



HORN **REVIEW**

IDEAS CONNECTIONS SYNERGY

The Greater Horn: Strategic Brief

Issue No.V | November 2025

By Horn Review

The Horn in November

Doctrinal Shifts, Proxy Competition, and State Fragmentation

Issue No.5 | November 2025



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

<https://hornreview.org/>



@HornReview

+251116393227

Foreword

“The Greater Horn” Strategic Brief offers a monthly synthesis of key diplomatic and security trends in one of the world’s most volatile yet consequential geopolitical theatres. This edition, covering developments from November 2025, draws on open-source intelligence, strategic assessments, policy briefings, and regional commentary to deliver nuanced, non-partisan, and research-driven insights into strategic complexities, internal vulnerabilities, emerging partnerships, and geopolitical recalibrations shaping the region’s trajectory. Intended to inform regional policymakers, analysts, and stakeholders, the briefing is produced by independent experts committed to regional stability, cooperative security, and evidence-based Policymaking.

**Blen Mamo, Executive
Director & Editor-in-Chief,
Horn Review**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary I

Section One: National Strategies, Internal Pressures, and the Reconfiguration of Regional Dynamics..... 1

1.1 Ethiopia: Consolidating Regional Doctrine and Expanding Global Influence 1

1.2 Eritrea: Cairo Alignment, Sudan Entrenchment, and International Pushback.....10

1.3 Djibouti: Mediation and Strategic Engagements14

1.4 Somalia and Somaliland.....17

1.4.1 The Federal Republic of Somalia: Piracy Resurgence, pre-Electoral Instability,... . 17

1.4.2 Somaliland: Sovereignty, Regional Diplomacy, and Security Engagements..... 22

1.5 Sudan: Escalation to Partition, Contagion of Instability, and a Plea for Intervention.....25

1.6 South Sudan: Power Consolidation, Escalating Violence, and Economic Fragility35

1.7 Kenya: Borderline Turbulence, Diplomatic Flashpoints, and Global Ambitions.....39

Section Two: MENA Region, Gulf, and Global Engagement 42

2.1 Egypt: Strategic Alliances, Economic Initiatives, and Diplomacy Amid...,42

2.2 Yemen: Power Divergence, Captagon Financing, and the Red Sea’s Breakdown49

2.3 Israel: Normalization Drives, Security Operations, and International Contestation.....53

2.4 Türkiye: Legal Pressure and Diplomatic Influence.....59

2.5 Gulf States: Diplomatic, Security and Geopolitical Engagement in the Horn of Africa62

2.5.1 UAE: Strategic Diplomatic and Economic Influence 62

2.5.2 Qatar: Constructive Diplomatic and Strategic Meditation 63

2.5.3 Saudi Arabia: Defense pacts, Diversified Diplomacy, and Economic leadership 64

Section Three: International Organizations and Global Powers Engagement 67

The Horn in November: Doctrinal Shifts, Proxy Competition, and State Fragmentation

Executive Summary

November 2025 marked one of the most consequential months defined by strategic realignments, intensifying proxy competition, and widening internal fractures in the Horn of Africa. Across the region, states navigated a volatile mix of escalating conflicts, contested governance, and shifting global engagements that continue to reshape the geopolitical architecture of the Greater Horn.

Ethiopia's November diplomacy clarified its regional doctrine, framing Eritrea's destabilization efforts as structural, while asserting the need for lawful maritime access and advancing global leadership through G20, COP32, and Asian partnerships. Meanwhile, Ethiopia strengthened its security cooperation and strategic communication, positioning itself as a stabilizing anchor in the volatile Horn.

Eritrea deepened its strategic alignment with Egypt and entrenched itself further in Sudan's civil war while escalating its global information offensive against Ethiopia. External pressure on Eritrea's diaspora networks grew significantly, even as internal uncertainty mounted due to generational attrition among the liberation-era elite.

Djibouti pursued quiet mediation in the Red Sea and Sudanese crises while navigating heightened external courtship from Egypt, the U.S., Russia, and the Gulf. Constitutional changes and military cohesion concerns added new layers of internal complexity.

Somalia entered a phase of acute instability. Al-Shabaab regained territorial initiative, piracy resurged, and Al-Shabaab–Houthi cooperation mechanism magnified the regional threat. Catastrophic data breaches and pre-electoral crisis exposed governance vulnerabilities.

Somaliland capitalized on regional turbulence to operationalize core attributes of sovereignty. It advanced airspace control, reinforced border security, and deepened defense dialogue with the U.S. while maintaining active partnerships with Taiwan and Gulf partners.

Sudan's civil war accelerated towards de facto partition. The RSF advanced into Kordofan, while the SAF declared a General Mobilization while rejecting the latest Quad proposal. External support for both sides remained entrenched.

Overall, the month underscored a decisive trend: power consolidation and state erosion are unfolding simultaneously, producing a region where national strategies, external interventions, and internal crises now reinforce one another rather than operate in isolation.

Section One: National Strategies, Internal Pressures, and the Reconfiguration of Regional Dynamics

1.1 Ethiopia: Consolidating Regional Doctrine and Expanding Global Influence

In November, Ethiopia's posture reflected a clearer regional doctrine and rising global influence. The Foreign Minister Gedion framed Eritrea's hostility as structural and intentional, rooted in a survival model that externalizes instability, while reaffirming Ethiopia's maritime access as a lawful economic necessity, not revisionism. Diplomatically, Ethiopia gained momentum through G20 engagement, Asia partnerships, and COP32 leadership. Security ties deepened via INTERPOL, the U.S., France, and Qatar, reinforcing deterrence and integration. Despite challenges like renewed TPLF violations, Ethiopia has advanced infrastructure, digital modernization, and its role as a regional stabilizer.

The Foreign Ministry's Doctrine and Ethiopia's Positioning in the Horn

Foreign Minister Dr. Gedion Timothewos outlined Ethiopia's emerging regional doctrine with unusual clarity during his November 13 keynote address at a Foreign Policy Forum, organized by Horn Review and Addis Ababa University, framing current tensions regarding Red Sea peace and security not as episodic disputes but as the culmination of entrenched structural asymmetries in the Horn of Africa.¹ At the core of his assessment is a recognition that Ethiopia's vulnerabilities and Eritrea's strategic behavior are deeply interlinked, shaped by divergent state models and incompatible security logics.

He provided extensive historical context, noting that conflict and tension have been the rule rather than the exception between the two countries since the 1960s. The Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission found Eritrea to be the aggressor in the 1998 war for violating Article 2, paragraph 4 of the UN Charter.

He stated that Eritrea's posture toward Ethiopia is intentional, not reactive, a long-standing doctrine that externalizes internal pressures by cultivating Ethiopian instability. In this framing, Asmara's political economy of survival depends on subversion, where clandestine networks inside Ethiopia are not rogue actors but coordinated extensions of the Eritrean state. Their goal, the minister argued, is to exploit Ethiopia's political transitions, disrupt cohesion, and obstruct institutional reforms. Another factor is the Eritrean leadership's eagerness to act as a regional proxy for third parties who desire to see a weak Horn of Africa, calling this a "congenital defect" of the Eritrean state. He stated that the Eritrean government desires "decaffeinated coffee", sovereignty without the consequences, manifesting as a "perverted entitlement" where Eritrean leaders feel entitled to intervene in Ethiopia's domestic affairs.

On the maritime question, FM Gedion rejected the reduction of Ethiopia's aspiration to

¹ Ethiopia's Policy and Perspectives on Some Developments in the Horn Region," Horn Review, November 14, 2025.

“Assab nostalgia,” clarifying that port access is a structural economic imperative, not a revisionist agenda.² He strongly countered the claim that tension is caused by Ethiopia's maritime ambition, noting Eritrea acted hostilely against the then government, which had categorically renounced all maritime claims. He underscored that Ethiopia never formally relinquished its sovereign right to the sea in 1993; rather, the absence of a negotiated settlement produced a legal ambiguity that continues to impose disproportionate costs on a country of over 120 million people.³ In this context, Dr. Gedion framed maritime access as a matter of economic justice, where Ethiopia's integration into global markets must be secured through lawful, negotiated, and mutually reinforcing arrangements. He underscored that the quest for durable and secure access to the sea is an existential matter for Ethiopia to avoid collapsing under the weight of "demographic boom and economic bust."

The Isayas Doctrine explicitly assumes Eritrea's continued statehood is contingent upon Ethiopia's insecurity, fragmentation, and instability. The Minister contrasted Ethiopia's state model with Eritrea's in direct terms: Ethiopia's political architecture is pluralistic by design; Eritrea's is exclusionary by function. This divergence, he argued, explains why Ethiopia remains open to dialogue, regional integration, and collective security mechanisms, while Eritrea persists as a closed, securitized state with minimal appetite for cooperative arrangements.

Foreign Minister Gedion emphasized that Eritrea's internal configuration, marked by indefinite conscription, institutional opacity, and criminalized migration, has produced a regional externality: illicit trade, forced labor pipelines, and cross-border infiltration that undermine the stability of neighboring states. This creates a permanent mismatch between Eritrea's domestic rigidity and the region's need for predictable, rules-based interaction.

On regional narratives, he warned that Ethiopia faces a multi-layered information contest, especially around the GERD and the Red Sea debate, where technical realities are frequently overshadowed by geopolitical framing. The Minister argued that Ethiopia must respond not only with data, but with strategic communication that repositions Ethiopia as a stabilizing anchor rather than a revisionist actor.

He described Ethiopia's current policy as dual-track: calibrating deterrence against external destabilization while expanding diplomatic engagement and economic integration. This includes infrastructural strategies, railway corridors, port diversification, and AfCFTA-aligned connectivity that reduce dependency, expand strategic options, and reshape Ethiopia's maritime vulnerability into a platform for continental trade leadership.

He concluded that regional stability requires a recalibrated multilateral architecture, one that integrates African agency, transparency in cross-border security practices, and incentives that

² Foreign-Minister Gedion Timothewos, “Speech by Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos at the Foreign Policy Forum on Developments in the Horn of Africa,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia*, November 14, 2025

³ Ethiopia's Red Sea Access: Historical Right,” *The Diplomatic Insight*, November 13, 2025,

neutralize destabilizing behavior. He outlined two fundamental preconditions for regional integration: the strategic autonomy of Horn countries (Ethiopia is for Horn-led solutions) and the rejection of being "client states" of external actors (while Eritrea is for them). He proposed that economic integration is the most preferable and durable approach, suggesting a simple Free Trade Area as an entry point for an ever-closer union and mutually beneficial maritime access. Until such an architecture exists, Ethiopia must maintain institutional vigilance, advance lawful negotiation on maritime access, and expose any foreign subversion that seeks to obstruct its internal cohesion or broader developmental trajectory.

Ethiopia's G20 Moment: Diplomatic Gain, Development Leverage, and Strategic Narrative

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's keynote at the G20 Summit in Johannesburg (November 22-23) successfully transformed Ethiopia's regional and global positioning, advancing a three-pillar agenda of debt justice, climate action, and an African energy transformation that elevated Addis Ababa's discourse beyond regional crisis management and reframed its economic and security imperatives as global development concerns.⁴ This approach has strengthened Ethiopia's bargaining leverage with international financial institutions and development partners, creating a pathway for concessional funding, technology transfer, and long-term investment in renewable energy and infrastructure, directly tying into the IMF review's endorsements and the AfDB's November 27 pledge for deeper infrastructure ties, including co-financing the 300MW AYSHA-1 wind project.⁵

Debt Negotiation Status: The government made good progress toward a staff-level agreement with the IMF during the fourth Extended Credit Facility (ECF) review mission,⁶ with virtual discussions ongoing to finalize it and enable the next tranche disbursement, reflecting continued commitment to fiscal reforms. Negotiations with the creditor committee remain constructive and focused on achieving long-term sustainability benchmarks, though private creditor (Eurobond) talks remain stalled in an impasse.⁷

The shift from grievance-based diplomacy to constructive, agenda-setting leadership has created political cover domestically for the government's macroeconomic and reform agenda. By anchoring foreign engagement to concrete deliverables, energy projects, climate resilience, and export-driven trade corridors, Addis Ababa bolsters both fiscal space and public legitimacy for ongoing reforms. International interest in Ethiopia's energy and infrastructure ambitions increases the likelihood that diplomatic commitment will translate

⁴ IFA, "H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Delivered a Keynote Speech at the G20 Summit in Johannesburg to Advance a Forceful Three-Pillar Agenda: Debt Justice, Climate Action, and an Energy Transformation," press release, November 23, 2025

⁵ Ethiopian News Agency, "Ethiopia Secures Infrastructure, Energy and Climate-Resilience Deals Following G20 Engagement," news release, November 27, 2025

⁶ IMF Concludes Mission to Ethiopia without Final Agreement on ECF Review," *Capital Ethiopia*, November 16, 2025

⁷ International Monetary Fund, "IMF Executive Board Completes Third Review under the Extended Credit Facility Arrangement for Ethiopia and Concludes the 2025 Article IV Consultation," press release, July 2, 2025.

into real capital flows.⁸

Ethiopia's emphasis on integration, whether through renewable energy, transport infrastructure, or cross-border trade corridors, demonstrates a holistic strategy: reducing strategic chokepoints, enhancing export competitiveness, and asserting resilience as a core pillar of sovereignty. The country's ability to convert international pledges into domestic rollout will determine the depth and durability of its gains. Timely execution, procurement discipline, and transparent implementation will be essential to secure the full benefits of this elevated global profile.

Looking ahead, the coming months will test whether Ethiopia can harness the momentum generated in Johannesburg to secure financing, finalize bilateral agreements, and advance key infrastructure projects. Success could mark a turning point: from regional volatility to structured growth, from external dependency to strategic autonomy. In that scenario, foreign diplomacy becomes not just a tool of stabilization but the engine of national transformation.

Diplomatic Momentum Post-G20: Engagements and Gains

Following the G20 summit, PM Abiy Ahmed leveraged the platform effectively, converting visibility into concrete diplomatic and development gains for Ethiopia.⁹ On the sidelines of high-level meetings, he engaged with leaders from Africa, Europe, Asia, and global institutions, including heads of state and major multilateral institutions, to secure commitments aligned with Ethiopia's reform and infrastructure agenda.¹⁰

These engagements produced a series of bilateral and multilateral agreements focused on investment, technology transfer, development financing, trade, energy cooperation, and climate-resilience support. Ethiopia used these agreements to reinforce its development trajectory, signaling a shift from dependency to partnership based on mutual benefit. By positioning itself as a credible voice for Africa and an emerging hub for green growth, infrastructure, and economic transformation, Ethiopia strengthened its international legitimacy. This renewed diplomatic reach helps smooth the path for foreign capital flows, technical cooperation, and institutional support for national projects, embedding its reform agenda in international frameworks.

Ethiopia's Asian Pivot: Afro-Asian Integration

Ethiopia's recent diplomacy reflects a decisive Asia-turn, deploying its G20 visibility into tangible partnerships and geo-economic bridges. Following the summit, engagements with

⁸ The Diplomatic Insight, "Ethiopia Re-Emergent: A New Era of Reform and Opportunity," *The Diplomatic Insight*, November 3, 2025

⁹ Ethiopian News Agency. 2025. "November Sees PM Abiy Intensify National, Global Efforts." *ENA*, November 24, 2025.

¹⁰ Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. 2025. "PM Abiy Ahmed Addresses G20 Summit on Climate Action, Renewable Energy, 'Medemer'." *EBC*, November 22, 2025.

Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia¹¹ and Singapore, signaled a deliberate recalibration of Ethiopia's international orientation. Singapore's announcement to open an embassy in Addis Ababa marked its first diplomatic mission in East Africa and the third on the continent,¹² underscoring confidence in Ethiopia as a gateway to African markets and the African Union.

Malaysia's visit, culminating in memoranda of understanding covering tourism, air services, health, and city-to-city cooperation, deepened bilateral ties and opened pathways for industrial, digital economy, and urban development collaboration. These developments reflect a broader shift toward a conceptual framework described as "Afrasia as an Emergent Regional World for Ethiopia-ASEAN and AU-ASEAN Geo-Economic Bonding," positioning Ethiopia as a bridge between Africa and Asia.¹³

For Addis Ababa, this pivot offers strategic dividends: expanded access to investment, technology, and markets; alternative funding sources; and reduced reliance on the Britannia hood system. It frames Ethiopia as an active agent shaping a new world order based on geo-economic synergies rather than geopolitical subservience, aligning with national goals of industrialization, digitalization, and infrastructure-led growth. Sustained, this shift could reshape Ethiopia's economic trajectory and the Horn of Africa's geopolitical architecture.

Ethiopia's COP32 Milestone

Ethiopia's selection by the Africa Group of Negotiators to host COP32 in Addis Ababa in 2027, defeating Nigeria's bid, marks a decisive diplomatic victory and elevates Ethiopia as Africa's climate convener.¹⁴ With FM Gedion Timothewos appointed COP32 President-Designate, Addis gains agenda-setting power to advance adaptation finance, just transitions, and African-led climate solutions.¹⁵ This builds on Ethiopia's Green Legacy and renewable ambitions while unlocking major preparatory inflows and infrastructure upgrades.

COP32 reframes Ethiopia globally, from a crisis-narrated state to a resilient, solutions-driven climate leader, reinforcing national credibility, attracting investment, and positioning Addis Ababa as the continental hub for climate diplomacy and innovation. The milestone complements Ethiopia's broader strategy of diplomacy, security consolidation, and economic integration, signaling a state capable of transforming challenges into strategic advantage while prioritizing prevention, stability, and sustainable development.¹⁶

¹¹ Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2025. "Official Visit of the Prime Minister of Malaysia to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 18-20 November 2025.

¹² Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry. 2025. "Singapore and Ethiopia Sign Memorandum of Understanding on Carbon Credits Collaboration." Press release, November 24.

¹³ Yassin, Nurye. 2025. "Afrasia as an Emergent Regional World for Ethiopia-ASEAN and AU-ASEAN Geo-Economic Bonding." *HORN REVIEW*, November 24.

¹⁴ Ethiopian News Agency. 2025. "Ethiopia Tapped to Host COP 32 in 2027, Solidifying Africa's Climate Leadership." *ENA*, November 12, 2025.

¹⁵ Fana Media Corporation. 2025. "Ethiopia Set to Be Confirmed as Host of COP32 in 2027 Following Broad International Endorsement." *FBC*, November 11, 2025.

¹⁶ "COP 32 In Addis Ababa: A Milestone For Ethiopia's Climate Journey!" 2025. *Ethiopian Truth Media*, November 2025.

Security Consolidation and Partnership Diplomacy

November underscored Ethiopia's disciplined blend of security consolidation and partnership-based diplomacy, countering regional speculation with evidence-driven engagement.¹⁷ High-level consultations with global partners focused on shared threats, terrorism, illicit flows, and corridor vulnerability, affirming that Ethiopia's defensive actions serve collective stability rather than geopolitical alignment. Ethiopia's peaceful efforts to secure Red Sea access gained international support, reflecting its potential contribution to regional stability.¹⁸ Gen. Dagvin Anderson, commander, AFRICOM's late-November visit captured this balance, advancing counter-terrorism coordination, intelligence fusion, and maritime awareness calibrated to Ethiopia's diversified port strategy.¹⁹

French Land Forces Commander General Pierre Schill's visit reinforced this narrative, emphasizing Ethiopia's strategic role in the Horn, its integration into international trade routes, and the ENDF's professionalism.²⁰ Discussions with Field Marshal Berhanu Jula and other senior ENDF leadership focused on military equipment support, peacekeeping, mine clearance, and personnel training. France pledged deeper cooperation, highlighting Ethiopia as a stabilizing regional actor whose active engagement is critical for security and economic resilience.

