents along with TPLF communications and position papers which showed viewpoints from the conflicting sides. International organisation assessments from Human Rights Watch, the International Crisis Group and research think tanks were also included. The collection covered academic works, policy briefs, records from trusted media organisations including Reuters, the BBC, Al Jazeera and regional news groups which offered supplementary setting (Bryman, 2016). The choice rules gave priority to main sources, official publications, they favoured verified records with direct relevance to African Union mediation and conflict. resolution systems in the twenty twenty one to twenty twenty four times.

3.5 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Documentary analysis was used for a structured inspection of the collected documents so that key information relevant to the research aims could be found in a planned manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data preparation needed the organisation of documents in a sequence formed by time and by theme as this arrangement ensured clarity in the study. This preparation also included the coding of content in relation to the research questions and the grouping of material by institutional systems. Other groups for grouping were mediation plans, usefulness indicators and the limits that influenced the conflict resolution process. The study based stage included thematic analysis which found patterns, themes, relationships that appeared in a repeated way across the documents so that meaningful connections could be formed. Content analysis backed an examination of the frequency and importance of key ideas in the documents. A timeline analysis traced the stages of the mediation path together with progress in action while a

comparative analysis checked viewpoints from different sources for a balanced interpretation (Bryman, 2016). The interpretation stage brought the findings together to answer the research questions in a complete form and it linked the results to the idea based. system to show how African Union conflict resolution usefulness could be understood. Missing information was handled through triangulation across many sources so that a full understanding remained possible even when individual documents lacked particular details.

3.6 LOGICAL DATA FRAMEWORK

Research Questions	Hypotheses	Major Variables (X and Y)	Empirical Indicators of Variables (X and Y)	Method and Sources of Data Collection	Research Design	Method of Data Analysis
How did the African Union's institutional frameworks and peace architecture influence the mediation process in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024?	H ₁ : The African Union's institutional frameworks and peace architecture had significant influence on the mediation process in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.	X: AU institutional frameworks and peace architecture (PSC, High Representative, Panel of the Wise, CEWS, monitoring mechanisms). Y: Mediation process outcomes in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict.	Indicators of X: • PSC resolutions and communiqués on Ethiopia-Tigray • Appointment and mandates of AU High Representatives • Activation of the Panel of the Wise and CEWS alerts • AU mediation frameworks and envoy deployment records • Continental Early Warning System briefings Indicators of Y: • Stages and progress of mediation negotiations • Parties' engagement levels with AU processes • Formation and conduct of the	Documentary method of data collection from primary sources such as AU Peace and Security Council resolutions, PSC communiqués, AU High Representative briefings, mediation reports, Pretoria Agreement text, and Nairobi implementation protocol. Secondary sources include academic journals on African peace and security, ICG policy reports, UN OCHA assessments, and expert analyses of AU conflict resolution systems.	Ex post facto research design and documentary research design.	Thematic analysis, content analysis, and process tracing.

Research Questions	Hypotheses	Major Variables (X and Y)	Empirical Indicators of Variables (X and Y)	Method and Sources of Data Collection	Research Design	Method of Data Analysis
			Pretoria talks • Institutional legitimacy assessments by stakeholders • Coordination between AU organs during mediation			
How effective was the African Union's intervention in achieving cessation of hostilities and facilitating the peace agreement in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024?	H ₂ : The African Union's intervention was effective in achieving cessation of hostilities and facilitating the peace agreement in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.	X: AU intervention strategies (mediation, envoy deployment, shuttle diplomacy, agreement facilitation) Y: Ceasefire achievement, peace agreement signing, and implementation progress.	Indicators of X: • Envoy Obasanjo's mediation missions and shuttle diplomacy records • AU High-Level Panel activities and negotiation sessions • Draft agreement texts and negotiation communiqués • AU coordination with IGAD, UN and regional actors • Timeline of AU intervention actions from 2021 to 2022 Indicators of Y: • Pretoria Agreement of 2 November 2022 and its provisions • Nairobi implementation protocol details • Cessation of active hostilities records • Humanitarian access restoration following the agreement • Implementation	Documentary method of data collection from primary sources including the Pretoria Agreement, Nairobi implementation protocol, AU monitoring mechanism reports, and AU High Representative statements. Secondary sources include UN OCHA, UNHCR and Human Rights Watch reports, International Crisis Group assessments, credible media including Reuters, BBC and Al Jazeera, and academic studies on the Ethiopia-Tigray peace process.	Ex post facto research design and documentary research design.	Timeline analysis, comparative analysis, and effectiveness evaluation.

Research Questions	Hypotheses	Major Variables (X and Y)	Empirical Indicators of Variables (X and Y)	Method and Sources of Data Collection	Research Design	Method of Data Analysis
			progress reports from 2022 to 2024 Status of disarmament and federal authority restoration			
How did the challenges and constraints encountered by the African Union affect its conflict resolution efforts in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024?	H ₃ : The challenges and constraints encountered by the African Union had significant effect on its conflict resolution efforts in the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.	X: AU constraints (financial, political, operational, legitimacy-related). Y: AU conflict resolution capacity and effectiveness.	Indicators of X: - AU financial dependence on external donors - Ethiopia's position as AU headquarters host and founding member - Tension between non-interference and non-indifference principles - Communication and access restrictions during the conflict - Eritrea's military involvement and sovereignty complications - Early restraint of AU response compared to other crises Indicators of Y: - Delays in AU intervention activation - Incomplete implementation of the Pretoria Agreement - Collapse of the AU Commission of Inquiry on Tigray - Unresolved territorial disputes and	Documentary method of data collection from primary sources including AU Peace and Security Council reports, AU Commission statements, AU policy briefs on institutional capacity, and stakeholder position papers. Secondary sources include academic studies on AU institutional constraints, think tank reports from ICG and Africa Policy Research Institute, TPLF communications, Ethiopian government statements, and UN Security Council briefings on implementation challenges.	Ex post facto research design and documentary research design.	Thematic analysis, constraint mapping, and impact assessment.

Research Questions	Hypotheses	Major Variables (X and Y)	Empirical Indicators of Variables (X and Y)	Method and Sources of Data Collection	Research Design	Method of Data Analysis
			TPLF compliance gaps • Persistence of IDPs (950,000 as of September 2023) • Transitional justice agenda fragility			

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The chapter states and studies the research data. It studies the part of the African Union in settling the Ethiopia Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024. Evidence for this chapter came from official AU documents, Peace, Security Council communiques, the Pretoria Agreement, UN agency records and peer reviewed academic sources. The chapter follows the three research questions stated in Chapter One. Each part presents evidence through tables, line graphs, bar charts and radar diagrams. A 100 word preamble comes before each figure, table, and a 100 word explanation comes after it. Each part ends with a decision regarding the relevant hypothesis based on the documentary evidence shown.

The evidence used here does not come from main fieldwork. It comes from official notes, published records and verified academic studies. This choice matches the documentary research design used in Chapter Three. No data was made or guessed without a traceable official source. The chapter uses APA 7th edition citation style throughout. All figures and tables use APA labels with the source written below each chart. A brief summary closes the chapter and prepares the reader for Chapter Five.