The economic dimension of these partnerships was notable: U.S. delegations consulted Ethiopian private-sector actors on fintech, logistics, and cyber resilience, laying groundwork for task forces and potential tens of millions in annual support for ENDF professionalization and SME cyber defenses. Parallel Gulf outreach added strategic depth. Ethiopia's Minister of Defense, Aisha Mohammed, conducted a three-day working visit to Doha focused on deepening security and economic cooperation.²¹ Her consultations centered on key bilateral priorities, with engagements that blended defense cooperation, joint exercises, unmanned-systems development, and counter-terrorism protocols alongside investment tracks in agriculture, logistics, and aviation.²² The outcome is a strategic diversification that strengthens Ethiopia's AfCFTA ambitions by bolstering supply chains from Berbera to Gulf markets and reducing reliance on any single external axis. These external advances complement Ethiopia's internal readiness, marked by professionalizing its forces, reinforcing deterrence, and calibrating intelligence capabilities that quietly undermine destabilizing networks.

¹⁷ *US Africa Command conducts a series of high-level visits to Africa, with stops in Ethiopia and in Somalia's member states of Somaliland and Puntland* (photograph), Wikimedia Commons

¹⁸ "Ethiopian PM Abiy Meets Senior AFRICOM General to Discuss Sea-Access Bid and Regional Security," Goobjoog News, November 2025,

¹⁹ U.S. Africa Command, "Press Releases," U.S. Africa Command, November 2025.

²⁰ Mesafint Brlie, "French Army Chief: Ethiopia Should Be Integrated into International Trade Routes," *Fana Media Corporation (FMC)*, November 29, 2025

²¹ Mesafint Brlie, "Ethiopia, Qatar Move to Deepen Defense Ties as Ministers Hold Talks in Doha," *Fana Media Corporation (FMC)*, accessed December 2, 2025

²² Qatar Tribune. "Deputy Prime Minister Meets Ethiopian Defence Minister." November 26, 2025.

The month's operational pattern points to a doctrine of quiet strength: military readiness safeguards economic lifelines, foreign partnerships provide technology and finance, and private-sector integration addresses the socioeconomic roots of instability. This strategy frustrates proxy interference by raising costs, increasing transparency, and offering partners shared benefits: corridor stability, predictable investment conditions, and reduced extremism risks. Risks persist from partner competition to institutional absorption strain but remain manageable through transparent procurement, clear oversight, and balanced diversification. Priority imperatives include accelerating U.S.–Qatar collaborative exercises for Red Sea resilience, scaling security-linked FDI dialogues, and championing AU-led forums that codify norms of cooperative security.

International Security Partnerships: INTERPOL and Capacity Building

In a landmark affirmation of Ethiopia's role as Africa's diplomatic and security hub, the country will expand its hosting of INTERPOL's Special Representative Office in Addis Ababa, as announced during the 93rd INTERPOL General Assembly on November 24.²³ The office will be embedded within the African Union complex, enabling real-time coordination against cybercrime, wildlife trafficking, and terrorism.²⁴ Already, joint operations have rescued 50 child trafficking victims and seized 4.5 tonnes of ivory, while enhancing ENDF intelligence-sharing and unlocking over €200 million in capacity-building aid. Transparent implementation of these initiatives could generate up to \$500 million in inflows by 2026, transforming Ethiopia's vulnerabilities into continental security leadership and solidifying Addis Ababa as Africa's preeminent security hub.

This deepened INTERPOL hub cements Addis Ababa as Africa's unrivalled security capital, transforming Ethiopia from a mere transit point into a strategic command node for disrupting terrorism financing and illicit networks across the continent. It quietly accelerates Ethiopia's maritime and border resilience, unlocking hundreds of millions in Western aid while raising the cost of any attempt to keep the country landlocked and vulnerable.

TPLF's Narrative Engineering vs. Ground Realities

The November 6 Afar incursion by TPLF-aligned fighters, immediately following President Isaias Afwerki's return to Asmara on November 5, suggests more than mere coincidence. This sequence mirrors a historical pattern where shifts in Asmara's internal posture are rapidly succeeded by escalatory actions inside Ethiopia. The act of TPLF forces crossing into Afar, seizing kebeles, and provoking federal units, despite their binding disarmament obligations, demonstrates the persistence of an insurgent mindset over a political commitment to the accord.²⁵

²³ INTERPOL, "93rd INTERPOL General Assembly," INTERPOL, November 24, 2025

²⁴ INTERPOL, "INTERPOL and the African Union," INTERPOL, n.d.

²⁵ Tigray fighters enter Ethiopia's Afar region, stoking fears of new conflict. 2025. *Al Jazeera*, November 6.

The TPLF has repeatedly declared that its participation in the June 2026 national elections is non-negotiable, citing the Pretoria Agreement and warning that exclusion would “pull Tigray back into war.”²⁶ The incursion revives a core governance question: How can the federal government credibly engage with a group that controls a parallel armed faction, continues to exercise coercive authority, and demands electoral inclusion while refusing to disarm? Elections require the rule of law, verified disarmament, demobilization, and institutional neutrality, none of which the TPLF has fulfilled. Their budget demands, including increased allocations despite Tigray’s inability to pay civil servants (as noted by Interim President Tadesse)²⁷, expose a governance deficit inside Tigray while shifting blame outward.

The TPLF’s counter-narrative, warning of a new war, appealing to the African Union (AU), and accusing the federal government,²⁸ is an attempt to pre-frame Ethiopia internationally, recalling their pre-2020 media strategy.²⁹ However, the Afar attack fundamentally contradicts their own claims of compliance and places responsibility for breaking the spirit of Pretoria squarely on the faction that has refused full Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR). This failure to consolidate peace is reinforced by the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) leadership’s labeling of part of the TPLF hierarchy as a “criminal clique,”³⁰ reflecting genuine concern that internal factions are actively working against stabilization.

The strategic implication is clear: the Pretoria Agreement, standing alone, cannot guarantee sustainable peace when one signatory retains military force, territorial leverage, and external patronage. Preventing a return to the devastation of 2022 requires stronger monitoring, verified DDR, and a robust security framework that definitively neutralizes cross-border sponsorship of insurgencies. The Afar incident starkly underscores which side made the first move to violate Pretoria conditions and why Ethiopia remains strategically cautious in fully reintegrating an armed political group whose behaviour continues to signal preparation for renewed confrontation rather than peaceful coexistence.

Development and Digital Transformation Highlights

In November, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed conducted oversight visits across Amhara and other key regions, highlighting progress on major development projects.³¹ In Gondar, he inspected the Megech Irrigation Project covering 870 hectares, expected to irrigate 17,000

²⁶ Council on Foreign Relations. 2025. "Conflict in Ethiopia." *Global Conflict Tracker*. Last updated March 20, 2025.

²⁷ Tigray Interim Administration warns peace is growing fragile as budget delays hit public services. 2025. *Addis Standard*, December 2.

²⁸ TPLF accuses the federal government of blocking mediated talks on Pretoria Agreement implementation. 2025. *Addis Standard*.

²⁹ TPLF urges UN and AU to act after the drone strike breached the Pretoria Peace accord. 2025. *Addis Standard*, November, 1, 2025

³⁰ Army chief brands part of TPLF leadership a criminal clique that should be eliminated; urges Tigrayans to liberate themselves at Fifth Y. 2025. *Addis Standard*.

³¹ Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. 2025. “November Sees PM Abiy Intensify National, Global Efforts to Accelerate Ethiopia’s Dev’t.” ENA English, December 2.

hectares, and inaugurated the fully restored Fasil Ghebbi heritage complex, including palaces, bridges, and public facilities.³² In Gorgora, the Tananesh II Ferry was launched, enhancing access to the new Eco Lodge, while in Bahir Dar, he reviewed upgrades at the 52,000-capacity International Stadium,³³ the Fellege Ghion Resort, and a new Ethio Ferries office.³⁴ In Kemise, the Prime Minister observed early corridor development, including a 1.3 km bicycle lane, and inspected the Elfora Agro Industries plant, supporting national agro-industrial growth. On the technology front, the relocated Artificial Intelligence Institute was showcased as a hub for AI innovation, with the AI Startup Center already supporting over 200 innovators, and the Council of Ministers approved the Digital Ethiopia 2030 Strategy for immediate implementation, signaling Ethiopia's commitment to modernization, digital transformation, and economic development.

Media Bias in the Getachew Reda Interview

The November 26 interview of Getachew Reda on Mehdi Hasan's "Head-to-Head" was structured less as a factual account than as a selective narrative aimed at shaping international perception. The framing emphasized alleged federal government abuses while minimizing or ignoring the TPLF's central role in instigating conflict and perpetuating violence, presenting Ethiopia as guilty by default. By controlling the composition of interlocutors and audience, the segment sought to manufacture sympathy for TPLF narratives and distort the record, obscuring Ethiopia's lawful and transparent efforts toward peace, stability, and national reconstruction. The broadcast highlights the TPLF's ongoing media strategy to delegitimize the Ethiopian government abroad.

Concluding November, Ethiopia's diplomatic and security strategy emphasizes prevention over confrontation. Through Gedion's speech and PM Abiy's international engagements, the government demonstrates willingness for peaceful dispute resolution, lawful negotiation on maritime access, and constructive dialogue on regional security challenges. This integrated approach, combining doctrine, diplomacy, security partnerships, and development, signals a state focused on safeguarding peace, strengthening resilience, and leveraging global support to transform vulnerabilities into strategic assets.

³² EBC English. 2025. "PM Abiy Declares Fasil Ghebbi's 'New Rebirth,' Challenges Nation to Honor its Greatness." *EBC*, November 7, 2025.

³³ Fana Media Corporation. 2025. "PM Abiy Commends Rapid Progress on Bahir Dar's CAF-Standard Stadium and Lakefront Tourism Projects." *FanaBC*, November 8, 2025.

³⁴ EBC English. 2025. "Prime Minister Abiy Launches 'Tananesh' Ferry, Boosting Tourism to Gorgora Eco Lodge on Lake Tana." *EBC*, November 7, 2025.

1.2 Eritrea: Cairo Alignment, Sudan Entrenchment, International Pushback, and Internal Uncertainties

Eritrea's political and diplomatic landscape in November was dominated by President Isaias Afwerki's expanded engagement with Egypt, deeper involvement in Sudan's war, and an extensive information campaign aimed at delegitimizing Ethiopia's claim to maritime access. These developments unfolded against a backdrop of internal generational dilemmas and increasing external pressure on the regime's diaspora infrastructure.

Growing Alignment with Egypt and Escalating Tensions with Ethiopia

President Isaias Afwerki began the month with a five-day visit to Egypt, during which he conducted multiple interviews with Egyptian and Eritrean media outlets.³⁵ His remarks revived long-standing themes of self-reliance, foreign interference, and the alleged destabilizing role of external actors in the Horn of Africa. Yet the most consequential element of the visit was the articulation of a public convergence between Cairo and Asmara.

Isaias's statement that "no force substitutes the littoral states of the Red Sea"³⁶ functioned as a pointed rebuttal of Ethiopia's claim to sovereign access to the sea. Cairo, unable to attain a decisive diplomatic outcome in its dispute with Ethiopia over the Nile, has recalibrated its strategy toward cultivating pressure points along Ethiopia's borders. Eritrea, given its strategic geography and adversarial posture toward Addis Ababa, has emerged as the most potent platform for such pressure.

This alignment was shortly followed by renewed agitation within Tigray. The hard-line faction of the TPLF—whose rhetoric increasingly mirrors Asmara's—escalated confrontational statements toward the federal government and attempted to instigate tensions along the Afar frontier.³⁷ Both Eritrea and the TPLF advanced narratives portraying Addis Ababa as the provocateur, a coordinated rhetorical posture that signals a deepening "Tsimdo" axis.

Egyptian officials, including the foreign minister, echoed Eritrea's line by publicly rejecting Ethiopia's legal and strategic arguments on sea access.³⁹ The convergence of messaging between Cairo, Asmara, and elements within Tigray illustrates the consolidation of an anti-Ethiopian bloc that is increasingly vocal and politically coordinated.

³⁵ Addis Standard, "Isaias Afwerki blames foreign intervention for instability in Horn of Africa, Red Sea and beyond," Addis Standard, November 5, 2025.

³⁶ Shabait, interview with Isaias Afwerki, "'No Force Substitutes the Littoral States of the Red Sea': President Isaias Afwerki," November 12, 2025.

³⁷ Addis Standard, "TPLF urges fed. gov't to 'refrain' from actions that could trigger new war, calls on AU to convene as Pretoria deal 'at risk'," Addis Standard, November 24, 2025.

³⁸ Al Jazeera, "Tigray fighters enter Ethiopia's Afar region, stoking fears of new conflict," Al Jazeera, November 6, 2025.

³⁹ Egypt Today, "Egypt's FM: Ethiopia had no right to participate in Red Sea governance mechanism as it is a deadlocked country," Egypt Today, October 31, 2025.

Intensified Propaganda and Anti-Ethiopia Rhetoric

Throughout November, the Eritrean Ministry of Information—led by Yemane Gebremeskel—amplified a vigorous propaganda campaign targeting Ethiopia. The messaging focused on portraying Ethiopia as “imperialist,” “expansionist,” and intent on violating Eritrea’s sovereignty under the guise of securing maritime access.⁴⁰

The campaign also strategically invoked international law, appealing to external audiences in an effort to frame Asmara as a defender of sovereignty and regional stability.⁴¹ This narrative seeks to exploit heightened international concerns over a potential Ethiopia–Eritrea war, concerns reinforced by media coverage in major outlets such as the BBC⁴², Foreign Policy⁴³, and New Lines Magazine⁴⁴. Eritrea’s information apparatus capitalized on these alarmist assessments, presenting Ethiopia as the inevitable aggressor while obscuring its own extensive destabilizing activities under the “Tsimdo” framework.

Asmara’s Deepening Entanglement in Sudan’s Civil War

Eritrea’s involvement in Sudan intensified markedly in November. The month witnessed a series of high-level exchanges with the leadership in Port Sudan.

On November 19, General Malik Agar, Deputy Chairman of the Transitional Sovereign Council, visited Asmara for consultations with President Isaias.⁴⁵ Ten days later, Isaias travelled to Port Sudan, receiving a highly publicized and celebratory welcome.⁴⁶

Among the array of external actors embedded in Sudan’s war, Eritrea is increasingly regarded by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) as a pivotal ally. Its extensive border with Sudan makes Asmara uniquely exposed to the consequences of a potential RSF upper hand. With the RSF gaining battlefield advantage in several theatres, Eritrea has incentives to deepen its support for the SAF both to secure its borderlands and to preserve its strategic influence in Khartoum’s political calculus.

General Hemedti’s warning that Eritrean airports could be considered legitimate targets⁴⁷ underscores how heavily embroiled Eritrea has become. Isaias’s speeches and interviews throughout the month placed Sudan at the centre of Eritrea’s foreign-policy thinking. The

⁴⁰ Eritrea Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Eritrea Unyielding: Defending Sovereignty Against Ethiopia’s Recycled Ambitions,” *Shabait*, November 23, 2025.

⁴¹ Shabait, “When Rhetoric Overrides Law: Potemkin Party’s Sea-Access Obsession,” *Shabait*, November 3, 2025.

⁴² BBC Africa, “Ethiopia-Eritrea: Escalating war of words triggers fears of conflict,” BBC, November 23, 2025.

⁴³ Gbadamosi, Nosmot, “Ethiopia-Eritrea Tensions Trigger Fears of a Fresh Regional Conflict,” *Foreign Policy*, November 26, 2025.

⁴⁴ Omer, Mohamed Kheir, “Eritrea, Ethiopia and the Missteps That Could Lead to War” *New Lines Magazine*, November 17, 2025.

⁴⁵ Sudan Horizon, “Agar Briefs Afwerki on Events Developments in Sudan,” *Sudan Horizon*, November 21, 2025.

⁴⁶ Sudan Tribune, “Sudan’s Burhan, Eritrea’s Afwerki vow closer ties amid regional tensions,” *Sudan Tribune*, November 29, 2025.

⁴⁷ Sudan War Monitor, “Hemedti Threatens Regional Aviation,” *Sudan War Monitor*, October 22, 2025.

emerging tripartite alignment—Egypt, SAF, and Eritrea—risks further constraining Ethiopia’s strategic influence in Sudan and may shape the regional balance in the event of a future Eritrea–Ethiopia confrontation.

European Governments Challenge Eritrea’s Diaspora Networks

Eritrea’s vast diaspora infrastructure—long central to the regime’s revenue generation, surveillance, and coercive reach—faced significant setbacks in November.

Several European governments initiated direct measures targeting PFDJ-linked networks:

- i. Norway’s Directorate of Immigration (UDI) began revoking the citizenship of individuals identified as “fake refugees” who continued to support the Eritrean state.⁴⁸
- ii. Switzerland’s Federal High Court struck down the compulsory “letter of regret,” a key instrument Asmara used to extract compliance from Eritrean nationals abroad.⁴⁹
- iii. Political voices in Switzerland, led by National Councillor Gerhard Pfister, called for decisive action against the Eritrean diaspora tax.⁵⁰
- iv. Sweden witnessed renewed diaspora movements demanding the dismantling of PFDJ-affiliated organizations and systems.⁵¹
- v. Israel deported an Eritrean man formally designated as a supporter of the regime, marking a precedent-setting case.⁵²

These actions reflect both the growing momentum of Eritrean diaspora activism and rising European concern over transnational repression. For a regime that has long relied on the diaspora for financial and political sustenance, these developments represent a meaningful erosion of its external leverage.

The Aging “Tegadelai” Generation and the Question of Succession

November saw the loss of several prominent figures from the liberation-era elite, including Musa Mohamed Adem, Brigadier General Ghebrekidan Habteab, and Fissehaie Haile.⁵³⁵⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Plaut, Martin, “Eritreans lose their Norwegian citizenship for falsely claiming they fled from the Eritrean regime,” *Martin Plaut* (blog), November 27, 2025.

⁴⁹ Plaut, Martin, “Swiss court outlaws Eritrean ‘letter of regret’ imposed by the regime,” *Martin Plaut* (blog), November 28, 2025.

⁵⁰ Peterhans, Anielle, “Diaspora Tax: Why Many Eritreans Don’t Have a Passport Here,” *Tages-Anzeiger*, November 9, 2025.

⁵¹ Plaut, Martin [@martinplaut], “Expert testimony on the use of regime networks to spy on Eritreans...” *X*, November 8, 2025.

⁵² Chiim, Avihai, “Israel departs first Eritrean regime supporter after 14 years in the country,” *The Jerusalem Post*, November 3, 2025.

⁵³ Meskel, Yemane G. [@hawelti], “Condolences: Veteran freedom fighter Btsai Musa Mohamed Adem has passed away,” *X*, November 8, 2025.

⁵⁴ Shabait, “Brig. General Gebrekidan Habteab (Wedi Miney) Passes Away,” *Shabait*, November 23, 2025.

Their deaths highlighted a broader generational transition within the PFDJ.

The “tegadelai” generation—veterans of the armed struggle—has long served as the guardian of the regime’s authoritarian ideology and as the backbone of its coercive apparatus. With President Isaias and the senior leadership, themselves aging, the absence of a younger cadre in meaningful positions of authority raises acute questions about Eritrea’s political future. The opacity surrounding succession only deepens the sense of structural fragility within the regime.

The Iranian Connection and Possible Arms Acquisition

Satellite imagery in November revealed the arrival of a Belarusian IL-62 freighter in Massawa, mirroring the flight path previously taken by a sanctioned Iranian Qeshm Fars Air cargo aircraft earlier in the same period.⁵⁶ Qeshm Fars Air, under U.S. OFAC sanctions for transporting weapons and drone systems linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), has been repeatedly associated with covert arms deliveries.

While the specific cargo remains unverified, the repeated appearance of aircraft tied to sanctioned Iranian logistics networks suggests the possibility that Eritrea is expanding its procurement of military equipment. Should this emerging pattern hold, it would indicate that Asmara is preparing for a heightened confrontation environment, particularly given escalating tensions with Ethiopia.

Diplomatic Engagements and UN Outreach

On November 12, the UN Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Guang Cong, visited Asmara for discussions with President Isaias. The meeting reaffirmed the President’s longstanding position that external interventions in the region are “unwarranted.”⁵⁷ His criticism echoed earlier remarks during his Cairo interviews,⁵⁸ reflecting a consistent message aimed at delegitimizing international mediation efforts.

Despite Eritrea’s troubled history with multilateral institutions, the UN appears determined to maintain engagement with Asmara as part of its broader regional strategy. In this context, UN Resident Coordinator Nahla Valji organized a human rights workshop in cooperation with the Eritrean authorities⁵⁹—an initiative that drew criticism from observers who

⁵⁵ Meskel, Yemane G. [@hawelti], “Condolences: Veteran freedom fighter and Governor Btsai Fissehaie Haile (Afro) has passed away,” *X*, November 5, 2025.

⁵⁶ Tedd, Rich [@AfriMEOSINT], “A Belarus-based Rada Airlines IL-62M freighter flew from Tehran to Massawa, Eritrea; last month, an OFAC-sanctioned IRGC-linked Fars Air Qeshm B747-281F made a similar flight,” *X*, November 10, 2025.

⁵⁷ Shabait, “President Isaias Afwerki met and held talks with UN Special Envoy to Horn of Africa,” *Shabait*, November 12, 2025.

⁵⁸ Addis Standard, “Isaias Afwerki blames foreign intervention for instability in Horn of Africa, Red Sea and beyond,” *Addis Standard*, November 5, 2025.

⁵⁹ Valji, Nahla [@UNinEritrea], “UN Eritrea wrapped up a successful 3-day human rights workshop led by Government of Eritrea, facilitated by @UNHumanRights on treaty body reporting, human rights and sustainable development,” *X*, November 20, 2025

underscored the regime's entrenched human rights abuses.

Among these abuses, one of the most persistent is the systemic discrimination against non-Tigrinya ethnic groups, especially the Afar. Their plight received renewed international attention this month, with Genocide Watch releasing a report⁶⁰ detailing ongoing human rights violations, including restrictions on movement, limited access to education and healthcare, political marginalization, and other forms of systemic oppression that undermine the community's social, economic, and cultural rights.

Conclusion

November underscored Eritrea's escalating reliance on regional alliances, particularly with Egypt and the SAF, to counter Ethiopia's strategic ambitions and preserve its own influence in the Red Sea corridor. Its deepening involvement in Sudan's war, intensifying propaganda campaigns against Addis Ababa, and signs of renewed military procurement operations all point to a regime preparing for heightened confrontation.

At the same time, domestic pressures—including the aging of the liberation-era elite and systemic challenges to diaspora networks abroad—underscore the vulnerabilities embedded within Eritrea's political structure. Asmara continues to navigate these internal and external pressures through a strategy of assertive regional engagement, defensive diplomacy, and expansive propaganda, leaving Eritrea both more influential in its immediate neighbourhood and increasingly exposed to instability.

1.3 Djibouti: Mediation and Strategic Engagements

Central to Djibouti's activities this month were peace and security initiatives aimed at mitigating conflicts that ripple across the Horn and threaten its fragile stability, prioritizing Red Sea de-escalation and counter-terrorism cooperation in response to Houthi insurgent activities. Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf shows ceasefire commitments between Sudan's Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF), dovetailing with U.S. Quad diplomatic efforts to facilitate civilian transitions, particularly in war-torn El Fasher.⁶¹

Djibouti also played a key role in addressing Ethiopia-Eritrea tensions on the Red Sea.⁶² The country played a low-profile strategy to manage the tension between Ethiopia and Eritrea while safeguarding their economic lifeline that also included signing port agreements with Egypt. Further Ethiopia's National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Director General Redwan Hussien, accompanied by Deputy Sisay Tola, visited Djibouti and led to productive talks on bilateral and regional security, including combating "anti-peace forces" along the shared border and safeguarding Ethiopia's import and export trade through Djibouti Port,

⁶⁰ Harris, Grace, "Eritrea Country Report: November 2025," *Genocide Watch*, November 10, 2025.

⁶¹ Reuters, Sudan's RSF agrees to US Proposal for Humanitarian Ceasefire, November 7, 2025

⁶² Horn International Institute of Strategic Studies, Eritrea and Ethiopia Renewed Tension and the Risk of another war, 2025

which handles over 95% of its commerce. The delegation formalized an agreement for a joint NISS-SDS task force to eradicate these threats.⁶³

The month also saw some essential events: Djibouti's recent constitutional amendment removing the presidential age limit⁶⁴ marks a significant shift in a political landscape dominated for over four decades by the Issa elite, which has long marginalized the sizable Afar population politically and economically.⁶⁵ This legal change will limit the possibility of another ethnic presidency.

The memory of the February 2022 coup scare, when military and police chiefs were detained amid an anti-Guelleh plot suspicion, highlights underlying elite fractures.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the transnational Afar identity spanning Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Eritrea raises stakes with the possibility of a "Greater Afar" movement, which complicates the region's integration. Foreign military bases and international interests add layers of complexity, balancing pressures for stability against potential factional alignments.

The upcoming 2026 election is expected to be tightly controlled, with the government limiting opposition through legal and practical barriers, controlling dissent under the guise of stability. Symbolic inclusivity towards minority representation likely won't translate into meaningful power shifts, as the ruling elite prioritize maintaining the existing hierarchy. Thus, Djibouti's path forward depends heavily on managing military unity, ethnic power transitions, political inclusivity, and diplomatic pressures to avert military fragmentation.

In a significant development, a France-Djibouti defense pact was signed on established joint patrols targeting regional border security.⁶⁷ Concurrently, Coordination between Ethiopia and Djibouti further advanced when Ethiopian Ambassador Legesse Tulu met with Djibouti's Infrastructure Minister Hassan Houmed, reaffirming a substantial \$200 million investment to upgrade the Ethiopia-Djibouti corridor port infrastructure.⁶⁸ This upgrade aims to alleviate persistent trade bottlenecks and ease bilateral relations strained by regional competition. In Somalia, Djibouti's contributions to regional counter-terrorism efforts intensified headway. Amid the AU Somalia mission (AUSSOM) drawdown, Djibouti hosted an EU roundtable to enhance intelligence-sharing against al-Shabaab militants, involving Kenya and Somalia.

⁶³ Ethiopian Embassy Djibouti, A delegation led H.E. Redwan Hussien Director general of Ethiopian NISS visit Djibouti (X post), November 19, 2025

⁶⁴ Faisal Ali and News Agencies, "Djibouti lifts Presidential Age Limits easy for sixth Gulleh term." Aljazeera, Oct. 25, 2025.

⁶⁵ Tafesse Olika, Djibouti's Foreign Policy Change from Survival Strategy to an Important Regional Power Player: Implications for Ethio- Djibouti Relations.

⁶⁶ IDEA, Africa is beset with coups and conflicts: How the trend can be reversed.

⁶⁷ Senat France, Accord France- Djibouti, November 2025

⁶⁸ Ethiopian Embassy Djibouti, Following a morning courtesy meeting with the PM, H.E. Legesse Tulu (PhD), 's Amb. to Djibouti, met H.E. Hassan Houmed, 's Minister of Infrastructure & Equipment. November 27, 2025.

However, tensions flared locally when Djibouti blocked unauthorized entries by actors affiliated with Somaliland in Zeila that threaten HoA stability. Yet, its neutrality is persistently tested by competing external influences, particularly from Gulf states and Egypt. Egypt's strategic engagement intensified when its Prime Minister announced a \$300 million investment in rail and port infrastructure through ElSewedy Electric, signaling Cairo's efforts to encircle Ethiopia in its wider regional contest and secure vital Red Sea navigation routes.⁶⁹

Egypt's state-owned bank, Banque Misr, has officially opened its first branch in East Africa, located in Djibouti. This launch is part of Egypt's broader African strategy to expand its financial presence. The inauguration took place in the presence of Djibouti's Prime Minister. Although it's explained that the bank will support trade, free-trade activities, and investments for Egyptians, Ethiopia needs to have discussions with the Djiboutian government to make sure this doesn't create risks for Ethiopia. Since Ethiopia depends on Djibouti for energy cooperation, port services, and the movement of goods, it's important to prevent any disruptions, foreign-currency stress, or security implications. Monitoring how the bank's operations affect the region would help ensure the money doesn't end up being used in ways that go against Ethiopia's interests.

Meanwhile, Djibouti reinforced its longstanding security partnership with the United States. U.S. Ambassador Cynthia Kierscht met with Djibouti's Chief of Staff General Zakaria Cheikh Ibrahim to strengthen intelligence-sharing within the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) framework targeting Al-Shabaab.⁷⁰ The continuation of the Justified Accord military exercises at Camp Lemonnier furthered regional capacity-building, training over 500 Somali and Kenyan forces. The Oklahoma National Guard's 1120th Engineers completed a nine-month infrastructure mission across Djibouti, Somalia, and Kenya, underscoring U.S. investment in HoA stability. Cultural and diplomatic events around the Thanksgiving holiday fortified the narrative of a robust U.S.-Djibouti partnership.

In parallel, Russia advanced proposals to secure Djibouti base access by negotiating mining and infrastructure exchanges, reflective of Russia's desire to deepen its Horn footprint. Not only Russia but China also continued expanding its digital security presence through the PEACE submarine cable system, enhancing Djibouti's role as a critical node in global communications and security networks.

At the Ninth AU-UN Annual Conference held in New York, Youssouf and UN Secretary-General António Guterres jointly addressed the fragility of the Horn and advocated for an inclusive Red Sea security pact⁷¹. Djibouti engaged complementary initiatives for Great Lakes stability and highlighted the growing impact of climate-related security risks. Further

⁶⁹ Diaspora Djibouti, Egypt and Djibouti Sign Agreement to Strengthen port and infrastructure cooperation, November 9, 2025.

⁷⁰ CJTF, U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti Cynthia Kierscht and Brig. Gen. Matthew Brown, Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, Commander, met with Gen. Zakaria Cheikh Ibrahim, Chief of the General Staff of the Djiboutian Armed Forces to advance security goals. (X post), November 24, 2025.

⁷¹ United Nation, UN and African Union vow closer action for peace and development, November 12, 2025.

expanding diplomatic ties, President Guelleh participated in the African Union-European Union Summit in Luanda, promoting an Africa-Europe security accord targeting Red Sea threats and the fallout of Sudan's conflicts.

1.4 Somalia and Somaliland

1.4.1 The Federal Republic of Somalia: Piracy Resurgence, pre-Electoral Instability and the Al Shaabab-Houthi nexus

The month of November was a weighty phase for Somalia, defined by several parallel developments. Internally, political cohesion faced pressures while the Al-Shabaab organization demonstrated an increased capacity for operational coordination. In the wider regional context, a resurgence of piracy activity in maritime corridors was observed alongside a growing convergence of interests among various armed non-state groups. These factors combined to alter the security substantially.

This convergence of internal and regional movements resulted in a more complex and demanding environment for state operations. The shifting situation presents a series of immediate tests for governance structures, while also influencing the strategic calculations and engagements of international partners in the Horn of Africa. The interplay of these elements suggests a critical juncture for future stability and policy direction.

Security & Counter-Terrorism: A Multi-Dimensional Threat Landscape

The security situation deteriorated across multiple domains, with the insurgent, maritime, and regional proxy threat vectors demonstrating alarming synergy. Al-Shabaab has transcended its insurgency roots to operate as a formidable parallel state, now assessed to govern approximately thirty percent of Somali territory. The group has effectively reversed the FGS's gains from the 2022 offensive, implementing a strategy of encirclement around Mogadishu through control of key supply routes and economic hubs in Hiraaan and Galgaduud. Its sophisticated governance and taxation apparatus, generating an estimated annual revenue of one hundred million dollars, ensures resilience and continued military pressure, exemplified by a major prison breach in the capital.⁷²

The United States demonstrated tactical escalation in response. On November 27, U.S. Special Operations Forces executed a rare ground raid in the Habar Bajjuke cave complex in Ballade, Middle Shabelle, targeting Al-Shabaab logistics.⁷³ This operation signalled a potential shift from an over-reliance on aerial engagements. Furthermore, the U.S. Africa Command maintained a high operational tempo throughout the month, confirming the death of Al-Shabaab co-founder Mahmoud Abdi Hamud in late October strikes and conducting a series of precision airstrikes from November 11-22 against both Al-Shabaab and ISIS-

⁷² U.S. Department of the Treasury. "Treasury Designates al-Shabaab Financial Facilitators." Press release, November 2025

⁷³ Garowe Online. "Somalia: US-Puntland Joint Operation Hits ISIS Stronghold, Senior Militants Killed", November 11, 2025.

Somalia targets.⁷⁴ However, this kinetic approach is marred by strategic liabilities like a reported civilian casualty incident near Jamame on November 17, allegedly claiming twelve lives, exemplifying a potent vulnerability that insurgents exploit for recruitment and propaganda.⁷⁵

Maritime Insecurity and Hybrid Threats

The successful hijacking of the commercial vessel MT Hellas Aphrodite on November 6 constituted an inflection point for regional maritime security.⁷⁶ The attack, occurring approximately three hundred nautical miles from the coast, showed the first successful seizure of a commercial ship in the area in more than twelve months. This event was followed by a series of related incidents, including an attempted boarding of the Stolt Sagaland and an attack on the Al-Thumama.⁷⁷ The operational methodology, which utilized hijacked Iranian-flagged dhows as logistical support vessels, demonstrated a notable adaptation in pirate tactics and extended operational range.

Following the initial hijacking, a substantial international naval presence was mobilized, culminating in the seizure of a pirate dhow by EU NAVFOR Atalanta forces on November 12.⁷⁸ This coordinated response was effective in managing the immediate tactical threat and preventing further successful seizures in the short term. However, the conditions that enabled the resurgence, including coastal economic instability, limited alternative livelihoods, and a documented reallocation of naval assets to other maritime sectors, were not mitigated by these counter-piracy operations. These systemic factors continue to influence the security in the region's maritime domain.

Furthermore, reports indicated that the United Nations Panel of Experts issued on November 25, 2025, documented an operational and expanding relationship between the Houthis movement in Yemen and the Al-Shabaab organization in Somalia.⁷⁹ According to the report, this collaboration involves the provision of unmanned aerial vehicles, explosive materials, and technical training by Houthi elements to Al-Shabaab operatives. In exchange, Al-Shabaab is reportedly facilitating and conducting maritime piracy activities, which are assessed as a method to divert the focus of international naval forces from the strategic waters surrounding Yemen.

This partnership represents a notable evolution in the regional security architecture,

⁷⁴ TRT Africa. TRT Afrika. "Somalia Says Airstrikes Killed." n.d. November 6, 2025

⁷⁵ Somali guardian. "Somalia At Least 12 Civilians Killed in Suspected US Airstrike Near Jamame". November 17, 2025

⁷⁶ Blenkey, Nick. "Hellas Aphrodite Crew Rescued as Somali Piracy Incidents Surge." *Marine Log*, November 7, 2025.

⁷⁷ Howard, Gary. "Pirates Fire on Tanker Stolt Sagaland in Attempted Hijacking Off Somalia." *Seatrade Maritime News*, November 3, 2025

⁷⁸ Maltezou, Renee, Jonathan Saul, Yannis Souliotis, Alexander Winning, and Yuka Obayashi. "EU Warship Secures Tanker Crew Following Somali Pirate Attack." *Reuters*, November 7, 2025.

⁷⁹ Africa Defense Forum. "U.N. Report Shows Increasing Collaboration of Houthis, al-Shabaab." *ADF Magazine*, November 2025

establishing a direct link between two major non-state actors across the Gulf of Aden. The report posits that the alignment, while crossing sectarian lines, is founded on a shared strategic opposition to certain international actors and interests⁸⁰. The principal consequences of this alliance include a heightened and more complex threat to maritime commerce transiting the Bab el-Mandeb strait, a significant complication for existing counter-terrorism and counter-piracy frameworks, and the potential for a broader, interconnected zone of instability spanning from the southern Arabian Peninsula into the Horn of Africa.

Political & Governance Pre-Electoral and Federal-Regional Relations

Domestic politics were characterized by an erosion of federal authority and a contentious pre-electoral environment, undermining collective action against national threats. Opposition to Mogadishu's centralizing agenda coalesced into a tangible tactical alliance. Somaliland and Puntland issued a joint declaration rejecting the federal e-visa system, while Puntland separately opposed the extension of the federal Electronic Cargo Tracking Number to its ports. Rhetoric escalated sharply, with a Puntland minister publicly accusing the FGS of collusion with Al-Shabaab. This coordination between Somaliland and one demanding authentic federalism represents a direct and potent challenge to the viability of a unified Somali state. The situation is exacerbated by external actors, including the UAE, Turkey, and Qatar, whose competing investments and partnerships with regional states have transformed Somalia into a geopolitical hotspot, further paralyzing federal cohesion.

Constitutional and Electoral Crisis

Efforts to implement a pilot for direct elections in Mogadishu, led by the National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, encountered logistical and security challenges, resulting in a postponement from November 30 to December 25.⁸¹ These district-level elections, while demonstrating a push for broader electoral reform, faced significant political obstacles, including boycotts by the regional states of Puntland and Jubaland.

Concurrently, the political landscape grew increasingly volatile with the return of former President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo on November 13, who immediately engaged in public criticism of incumbent President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's administration. Farmajo's subsequent engagements, including appeals for constitutional compliance and meetings with key political figures, positioned him as a potential contender for the 2026 elections, while President Mohamud publicly defended his record on security and economic management.⁸²

This internal discord unfolded alongside heightened regional tensions, exemplified by a

⁸⁰ Shabelle Media Network. "UN Experts Report Secret Collaboration Between Houthis, Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab." November 5, 2025

⁸¹ Security Council Report. "Somalia, December 2025 Monthly Forecast." November 30, 2025

⁸² Somali Guardian. "Somalia's President and Predecessor Trade Barbs over Rising Poverty in Mogadishu." November 24, 2025.

summit in Nairobi where leaders from Jubaland and Puntland criticized the federal government and called for consensus-driven electoral processes. In response, international partners increased mediation efforts to address the deepening political divisions before the May 2026 constitutional deadlines. However, these political crises risked exacerbating donor fatigue, threatening the funding stability of critical security missions such as the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia.⁸³ While there were incremental steps toward electoral preparation, including voter registration in secondary cities and civil society forums, the fundamental disagreement over the electoral model between universal suffrage and indirect voting remained unresolved, posing a continued risk to Somalia's stability and democratic transition.

Sovereignty and the E-Visa Debacle

The Federal Government of Somalia's mandatory e-visa system, rolled out via the Kenyan firm Empire Tech Solutions criticized for opaque contracts and unproven cybersecurity, triggered a sovereignty backlash from the outset.⁸⁴ Somaliland and Puntland rejected it as federal overreach, opting for a visa-on-arrival to safeguard local revenues. Mid-November's catastrophic breach on November 11 exposed passport numbers, biometrics, financial details, and personal data of over 35,000 applicants from 25 countries, including thousands of Kenyans, Americans, and Europeans, with leaks proliferating on the dark web and social media.⁸⁵

Following this, U.S. and UK embassies issued urgent alerts,⁸⁶ urging travellers to freeze credit and monitor for identity theft, while the FGS hastily migrated the platform and launched an investigation validating regional fears of incompetence and bolstering calls for decentralized immigration controls amid pre-electoral distrust. Compounding the fallout, Somaliland escalated an airspace sovereignty clash by mandating overflight permits from Hargeisa for all aircraft effective November 10, citing the Chicago Convention to assert exclusive jurisdiction over its skies.

The FGS retaliated by suspending radio communications and VHF/HF transmissions over the region on November 12, plunging flights into chaos with dual, conflicting ATC instructions from Mogadishu and Hargeisa, risking mid-air collisions and forcing airlines like flydubai to seek dual clearances.⁸⁷ This de facto concession handed practical control to Somaliland, eroding FGS's credibility, deterring investors, and amplifying geopolitical

⁸³ Muibu, Daisy, and Yayedior Mbengue. "Somalia at a Crossroads: Resurgent Insurgents, Fragmented Politics, and the Uncertain Future of AUSSOM." *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* 18. November

⁸⁴ Walaaleeye, Maxamuud. "Somalia E-Visa Portal Taken Offline After Massive Data Leak Exposes Thousands of Travelers." *The Horn Tribune*, November 11, 2025.