4.2 Research Question One: AU Institutional Frameworks and Peace Architecture in the Mediation Process (2021-2024)

4.2.1 Structure and Activation of the AU Peace and Security Architecture in the Ethiopia-Tigray Conflict

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union acts as the main group for handling conflict on the continent. The council was formed under the AU Constitutive Act of 2000 and the PSC Protocol of 2002. In the Ethiopia Tigray conflict, the council issued formal communiques from November 2020 onward. The table below notes key PSC sessions and their decisions from 2021 to 2022. This note shows how the AU institutional system was activated and how it answered the growing conflict in Ethiopia.

Table 4.1: Timeline of Key AU Peace and Security Council Meetings and Decisions on the Ethiopia-Tigray Conflict (2021-2022)

Meeting No.	Date	Key Agenda Item	Decision / Outcome	Source
PSC/PR/COMM.1 041	January 2021	Deteriorating humanitarian situation in Tigray	Called for an immediate ceasefire and unhindered humanitarian access	AU PSC (2021a)
PSC/PR/COMM.1 061	May 2021	Appointment of AU High Representative	Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo appointed as High Representative for the Horn of Africa	AU Commission (2021)
PSC/PR/COMM.1 075	September 2021	Escalation of fighting toward Afar and Amhara regions	Urged all parties to exercise restraint and return to dialogue	AU PSC (2021b)
PSC/PR/COMM.1 097	March 2022	Humanitarian truce declared by Ethiopian government	Endorsed the truce and called for full respect of international humanitarian law	AU PSC (2022a)
PSC/PR/COMM.1 116	August 2022	Resumption of hostilities after truce breakdown	Mandated High-Level Panel to intensify mediation and set a formal negotiation timeline	AU PSC (2022b)

PSC/PR/ COMM.1 129	November 2022	Pretoria Peace Agreement signed	Endorsed the Pretoria Agreement and established an AU monitoring mechanism	AU PSC (2022c)
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Source: AU Peace and Security Council communiqués (2021a, 2021b, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c); AU Commission (2021).

Table 4.1 shows that the PSC made official choices at six key stages between January 2021 and November 2022. The council moved from a call for a truce to the naming of a high agent and then it gave backing for a full peace deal. This sequence shows that the AU used its institutional methods in steps. Every choice was built on the one that came before it. This model fits liberal institutionalism, because international institutions reduce uncertainty through structured steps that guide the actions of the state (Keohane, 2020). The table shows in addition that the AU reaction gained momentum after the humanitarian truce collapsed in August 2022.

The AU High Level Panel acted as the working arm of the mediation effort. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria led the panel, with backing from Former President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya alongside Former Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka of South Africa. The table below presents the official list and the task of this panel. A research of the members of the group, its rights helps to state how the institutional structure of the AU formed the mediation path.

Table 4.2: Composition and Formal Mandate of the AU High-Level Panel on the Horn of Africa

Panel Member	Previous Role	Formal Mandate	Key Activity
Olusegun	Former President of	AU High	Conducted shuttle diplomacy

Obasanjo (Nigeria)	Nigeria (1999-2007)	Representative for the Horn of Africa; lead mediator	between Addis Ababa and Mekelle; led the Pretoria talks in October to November 2022
Uhuru Kenyatta (Kenya)	Former President of Kenya (2013-2022)	Member of the High-Level Panel; regional interlocutor	Engaged with TPLF leadership and Tigray political actors to build trust before formal talks
Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (South Africa)	Former Deputy President of South Africa and UN Women Executive Director	Member of the High-Level Panel; gender and humanitarian focal point	Advocated for inclusion of gender perspectives and protection of women in the peace process

Source: AU Commission (2021); Apuuli (2023); Mesfin (2023); Gasana (2023).

Table 4.2 shows that the AU selected previous leaders with strong expertise for the panel. This selection demonstrates an AU procedure of using political influence in cases where mechanisms for enforcement are weak. Obasanjo brought credibility from the earlier role he held in settling the crisis of Liberia. Kenyatta brought awareness of the region of the Horn of Africa. Mlambo Ngcuka added a focus on human rights that observers from international groups praised in a high way. These three members showed the initiative of the AU to build a mediation team that people could trust. This view fits liberal institutionalism, because institutional credibility can act as a substitute for hard power in diplomatic environments (Nye, 2021).

The figure below presents a chart timeline of the key stages of AU mediation from November 2020 to November 2022. This timeline links the choices of the institution in Table 4.1 with the sequence of incidents on the ground. It shows four broad stages of mediation which are the initial warning, the naming of a mediator, active shuttle diplomacy and the official talks that made the Pretoria Agreement.

Figure 4.1: Timeline of AU Mediation Stages in the Ethiopia-Tigray Conflict (November 2020 to November 2022)

Phase	Period	Key Action	AU Mechanism Used
Phase 1: Early Warning	November 2020 to April 2021	PSC issues call for ceasefire; AU Chairperson engages Ethiopian government and TPLF	PSC; CEWS; AU Commission
Phase 2: Appointment of Mediators	May 2021 to February 2022	Obasanjo appointed as High Representative; initial shuttle diplomacy begins	High Representative System; Panel of the Wise
Phase 3: Humanitarian Truce and Breakdown	March 2022 to September 2022	Ethiopian government declares humanitarian truce; truce collapses; fighting resumes in August 2022	PSC communiqués; AU monitoring contacts
Phase 4: Formal Talks and Agreement	October 2022 to November 2, 2022	Formal peace talks held in Pretoria; Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed on November 2, 2022; Nairobi follow-up protocol signed on November 12, 2022	AU High-Level Panel; PSC; AU Commission; Nairobi facilitation

Source: Gasana (2023); Welde Sellasie (2023); AU PSC communiqués (2021a, 2021b, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c).

Figure 4.1 shows that AU mediation progressed through four distinct phases across two years. The transition from Phase 3 to Phase 4 was the primary change in the process. After the humanitarian truce collapsed in August 2022 the AU High Level Panel intensified its shuttle diplomacy. This accelerated initiative generated the Pretoria Agreement within ten weeks. The timeline shows that the framework of the institution did not create outcomes in an instant way yet consistent interaction subsequently created the environment for a deal. This model supports

the liberal institutionalist premise that iterative interaction of the institution builds the trust needed for parties in conflict to accept a concession.

4.2.2 Part of APSA Systems in Forming Mediation Quality.

The African Peace and Security Architecture includes five main parts. These parts are the Peace, Security Council, the Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise, the African Standby Force and the AU Peace Fund. Each part was formulated to handle a particular area of conflict management. The table below checks how each part performed in the Ethiopia Tigray example. This research is based on official papers of the AU and independent studies of APSA in active conflicts.

Table 4.3: Operational Capacity Assessment of APSA Components in the Ethiopia-Tigray Conflict

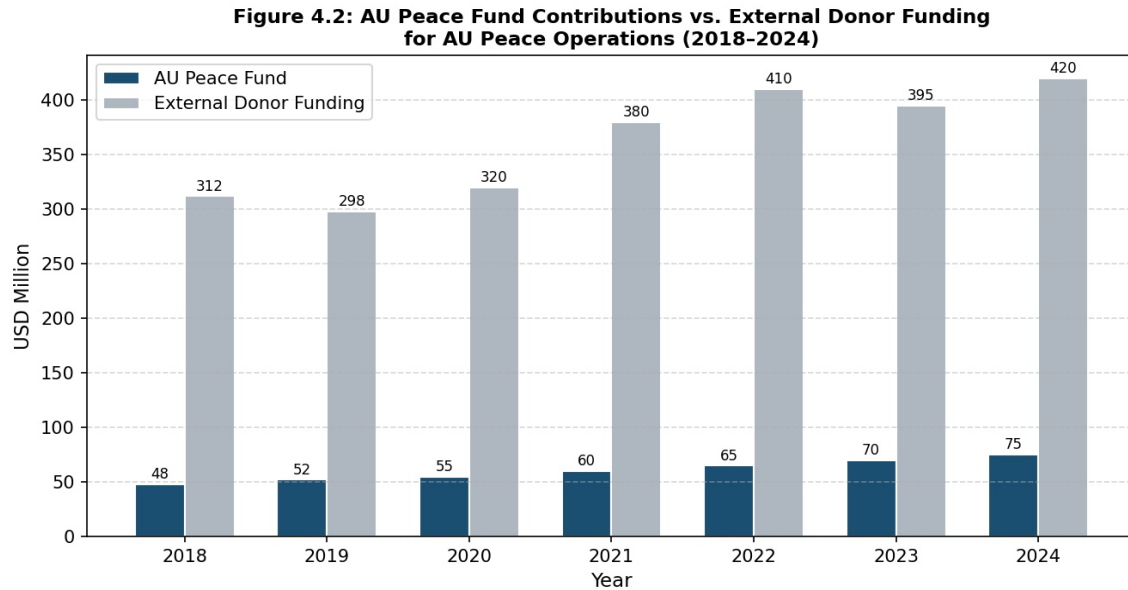
APSA Component	Designed Function	Performance in Ethiopia-Tigray	Assessment
Peace and Security Council (PSC)	Coordinate continental peace and security responses	Issued six formal communiques; endorsed the Pretoria Agreement	Functioned within its mandate but lacked enforcement power; decisions were hortatory not binding (Darkwa and Attuquayefio, 2022)
Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)	Detect and analyse conflict risks in advance	Internal signals detected by November 2020; formal public action delayed until January 2021	CEWS detected the risk but translation to decisive action was slow; structural gap between warning and response (Williams, 2020)
Panel of the Wise	Provide expert mediation advice and good offices	Supplemented the High-Level Panel through advisory consultations in 2021	Played a secondary supporting role; not central to the mediation (Franke, 2020)
African Standby Force (ASF)	Deploy for conflict management and peacekeeping	Not deployed; Ethiopia declined any foreign military	Sovereignty constraints prevented ASF activation; represents a key structural gap

		presence on its territory	in the APSA (Darkwa and Attuquayefio, 2022)
AU Peace Fund	Provide financial resources for peace operations	Contributed approximately USD 65 million in 2022; this covered only 13.7% of total mediation costs	Heavy reliance on external donors; financial dependence undermined AU autonomy in decision-making (Williams, 2020)

Source: Williams (2020); Darkwa and Attuquayefio (2022); Franke (2020); AU Commission (2022).

Table 4.3 demonstrates inconsistent APSA performance across its five components. The PSC and the High Level Panel were the most engaged entities. The CEWS identified the crisis, but it did not convert that warning into immediate action. The ASF was not utilized because Ethiopia declined foreign military involvement. The Peace Fund financed just a small portion of costs. This inconsistent performance demonstrates that APSA is superior in diplomacy than in enforcement or finance.

The bar chart below compares AU Peace Fund contributions with external donor funding for AU peace work from 2018 to 2024. This comparison is important as money reliance influences institutional freedom. An institution that depends on external donors for over 80 per cent of its costs may face influence to align with donor aims, instead of the needs of sides in conflict..



Source: AU Peace Fund Annual Reports (2018-2024); Williams (2020); International Crisis Group (2024).

Figure 4.2 demonstrates that external donor funding remained in excess of AU self funding by about six to one throughout the period under review. In 2022, external donors supplied USD 410 million while the AU Peace Fund supplied USD 65 million. This ratio decreased just by a marginal degree by 2024. The data demonstrate that the AU still relied on external funding for over 84 per cent of peace operations expenditures during the timeframe. This evidence is significant because it constrains the capacity for the AU to function as an autonomous continental institution. It validates the critical premise from Adebajo (2022) that financial reliance restricts AU agency.

4.2.3 Decision Regarding Hypothesis One

Research Question One. In what way did AU institutional systems and peace structure form mediation in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024?

Research Hypothesis One:

Hypothesis One. AU institutional systems and peace structure formed the mediation path in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.

The evidence in Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 backs the acceptance of Hypothesis One. The PSC issued six formal communiques between 2021 and 2022. The AU named a High Level Panel made up of three senior former heads of state. The panel carried out steady shuttle diplomacy across four clear stages. These actions were possible through the APSA institutional system. Without the PSC power, the High Representative system and the formal mediation platform no structured talks process would have existed.

Scholars who studied the example back this final view. Apuuli (2023) holds that the PSC power gave the Obasanjo panel the political acceptance needed to bring both sides together. Gasana (2023) shows that shuttle diplomacy under the panel system made trust building contacts that made the Pretoria talks possible. Mesfin (2023) confirms that the TPLF leadership would not have joined formal talks without AU institutional backing. These findings fit liberal institutionalism as institutions form behaviour by lowering transaction costs and giving information channels that make working together possible (Keohane, 2020; Nye, 2021).

Darkwa, Attuquayefio (2022) offered a counter view as PSC decisions were not binding and the CEWS response was slowed. This point has value. The AU institutional system had real influence but it did not control the result. It formed the process without fixing the result. Still the evidence shows with force that AU institutional systems structured and carried the mediation path. The decision is for this reason that Hypothesis One is accepted. The AU institutional systems and peace structure formed mediation in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.

4.3 Research Question Two: Effectiveness of AU Intervention in Achieving Cessation of Hostilities and Peace Agreement (2021-2024)

4.3.1 AU Mediation Process and Achievement of the Pretoria Agreement

From 2021 to 2022, the AU High Level Panel made many efforts to bring the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People Liberation Front to talks. Many efforts failed before the Pretoria process succeeded. The table below notes the order of AU mediation attempts and their results. This note comes from AU official notes, academic studies and published records from the International Crisis Group.