⁸⁵ U.S. Embassy in Somalia. "Alert: Federal Republic of Somalia (FGS) Electronic Visa (E-Visa) Data Breach." November 13, 2025.

⁸⁶ Ali, Faisal. "Somalia Confirms Major Data Breach in Electronic Visa System." *Al Jazeera*, November 16, 2025.

⁸⁷ Somali Guardian. "Somalia Reels after Massive E-Visa Hack; Airspace 'War' with Somaliland Compounds Turmoil." November 15, 2025

strains with Gulf backers, as the incidents intertwined with broader federal fragmentation ahead of the 2026 polls.

International Engagements & Diplomacy: Strategic Recalibrations

The international approach to the Horn, particularly that of the United States, underwent a significant shift, with implications for regional diplomacy.

In a move of realism, the United States engaged directly with regional authorities, bypassing the FGS. A high-level delegation, including AFRICOM Commander General Dagvin Anderson, conducted separate visits to Somaliland and Puntland on November 27, discussing security cooperation, counter-terrorism, and maritime protection. The tour of Berbera port and airport brought speculation regarding a potential U.S. interest in establishing a military presence there as a counterweight to China's presence in Djibouti. This engagement acknowledges the ground reality of the FGS's limited effective control and seeks more stable and capable partners. However, it carries the substantial risk of accelerating Somalia's fragmentation and a diplomatic backlash from the African Union and the FGS itself.

Humanitarian Governance

Underpinning Somalia's political and security landscape is a worsening humanitarian crisis, triggered by four consecutive failed rainy seasons that have parched vast regions, killing livestock, decimating crops, and spiking food prices by up to 160% above pre-2020 levels.⁸⁸ On November 10, the Federal Government of Somalia declared a national drought emergency across 64 districts, affecting 7.5 million people over 40% of the population, with projections of 421,000 children facing severe acute malnutrition and 1.43 million at risk of moderate acute malnutrition. The Somali Disaster Management Agency (SoDMA) formed a technical committee to coordinate responses, while the UN allocated \$10 million from its Central Emergency Relief Fund for early action targeting 603,000 people in northern and central hotspots like Puntland and the Bari region, where nearly one million people need urgent support.⁸⁹

Following this Amnesty International's November 13 report, No Rain, No Food, No Animals based on interviews with 177 displaced individuals in Kenya's Dadaab camp, accuses the FGS and international donors of systemic neglect, exposing thousands to rights violations including family separations, evictions from IDP camps, gender-based violence, and preventable deaths from hunger and disease during 2020-2023 displacements that continue to compound current crises.⁹⁰ This failure not only drives further displacement, adding 350,000 people in 2025 alone, but also fuels al-Shabaab recruitment by preying on desperate

⁸⁸ Amnesty International. "Somalia: Thousands of Climate-Displaced Individuals Being Failed by Authorities and the International Community – New Report." November 10, 2025.

⁸⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "Somalia: 2025 Drought Emergency - Situation Report No. 1 ." November 27, 2025.

⁹⁰ Amnesty International. "Somalia: Thousands of Climate-Displaced Individuals Being Failed by Authorities and the International Community – New Report." November 10, 2025.

communities, perpetuating conflict cycles, and undermining federal stability ahead of the 2026 elections, as marginalized southern regions bear the brunt of a climate crisis they minimally contributed to.

1.4.2 Somaliland: Sovereignty, Regional Diplomacy, and Security Engagements

November was a period of administrative and strategic activity for Somaliland. During this time, authorities in Hargeisa implemented measures to assert administrative control in areas of contention with the Federal Government of Somalia. Key developments included the establishment of independent airspace management protocols and the discontinuation of the FGS's e-visa system within its territory.

At the same time, Somaliland engaged in regional security, undertaking border reinforcement initiatives and articulating its role in maritime security frameworks pertinent to the Bab el-Mandeb strait. This period of operational activity was accompanied by a visit from a senior United States military delegation, an event noted by observers as indicative of evolving international engagement with regional entities in the Horn of Africa. The overall context of these developments remains framed by Somaliland's protracted pursuit of broader diplomatic recognition and the governance of the region.

Security & Defense: Hybrid Threats and Strategic Positioning

Somaliland maintained its distinction as an Al-Shabaab-free territory,⁹¹ yet faced nuanced security challenges from proxy actors and economic coercion, all while its maritime value became increasingly prominent. Border integrity was tested by reports of mobilized Issa clan militias in the Awdal region's Zeila district, alleged to be backed by external state actors, including Djibouti with linkages to Qatar, Turkey, Egypt, and China.

This development was interpreted in Hargeisa as a form of hybrid warfare aimed at destabilizing its western flank in response to Somaliland's growing ties with the United States, Taiwan.⁹² Somaliland security forces responded with targeted patrols and logistical disruptions in early November, successfully containing the threat without major incident. This episode shows the multi-actor nature of regional rivalries, where Somaliland's internal stability makes it a target for adversaries employing non-state proxies.

Maritime security faced economic pressure as the FGS attempted to impose centralized cargo manifest requirements on vessels operating in what it claims as Somali territorial waters, a move explicitly targeting the economic viability of the Port of Berbera. Somaliland dismissed this as economic warfare and enforced its independent protocols, leveraging the

⁹¹ Duale, Mohamed. "Somalia: Somaliland, U.S. Deepen Security Cooperation During Africom Commander's Visit to Hargeisa, Berbera." *Horn Diplomat* (Hargeisa), November 27, 2025.

⁹² Hared, Hassan Cher. "Djibouti / Somaliland: Ismail Omar Guelleh and His Reer-Awl/Mamasan Sub-Clan Urge Somaliland to Ban the Xeer-Ciise Ceremony in Saylac." *HCH24*, November 21, 2025.

port's management by DP World to mitigate external interference.⁹³ The broader regional security further elevated Berbera's strategic importance. The verified collaboration between Houthi forces in Yemen and Al-Shabaab in southern Somalia, detailed in a late-November UN report, amplifies threats to Red Sea shipping lanes.⁹⁴ This nexus positions Somaliland-controlled Berbera not just as a commercial hub, but as a potential secure logistical node for international coalitions seeking to ensure freedom of navigation and counter Iranian-backed influence networks, a point central to discussions with visiting U.S. officials.

Political & Administrative Sovereignty: Operationalizing Statehood

Somaliland engaged in a decisive and successful contest over the practical levers of sovereignty, effectively demonstrating functional state capacity.

The most conspicuous victory was in the aviation authority. Following a coordination meeting in early November, Somaliland's Ministry of Civil Aviation initiated enforcement of a requirement for all international overflights to obtain permits from Hargeisa, invoking the Chicago Convention.⁹⁵ By mid-month, this policy resulted in the diversion of several commercial flights that failed to comply, with Somaliland air traffic controllers issuing direct instructions to pilots. The subsequent announcement of a ban on international passenger flights routing through Mogadishu, citing security risks, further framed Somaliland as the secure and orderly aviation alternative in the Horn. This move operationalized airspace sovereignty, creating tangible facts on the ground that challenge Mogadishu's claims and disrupt regional logistics reliant on FGS-administered corridors.

A parallel and reinforcing success came in the realm of border and identity management. Somaliland's joint rejection with Puntland of the FGS's e-visa system was dramatically vindicated when the Mogadishu-run portal suffered a catastrophic data breach in mid-November, exposing the sensitive personal information of approximately 35,000 applicants.⁹⁶ The breach, attributed to a basic URL design flaw rather than sophisticated hacking, triggered alerts from the U.S. and UK embassies and became a potent symbol of FGS's incompetence and corruption. In contrast, Somaliland mandated its visa-on-arrival system, reinforcing a narrative of secure, pragmatic governance. The FGS's subsequent suspension of its related Electronic Travel Authorization rollout by month's end constituted a significant retreat, further ceding administrative credibility to Hargeisa. Domestically, a minor internal rift within the ruling Kulmiye party surfaced,⁹⁷ highlighting post-election

⁹³Somali Guardian. "Somalia Extends Cargo-Tracking Rules to Somaliland's Berbera Port amid Deepening Dispute." November 18, 2025.

⁹⁴ Africa Defense Forum. "U.N. Report Shows Increasing Collaboration of Houthis, al-Shabaab." *ADF Magazine*, n.d. (November 2025).

⁹⁵Duale, Mohamed. "Somalia: Several Flights Diverted From Somaliland Airspace As Government Enforces New Clearance Rules." *Horn Diplomat*, November 13, 2025.

⁹⁶Ali, Faisal. "Somalia Confirms Major Data Breach in Electronic Visa System." *Al Jazeera*, November 16, 2025.

⁹⁷Ali, Khadija. "Somaliland's Parties Committee Forces Opposition Kulmiye to Hold Leadership Vote." *Waryah TV*, November 26, 2025.

political negotiations but ultimately underscoring the robustness of Somaliland's multiparty system compared to the fractious politics of the south.

International Engagement & Diplomacy: Building a Coalition of Legitimacy

Somaliland leveraged its stability and strategic location to cultivate a diverse array of international partnerships, achieving its most significant diplomatic engagement in years with the United States⁹⁸ while advancing ties with other isolated yet capable partners. The itinerary of the U.S. delegation included engagements that assessed operational capacities far from diplomatic discussions. On November 26, the delegation, led by General Anderson and including U.S. Deputy Ambassador Justin Davis, held meetings with Somaliland's Chief of General Staff, Niman Yusuf Osman, and Coast Guard Commander, Adm. Ahmed Hurre Hariye.⁹⁹ The discussions centered on topics such as maritime patrol coordination and intelligence-sharing procedures related to security in the Gulf of Aden. The delegation also conducted a review of key infrastructure, visiting Berbera International Airport and the DP World-operated Port of Berbera. This assessment considered the facilities' operational capabilities and infrastructural resilience. The evaluation of Berbera's potential logistical utility for international operations occurred within the context of ongoing maritime disruptions in the Red Sea region.

These engagements highlighted Somaliland's ongoing investments in its coastal monitoring and response systems. The developments are noted within the framework of international security partnerships in the region. Concurrently, Somaliland maintained its distinct foreign policy engagements. A development in its partnership with Taiwan was marked by the issuance of a national quarantine license for a livestock export facility near Berbera, a measure connected to trade flows with markets in the Middle East and Asia.¹⁰⁰ Technical cooperation, including in areas such as radar systems, was reported between the two parties. Parallel diplomatic advocacy was observed in European forums. A former British ambassador publicly commented on Somaliland's governance model, while an Austrian official within NATO structures reportedly encouraged European Union engagement.¹⁰¹ An analysis from an Israeli research institution separately suggested exploring security cooperation with Hargeisa.

⁹⁸Duale, Mohamed. "Somalia: Somaliland, U.S. Deepen Security Cooperation During Africom Commander's Visit to Hargeisa, Berbera." *Horn Diplomat*, November 27, 2025

⁹⁹U.S. Africa Command Public Affairs. "AFRICOM Commander Makes High-Level Visits to East Africa." Press release, November, 2025

¹⁰⁰ Business Insider. "Taiwan's Central Sky International Secures Landmark Quarantine License in Somaliland, Paving the Way for Global Livestock Trade Modernization." November 18, 2025.

¹⁰¹ Pravda USA. "A Parade of Confessions. UK Calls for Recognition of Somaliland Now Somaliland Is Being Recognized Not Only in the United States, but Also in the United Kingdom." November 18, 2025.

1.5 Sudan: Escalation to Partition, Contagion of Instability, and a Plea for Intervention

The Sudanese civil war accelerated toward *de facto* partition following the RSF's confirmed offensive into North Kordofan (Bara) post-El Fasher. This eastward pivot signals the RSF's focus on establishing a defensible territorial base for the 'Tasis' administration, while the SAF maintains, but struggles to govern, the central Nile corridor.¹⁰²

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) countered this momentum by formally declaring a General Mobilization,¹⁰³ confirming an institutional strategy of survival through attrition, strongly backed by the Egyptian government.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the SAF successfully executed a high-stakes geopolitical maneuver by temporarily suspending the Russia Port Sudan naval base deal (Nov 10).¹⁰⁵ This action is interpreted as a strategic bargaining chip intended to solicit high-level security cooperation from the United States and other Western partners.

Diplomatic efforts remain paralyzed by non-compliance. The war continues to be sustained by confirmed external supply lines to the RSF, including newly indicted munitions conduits through South Sudan, which demonstrates high operational resilience despite international condemnation.

Operational and Frontline Dynamics

The RSF's capture of El Fasher in late October fundamentally altered the conflict's geography, validating the emerging east-west territorial split.¹⁰⁶ The RSF immediately launched a concentrated offensive into the highly strategic Kordofan region, aiming to establish a contiguous and viable *de facto* state.¹⁰⁷

The Kordofan states, North, West, and South, constitute the geographical corridor connecting the SAF heartland around Port Sudan and the central Nile region to the Darfur provinces, which are now largely under RSF control.

Escalation in Kordofan was immediate and substantial. The fighting intensified across North and West Kordofan. Confirmed reports detailing drone strikes and troop deployments marked the beginning of the RSF's offensive on November 13, 2025.¹⁰⁸ The offensive quickly resulted in the RSF seizing the town of Bara in North Kordofan, overcoming resistance previously sustained outside El Fasher. The immediate military consequence of the capture was severe: survivors reported revenge attacks and summary executions targeting individuals

¹⁰² Jamestown Foundation. "RSF Establishes Rival Government as Sudan's War Spirals," November 20, 2025.

¹⁰³ Manassa News. "Sudan army rejects truce, announces mobilization against RSF," November 20, 2025.

¹⁰⁴ Ahram Online. "Egypt fully supports Sudan army, gov't: FM Abdelatty to Al-Burhan," November 11, 2025.

¹⁰⁵ Capadmin. "Suspension of Russia's Naval Base Project in Port Sudan," *Progress Center for Policies*. November 11, 2025.

¹⁰⁶ Worldview Stratfor. "Sudan Slips Toward De Facto Partition." November 17, 2025.

¹⁰⁷ Eiad Husham, "RSF Military Push for Kordofan Leaves Sudan at Risk of Partition," *Al Jazeera*, November 28, 2025.

¹⁰⁸ Reuters. "Paramilitary Force Pushes East in New Escalation of Sudan's War," November 14, 2025.

accused of supporting the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

However, the RSF's attack in West Kordofan was ultimately unfruitful, failing to break SAF's defenses or secure any meaningful territorial or operational gains. The commitment to this front was underlined by the SAF's successful defense of the 22nd Infantry Division headquarters in Babanusa, West Kordofan, on November 25.¹⁰⁹ This engagement involved repelling a major RSF assault shortly after the RSF had publicly declared a humanitarian truce. The SAF stated that it inflicted heavy losses, seized combat vehicles, and killed RSF field commanders and "hundreds of mercenaries".¹¹⁰

This advance into North Kordofan highlights the RSF's strategic intent. By seizing Bara, located west of the strategically important city of El Obeid, the RSF is working to establish strategic depth and physically solidify the proposed borders of its 'Tasis' parallel administration. This tactical maneuver confirms that the RSF's leadership is no longer primarily focused on retaking the SAF-controlled capital axis, which was largely cleared of RSF presence earlier in the year. Instead, the military campaign is directed toward making the territorial claim of partition physically contiguous, defensible, and logistically independent from the SAF's core areas.

In addition, the strategic importance of Babanusa extends beyond its tactical value as a military base, as it is geographically proximal to the oil-rich area of Heglig near the South Sudan border. The RSF's sustained push to capture Babanusa¹¹¹ and Heglig demonstrates an operational priority to secure control over crucial economic infrastructure and border logistics nodes in West Kordofan.

While conflict persists in Khartoum and Omdurman, verified frontline shifts in the capital area were not prominently reported in November. The strategic posture of the SAF indicated an acceptance that major tactical victories in the metropolitan area are not immediately feasible. Instead, the focus has shifted to peripheral defense and the prevention of further fragmentation. The SAF's decision to send senior officers and reinforcements to key provincial capitals, such as El Obeid in North Kordofan,¹¹² demonstrates a pragmatic prioritization of halting the RSF's westward expansion and maintaining the integrity of the remaining SAF-controlled territory.

The prolonged conflict and the significant territorial losses, like the capture of El Fasher, prompted General Al-Burhan to declare a General Mobilization,¹¹³ formalizing the SAF's reliance on auxiliary forces and popular resistance groups to address severe manpower deficits. This decree signals a high-stakes strategy of engaging in a prolonged war of

¹⁰⁹ Sudan Tribune. "Sudanese Army Repels Fresh RSF Attack in West Kordofan," November 25, 2025.

¹¹⁰ China.org.cn. "Sudanese Army Says Repelled Paramilitary Forces' Attack after Unilateral Truce," November 26, 2025.

¹¹¹ Sudan Tribune. "Army repels ground attack on Babanusa amid RSF reinforcements," November 12, 2025.

¹¹² Sudan Tribune. "Al-Atta announces detailed conditions for peace, vows to prosecute mercenaries," November 26, 2025.

¹¹³ Progress Center for Policies. "Declaration of General Mobilization in Sudan," November 18, 2025.

attrition, leveraging institutional backing, particularly from Egypt,¹¹⁴ to degrade the RSF's territorial control over time. The General Mobilization carries the high risk of increasing the political and operational influence of hardline Islamist and Muslim Brotherhood elements within the military apparatus.¹¹⁵

The SAF maintains operational control over the central, northern, and eastern parts of Sudan.¹¹⁶ It has successfully driven the RSF out of most of the tri-city area earlier in 2025, and the SAF achieved near-total control over areas like Bahri and Omdurman. The result of this military success in the capital was a major factor in the subsequent return of populations. Despite this demonstration of civilian resilience and the SAF's military control, the operational reality on the ground in November remained dire. Basic services are reported as shattered, and the IOM warned that the city is still scarred by conflict, with homes damaged and essential services barely functioning.¹¹⁷ The United Nations Country Team did not meet in Khartoum until November 24, signaling only a "gradual move back to the capital" after operating for months from Port Sudan.¹¹⁸

This governance vacuum within the SAF-controlled territory creates a systemic weakness. The failure of the SAF to translate its military control into effective civil governance or restoration of basic services limits its ability to fully leverage its victory politically. This neglect inadvertently strengthens the RSF's primary justification for establishing the 'Tasis' parallel administration: the proclaimed urgent need to provide security, medicine, and basic identity documents to communities in the west.¹¹⁹

Diplomatic Efforts and Ruptures

November 2025 was marked by continued international appeals for peace, but little progress toward a negotiated settlement due to the hardening political positions of the belligerents, reflecting a divergence in strategic calculus.

On November 23, General Al-Burhan rejected the latest Quad ceasefire proposal. The SAF leadership deemed the proposal the "worst yet," characterizing it as a biased imposition dictated by foreign powers.¹²⁰ The objection was rooted in the proposal's structural requirements, which reportedly called for the dissolution of current security agencies while leaving the RSF's structure largely intact during the transition. The SAF viewed this as a requirement for institutional capitulation; this rejection explicitly cited the perceived bias of the UAE, which the SAF accuses of arming the RSF. Al-Burhan maintained that the only

¹¹⁴ Ahram Online. "Egypt Fully Supports Sudan Army, Gov't: FM Abdelatty to Al-Burhan." November 11, 2025.

¹¹⁵ TRENDS Research & Advisory. "The Muslim Brotherhood's Influence on Sudan's Military Leadership and Its Impact on Regional Stability," November 24, 2025.

¹¹⁶ Rabia Ali, "Territorial Control: Who Holds What in Sudan's War." *Anadolu Agency*, November 04, 2025.

¹¹⁷ United Nations News. "Sudan: Over One Million Return to Khartoum amid Fragile Recovery." October 21, 2025.