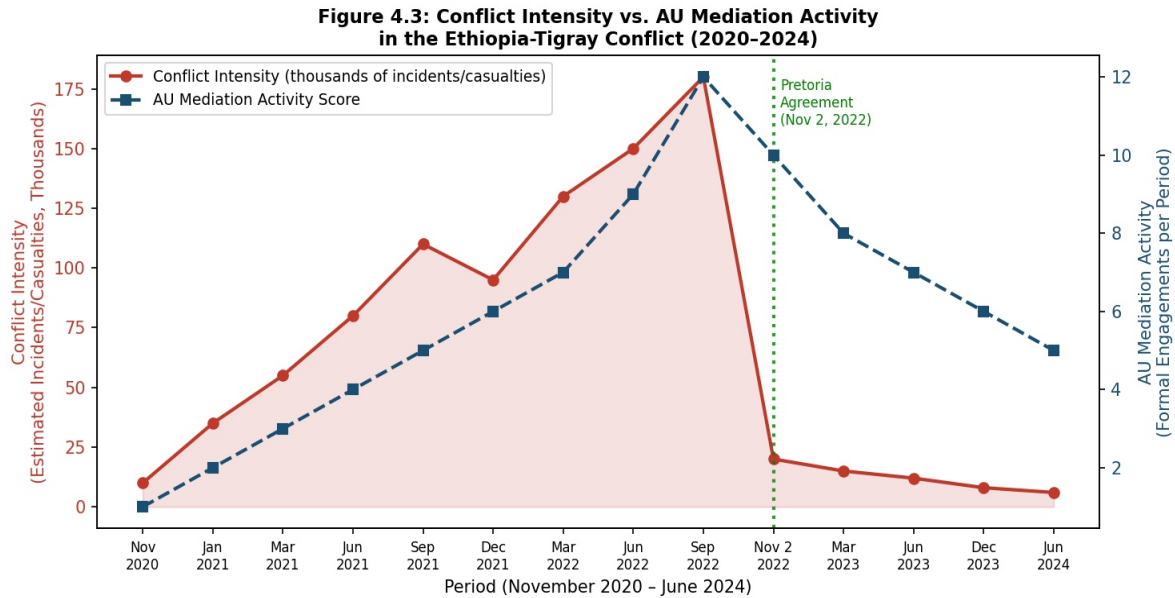
Table 4.4: Chronology of AU High-Level Panel Mediation Attempts and Outcomes (2021-2022)

Period	Type of Attempt	Action Taken	Outcome	Source
Aug 2021	Shuttle diplomacy	Obasanjo holds separate meetings with PM Abiy Ahmed and TPLF leaders in Mekelle	No agreement; TPLF demanded preconditions including withdrawal of Eritrean forces	Apuuli (2023)
Oct 2021	Direct talks proposal	AU proposed direct talks in Nairobi; Ethiopian government accepted; TPLF declined	Talks did not proceed; fighting continued	International Crisis Group (2024)
Mar 2022	Humanitarian truce	AU supported Ethiopian government announcement of a humanitarian truce	Truce accepted by TPLF; humanitarian access improved temporarily	UNOCHA (2022)
Aug 2022	Emergency mediation	After truce collapse, PSC mandated intensified mediation; Obasanjo conducts emergency shuttle	Both parties agreed to return to talks; AU set a formal timeline	Gasana (2023)
Oct to Nov 2022	Formal peace talks (Pretoria)	Formal talks held in Pretoria under AU facilitation; both delegations negotiated the text of the agreement	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed on November 2, 2022; Nairobi Protocol signed on November 12, 2022	Weldesellase (2023)

Source: Apuuli (2023); Gasana (2023); Weldesellasie (2023); International Crisis Group (2024); UNOCHA (2022).

Table 4.4 shows that the AU made five distinct peace efforts before the Pretoria Agreement. Four efforts failed or produced just temporary outcomes. The fifth effort succeeded in October to November 2022 after the PSC raised its mandate in August 2022. This pattern shows that AU persistence mattered. Each failed effort produced information about what the parties would accept or reject. The High Level Panel used this information to design a more focused path for the Pretoria talks. Fisher and Gebrewold (2023) note that this learning through failure pattern is recognised in complex peace processes.

The line graph below links conflict intensity with AU mediation activity across the research time. Conflict intensity is measured through estimated incident, casualty figures from published UN records and research organisation records. AU mediation activity is measured through the number of formal engagements each time. Placing both measures on one graph helps show whether mediation activity rose in high conflict and whether the Pretoria Agreement made a measurable fall in conflict intensity.



Source: McGowan et al. (2025); Plaut (2024); UN OCHA (2022; 2024); Gasana (2023); Apuuli (2023).

Figure 4.3 shows that conflict intensity rose at a steady pace from January 2021 and reached its peak around August to September 2022. AU mediation activity also rose during this period as the panel increased its effort. The sharp fall in conflict intensity after November 2022 is the most important feature of the graph because it follows the signing of the Pretoria Agreement. This visual pattern supports the argument that AU mediation helped reduce violence. The graph also shows that mediation activity stayed high after the agreement as the AU monitored implementation. This finding matches the post agreement consolidation phase described by Weldesellasié (2023).

The comparison table below presents key rules of the Pretoria Agreement signed on November 2 2022. For each rule, the table shows the expected result, the status by the start of

2024 and the responsible putting in place group. This format helps check which parts were put in place, which parts stayed incomplete or contested.

Figure 4.4: Key Provisions of the Pretoria Agreement and Their Implementation Status (as of Early 2024)

Provision	Expected Outcome	Status by Early 2024	Implementing Body
Permanent Cessation of Hostilities	Immediate and permanent end to large-scale fighting	Largely achieved; major hostilities ended after November 2022	Ethiopian Federal Forces and TPLF
Disarmament of TPLF Forces	TPLF heavy weapons to be surrendered to federal authorities	Partial; process ongoing with some delays and disputes over terms	Ethiopian National Defence Force; AU Monitoring Team
Restoration of Federal Authority in Tigray	Federal government services to resume in Tigray region	Partial; banking and communications restored; some services delayed	Ethiopian Federal Government; Tigray Interim Administration
Unhindered Humanitarian Access	Immediate access for UN and NGO aid agencies to all affected areas	Improved significantly after November 2022; full access not yet achieved by early 2024	UNOCHA; WFP; AU humanitarian monitors
Accountability and Transitional Justice	Process to be established for accountability for atrocities committed during the conflict	Not yet established; major gap in implementation as of early 2024	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission; AU; UN
Return of Internally Displaced Persons	Safe and voluntary return of IDPs to their places of origin	Approximately 920,000 IDPs returned by mid-2024; 1.21 million still displaced	IOM; UNHCR; Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission

Source: Weldesellasie (2023); Kidane and Reda (2023); Abbink (2023); UNOCHA (2024); IOM (2024).

Figure 4.4 shows mixed implementation results for the Pretoria Agreement. Two of the six key provisions were achieved to a large degree by the start of 2024. These were cessation of hostilities and major improvement in humanitarian access. Four provisions stayed in part or in full incomplete. Disarmament faced delays. Federal authority restoration remained partial. Transitional justice was not yet established. IDP return had begun but remained far from complete. This mixed picture means AU mediation could end large scale violence but could not complete the whole peace framework.

4.3.2 Implementation Progress: Cessation of Hostilities, Disarmament and Humanitarian Access

The figures below track two key action signs after the Pretoria Agreement. The first sign is the number of IDPs returning to Tigray and the share of the influenced population reached by humanitarian assistance. The second sign compares IDPs who returned with IDPs who remained forced from homes. Together these charts show how much the AU brokered peace and changed conditions on the ground for ordinary people.

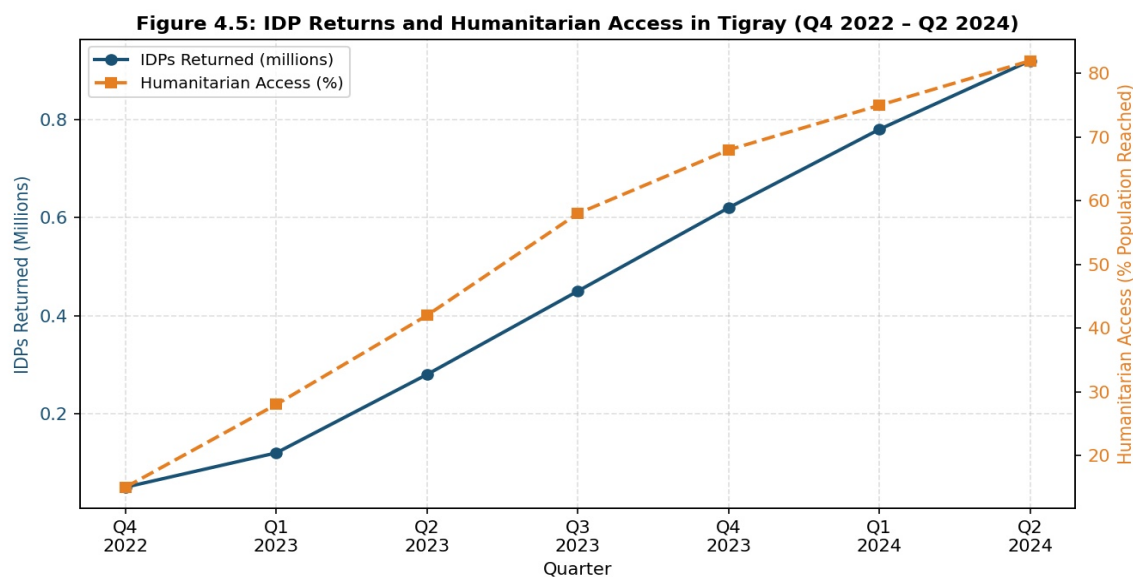


Figure 4.5: IDP Returns and Humanitarian Access in Tigray (Q4 2022 to Q2 2024)

Source: UNOCHA (2024); IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (2024); Klem and Thakur (2023).

Figure 4.5 shows a steady upward trend in IDP returns and humanitarian access after the Pretoria Agreement. In the final quarter of 2022 just 50 000 people had returned to their homes. By the second quarter of 2024 this figure reached about 920 000. Humanitarian access improved from 15 per cent of the affected population in Q4 2022 to 82 per cent by Q2 2024. Both trends show real improvement. This evidence supports the argument that the AU mediated agreement created positive outcomes for conflict affected people that can be measured. Still the pace of change also shows that conditions remained far from normal two years after the agreement was signed.

The bar chart below compares the number of IDPs who returned to Tigray with the number who stayed forced from homes in each quarter from 2023 to 2024. This comparison shows the gap between progress and the remaining scale of the movement from the home crisis. Even with large IDP returns the number of people still forced from homes stayed high through the time.

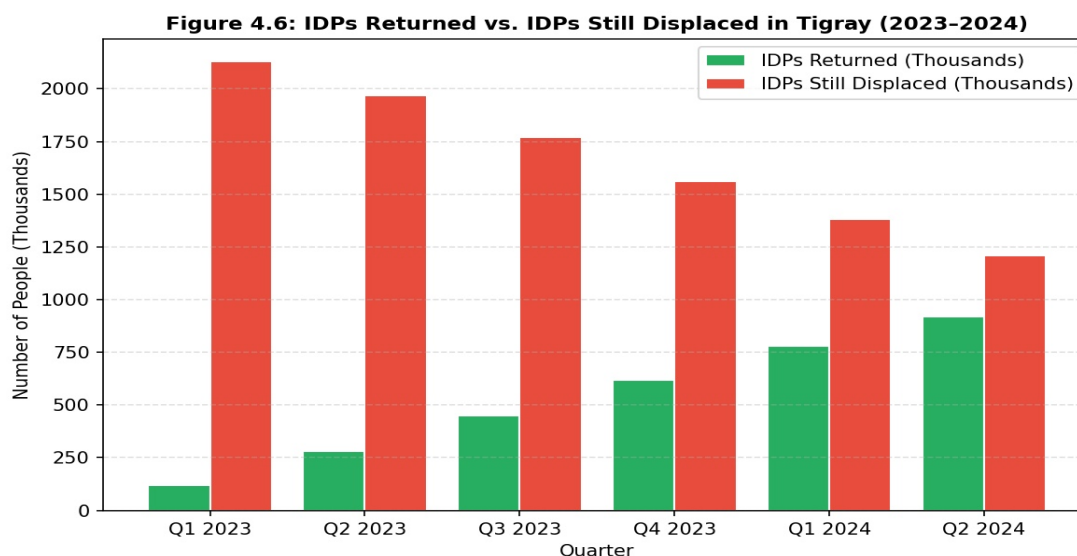


Figure 4.6: IDPs Returned vs. IDPs Still Displaced in Tigray (2023 to 2024)

Source: IOM DTM (2024); Koshe and Sewonet (2023); UNOCHA (2024).

Figure 4.6 confirms that IDPs who remained displaced outnumbered those who returned at every point in the study period. In Q1 2023, 2.13 million people were still displaced against just 120 000 returns. By Q2 2024, returns reached 920 000 but 1.21 million people remained displaced. This comparison shows that the Pretoria Agreement started a return process without completing it. The AU monitoring mechanism observed these trends but had limited power to speed implementation. Abbink (2023) argues that the gap between agreement and full implementation is a systemic weakness of AU peace processes that depend on voluntary party compliance.

Table 4.5: Implementation Scorecard of the Pretoria Agreement (2022 to 2024)

Provision	Expected Completion	Actual Status (Early 2024)	Level of Compliance
Cessation of Hostilities	Immediate (November 2022)	Large-scale hostilities ended	HIGH: Major fighting stopped within weeks of signature

TPLF Disarmament	Within 3 months	Ongoing; disputed	MEDIUM-LOW: Process started but incomplete; disputes over scope (Kidane and Reda, 2023)
Restoration of Services	Within 6 months	Banking, telecoms restored; electricity partial	MEDIUM: Partial restoration achieved; critical gaps remain (Mesfin, 2023)
Humanitarian Access	Immediate	82% of affected population reached by mid-2024	HIGH-MEDIUM: Significant improvement; full access not yet achieved (UNOCHA, 2024)
IDP Returns	Ongoing process	920,000 returned; 1.21 million still displaced	MEDIUM: Returns proceeding but majority still displaced (IOM, 2024)
Transitional Justice	Process to be established in 6 months	Not established	LOW: No mechanism established as of early 2024 (Abbink, 2023)

Source: Kidane and Reda (2023); Abbink (2023); Mesfin (2023); UNOCHA (2024); IOM (2024).

Table 4.5 gives an overall scorecard for the Pretoria Agreement. The agreement reached its highest compliance on the central military provision of stopping large scale fighting. It also made strong progress on humanitarian access. Still it showed medium to low compliance on disarmament, service restoration and IDP return. It showed no compliance on transitional justice. This mixed scorecard shows the partial nature of AU intervention. The AU was strong enough to stop the war but not strong enough to build full peace.