¹¹⁸ United Nations News. "Sudan: UN's Gradual Move Back to Khartoum 'An Important Step.'" November 24.

¹¹⁹ Jamestown Foundation. "RSF Establishes Rival Government as Sudan's War Spirals." November 20, 2025.

¹²⁰ Military.com. "Sudan's Top General Rejects U.S.-Led Ceasefire Proposal, Calling It 'Worst Yet.'" November 24, 2025.

path to peace is the full elimination of the militia, declaring that "any negotiations that do not lead to the elimination of this militia are invalid".¹²¹

In a move designed to seize diplomatic momentum, RSF Commander Hemedti accepted a unilateral three-month humanitarian truce on November 24.¹²²

The unilateral truce, however, is perceived by analysts as a strategic instrument rather than a commitment to peace. The action performed a clever sleight of hand, allowing Hemedti to gain diplomatic credit for seeking peace while retaining the ability to disavow continued fighting by his fractured units, dismissing them as the work of rogue elements.¹²³ The unilateral nature avoids a formal, monitored deal, which would document every act of looting or abuse as a violation. This protection is vital because the war serves as Hemedti's payroll, sustaining fighters through a "license to loot" since formal salaries cannot be paid through a state budget. Therefore, the truce acts as a political cover for both the RSF's inability to fully rein in its forces and its need for a pause to regroup overextended supply lines.

Meanwhile, General Al-Burhan executed a critical shift in his external outreach by publishing an opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal* on November 26, calling directly on US President Donald Trump to intervene.¹²⁴ This strategy was intended to bypass the existing US diplomatic establishment and the Quad framework, which the SAF views as compromised by Emirati influence.

Moreover, the diplomatic rift deepened into a public messaging war. The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) publicly denied accusations of supplying weapons.¹²⁵ Concurrently, the UAE welcomed President Trump's engagement and criticized Al-Burhan's "consistently obstructive behavior" in negotiations.¹²⁶

Regional bodies like the African Union (AU) and IGAD expressed support for unifying diplomatic efforts under the Quad's proposal and reaffirmed support for an AU-IGAD-led, Sudanese-owned political process and condemned the atrocities committed by the RSF in El Fasher. In late November, Sudanese rights groups appealed to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to reactivate the Jeddah platform.¹²⁷ The groups called for binding commitments to halt combat, open humanitarian corridors, and implement UN Security Council resolutions.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² *Washington Examiner*. "RSF Declares U.S.-Proposed Truce as Report of War Crimes in Darfur." November 25, 2025.

¹²³ Sudan Tribune. "RSF commander agrees to three-month humanitarian truce in Sudan." November 24, 2025.

¹²⁴ Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. "The Truth About the War in Sudan," *Wall Street Journal*. November 25, 2025.

¹²⁵ UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "UAE Calls for Unconditional and Immediate Ceasefire to End Civil War in Sudan." November 24, 2025.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Sudan Tribune. "Rights groups urge Saudi Crown Prince to revive Jeddah talks." November 25, 2025.

However, the SAF government displayed a hardening negotiating posture. On November 26, Sudan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mohamed Mohiuddin Salem, rejected any external interference in Sudan's affairs or the discussion of proposals without government consultation.¹²⁸ The Ambassador reaffirmed commitment to the original Jeddah Agreement terms but argued that the SAF was compelled to enforce those terms through military victory due to the RSF's refusal to comply. The SAF leadership is signaling that only a political process recognizing its ultimate military victory and sovereign authority will be acceptable, effectively excluding the politically unrecognized Tasis administration from meaningful participation.

The 7th African Union (AU) – European Union (EU) Summit, held on November 24-25, 2025, reaffirmed support for an AU-IGAD-led and Sudanese-owned political process. The resulting joint declaration expressed deep concern over the situation in Sudan and specifically condemned the atrocities committed by the RSF in El Fasher following the city's seizure. They jointly called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and unhindered humanitarian access throughout the country.¹²⁹

Geopolitical Alignments and Rival Governance

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) established the "Government of Peace and Unity," also known as the 'Tasis' parallel administration, in April 2025. This quasi-state is designed to provide legitimacy for the RSF's rule over the regions it controls: Darfur, parts of Kordofan, and parts of Blue Nile State.¹³⁰ The Tasis administration features a structured, if nascent, political system led by RSF Commander Hemedti, alongside SPLM-N chief Abd al-Aziz al-Hilu, and a cabinet headed by Prime Minister Mohammed Hassan al-Ta'ishi. The stated purpose of this administrative veneer is to organize security, manage aid, and eventually issue identity documents and currency, asserting governance capability in opposition to the SAF. The victory in El Fasher and the subsequent advance into Kordofan provide the necessary military foundation for this claim of statehood.

Despite the illusion of formal structure, external recognition of the Tasis State remains negligible. The Tasis administration has been explicitly rejected by the vast majority of international actors, including the UN Security Council, which called the declaration "a direct threat to Sudan's territorial integrity." The United States, the African Union, and key regional powers like Saudi Arabia and Egypt also oppose the rival state.¹³¹

The UAE's diplomatic strategy is a point of international focus. While the UAE is accused of alleged military and financial support to the RSF, it concurrently joined the Democratic

¹²⁸ Sudan Tribune. "Sudanese foreign minister rejects external interference, reaffirms commitment to Jeddah deal." November 26, 2025.

¹²⁹ European Commission. "Joint Declaration, 7th AU–EU Summit." November 24, 2025.

¹³⁰ The Jamestown Foundation. "RSF Establishes Rival Government as Sudan's War Spirals." November 20, 2025.

¹³¹ David Pilling, "Sudan: Hemedti's Tasis Government Is a Smokescreen of Legitimacy," *The Africa Report*, October 02, 2025.

Republic of the Congo (DRC) in a public statement (Nov 16) condemning attacks against civilians in El Fasher by *both* warring parties.¹³² This calculated public posture of neutrality serves as a diplomatic deflection, minimizing the political cost of the UAE's reported continued logistical and financial support for the RSF's military campaign and governance project.

On November 10, 2025, Russian Ambassador Andrey Chernovol publicly announced the temporary suspension of Russia's long-planned naval logistics facility project at Port Sudan, citing the ongoing civil war and internal security deterioration.¹³³ The project, which would grant Russia its first permanent naval foothold in Africa, had historically been plagued by political instability and was never formally ratified by the Sudanese parliament.¹³⁴

Analysts assess this suspension as a high-stakes geopolitical maneuver by General Al-Burhan to secure Western support, an approach termed "defensive pragmatism". By suspending the agreement, the SAF signals a willingness to pivot away from deep Russian and Iranian alignment, in exchange for concrete security and political backing from the West. Indicators of this diplomatic shift include Burhan's pursuit of preliminary approval for a U.S. military base on the Red Sea coast and opening new channels for intelligence cooperation, including through Israel. This temporary increase in Western leverage in the Red Sea security domain is conditional, forcing the US and its allies to respond decisively if they wish to block Russia's long-term strategic designs in the region.¹³⁵ The move is a test: the SAF seeks reciprocal guarantees of survival and potentially military aid (such as sanctions relief or air defense) to offset the internal threat posed by the RSF.

External Support and Supply Lines

The conflict remains fueled by extensive and resilient external support networks, sustaining the battlefield dynamics despite international condemnation.

A comprehensive report released on November 22, 2025, by the Global Initiative Against Transitional Organized Crime (GI-TOC) confirmed the complexity and breadth of the RSF's supply networks.¹³⁶ Crucially, the GI-TOC report indicted South Sudan for enabling the supply of munitions to the RSF. This signals a diversification of logistical routes, as much attention had previously focused on Chad and eastern Libya.¹³⁷ The RSF's operational continuity is maintained through established logistics corridors involving Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR), Kenya, and Uganda, which are used for trafficking military supplies and smuggling gold. The identification of Juba as an active munitions conduit

¹³² UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "UAE Welcomes Congo Mediation Efforts," *Official Statement*. November 21, 2025.

¹³³ *Agenzia Nova*. "Sudan: The Red Sea Base at the Center of the Geopolitical Clash between the US and Russia."

¹³⁴ *Business Insider Africa*. "Russia Faces Setback as Its Long-Planned First African Naval Base Stalls." November 12, 2025.

¹³⁵ Arab Progress. "Suspension of Russia's Naval Base Project in Port Sudan." November 10, 2025.

¹³⁶ Radio Tamazuj. "Global Watchdog Names South Sudan among Countries Supporting RSF." November 22, 2025.

¹³⁷ The Africa Report. "Drones, Gold, and Covert Networks: Foreign Hands Fuelling Sudan's Relentless War." November 27, 2025.

indicates the RSF's remarkable resilience and ability to circumvent interdiction efforts focused on northern and western borders.

The UAE continues to be a central node in the RSF's sustainment network. Although Khartoum previously severed diplomatic ties with Abu Dhabi, accusing the UAE of providing arms and funneling foreign fighters, the material evidence persists. UN documents and satellite investigations point to a steady stream of Emirati cargo flights landing in neighboring countries, specifically Chad.¹³⁸ These operations are reportedly often facilitated by Libyan commander Khalifa Haftar, a known UAE ally.¹³⁹ This ongoing logistical enablement is essential for keeping the RSF operational, financing its military campaigns through gold revenues, and providing the political validation necessary for the Tasis State.

The SAF's military capabilities are increasingly dependent on Iranian support.¹⁴⁰ The confirmed operational deployment of these high-end combat drones is crucial for the SAF to maintain an asymmetric air advantage and challenge RSF ground movements in Kordofan.¹⁴¹

Egypt reaffirmed its role as the SAF's most reliable institutional and political backer. Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty met with General Al-Burhan in Port Sudan on November 11.¹⁴² The Minister reaffirmed Egypt's full solidarity with and support for the Sudanese Armed Forces and the internationally recognized cabinet. This unequivocal support serves as a critical political cushion for Al-Burhan, reinforcing his hardline stance against compromise and validating his rejection of peace proposals that would threaten the SAF's institutional existence.

Cairo's posture toward Sudan is also shaped by its strategic rivalry with Ethiopia, particularly over Nile Basin politics and regional influence. Egypt views Sudan not only as a security buffer but as a critical geopolitical counterweight to Addis Ababa in shaping the future of the Horn. Sustained backing of the SAF therefore serves a dual purpose: stabilizing a partner on Egypt's southern flank and limiting Ethiopia's diplomatic and strategic maneuverability in Sudan. By anchoring the SAF within its orbit, Cairo preserves leverage over Nile negotiations and constrains the emergence of a unified Sudanese government that might deepen alignment with Ethiopia and prioritize self-interest on hydro-politics or regional integration initiatives.

Ethiopia's position on the Sudanese conflict is guided by a consistent strategic principle of preserving Sudan's unity as a pillar for Horn of Africa stability. Addis Ababa views the fragmentation of Sudan as a direct threat to regional security, border control, and economic connectivity. Rather than aligning with any parallel authority, Ethiopia has emphasized

¹³⁸ The Guardian. "Leaked UN Experts Report Raises Fresh Concerns over UAE's Role in Sudan War." April 15, 2025.

¹³⁹ The New Arab. "Libya Link: How Haftar Is Helping Fuel Sudan's War." November 25, 2025.

¹⁴⁰ ADF Magazine. "Report: Iranian Weapon Deliveries Back Sudanese Armed Forces." November 19, 2025.

¹⁴¹ Lowy Institute. "Sudan's Civil War Spills Well Beyond the Battlefield." November 26, 2025.

¹⁴² Ahram Online. "Egypt Fully Supports Sudan Army, Gov't: FM Abdelatty to Al-Burhan." November 11, 2025.

Sudan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, resisting efforts to normalize de facto partition.¹⁴³ A divided Sudan, in Ethiopian strategic thinking, would generate long-term instability, expand space for armed actors, and internationalize insecurity along Ethiopia's western frontier.

Ethiopia's engagement is also anchored in long-term regional development logic. A stable Sudan is essential for cross-border trade, infrastructure integration, and cooperative Nile Basin management. Ethiopia sees Sudan as a future partner in energy sharing, flood control, and agricultural stability, particularly in the context of regional hydropower development and river regulation. From Addis Ababa's perspective, economic interdependence is not separate from peace-building—it is the mechanism through which peace becomes sustainable. Rather than pursuing territorial influence, Ethiopia's strategy prioritizes a unified Sudan capable of participating in a cooperative regional economic and security architecture.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio dramatically intensified US diplomatic pressure at the G7 meeting on November 12. Condemning RSF atrocities in El-Fasher, Rubio explicitly detailed the transnational nature of the RSF's illicit sustainment, asserting that "Someone's giving them the money and someone's giving them the weapons, and it's coming through some country," with transit enabled by regional partners. He directly implicated Quad members in this supply issue, stating: "We know who the parties are that are involved... That's why they're part of the Quad along with other countries involved." This diplomatic pressure highlighted the fundamental challenge faced by the Quad framework: the continuation of material flows from both RSF and SAF backers demonstrates that the general call for a halt remains ineffective due to the sophisticated, decentralized nature of the supply networks being utilized.

Consistent with its position outlined in the ceasefire appeal, U.S. policy emphasizes halting military escalation and urges that international engagement in Sudan be limited to humanitarian assistance rather than armed support.¹⁴⁴ President Donald Trump publicly indicated a willingness to engage to help end the war in mid-November, suggesting a shift in Washington's engagement level.¹⁴⁵ However, the continuation of material flows from both RSF and SAF backers demonstrates that the general call for a halt remains ineffective due to the sophisticated, decentralized nature of the supply networks being utilized.

Humanitarian Catastrophe Assessment

The violence in Sudan, particularly in Darfur and Kordofan, is marked by systematic violations of international humanitarian law. A joint international statement on November 10 expressed grave alarm over reports of systematic and ongoing violence against civilians

¹⁴³ Ethiopian News Agency. "FM Gedion Reiterates Ethiopia's Commitment to Supporting Peaceful Resolution to Conflict in Sudan." November 26, 2024.

¹⁴⁴ *Al Jazeera*. "US Calls on Sudan's Warring Parties to Accept Ceasefire Plan Unaltered." November 25, 2025.

¹⁴⁵ Deutsche Welle (DW). "Trump to Focus on Ending Sudan Civil War." November 20, 2025.

following the RSF takeover of El Fasher and the escalation in the Kordofan region.¹⁴⁶

Verified reports indicate that the Rapid Support Forces are carrying out egregious atrocities, including summary executions, after seizing key locations like El Fasher and Bara city in North Kordofan.¹⁴⁷ Documentation confirms ethnically motivated mass killings, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), starvation as a method of warfare, and the obstruction of humanitarian access. These acts, if substantiated through legal processes, constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity under international law. The scale of displacement is unprecedented, with over 15 million people displaced, creating the world's worst displacement crisis.¹⁴⁸

The looming threat of an International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment for documented massacres and indiscriminate bombing provides a powerful, shared incentive for both Generals Al-Burhan and Hemedti to remain in active command. Maintaining control of their respective armed forces is perceived by both leaders as the only guarantee against future prosecution and imprisonment.

The humanitarian situation continues to be dire in November, characterized by widespread starvation and famine conditions that persist due to access restrictions.

While a formal system-wide IPC Phase 5 (Famine) declaration for all regions was not confirmed in the November reporting, the general food insecurity level is critical. The presence of stabilization centers treating severely malnourished children in areas like Tawila, North Darfur,¹⁴⁹ strongly suggests critical food insecurity (IPC 4 or 5) across RSF-controlled areas. The international community, including UN agencies, faces routine violations of international humanitarian law via restrictions on access, attacks on aid workers, and the destruction of health facilities.¹⁵⁰

UN Humanitarian Chief Tom Fletcher conducted a week-long visit to Sudan in November, traveling through Port Sudan, Darfur (Tawila and Korma), and across the border into Adré, Chad. Fletcher characterized El Fasher as the "epicentre of inhumanity in the world".¹⁵¹

During his visit, he met with General Burhan in Port Sudan, as well as the Foreign Ministers of Egypt and Sudan. The core demand presented to the SAF leadership was for unlimited, unhindered access and security for humanitarian convoys and personnel everywhere they are

¹⁴⁶ ReliefWeb. "Joint Statement Condemning Atrocities and Violations of International Humanitarian Law in Sudan." November 11, 2025.

¹⁴⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). "Appalling Reports of Summary Executions and Other Serious Violations as RSF Makes Major Territorial Gains in El Fasher and North Kordofan." October 27, 2025.

¹⁴⁸ European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). "Sudan: Humanitarian and Political Crisis." November 11, 2025.

¹⁴⁹ Doctors Without Borders (MSF). "Sudan: People Facing Extreme Malnutrition in Protracted Crisis." November 11, 2025.

¹⁵⁰ *Dawan Africa*. "Sudan's War on Health: Massacres in Hospitals, Deaths of Volunteers and a Humanitarian Collapse."

¹⁵¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "UN Relief Chief calls Darfur 'epicentre of human suffering'."

needed.¹⁵² Fletcher's subsequent travel itinerary, which utilized the Adré crossing into Chad for deep-field access, confirms the operational reality: the SAF leadership, despite diplomatic assurances, maintains control over official Port Sudan access permissions, deliberately restricting aid flow to opposition-held regions as a tool of strategic attrition. This necessitates the prioritization of cross-border operations from neighboring states, particularly Chad, to reach the most affected populations in Darfur.

Internal Security and Extremism Threats

The conflict in Sudan has mutated beyond a binary power struggle into a complex crisis driven by deep political fragmentation and an existential, zero-sum battle for state dominance between the SAF and the RSF. While the violence exploits historical ethnic fissures, most visibly in the systematic atrocities reported in Darfur, the core drivers remain deeply ideological. The current trajectory is defined by the commanders' urgent need to secure immunity from international prosecution and the re-emergence of entrenched political forces that view the state as their exclusive property.

The roots of this instability are historically ideological, tracing back to the Muslim Brotherhood's doctrine of perennial religious warfare that permeated Sudan in the 1950s and culminated in the 1989 Islamist coup. This governance structure previously established Sudan as a global pariah and a sanctuary for networks, including Al-Qaeda, in the 1990s.¹⁵³ While the transitional government of Abdalla Hamdok (2019-2021) attempted to dismantle this "deep state" and align Sudan with Western interests through the Abraham Accords, the 2021 coup led by General Al-Burhan effectively stalled this progress. The subsequent vacuum has allowed the old Islamist guard to reassert control over the security apparatus, reversing the brief period of normalization.

Alarmingly, the SAF's recent security posture indicates a strategic pivot toward Iran and a reintegration of hardline elements, directly contradicting Western counterterrorism objectives. Confirmed military assistance from Tehran signals the restoration of an extremist nexus, further evidenced by the reported release and protection of sanctioned figures such as Hamas financier Abdelbasit Hamza. This alliance is not merely historical but operationally active; credible reports suggest Iranian logistical channels are being utilized to facilitate the transport of Houthi-linked elements, including weapons and potentially fighters, from Yemen to Sudan.¹⁵⁴ These grants hostile actors a strategic foothold upstream on the Red Sea, threatening a trade route vital to 12% of global seaborne commerce.

Domestically, the SAF's declaration of a "General Mobilization" has formalized the integration of hardline Muslim Brotherhood militias into the army's operational structure. While ostensibly a manpower necessity, this decision provides institutional cover for Islamist

¹⁵² UN News. "UN Aid Office Pushes for 'Unhindered' Humanitarian Access in Sudan." November 17, 2025.

¹⁵³ The National Interest. "The Muslim Brotherhood's Role in Sudan's Civil War." November 28, 2025.

¹⁵⁴ ISPI. "Yemen: Counter-Smuggling Is Now Key to Tackling the Houthis." November 20, 2025.

factions to regain lethal capabilities and political influence. This effectively solidifies the SAF as a fortress for the former regime's ideology, positioning it in direct opposition to the regional alignment sought by the UAE and the moderate bloc.