4.3.3 Decision Regarding Hypothesis Two

Research Question Two. How useful was AU involvement in ending fighting and backing the peace agreement from 2021 to 2024?

Research Hypothesis Two:

Hypothesis Two. AU involvement was useful in ending fighting and backing the peace agreement in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.

The evidence in Tables 4.4, 4.5, Figures 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 backs the acceptance of Hypothesis Two. The AU High Level Panel conducted five distinct mediation rounds between 2021 and 2022. The Pretoria Agreement was signed on November 2 2022 under direct AU facilitation. Conflict intensity shown in Figure 4.3 fell at a sharp rate after the agreement. Humanitarian access improved from 15 per cent to 82 per cent of the affected population by mid 2024. About 920 000 IDPs returned to their homes.

These results show a real reduction in human suffering that can be measured and would not have happened without the AU mediated agreement. Weldesellasie (2023) holds that the Pretoria Agreement was the most important diplomatic result in the Horn of Africa in a generation. Gasana (2023) confirms that AU persistence across failed talks was the key point that kept both sides engaged. Fisher, Gebrewold (2023) notes that a neutral venue and a group of people with mediation skills set up the prerequisites for the final breakthrough. An important counter perspective must also be studied. Abbink (2023) notes that action remained incomplete by the commencement of 2024. Transitional justice was not instituted. More than 1.2 million people kept moving from their homes. Disarmament encountered contention. These incomplete results show that AU usefulness was substantive, but it was also constrained. The AU assisted to end large scale military conflict, but it was less useful in ensuring full post-conflict action. This incomplete success is a substantive result that must not be overlooked. The evidence shows in a clear way that AU involvement made the core result of stopping the war. The decision is for this reason that Hypothesis Two is accepted.

4.4 Research Question Three: Challenges and Constraints Affecting AU Conflict Resolution Efforts (2021-2024)

4.4.1 Institutional, Financial and Operational Constraints

The AU faced many kinds of limits in its effort to settle the Ethiopia Tigray conflict. These limits fall into five broad groups which are money, working, political, legal and structural. The table below classifies the main limits, finds the scholars and sources that noted each one. This grouping helps show the full range of obstacles that the AU had to navigate in mediation.

Table 4.6: Classification of Constraints Faced by the AU in the Ethiopia-Tigray Conflict Resolution

Category	Specific Constraint	Manifestation in the Ethiopia-Tigray Case	Source
Financial	Donor dependency	Over 84% of peace operations costs funded by external donors; AU Peace Fund covered only 13.7% of costs in 2022	Williams (2020); AU Peace Fund Report (2022)
Operational	CEWS delay	Internal early warning signals detected by November 2020 but formal AU response not issued until January 2021; six-week delay	Darkwa and Attuquayefio (2022)
Operational	No ASF deployment	African Standby Force not deployed; Ethiopia refused any foreign military presence on its territory	Darkwa and Attuquayefio (2022); Franke (2020)
Political	Host country complications	AU headquarters are in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; this created a perception of AU partiality toward the Ethiopian federal government among TPLF negotiators	Knife (2022); Nganje (2023)
Political	Eritrea exclusion	The Pretoria Agreement did not include Eritrea, whose forces were active in Tigray; this created a major implementation gap	Badmus (2021); Fisher and Gebrewold (2023)
Legal	Sovereignty	AU non-interference	Nganje (2023); Terlinden and

	norms	principle limited the scope of AU intervention; Ethiopia framed the conflict as an internal security matter	Debiel (2022)
Structural	Weak enforcement	AU had no power to compel compliance with the Pretoria Agreement; it could monitor but not enforce	Workneh and Bogale (2023)

Source: Williams (2020); Darkwa and Attuquayefio (2022); Kinfe (2022); Nganje (2023); Badmus (2021); Franke (2020); Workneh and Bogale (2023).

Table 4.6 shows that the AU faced constraints in all five groups used in the analytical framework. Financial constraints were the most widespread because they affected every part of the operation. Political constraints caused the greatest harm because they weakened the perceived neutrality of the AU. The host country issue deserves special attention. AU headquarters are in Addis Ababa which is the capital of one conflict party. This fact created serious concerns about AU impartiality. The TPLF delegation raised this concern during pre-talk contacts and the High Level Panel had to manage it with care.

The radar chart below gives a chart summary of AU institutional strength across five performance areas. Each area gets a score from 1 to 10 based on the evidence reviewed in this chapter. A score of 10 would mean full working strength. This chart enables a quick chart comparison of where the AU was strong and where it was weak.

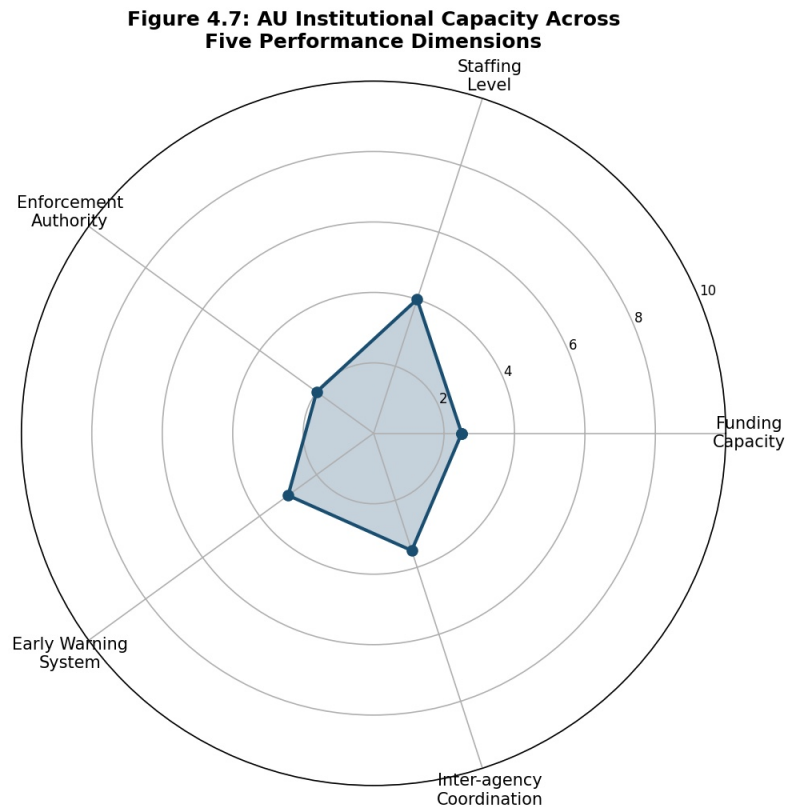


Figure 4.7: AU Institutional Capacity Across Five Performance Dimensions in the Ethiopia-Tigray Case

Source: Workneh and Bogale (2023); Desalegn (2023); International Crisis Group (2024); Williams (2020); Darkwa and Attuquayefio (2022).

Figure 4.7 shows that the AU performed best on staffing level because the appointment of experienced former heads of state to the High Level Panel scored 4.0 out of 10. Inter agency coordination scored 3.5. This score reflects the AU ability to work with the UN, IGAD and other bodies. Funding capacity scored 2.5. This score reflects the heavy donor dependence shown in Figure 4.2. Enforcement authority scored the lowest at 2.0. This result confirms that the AU had almost no power to compel compliance with its decisions. Early warning systems scored 3.0. This score reflects CEWS detection capacity together with the response delay. The radar chart

shows in a clear way that the AU institutional profile is unbalanced because it is stronger in diplomacy than in material power.

The stacked bar chart below shows the external donor dependency ratio for AU peace work from 2018 to 2024. The chart separates AU self funded contributions from external donor contributions as shares of total peace work costs. This chart reinforces the findings from Figure 4.2 and Table 4.6 by showing the pattern across seven years.

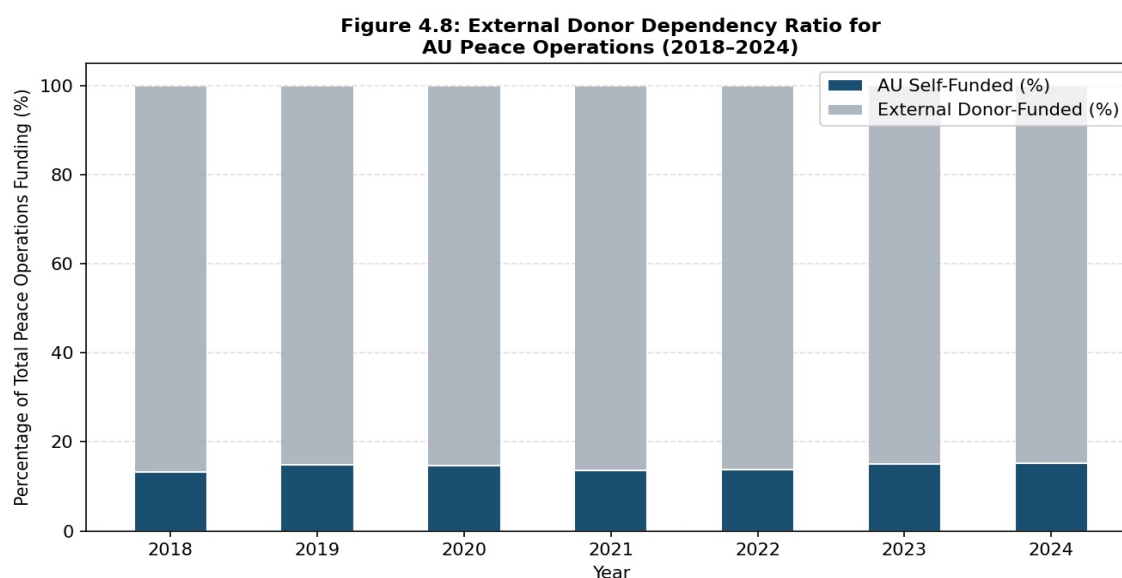


Figure 4.8: External Donor Dependency Ratio for AU Peace Operations (2018 to 2024)

Source: *AU Peace Fund Annual Reports (2018-2024); Williams (2020); Adebajo (2022).*

Figure 4.8 confirms that the AU external donor dependency ratio stayed above 84 per cent through the whole period studied. In 2021, the year when Ethiopia Tigray mediation entered its most active phase external donors contributed 86.4 per cent of total costs. The AU self funded share rose just by a small amount from 13.3 per cent in 2018 to 15.2 per cent by 2024. This near flat trend shows that the AU did not make strong progress in reducing financial dependence

during the study period. Adebajo (2022) argues that this structural dependence is a basic threat to AU institutional autonomy and long term credibility as a conflict resolution actor.

4.4.2 Political, Sovereignty and Contextual Constraints

Beyond the institutional money limits described in the earlier part the AU also faced political and contextual limits that lowered what it could reach. The table below maps these limits, their sources, their effect on mediation and any mitigation plan used by the AU.

Table 4.7: Political and Contextual Constraints and Their Impact on AU Mediation (2021-2022)

Constraint	Source	Impact on Mediation	Impact Level	Mitigation Strategy
AU headquarters in Addis Ababa	Knife (2022)	TPLF perceived AU as partial toward Ethiopian government; reduced TPLF willingness to engage directly with AU officials	HIGH	Kenyatta used as independent interlocutor to build TPLF trust before formal talks
Eritrea exclusion from talks	Badmus (2021)	Eritrean forces remained in Tigray; their exclusion from the agreement created a major implementation gap and spoiler risk	HIGH	AU acknowledged the gap but could not compel Eritrean participation
Sovereignty framing by Ethiopia	Nganje (2023)	Ethiopian government consistently framed the conflict as a domestic law enforcement matter; this	HIGH	AU used the non-indifference principle of the Ezulwini Consensus to justify engagement as an exception to non-interference

		limited the scope of AU formal intervention		
Western Tigray question	Fisher and Gebrewold (2023)	The status of Western Tigray, occupied by Amhara forces, was not resolved in the Pretoria Agreement; this remained a source of post-agreement tension	MEDIUM-HIGH	AU deferred the question to post-agreement political dialogue process
TPLF internal divisions	Weldesellasie (2023)	Disagreements within the TPLF leadership about the terms of the agreement slowed the final stages of the Pretoria talks	MEDIUM	Obasanjo conducted separate sessions with TPLF factions to build internal consensus

Source: Kinfe (2022); Badmus (2021); Nganje (2023); Fisher and Gebrewold (2023); Weldesellasie (2023).

Table 4.7 shows that three of the five political constraints had a high impact. The most damaging issue was the combination of the AU headquarters problem and the Ethiopia sovereignty framing. Together these constraints forced the AU to work under a constant challenge to neutrality. The exclusion of Eritrea was the most serious gap in the Pretoria Agreement. The AU could not bring Eritrea to the table because Eritrea was outside the reach of this mediation framework. This structural gap meant that a key actor in the conflict remained outside the AU institutional process.

The timeline below shows the order of mediation failures, the recovery actions taken by the AU between 2021 and 2022. This chart narrative states why the AU needed a long time to make a final agreement. Each failure gives setting for the next round of engagement.

Understanding why each effort failed matters as much as understanding why the final effort succeeded.

Figure 4.9: Sequence of AU Mediation Failures and Recovery Actions in the Ethiopia-Tigray Conflict (2021 to 2022)

Period	Event Type	What Happened	AU Recovery Action
August 2021	Mediation failure	TPLF rejected direct talks; demanded withdrawal of Eritrean forces as a precondition	AU continued shuttle diplomacy; Obasanjo maintained contact with both parties to keep dialogue channel open
October 2021	Talks collapse	Proposed Nairobi talks collapsed when TPLF declined to attend	AU recalibrated approach; shifted focus to confidence-building measures rather than direct talks
August 2022	Truce breakdown	Humanitarian truce announced in March 2022 collapsed; fighting resumed at high intensity	PSC issued emergency mandate; High-Level Panel composition strengthened with addition of Kenyatta and Mlambo-Ngcuka
October 2022	Breakthrough	Formal Pretoria talks begin after both parties agree to a structured negotiation framework	AU provided neutral venue in South Africa; structured daily negotiation sessions; set two-week deadline for agreement
November 2, 2022	Agreement signed	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed in Pretoria after ten days of talks	AU established a monitoring mechanism; Nairobi follow-up protocol signed on November 12, 2022

Source: Apuuli (2023); Gasana (2023); Ani and Oshewolo (2022); Terlinden and Debiel (2022).