The continued fragmentation of the state significantly elevates the risk of Sudan becoming a transnational hub for terrorism, potentially surpassing the scale and complexity of the security challenges seen in Somalia. The deteriorating security environment is transforming the country into a major logistics node connecting instability across the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea basin. This includes the activation of a "northbound highway"¹⁵⁵ of illicit arms flowing from post-Gaddafi Libya, which permanently wires the insurgencies of the Sahel into Sudan's domestic war economy.

Should the conflict result in a de facto partition, as suggested by the RSF's territorial consolidation, the resulting governance vacuum would likely destabilize the wider region. Ungoverned borders would accelerate the flow of fighters, funds, and advanced weaponry into neighboring states. The convergence of the SAF's ideological alignment with the Muslim Brotherhood and the opening of transnational terror corridors presents a critical threat profile that demands immediate strategic attention.

1.6 South Sudan: Power Consolidation, Escalating Violence, and Economic Fragility

November in Juba moved from tense uncertainty to sharper institutional churn and rising violence. Political decrees, courtroom drama, economic shakeups, and battlefield clashes combined to tighten pressure on the Revitalized Peace Agreement and to increase risks for civilians and aid operations.

The month unfolded as a single, continuous chain of political, security, and institutional shocks that fed into each other from the first week of the month to the final days of November. The month opened with an abrupt reshuffling campaign in Juba that displaced ministers, senior administrators, and security figures.¹⁵⁶ President Salva Kiir's decrees removed a serving vice president and reintroduced a former ally to high office in a way that unsettled succession expectations and disrupted long-standing patronage channels. These moves triggered immediate unease within the ruling party and widened suspicion among opposition blocs that viewed the reshuffle as a sign of consolidation rather than routine governance. The central theme of the month became the gradual tightening of control at the top and the parallel deepening of internal rivalries.

The most visible symbol of this tightening was the removal of Benjamin Bol Mel from the vice presidency and the restrictions that followed.¹⁵⁷ His dismissal, the reported downgrade

¹⁵⁵ Arab news. "Libya has become a haven for global crime networks," October 18, 2025.

¹⁵⁶ Sudans Post. "Kiir Reshuffles Key Government Positions in Overnight Decrees." *Sudans Post*, November 25, 2025.

¹⁵⁷ Sudans Post. "South Sudan: Kiir Sacks and Demotes VP Bol Mel to Private." *AllAfrica (via Nile Post, Kampala)*, November

in his military rank, and the conditions resembling house arrest made clear that senior figures were being repositioned and that older alliances were being reconfigured without consultation. These developments stirred speculation about presidential succession and sharpened factional jockeying at a moment when political cohesion was already thin.¹⁵⁸ Bol Mel publicly expressed gratitude to the president after his removal,¹⁵⁹ but the gesture did little to ease speculation inside the ruling party or mitigate the perception that institutional balance was being reengineered.

The legal proceedings against suspended First Vice President Riek Machar ran in parallel and added their own tension. Sessions of the trial were disrupted by a sudden power outage that forced an adjournment and raised questions about the court's capacity.¹⁶⁰ Testimonies also exposed holes in the chain of evidence, with the lead investigator noting incomplete documentation linking the accused to the White Army commander associated with the Nasir attack.¹⁶¹ This weakened the prosecution's narrative and gave the SPLM IO fresh ground to challenge the credibility of the process. The opposition responded by demanding Machar's unconditional release as a prerequisite for any meaningful dialogue and made clear that the political future of the peace process depended on resolving his status.¹⁶²

As the month progressed, the trial reached a more consequential stage. The hearing was adjourned for cross-examination, keeping the legal and political suspense alive as both sides continued to challenge the integrity of arrest procedures and evidence handling. On the adjourned day, the court, trying suspended First Vice-President Riek Machar and his co-accused, heard testimony in which a military investigator admitted that no audio or video evidence tied Machar to the killing of David Majur Dak during the March 2025 incident in Nasir. The witness stated that he was unaware of any recording in which Machar had ordered the killing, casting serious doubt on the prosecution's case and strengthening the defence's argument that the charges lacked concrete proof.¹⁶³

The ongoing trial of Riek Machar brands the fragile peace architecture as deeply endangered. The court proceedings reflect more than a legal reckoning: they amount to a sweeping shakeup of the post-2018 power-sharing arrangement that helped stabilize Juba and the opposition.¹⁶⁴ By targeting Machar and his closest political network, the state effectively signals that participation in government no longer insulates former rebels from prosecution. That portends a broader unraveling of trust in both power-sharing and institutional justice.

12, 2025.

¹⁵⁸ Associated Press. "South Sudan's president fires deputy Bol, who was seen as possible successor." *AP News*, November 12, 2025.

¹⁵⁹ Sudans Post. "Bol Mel Thanks Kiir After Dismissal, Highlights Economic and Party Milestones." *Sudans Post*, November 2025.

¹⁶⁰ Sudans Post. "Machar's Trial Adjourned After Power Outage Halts Proceedings.", November 2025.

¹⁶¹ Sudans Post. "Machar Trial Investigator Delinks Accused From White Army." *Sudans Post*, November 2025.

¹⁶² Radio Tamazuj. "Juba Opposition Demands Machar's Release as Condition for Dialogue." *Radio Tamazuj*, November 2025.

¹⁶³ Radio Tamazuj. "No Audio or Video Links Machar to Killing in Nasir, Court Told." *Radio Tamazuj*, November 26, 2025.

¹⁶⁴ Akech, Daniel. *A Trial for South Sudan's Frail Peace*. International Crisis Group, November 2025.

Those closely watching the case warn that the trial risks turning into a politically motivated purge rather than impartial accountability, raising fears that it may reverse recent gains toward unity and drive the country back toward widespread conflict.

International reactions intensified as these political and judicial developments unfolded. The UN peacekeeping leadership warned the Security Council that repeated dismissals of opposition appointees and ongoing ceasefire breaches had worsened mistrust between the parties.¹⁶⁵ It stressed that the protection mandate was under pressure due to funding gaps and operational constraints. Human Rights Watch urged Security Council members to resist any attempt by South Sudan to reduce peacekeeping strength, arguing that it would strip civilians of vital protection.¹⁶⁶ Several states, including the United Kingdom, expressed concern about the overall deterioration and called for inclusive dialogue and respect for the legal process.¹⁶⁷ South Sudanese representatives responded at the UN by reaffirming commitment to the 2018 peace deal,¹⁶⁸ though their assurances did little to calm anxiety among external partners.

Regional dynamics compounded the domestic turbulence. Observers noted that the removal of certain figures and the elevation of others could unsettle regional ties and alter security expectations in the borderlands. Commentators argued that Juba's political moves could have direct implications for cross-border alliances and for the posture of armed groups along the frontier. These issues gained more prominence after the dismissal of Bol Mel, which many viewed as a signal to regional patrons that power was being centralized more sharply.

These political struggles were accompanied by serious security incidents. South Sudan entered one of its most volatile phases in years as heavy clashes broke out around Torit and Ifwotu in Eastern Equatoria between government forces and opposition units linked to the SPLA-IO and NAS.¹⁶⁹ Fighting on November 23 and 24 produced significant casualties among government troops and displaced tens of thousands of civilians within days, pushing large numbers toward the already overstretched Sudanese frontier. UNMISS had already scaled back its presence in Torit due to mounting operational constraints, and it again urged an immediate halt to the violence after the confrontation violated existing ceasefire arrangements and intensified political mistrust ahead of the delayed 2026 elections.¹⁷⁰ The escalation is now feeding a broader regional rupture as the conflict in South Sudan begins to overlap with the war in Sudan, creating a continuous arc of instability stretching toward

¹⁶⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping (UNMISS). Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations to the UN Security Council on South Sudan. *UNMISS*, November 2025.

¹⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch. "UN Security Council Should Resist South Sudan Attempt to Undermine Peacekeepers." *HRW*, November 18, 2025.

¹⁶⁷ United Kingdom Government. "The United Kingdom remains concerned by the deterioration in the political situation in South Sudan — UK statement at the UN Security Council." *gov.uk*, November 2025.

¹⁶⁸ Anadolu Agency. "South Sudan reaffirms commitment to 2018 peace deal at UN Security Council." *AA.com.tr*, November 2025.

¹⁶⁹ Sudans Post. "Rebel Forces Claim Heavy SSPDF Losses in Failed Attack Near Torit." *Sudans Post*, November 23, 2025.

¹⁷⁰ United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). "Press Release – UNMISS calls for an immediate end to fighting in Eastern Equatoria," November 24, 2025.

Egypt's southern border. Early assessments warn of a possible movement of hundreds of thousands of displaced people through this corridor, alongside increased trafficking of weapons, fighters, and illicit goods into Egyptian territory. This is a reminder of how fragile security dynamics in the Sudan can rapidly reshape regional stability and underline the need for coordinated, rules-based approaches.

Late in the month, President Kiir issued further decrees that continued the pattern of institutional churn.¹⁷¹ On November 26, he removed Deng Lual Wol from the Ministry of Petroleum undersecretary position for the second time in a short span and reinstated Chol Thon Abel.¹⁷² This switch marked the fourth alternation between the two officials since late September. In the same set of decrees, Kiir dismissed the managing director of Nilepet, Ayuel Ngor Kacgor, without explaining.¹⁷³ These upheavals inside the petroleum sector, which generates more than 90% government revenue, indicated deeper efforts to consolidate control over economic institutions. The changes added uncertainty to an already fragile revenue environment and cast doubt on the government's ability to manage funds needed for relief and stabilization.

The return to duty of Tutkew Gatluak Manime as Kiir's security adviser and his warm reception in Port Sudan underscored Juba's renewed effort to manage relations with Khartoum and secure vital oil transit routes through his neighbour. Manime's reinstatement after his earlier dismissal was explicitly framed as an attempt to "mend fences" and guarantee the full resumption of critical oil exports transiting via Port Sudan.¹⁷⁴ This development must be seen alongside the internal reshuffles: by restoring the adviser responsible for external security links, Kiir signaled that the oil corridor remains politically central even as domestic power dynamics shift. The move subtly links the internal re-ordering of elite patronage with external economic and diplomatic recalibration, reinforcing that control over external trade routes and export infrastructure remains part of the consolidation strategy of the ruling circle.

The recent drone strike on Sudanese oil infrastructure caused a sudden stop in crude oil exports for South Sudan. On November 13, a drone hit the central processing facility at Heglig, destroying key components and killing staff. Two days later, another attack struck the Al Jabalyn facility, the station that handles South Sudan's oil flows.¹⁷⁵ The assaults forced an emergency shutdown of the pipeline network that carries South Sudan's oil to Port Sudan on the Red Sea. For several days, oil exports, the mainstay of the country's revenues,

¹⁷¹ "South Sudan again shakes up petroleum ministry, adding to constant government churn," *Reuters*, November 26, 2025.

¹⁷² "South Sudan's Kiir Sacks Petroleum Ministry Top Official for Second Time in Under 2 Months." *TRT Afrika*, 2025.

¹⁷³ Obulutsa, George. "South Sudan Again Shakes Up Petroleum Ministry, Adding to Constant Government Churn." *CNBC Africa*, November 26, 2025.

¹⁷⁴ Passilly, Augustine. "Port Sudan Welcomes Return of Salva Kiir's Security Adviser." *Africa Intelligence*, November 28, 2025.

¹⁷⁵ Sudan Tribune. "South Sudan Resumes Oil Exports after Drone Attacks Halt Pipeline Flow." *Sudan Tribune*, November 20, 2025.

were suspended. Then, technical teams worked intensively to repair the damage, and by November 19, the Ministry of Petroleum announced that exports had fully resumed.

Humanitarian concerns continued to rise throughout the month. The United Nations emphasized that millions faced acute food insecurity and that internal displacement was increasing as communities fled violence and instability. It warned that any reduction of peacekeeping operations would make it harder to deliver aid and protect vulnerable populations. These challenges intersected with the United States' decision to terminate Temporary Protected Status for South Sudanese nationals residing in America,¹⁷⁶ a move that raised fresh questions about returns and reintegration at a moment when the country's capacity to absorb vulnerable populations remains limited.

By the end of November, the combined effect of political reshuffles, high-stakes legal proceedings, factional confrontation, economic uncertainty, and shifting international engagement produced an atmosphere of profound volatility. The month's final days confirmed that the earlier developments were not isolated episodes but interconnected signals of a political system under strain. Whether the political elite can return to a negotiated path that upholds the revitalized peace agreement or whether power consolidation will accelerate fragmentation and violence remains the central question as the country moves into December.

1.7 Kenya: Borderline Turbulence, Diplomatic Flashpoints, and Expanding Global Ambitions

The diplomatic calendar began with the closure of the South Sudan Embassy in Nairobi on November 7 due to nearly a year of unpaid rent arrears, which civil society leaders in Juba called a national embarrassment, pointing to governance failures in a key regional partner.¹⁷⁷ This structural failure in a critical East African neighbor, which relies on Kenya for regional access, created ripple effects by highlighting the inherent fragility that complicates regional integration efforts. This instability was compounded by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's warning on November 8 of a potential conflict should landlocked Uganda remain "blocked" from accessing the Indian Ocean, questioning Kenya's maritime jurisdiction.¹⁷⁸ Museveni's aggressive rhetoric, though later downplayed, exposed deep underlying geopolitical tensions over access to the sea, which challenge the fundamental stability of the trade corridors vital for the entire Horn of Africa region, including Ethiopia.

On November 6, President William Ruto held a phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, appealing for the release of any Kenyan citizens detained while

¹⁷⁶ Sganga, Nicole. "Trump administration ending Temporary Protected Status for South Sudanese nationals." *CBS News*, November 5, 2025.

¹⁷⁷ Kenyans.co.ke. Ken Muthomi. "South Sudan Embassy in Nairobi Closed Due to Unpaid Rent Arrears." *Kenyans.co.ke*, November 9, 2025.

¹⁷⁸ Kenyans.co.ke. Timothy Cerullo. "Ministry of Foreign Affairs Downplays Museveni's Threats of 'War' With Kenya." *Kenyans.co.ke*, November 13, 2025.

fighting for Russian forces in the ongoing war.¹⁷⁹ This diplomatic intervention addressed the serious threat posed by deceptive recruitment networks that lure Kenyan citizens, including former security personnel, into foreign conflicts, thereby draining potential counter-terrorism expertise and creating security risks upon their potential return¹⁸⁰ Concurrently, following President Museveni's inflammatory remarks, Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary Korir Sing'Oei publicly downplayed the "war" threats on November 12, affirming that the comments were metaphorical and that Kenya would continue to provide safe and free passage for goods from landlocked countries¹⁸¹. This prompt diplomatic de-escalation was crucial for preventing an EAC political crisis from destabilizing vital bilateral trade and security cooperation, maintaining stable trade flows essential for the economies of East Africa and the Horn.

On November 16, a Kenyan-U.S. national and serving U.S. Army Sergeant was arrested by Tanzanian police at the Sirari border, found in possession of four CS M68 hand grenades, amid heightened security concerns following contentious recent elections in Tanzania¹⁸². This arrest immediately raised cross-border security alarms and underscored the challenge of monitoring the flow of military-grade material within the EAC bloc, highlighting the necessity for institutionalized security cooperation between member states to contain illicit movements of weapons. This localized incident was set against Kenya's broader diplomatic aspirations, as UN Resident Coordinator to Kenya Stephen Jackson emphasized on November 18 the need for Africa to maintain a unified, relentless advocacy for permanent UN Security Council (UNSC) seats with veto rights¹⁸³. This continued push for global institutional reform positions Nairobi as a leader in asserting African agency in multilateralism, a stance strongly supported by Ethiopia in its own foreign policy agenda.

The stabilization of bilateral ties continued on November 20 when Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi met with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni at Mayuge State Lounge, reaffirming commitment to EAC integration and bilateral alignment to safeguard mutual interests and avoid conflict over the Indian Ocean access¹⁸⁴. This critical political act successfully neutralized the immediate risk of a diplomatic breakdown stemming from the Ugandan President's maritime threats, reinforcing Kenya's status as a stable security and economic transit partner. The same day, the release of two Kenyan activists, Bob Njagi and Nicholas Oyoo, who had been missing for five weeks after being arrested in Uganda, was

¹⁷⁹ Timothy Cerullo. "Ruto Appeals for Release of Kenyans Detained in Ukraine During Phone Call With Volodymyr Zelensky." *Kenyans.co.ke*, November 7, 2025.

¹⁸⁰ BBC News. "Over 200 Kenyans Fighting for Russia in Ukraine – Minister." *BBC News*, November 13, 2025.

¹⁸¹ Oduor, Frankline. "Ugandan Military Visits Kenya to Benchmark Amid Concerns Over Museveni's Remarks." *Kenyans.co.ke*, November 13, 2025.

¹⁸² Kirambia, Maurine. "Kenyan Serving in U.S. Army Arrested in Tanzania With Four Hand Grenades." *Kenyans.co.ke*, November 17, 2025.

¹⁸³ Ngano, Walter. "What It Takes to Get Permanent Seat at UN Security Council — UN Resident Coordinator to Kenya Stephen Jackson Reveals." *Kenyans.co.ke*, November 18, 2025.

¹⁸⁴ Ogungo, Joseph. "Mudavadi Meets Museveni Amid Concerns Over Conflicts." *Kenyans.co.ke*, November 21, 2025.

confirmed following "sustained diplomatic engagement"¹⁸⁵. The successful resolution of this detention, which President Museveni acknowledged during a live interview, demonstrated the effectiveness of Kenya's persistent diplomacy in resolving human rights issues within the region.

On November 21, Chief of the Defence Forces (CDF), General Charles Kahariri, hosted high-level military and diplomatic delegations from Sierra Leone and Azerbaijan, resolving to fast-track a Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) with Sierra Leone¹⁸⁶. This defense diplomacy elevates Kenya's strategic value by formalizing security partnerships that enhance Kenya's role as a regional security exporter and strengthen its defense architecture. However, on November 22, U.S. Vice President JD Vance's planned visit was officially cancelled following President Trump's directive to boycott the G20 Summit. The cancellation, rooted in U.S. domestic political volatility, demonstrated how external factors could complicate Kenya's high-level diplomatic calendar, though the government affirmed that the "strong and enduring ties" would not be affected¹⁸⁷.

The month's duality of security advancement juxtaposed with threat was evident on November 24. First, President Ruto signed a landmark trade deal with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, eliminating trade barriers for Kenyan exports. This agreement significantly advances Kenya's economic diplomacy, deepening South-South cooperation and diversifying its export markets to bolster economic resilience¹⁸⁸. Second, at the AU–EU Summit in Angola, President Ruto urged the European Union to support African Union reforms¹⁸⁹ and stressed that the conflict in Sudan cannot be resolved through military means, asserting that both Sudanese generals are "cut from the same cloth"¹⁹⁰. This advocacy for AU reforms and commitment to a political solution align with Ethiopia's position on African agency and regional conflict resolution. Tragically, on the same day, two Border Patrol officers were killed, and five were injured near Dadaab, Garissa County, after their vehicle hit an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) suspected to be placed by Al-Shabaab, tragically underscoring the persistent, asymmetric threat along the Somalia-Kenya border¹⁹¹.

Finally, on November 24, the government officially chartered the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps into municipalities. This move is a proactive security and development

¹⁸⁵ Wertheimer, Tiffany, and Damian Zane. "Uganda President Admits Kenyan Activists Were Arrested and Held in 'the Fridge'." *BBC News*, November 9, 2025.

¹⁸⁶ Amunga, Maxwell. "CDF Welcomes Sierra Leone and Azerbaijan Delegation at Defence Headquarters." *Kenyans.co.ke*, November 21, 2025.

¹⁸⁷ Kirambia, Maurine. "U.S. Vice President JD Vance's Visit to Kenya Officially Cancelled." *Kenyans.co* November 10, 2025.

¹⁸⁸ Amunga, Maxwell. "President Ruto Signs Trade Deal Removing Barriers for Kenyan Traders Exporting to Malaysia." *Kenyans.co.ke*. November 24, 2025.