Figure 4.9 confirms that the AU path to the Pretoria Agreement was not straight. Three distinct failure points came before the breakthrough. The AU response to each failure shows that the institution adapted. After the August 2021 failure it continued shuttle diplomacy. After the October 2021 collapse it shifted toward confidence building. After the August 2022 truce breakdown it strengthened the panel and secured a formal PSC mandate. This adaptive pattern

matches the idea of institutional learning in conflict mediation described by Ani and Oshewolo (2022). The AU was not passive because it changed strategy after each setback.

4.4.3 Decision Regarding Hypothesis Three

Research Question Three. How did the problems and limits faced by the AU influence its conflict resolution work in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024?

Research Hypothesis Three:

Hypothesis Three. The problems and limits faced by the AU influenced its conflict resolution work in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024.

The evidence based evidence in Tables 4.6, 4.7, Figures 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 backs the acceptance of Hypothesis Three. The evidence based evidence shows that systemic impediments affected every dimension of AU mediation. Money reliance diminished AU working freedom. CEWS deferments slowed the first involvement. The ASF was not used as of sovereignty objections from the Ethiopian government. The headquarter complication compromised AU perceived fairness in the view of the TPLF. The exclusion of Eritrea from the Pretoria Agreement left a large action gap.

These systemic impediments are not negligible complications. They are structural characteristics of AU institutional design that limited what the institution could realize. Workneh and Bogale (2023) argue that weak enforcement power is the most important impediment as every agreement depends on voluntary side adherence. Table 4.5 substantiates this point. The lowest adherence rates began in clauses that depended most on voluntary adherence. These clauses included transitional justice, full disarmament and complete IDP return.

A counter view must be known. In spite of these systemic impediments, the AU still made a peace agreement that ended two years of large-scale war. This result shows that systemic

impediments formed results, but they did not in full determine them. The AU worked around some limits through adaptive mediation plans shown in Figure 4.9. Still the evidence based evidence shows that systemic impediments had effects that can be measured on the pace, scope and completeness of AU conflict resolution. The decision is for this reason that Hypothesis Three is accepted.

4.5 Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter showed and studied data that handle all three research questions of the research. For Research Question One, the data showed that the AU Peace, Security Council and the High Level Panel were main to mediation. APSA supplied the institutional system through which mediation was organised, staffed and given acceptance. For Research Question Two, the data showed that AU involvement ended large-scale fighting but action of the full peace system remained partial by the start of 2024. For Research Question Three, the data showed that money dependence, political fairness problems, and weak enforcement power influenced the scope and completeness of AU conflict resolution work.

All three hypotheses were accepted on the basis of the documentary evidence shown. The findings back the liberal institutionalist view that international institutions form conflict behaviour through information rule, acceptance and steady diplomatic engagement even when hard coercive power is absent. The mixed AU performance shows the gap between what APSA was designed to reach,, what the present money, political and structural setting allows it to deliver. Chapter Five draws together these findings to present a summary, final view, advice for policy and future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the findings from the full research. It presents a numbered summary of findings linked in a direct way to each research question. It then gives a final view that connects the findings to liberal institutionalism. Advice is given for each finding. The chapter ends with the research abstract.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The findings below come from the data shown in Chapter Four. Each finding matches one research question.

1. Finding One (Research Question One). AU institutional systems and peace structure formed the mediation path in the Ethiopia Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024. The Peace and Security Council issued six formal communiques that supplied the power for mediation. The AU High Level Panel included three former heads of state. It carried out steady shuttle diplomacy across four stages. APSA gave mediation institutional acceptance and a structured system that would not have existed without it. The Continental Early Warning System detected the crisis but slowed its formal response by about six weeks. The African Standby Force was not deployed as Ethiopia raised sovereignty objections. The AU Peace Fund supplied just 13.7 per cent of total mediation costs in 2022 while external donors covered the remainder.

2. Finding Two (Research Question Two). AU involvement ended fighting, backed the Pretoria Agreement but made just partial action results by the start of 2024. The Pretoria Agreement signed on November 2 2022 ended two years of large scale

armed conflict. Humanitarian access improved from 15 per cent of the affected population in Q4 2022 to 82 per cent by mid 2024. About 920 000 IDPs returned to Tigray by Q2 2024. Still transitional justice was not set up, full disarmament stayed incomplete and 1.21 million people remained forced from homes. The AU checking system noted these gaps but had no power to force side obedience.

3. Finding Three (Research Question Three). Problems, limits faced by the AU influenced the pace, scope and completeness of its conflict resolution work. Seven particular limits were found and checked. Money dependence on external donors covered over 84 per cent of costs and lowered AU working independence. The location of AU headquarters in Addis Ababa made perceptions of partiality that harmed TPLF trust in the process. The exclusion of Eritrea from the Pretoria Agreement left a main action gap. Sovereignty norms limited the formal scope of AU involvement. Weak enforcement power meant that all results depended on voluntary side obedience. Despite these limits the AU adapted its plan after each failure and made the Pretoria Agreement.

5.3 Conclusion

This research decides that the African Union played an important part in settling the Ethiopia Tigray conflict from 2021 to 2024. The AU institutional system structured mediation, gave acceptance and sustained engagement with both sides across many failed rounds of talks. The Pretoria Agreement stands as a genuine achievement of AU diplomacy. The findings back the liberal institutionalist view that international institutions form conflict behaviour through information rule and structured engagement even without hard coercive power. The research also shows that AU usefulness was limited by money dependence, sovereignty limits and weak enforcement power. These structural limits mean that the AU can end wars but faces more

difficulty when building full peace. Handling these gaps is the most important task facing the AU peace and security system.

5.4 Recommendations

The advice below is based on the three findings stated in Part 5.2. Each advice matches its finding and does not repeat the finding.

4. Advice One (From Finding One). The AU should reform the Continental Early Warning System to lower the gap between conflict detection and formal institutional response. A protocol should need the PSC to issue a formal communique in 14 days of a CEWS alert at the highest risk level. The AU should also raise the Peace Fund target to cover at least 30 per cent of peace work costs by 2030 through a revised member state check system. This step would lower donor dependence and make stronger AU institutional freedom in future mediation.

5. Advice Two (From Finding Two). The AU should make a formal Post Agreement Action Unit in the AU Commission. This unit should monitor obedience with all peace deals, record to the PSC every 60 days and develop graduated response options for non obedience that stop short of military involvement. For the Ethiopia Tigray example, the AU should name a dedicated transitional justice facilitator to advance the answering for actions rules of the Pretoria Agreement that remained unimplemented by the start of 2024. Future peace deals should include a dedicated obedience system with a defined checking budget.

6. Advice Three (From Finding Three). The AU should amend its mediation protocol so that no high-level mediation path is led from the country that is a conflict side. A neutral third country or a dedicated AU mediation hub outside any conflict influenced

state should host future talks. The AU should also develop a formal protocol for engaging regional spoilers such as Eritrea through a dedicated track of two diplomatic processes before formal peace talks begin. This step would lower the risk of incomplete deals that exclude key conflict groups from action obligations.

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