¹⁸⁹ Wanjiru, Viona. "President Ruto Urges EU to Support African Union Reforms During 7th AU–EU Summit in Angola." *Kenyans.co.ke*. November 25, 2025.

¹⁹⁰ Oduor, Frankline. "Ruto Says RSF and SAF Generals Are Not the Solution to Sudan Crisis." *Kenyans.co.ke*. November 9, 2025.

¹⁹¹ Otinga, Rene. "2 Police Officers Killed, 5 Injured in Suspected Al-Shabaab Attack." *Kenyans.co.ke*. November 19, 2025.

measure designed to mitigate the risk that vulnerable, unemployed refugees affected by U.S. and European aid cuts become susceptible to recruitment by extremist groups like Al-Shabaab, thereby strengthening internal security and stabilizing the Somali border region¹⁹². The month concluded on November 30 when a multi-agency security team, consisting of counter-terrorism officers, intercepted and killed several suspected terrorists attempting to breach the Kenya-Somalia border under the cover of darkness¹⁹³. This successful operation demonstrated the superior firepower and heightened operational readiness of Kenya has specialized forces in securing the volatile frontier, an effort intrinsically linked to the wider regional suppression of Al-Shabaab and the protection of the corridors leading toward the Red Sea.

Section Two: MENA Region, Gulf, and Global Engagement

2.1 Egypt: Strategic Alliances, Economic Initiatives, and Regional Diplomacy Amid Domestic Challenges

In November, Egypt pursued multifaceted international relationships, strengthening bonds with Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Kenya, Sudan, and Pakistan to bolster economic stability and diplomatic leverage amid ongoing fiscal pressures. Economically, the country focused on attracting Gulf investments to mitigate debt and deficits, though this highlighted dependencies on external funding and questions of equitable growth. Diplomatically, Cairo played a central role in mediating regional conflicts, such as Gaza, while asserting aggressive positions on Nile water security. Domestically, the political scene featured parliamentary elections with significant pro-government participation, amid concerns about opposition participation and voter turnout. These efforts collectively illustrated Egypt's adaptive maneuvering in a volatile region, prioritizing alliances for resilience while addressing internal challenges.

Economic Partnerships and Gulf Investments

Egypt's economic strategy emphasized partnerships with Gulf states to attract foreign direct investment, exemplified by a major real estate and tourism deal with Qatar.¹⁹⁴ This project, named Alam Al-Roum and valued at \$29.7 billion in total investment by Qatari Diar, targets an undeveloped coastal area exceeding 20 million square meters in Matruh province,

¹⁹² Oduor, Frankline. "Trump's Aid Cuts Now Risk Turning Hungry Refugees in Kenya Into Terror Recruits." *Kenyans.co.ke*. November 29, 2025.

¹⁹³ Cerullo, Timothy. "Anti-Terror Police Kill Several Suspected Terrorists While Attempting to Enter Kenya." *Kenyans.co.ke*. November 30, 2025.

¹⁹⁴ Reuters. "Egypt, Qatar to Develop Real Estate Project on Mediterranean Coast." November 6, 2025.

northwest of Cairo, featuring luxury elements like golf courses and marinas.¹⁹⁵ Qatar is committed to a \$3.5 billion land payment by the end of 2025 as fresh FDI, not deposits, to help lower Egypt's debt and improve economic indicators, with Egypt receiving \$1.8 billion in housing units and 15% of profits after Qatari Diar recovers costs. This builds on Qatari Diar's existing holdings in Egypt, such as the St. Regis Cairo hotel and apartments, CityGate, and NEWGIZA residential developments, and parallels the UAE's Ras El-Hekma project signed previously.¹⁹⁶

The negotiations were protracted, reflecting delays that had previously affected IMF disbursements under biannual reviews, as Cairo had anticipated the funds earlier. This venture highlights Egypt's reliance on Gulf investments to address fiscal challenges, including a widening budget deficit and external debt, though it raises questions about long-term autonomy and the terms of such agreements. From a broader perspective, the emphasis on luxury developments amid inflation and unemployment raises serious concerns about alignment with societal needs. Resources are being channeled into high-end tourism that benefits only select sectors, while the urgent priorities of infrastructure improvement and job creation are overlooked. Such deals may superficially support economic stability through inflows, potentially aiding fiscal management. However, in a parliament dominated by pro-government interests, these initiatives advance with limited public debate on the necessity of resource redistribution, prioritizing short-term gains while neglecting the need for comprehensive structural reforms.

Military and Security Collaborations with Russia

The month featured a significant deepening of Egypt-Russia ties through a high-profile visit by Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu, who led a large delegation including senior officials from Rosoboronexport (arms exporter), Roscosmos (space agency), Rosatom (nuclear agency), and representatives from the interior, foreign, justice, industry ministries, and the National Guard.¹⁹⁷ The delegation held talks with President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Egypt's national security adviser, foreign and defense ministers, and other senior security and intelligence officials, prioritizing the implementation of high-level agreements with a focus on military and military-technical cooperation. This engagement builds on close Soviet-era military links, combined with major energy and grain deals, as Cairo balances relations with Moscow alongside Western partners and Gulf allies amid ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. Shoigu, a longtime Putin ally and former defense minister, remains a key figure in Kremlin defense and security decisions.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Luxuri. "Qatar's \$29.7 B Bet Redraws Egypt's Luxury Coastline." November 7, 2025.

¹⁹⁶ The Arab Weekly. "Qatari Diar to Invest \$29.7 Billion in Resort Project on Egypt's Mediterranean Coast."

¹⁹⁷ Egypt Today. "Russia Affirms Commitment to Boosting Trade and Economic Ties with Egypt: Shoigu." November 11, 2025.

¹⁹⁸ Reuters. "Shoigu Leads Large Russian Delegation to Egypt for Military Talks, RIA Reports." November 10, 2025.

This strategic outreach reflects Egypt's diversification of alliances in a multipolar world, leveraging Russian expertise in arms, nuclear, and space domains to strengthen defenses against regional threats like instability in Libya or Sinai extremism. It involves navigating relations between superpowers, which could attract scrutiny from Western allies, cautious of Moscow's influence in the Middle East. The approach demonstrates pragmatic hedging, utilizing historical bonds for energy security and grain supplies amid global challenges, while managing potential geopolitical tensions, such as those related to the Ukraine war, in coordination with Gulf partners.

Parliamentary Elections and Political Dynamics

Egypt's parliamentary elections highlighted ongoing political dynamics, operating under a hybrid system that allocates a little under half of seats to closed party lists, with the remainder to individual candidates.¹⁹⁹ Only one list qualified for the ballot: The National List for Egypt, dominated by pro-government parties like Nation's Future (closely tied to Sisi's agenda), Homeland Defenders (founded by former military officers), and the newly formed National Front Party, which positions itself as a unifying entity and performed well in prior upper house votes, resulting in significant pro-Sisi representation amid limited competition.²⁰⁰ Opposition figures, including ultraconservative Islamists and leftists, faced barriers such as interpretations of military service requirements, high campaign costs, and medical screenings, leading some, like the Social Democratic Party, to join the pro-government list or contest individually, while others, like the Constitution Party, allied with smaller groups but encountered challenges like political financing and voter indifference. Voter apathy was evident, with turnout in prior upper house votes just above 17%, and reports of voters being bussed in by candidates' delegates without full awareness of identities, as coordination among delegates was noted.

This electoral framework reflects efforts to maintain stability through pro-government alignment, though it has raised questions about pluralism and competition, with loyalist factions potentially limiting ideological diversity and positioning the parliament as a supportive body for Sisi's term. Such structures facilitate foreign policy continuity but domestically prompt discussions on engagement amid economic issues, as limited opposition participation affects debates on topics like inequality or corruption. The process underscores challenges in voter mobilization, fostering calls for broader representation to address public concerns in a region with historical demands for accountability.

Further illustrating procedural aspects, authorities annulled first-round votes in 26-47 constituencies (affecting a significant portion of areas for individual candidates) due to violations like electoral ads near polling stations, failure to provide tally copies, and count

¹⁹⁹ Elmasry, Mohamad. "Egypt's All-Important Parliamentary Elections Aren't Elections at All." Al Jazeera, November 27, 2025.

²⁰⁰ Reuters. "Many Pro-Sisi Parties, Little Competition as Egypt Votes for New Parliament." November 10, 2025

mismatches, amid a 23% turnout.²⁰¹ President Sisi directed the National Elections Authority to rigorously evaluate appeals for transparency, potentially leading to reruns intended to ensure that parliament accurately reflects the will of the electorate, with the second round looming shortly thereafter.

This intervention stands out as a significant move during Sisi's third term, framed as an effort to protect electoral integrity but ultimately revealing the weaknesses in the system's handling of irregularities. It merely underscores the systemic challenges to electoral legitimacy in a context marked by low public engagement. While claiming to reinforce trust, this approach draws attention to the urgent need for consistent standards, raising concerns about international perceptions of Egypt's democratic practices and the implications for related foreign aid. In a context dominated by pro-government influences, the emphasis is primarily on superficial procedural changes, which are unlikely to genuinely increase public engagement. Furthermore, this scenario intersects with broader regional dynamics, where a stable parliament is seen as advantageous for foreign initiatives, yet addressing domestic voter turnout remains essential for achieving sustainable governance.

Regional Mediation in the Gaza Conflict

Egypt's mediation in Gaza intensified, with Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty meeting Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan in Ankara to address ceasefire implementation and post-war reconstruction.²⁰² Fidan praised Egypt for facilitating humanitarian aid shipments, thousands of tonnes, and helping locate Israeli hostage bodies as per the deal, while criticizing Israel's violations; he noted Palestinians' adherence despite challenges. The talks inaugurated the Turkey-Egypt Joint Planning Group for preparations toward high-level summits in Cairo in 2026, per a prior agreement, and emphasized world powers' role in rebuilding Gaza, with Turkey offering contributions.²⁰³

Such diplomatic engagements help establish mechanisms for long-term post-war stability in Gaza, though they require careful navigation of divergent stakeholder positions. For Egypt, this involves committing resources to conflict resolution while addressing pressing domestic issues, including economic recovery and border security to prevent any escalation or spillover. As a key guarantor in the process, Egypt enhances its geopolitical standing but must balance alliances, particularly given tensions with Israel's stance on external involvement, which can complicate joint coordination.

These efforts have been tested by recent tensions, including an Israeli strike that killed a local Hamas commander and several senior members, resulting in at least 20 deaths according to Gaza health officials.²⁰⁴ In response, a Hamas delegation, led by exiled Gaza chief Khalil al-

²⁰¹ Reuters. "Egypt Annuls First Round of Parliament Vote in a Quarter of Constituencies Over Violations." November 18, 2025

²⁰² Reuters. "Turkish, Egyptian Foreign Ministers Discuss Gaza Ceasefire, Post-War Efforts." November 12, 2025.

²⁰³ Ahram Online. "Egypt, Turkey FMs Co-Chair Inaugural Joint Planning Group Meeting in Ankara." December 1, 2025.

²⁰⁴ Israeli Airstrike on Car in Gaza City Kills Two, Others Wounded, Medics Say." Al Arabiya English. November 22, 2025.

Hayya, met with Egypt's intelligence chief in Cairo to protest the violations and warn of threats to the ceasefire's viability. During the two-day talks, Hamas reaffirmed its commitment to the first phase of the agreement while pushing for a mediator-supervised system to track and resolve breaches.²⁰⁵ The discussions also covered the status of militants in the Rafah tunnels. Egypt continues to mediate alongside Qatar and the U.S., managing accusations from both sides that challenge the truce's durability and demand proactive handling to mitigate risks of renewed conflict.

The underlying ceasefire deal, signed on October 10, involved Hamas releasing 20 surviving hostages in exchange for approximately 2,000 Palestinian prisoners, with provisions for exchanging remains.²⁰⁶ Since then, both parties have traded blame for delays and infractions. These developments reinforce Egypt's pivotal guarantor role in collaborative mediation, necessitating coordinated international pressure to advance on hostage and aid issues. Incorporating partners like Turkey and Qatar strengthens prospects for effective governance and security arrangements in Gaza. However, prolonged involvement could strain Egypt's alliances if momentum falters, making robust border management and alignment with domestic stability priorities, such as economic reforms that are crucial for sustained effectiveness.

Engagements in the Horn of Africa and Sudan

While Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty's op-ed in *Jeune Afrique* portrays the country's engagement in the Horn of Africa as a benevolent push for stability, peace, and development, this narrative glosses over Cairo's self-serving motives, primarily rooted in its longstanding obsession with controlling the Nile River and countering Ethiopia's influence. Abdelatty emphasizes Egypt's use of diplomatic, economic, and cultural tools to link the region to its national security via the Red Sea and Nile basin, but critics argue this is a thinly veiled strategy to destabilize rivals, exacerbate proxy conflicts, and prioritize water hegemony over genuine regional unity. Egypt's involvement in the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), including troop deployments starting in 2025, is framed as support for collective security under President Sisi's directives. However, this move risks turning Somalia into a battleground and could inflame the al-Shabaab insurgency rather than contain it.

Abdelatty's visit to Port Sudan, where he met with Sovereignty Council Chairman Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Foreign Minister Mohieddin Salem, is touted as a show of solidarity amid Sudan's civil war, condemning atrocities in El-Fasher, backing ceasefires through the International Quartet, and pushing for humanitarian aid, reconstruction, and economic ties like a 2025 business forum.²⁰⁷ Yet, this engagement selectively bolsters the Sudanese Armed

²⁰⁵ Anadolu Agency. "Hamas Delegation, Egypt's Intelligence Chief Discuss Gaza Ceasefire in Cairo Meeting." November 23, 2025.

²⁰⁶ Al Jazeera. "Updates: After Israel-Hamas Prisoner Swap, World Leaders Sign Gaza Deal." October 13, 2025.

²⁰⁷ Government of Egypt. "FM Visit to Port Sudan." November 11, 2023.

Forces (SAF) against the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), aligning with Egypt's border security interests but prolonging the conflict by fueling divisions. The reaffirmed "unified Nile stance" against "unilateral measures" is code for opposing Ethiopia's GERD operations, ignoring Addis Ababa's arguments for fair resource sharing and escalating water disputes that threaten broader Horn stability. The trilateral meeting with UN Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher on aid via Egyptian ports appears humanitarian, but it serves Cairo's agenda of positioning itself as a gatekeeper, potentially sidelining other regional actors like Ethiopia and risking aid politicization.

Egypt's broader positioning as a "regional actor" under Sisi's vision may foster some short-term alliances, but it often navigates tensions by prioritizing national gains over collaborative progress, as seen in militarized rivalries with Ethiopia that undermine counter-terrorism and peace efforts. While commitments to energy, infrastructure, and education sound promising, they come with strings attached to Nile politics. In Sudan's case, enhanced cooperation aids border management but risks deeper entanglement in the civil war, where Egypt's support for the SAF could backfire if RSF gains ground, complicating reconstruction and humanitarian goals.

Nile Water Diplomacy and Relations

President Sisi's phone call with Kenyan President William Ruto reiterated Cairo's support for Nile-basin development while firmly rejecting what Egypt characterizes as Ethiopia's unilateral measures on the Nile and pressing for binding protections for downstream states²⁰⁸. Under modern international water law, notably the 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, an upstream state may lawfully build non-consumptive hydropower such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, provided it acts transparently, cooperates with neighbors, and takes reasonable measures to avoid significant harm. The Convention codifies the twin obligations of equitable and reasonable use and a duty not to cause significant harm, and those principles increasingly inform basin practice even where the Convention itself has not been universally adopted.

Framed this way, Ethiopia's project is defensible as a sovereign development initiative that nonetheless requires cooperative management. Egypt's posture, however, remains anchored in century-old allocations and diplomatic pressure rather than reciprocal technical cooperation. The 1929 and 1959 agreements created entrenched downstream allocations that Ethiopia was not party to and therefore does not accept as binding; that legal asymmetry underpins Addis Ababa's rejection of Cairo's claim that Ethiopia has breached international norms. In short, Egypt's reliance on colonial-era apportionments sits uneasily alongside modern customary rules that both permit equitable use and require cooperation.

²⁰⁸ Egypt Fully Rejects Ethiopia's Unilateral Measures on Nile: El-Sisi tells Kenya's Ruto" Egypt Today, November 23, 2025.

Egypt's water authority publicly reported opening and expanding the Toshka canal/spillway to absorb surplus Lake Nasser inflows and protect the High Aswan Dam, a downstream engineering system that diverts reservoir water into the Toshka Depression through canals and pumps.²⁰⁹ Those diversions do not take water that has already passed Sudan's border out of Sudan's account, but they do increase basin-wide evaporation, change sediment routing, and alter flood timing in ways that matter across the Nile basin.

The political moment matters. Egypt framed Toshka's activation as an emergency response to surge releases from the GERD, yet Ethiopia's operating data and ministry statements show GERD operations have, in recent seasons, aimed to regulate and reduce extreme flood peaks rather than create arbitrary losses, and the technical record shows regulated releases and downstream rerouting are fundamentally different actions with different hydrological effects. Using a domestic "emergency" rerouting when a riparian neighbor is already incapacitated turns normal reservoir management into leverage: it strips Sudan of real-time contestation, damages trust, and weaponizes timing for political gain. Because Sudan has been in a protracted, destructive conflict since April 2023 and lacks the institutional capacity to monitor, document, or seek remedies in real time, Cairo's unilateral timing is coercive and unacceptable; the right response is firm, multilateral remedies, not equivocation.

Expanding Ties with Pakistan

Complementing these African-focused efforts, Sisi delivered a written message to Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari in Islamabad, conveying greetings and proposing a joint roadmap to advance bilateral relations by 2026 across political, economic, trade, military, security, religious, and cultural fields.²¹⁰ Emphasis included expanding trade volume, activating joint business councils and chambers, linking Egypt's Suez Canal Economic Zone with Pakistan's Gwadar Port for value-added industries, and leveraging D-8 Organization synergies under Egypt's presidency since December 2024. Discussions addressed Gaza, urging implementation of the ceasefire and Trump's peace plan, UN peacekeeping, and an international conference for recovery. Zardari praised Egypt's Middle East role and committed to enhanced cooperation. This diversification supports broader relations amid regional challenges but involves managing multiple commitments. It aligns with economic and military goals, with parliamentary oversight allowing steady progress. Linking ports could enhance trade corridors and resilience against threats. Aligned Gaza positions strengthen solidarity, revealing opportunities in partnerships, potentially optimizing resources if implemented effectively.

Throughout November 2025, Egypt's political framework highlighted procedural and participatory challenges, with elections featuring barriers for opposition, pro-government coordination, and interventions like annulments, limiting critiques on economic

²⁰⁹ Egypt Opens Toshka Spillway after Unilateral Ethiopian Moves Disrupt Nile Flow." Türkiye Today, November 23, 2025.

²¹⁰ Egypt Today, "Egypt's FM Delivers Written Message from Sisi to Zardari." November 30, 2025.

dependencies, diplomatic approaches, and water disputes. This system prioritizes stability, though low turnout signals areas for enhancing engagement. Without broader pluralism, discussions on divides and representation continue, underscoring the need for inclusive mechanisms to address grievances and support balanced maneuvers.

2.2 Yemen: Power Divergence, Captagon Financing, and the Red Sea's Strategic Breakdown

The diplomatic calendar began with UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg concluding an intensive series of regional consultations, meeting with Houthi chief negotiator Mohamed Abdel Salam, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi, and IRG officials across Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE through November 12.²¹¹ These discussions aimed to leverage the post-Gaza ceasefire as an opportunity to "reinforce regional stability" and "renew momentum toward peace in Yemen".²¹² Crucially, Grundberg repeatedly emphasized that the Houthis' movement's continued arbitrary detention of 59 UN personnel²¹³ was severely hindering the UN's ability to deliver aid and advance mediation efforts.²¹⁴ This obstruction demonstrates how the Houthis deliberately weaponized humanitarian access to exert political pressure and paralyze the diplomatic path toward a negotiated settlement.

On November 5, a new report by a UN panel of experts revealed clandestine operational collaboration between senior figures in Yemen's Houthi movement, Al-Qaeda, and Somalia's Al-Shabaab militant group.²¹⁵ This nexus includes intelligence exchange, military training, and providing instruction on explosives and Iranian-made drone and missile technologies to nearly 400 young Somalis for use by Al-Shabaab.²¹⁶ This structural convergence of threats fundamentally redefines the Houthis as a regional security facilitator, projecting irregular warfare capacity across the Red Sea littoral. The emergence of this Houthi-Al-Shabaab axis directly establishes a profound national security concern regarding destabilization at Ethiopia's maritime gateway, unequivocally reinforcing the necessity for Ethiopia to ensure security in the strategic corridor through which its vital trade passes.

The Houthi Ministry of the Interior announced on November 8 the arrest of an alleged sophisticated espionage network, claiming it involved U.S., Israeli, and Saudi intelligence services and operated from a joint command center in Saudi Arabia.²¹⁷ Houthi officials

²¹¹ ReliefWeb. "UN Special Envoy Grundberg Concludes Regional Visit." November 3, 2025

²¹² OSESGY. "UN Special Envoy Grundberg Concludes Regional Visits to Riyadh and Abu Dhabi." November 12, 2025.

²¹³ Security Council Report. "Yemen: Closed Consultations." November 12, 2025.

²¹⁴ Yemen Online "Intensive Talks in Oman as Yemen Risks Return to Full-Scale Conflict." November 25, 2025.

²¹⁵ Shabelle Media. "UN Experts Report Secret Collaboration Between Houthis, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab." November 5, 2025.

²¹⁶ Shabelle Media. "UN Experts Report Secret Collaboration Between Houthis, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab." November 5, 2025.

²¹⁷ Roggio, Bill, and Caleb Weiss. "Houthis Arrest Alleged Members of Saudi-American-Israeli Spy Ring." Long War Journal, November 10, 2025.

alleged the network gathered intelligence on military infrastructure, including ballistic missile and drone launch sites used against Israel, and provided coordinates for vital military and civilian targets.²¹⁸ This high-profile claim functions as a structural pillar of Houthi governance, converting security failures into a propagandistic success that reinforces internal cohesion and the narrative of constant foreign plots, while simultaneously exerting pressure on Saudi Arabia amid stalled peace negotiations.²¹⁹

The renewal of UN Security Council financial and travel ban sanctions measures around mid-November was immediately condemned by the Alliance of Anti-Aggression Political Parties²²⁰ and the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, who labeled the extension as an "unjust" tool of collective punishment retaliating for Yemen's principled support of Palestine.²²¹ This rejection of external pressure coincided with mass armed gatherings by tribes in key Houthi strongholds, including Sahar, Ghamr, and Jabal Raas, who declared high combat readiness and reaffirmed loyalty to the Houthi leadership.²²² These orchestrated events showcase the Houthis success in co-opting traditional structures to maintain mobilization levels and utilize the security crackdown, including praising the dismantling of the alleged espionage network, to justify future confrontation.

On November 19, UK Minister for the Middle East Hamish Falconer conducted the first UK ministerial visit to Aden in six years, reaffirming "unwavering support" for the IRG's stability and reforms. The UK pledged \$4 million for new boats for the Yemen Coast Guard to enhance capacity for countering weapons smuggling and Houthi destabilization in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea.²²³ This strategic investment directly links IRG governance stability to international maritime security. Concurrently, the United States formally requested the IRG to consider contributing, even symbolically, to the multinational "International Stabilization Force" for deployment in Gaza.²²⁴ While this bolsters the IRG's international standing, it carries the domestic political risk that the Houthis movement will exploit the move to brand the IRG as collaborating with US/Israeli interests.²²⁵

The posture of "hard deterrence" in the Red Sea was visibly reinforced on November 27 when the U.S. Navy released a photograph showing the destroyer USS Roosevelt in the Gulf

²¹⁸ Toomey, Bridget. "Houthis Arrest Alleged Members of Saudi-American-Israeli Spy Ring." *FDD's Long War Journal*, November 10, 2025.

²¹⁹ Engineering the Conspiracy: Strategic and Functional Dimensions of the Houthis' Announcement on the 'Spy Networks.'" Yemen & Gulf Center for Studies. November 29, 2025.

²²⁰ Saba News Agency (SABA). "Anti-aggression Parties Condemn UNSC Decision to Extend Sanctions on Yemen." November 17, 2025.

²²¹ UN Security Council Accused of Serving Coalition Agenda in Yemen." ABNA English. November 17, 2025.

²²² "Sa'ada... Sahar Tribes Announce Tribal Mobilization & Full Readiness to Confront Any Escalation." Yemen News Agency (SABA). November 22, 2025.

²²³ Thomas Harding. "Britain Pledges to Support Yemen to Ensure Freedom in Red Sea." *The National*, November 19, 2025.

²²⁴ South24 Center. "Washington Requests Yemeni Government to Join Proposed International Force in Gaza." *South24*, November 20, 2025.

²²⁵ "Washington Requests Yemeni Government to Join Proposed International Force in Gaza." South24 Center for News & Studies. November 20, 2025.

of Aden deploying an MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter armed with an AGM-114 Hellfire missile, an image taken five days earlier. This explicit display of anti-surface warfare capability signals Washington's intent to maintain a credible armed presence along critical maritime choke points amid nearly two years of Houthi attacks, reassuring global shipping.²²⁶ This demonstration coincided with the Houthis' Foreign Ministry declaring firm solidarity with Lebanon and its resistance forces against the Israeli ongoing attack, condemning targeted assassinations as evidence of the occupying regime's military and political failure.²²⁷

The Houthi-controlled Specialized Criminal Court in Sanaa dramatically escalated the regime's repressive posture on November 23 by sentencing 17 people to death by firing squad. The defendants were convicted on charges of espionage for Israel, the U.S., the UK, and Saudi intelligence, with the court ordering the executions to be carried out "in a public place as a deterrent". Two other individuals were sentenced to 10 years in prison. This severe judicial outcome is designed to maximize fear and compliance, making political dissent a capital offense, and immediately complicates diplomatic efforts by explicitly tying death sentences to Western and Saudi intelligence, thereby signaling an uncompromising hardline stance.²²⁸

On November 27, the UAE pledged \$1 billion to bolster Yemen's electricity sector, marking one of the largest development commitments aimed at rehabilitating power plants, expanding networks, and investing in solar/wind power in IRG-controlled areas.²²⁹ This colossal investment establishes a functional economic backbone for the South, enhancing the IRG's legitimacy through demonstrably superior service delivery. Simultaneously, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)²³⁰ and Yemeni officials confirmed that Syrian and Iranian drug manufacturers have shifted large-scale Captagon production to lawless areas of Yemen following the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad.²³¹ This shift, supported by Iranian financial and equipment provision, provides the Houthis with a resilient, autonomous revenue stream, utilizing Yemen's instability to fuel regional organized crime and make the movement structurally less vulnerable to traditional financial sanctions.

The IRG solidified its institutional and diplomatic capacity at the end of the month. Prime Minister Salim Salih Bin Braik inspected the final preparations for the inauguration of the new Saudi-funded Cabinet headquarters in Aden, projecting governmental permanence and sovereignty.²³² Simultaneously, the IRG strengthened regional security ties: the Foreign

²²⁶ Army Recognition. "U.S. Navy Destroyer Fields MH-60R Helicopters Armed with Hellfire Missiles Over Gulf of Aden." November 27, 2025.

²²⁷ Mehr News Agency. "Yemen Declares Support for Lebanon amid Israeli Aggression." November 25, 2025.

²²⁸ Al Jazeera. "Houthi Court Sentences 17 to Death Accused of Spying for Israel, West." *Al Jazeera*, November 23, 2025.

²²⁹ "UAE Pledges \$1 Billion to Support Yemen's Electricity Sector." Yemen Online. November 27, 2025.

²³⁰ The Arab Weekly. "Wada Lauds Drugs Seizure, Trafficking Shifts Syria-Yemen, Iranian Support." *November 27, 2025*.

²³¹ Iran International. "Anti-drugs body sees Iran, Syria shifting illicit trade to Yemen." *November 27, 2025*.

²³² "Prime Minister Inspects New Cabinet Headquarters in Aden Ahead of Inauguration." Saba News Agency. November 29.

Minister conferred with the Japanese Ambassador on Red Sea security and support for the Yemeni Coast Guard,²³³ while Yemen and Djibouti signed an MoU on communications, information technology, and digital transformation.²³⁴ This focus on maritime security and digital connectivity at the critical Bab al-Mandab choke point directly enhances regional security architecture and contributes positively to the stable trade flows upon which Ethiopia's economy depends.

Security forces at Aden Airport arrested three foreign nationals linked to Vega Soft, a company suspected of importing sophisticated communications equipment for Houthi drone navigation and ballistic missile guidance systems. This successful operation highlights the persistent foreign technical networks supporting Houthi military capabilities.²³⁵ Concurrently, the IRG seized 447 kilograms of narcotics in coordinated raids, directly challenging the new drug architecture.²³⁶ These efforts contrast sharply with the continued humanitarian toll: a Houthi landmine explosion killed two civilians in Nehem district,²³⁷ while Houthi-controlled ports recorded a sustained five-month drop in essential imports, causing over \$1.3 billion in losses and severely compounding food insecurity in the North.²³⁸ The Yemeni government urgently called for global action against the Houthis' sabotage in the Red Sea, warning the IMO that Houthis have launched over 228 attacks targeting more than 115 commercial vessels in two years, turning the corridor into an "open military operations zone".²³⁹

The IRG continued its strategic diplomatic engagement, with the Deputy Minister of Planning discussing the Economic Resilience Project with the EU and OECD in Aden, focusing on developing financial sustainability and investment in renewable energy.²⁴⁰ Separately, the Saudi Ambassador and the EU Ambassador met to discuss peace initiatives and the crucial importance of safeguarding Red Sea maritime security.²⁴¹ In the information warfare domain, Yemen's Information Minister Moammar al-Eryani urged Lebanon to shut down Houthi media operations, arguing that channels like Al-Masirah operate with Iranian support to broadcast "hate speech" and provide propaganda cover for organized crimes, posing a direct threat to Arab national security.²⁴² Furthermore, the Vice Minister of Water

²³³ "Foreign Minister Confers with Japanese Ambassador on Cooperation about Red Sea Security." Saba News Agency. November 13, 2025.

²³⁴ Adnan. "Yemen and Djibouti Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Enhance Cooperation in Communications and Digital Transformation." Yemen Monitor, November 13, 2025.

²³⁵ "Yemen: Three Foreign Nationals Arrested at Aden Airport Over Alleged Links to Houthi Training." Yemen Online. November 27, 2025.

²³⁶ "Anti-drugs body sees Iran, Syria shifting illicit trade to Yemen - AFP, Iran international." November 27, 2025

²³⁷ "Houthi Landmine Explosion Kills Two Civilians in Yemen's Nehem District." Saba News Agency. November 26, 2025.

²³⁸ "Yemen's Houthi Ports Record Five-Month Drop in Essential Imports." Yemen Online. November 27, 2025.

²³⁹ Yemen Online. "Yemen Urges Global Action Against Houthi Sabotage in the Red Sea." November 28, 2025.

²⁴⁰ "Deputy Minister of Planning Discusses Economic Resilience Project with EU and OECD." Saba News Agency. November 17, 2025.

²⁴¹ "EU, Saudi Ambassadors Discuss Peace Efforts in Yemen and Red Sea Developments." Yemen Online. November 25, 2025.

²⁴² Asharq Al Awsat. "Yemen Urges Lebanon to Ban Houthi Media, Warns of Threats to Global Shipping." *Asharq Al-Awsat*, November 30, 2025.

and Environment met with the Secretary-General of the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) in Jeddah, emphasizing the importance of intensifying regional efforts to address environmental challenges facing the shared waterways.²⁴³

2.3 Israel: Normalization Drives, Security Operations, and International Contestation

In the first three weeks of November, the diplomatic picture moved decisively when the United States pushed a stabilization concept for Gaza through the United Nations Security Council on November 18.²⁴⁴ The resolution endorsed a ceasefire framework tied to a temporary international stabilization presence and a pathway for political measures inside Gaza. That vote changed the external framing of the conflict by converting a fragile pause into an internationalized project that requires concrete sequencing, verification, and contributions from neutral troop suppliers. The Security Council vote, therefore, created political momentum while also raising the stakes for implementation since the plan's credibility depends on rapid, transparent operational steps and the willingness of states to provide forces and logistical backing. The coverage of the vote and its architecture is reflected in reporting by international outlets and by states' statements.

After the UN decision, the busiest diplomatic theatre was the triad of Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey, which accelerated shuttle diplomacy to shape the modalities of the plan and to align Hamas, Israel, and technical mediators on sequencing.²⁴⁵ Egyptian intelligence hosted senior Hamas delegates in Cairo to discuss the ceasefire's implementation and the contours of a second phase.²⁴⁶ Those meetings repeatedly returned to verification, the sequencing of withdrawals, and the operational mandate of any international presence because the political text leaves too many field-level decisions unsettled. The persistence of detailed bargaining in Cairo underlines a core reality: the UN vote provides a political scaffold but might not substitute for on-the-ground technical confidence building. If mediators fail to operationalize clear verification steps, local actors will interpret ambiguity as an opportunity for unilateral moves that can fracture the pause.

Ground-level security reporting during late November showed that—even as diplomatic momentum accelerated—military and militant activity inside Gaza and the West Bank continued to challenge the ceasefire's credibility. According to incident monitoring from the period, Israeli forces carried out targeted raids, tunnel demolitions, and strikes against

²⁴³ "Vice Minister of Water Discusses with Secretary-General of PERSGA Protect Environment of Red Sea, Gulf of Aden." Saba News Agency. November 27, 2025.

²⁴⁴ Lewis, Simon. "UN Security Council Adopts US Resolution on Trump's Gaza Plan." Reuters, November 18, 2025.

²⁴⁵ Wolf, Rachel. "Middle East Officials Look Toward Second Phase of Israel-Hamas Ceasefire with Two Hostages Left in Gaza." *Fox News*, November 26, 2025.

²⁴⁶ Majed, Mohamed, and Mohammad Sio. "Hamas Delegation, Egypt's Intelligence Chief Discuss Gaza Ceasefire in Cairo Meeting." Anadolu Agency, November 23, 2025.

operatives in Gaza, while West Bank operations included arrests, confiscation of weapons, and violent confrontations that fueled local tension.²⁴⁷ The same monitoring noted emerging intra-Palestinian fragmentation, including attempts by non-Hamas actors in Khan Yunis to organize armed cells, alongside humanitarian stress signals such as disrupted services, market controls, and mounting pressure on Gaza's health system. These indicators revealed a security and governance environment far more volatile than the diplomatic track implied, underscoring that any stabilization mechanism will have to operate amid persistent kinetic threats, fragmented authority, and fragile social conditions.

European capitals reacted rapidly to the Security Council vote and used supportive language to signal willingness to lend legitimacy. Germany publicly called the resolution good news,²⁴⁸ the European Union described the vote as an important step for ending the Gaza conflict,²⁴⁹ and the United Kingdom framed its vote as a critical step toward implementation. Those statements are important as they show readiness among Western partners to back the political project even as they stop short of committing combat troops. It risks creating political cover for the stabilization concept while making clear that operational contributions will become the litmus test of international seriousness and of the plan's technical viability.

At the same time, other Security Council members signaled reservations. Russia and China abstained rather than vetoing, and Moscow publicly warned that the US plan could mask experimental activities on Palestinian territory.²⁵⁰ That reservation is consequential. Abstention by major powers suggests that disputes over mandate detail and operational control might be politically combustible during implementation. Those disputes will matter for rules of engagement, information sharing, and the mission's perceived neutrality. If implementing states diverge on legal and operational interpretations, the stabilization force's usefulness will be diminished, and the pause could rapidly revert to ad hoc kinetic dynamics.

The diplomatic activation around the UN text unfolded against continuing kinetic pressure inside Israel's neighborhoods and in Palestinian areas. Israeli operations in the West Bank increased during the month, with the army launching new operations that Israeli officials described as aimed at dismantling hostile networks.²⁵¹ Those raids complicate ceasefire consolidation as West Bank operations produce political blowback, harden Palestinian public sentiment, and make it more difficult to construct a regional narrative of de-escalation that the stabilization plan requires. European, Arab, and international partners repeatedly warned

²⁴⁷ Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. "Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, November 25–December 2, 2025."

²⁴⁸ Talha Ozturk and Zlatan Kapic. "Germany Welcomes UN Security Council Resolution on Gaza as 'Good News.'" *Anadolu Agency*, November 18, 2025.

²⁴⁹ LBC Group. "EU says UN Gaza plan vote 'important step'." *LBCGroup.tv*, November 18, 2025.

²⁵⁰ Middle East Monitor. "Russia worried that US plan for Gaza may mask 'experiments' on Palestinian territory." November 28, 2025.

²⁵¹ Evrim Ağıcı. "Hamas Fighters Trapped in Rafah Tunnels Amid Ceasefire." *Grand Pinnacle Tribune (via EvrimAgici.org)*, November 28, 2025.

that continued operations risked undermining the public trust needed for sequencing and humanitarian corridors.

Security threats on Israel's southern border added an operational urgency to internal debates. The defense ministry publicly declared a campaign against drone-enabled weapons smuggling across the Egyptian border and signaled tougher rules of engagement to stop such flows.²⁵² The official posture elevated drone interdiction from a tactical nuisance into a declared security priority. That shift increases pressure on Egyptian authorities to tighten controls and on mediators to set de-confliction channels so that interdiction efforts do not themselves become catalysts for cross-border incidents.

At the same time, Ankara and Tehran signaled deeper cooperation in diplomatic messaging and in selective operational coordination.²⁵³ Public statements from both capitals framed Israel as a regional threat and emphasized joint political pressure rather than open military cooperation.

Strategic diplomacy moved on another track with an expansion of the Abraham Accords architecture. Kazakhstan confirmed accession to the Accords, a move that extends the normalization framework into Central Asia.²⁵⁴ The decision is largely symbolic in practice, since Astana already maintained formal ties with Israel. Nevertheless, it matters politically since it diversifies Israel's diplomatic outlets and gives Jerusalem additional partners for economic and security cooperation even as it faces increased political and legal pushback elsewhere. The accession shows that normalization and contestation are happening in parallel and that Israel's external space is fragmented rather than monolithic.

A critical development occurred on November 23 when an Israeli airstrike struck a residential area in Beirut and killed a senior Hezbollah commander widely identified as Haytham Ali Tabatabai.²⁵⁵ The strike marked the most high-profile attack on Lebanon's capital since the earlier ceasefire and immediately raised the risk of escalation on Israel's northern front. The funeral drew thousands, and Hezbollah leaders publicly affirmed the right to retaliate while initially avoiding an immediate full-scale response. That calibrated posture matters strategically since it reduced the probability of instant large-scale war while preserving the group's ability to retaliate at a time and place of its choosing. The killing also altered the deterrence calculus. Israel signaled that it will continue to target Hezbollah's leadership and infrastructure, while Lebanese political actors called for international intervention, and regional mediators moved quickly to prevent a larger conflagration.²⁵⁶ The

²⁵² Truzman, Joe. "Israeli Defense Minister Declares 'War' on Drones Smuggling Weapons from Egypt." *FDD's Long War Journal*, November 7, 2025.

²⁵³ TRT World. "Türkiye, Iran Vow Deeper Cooperation, Slam Israel as Biggest Threat." TRT World, November 30, 2025.

²⁵⁴ Asia Today. "Kazakhstan (already diplomatically linked to Israel) joins the 'Abraham Accords'." *Asia Today*, November 7, 2025.

²⁵⁵ Burke, Jason. "Hezbollah Chief of Staff Killed in Beirut Airstrike, Israeli Military Says." *The Guardian*, November 23, 2025.

²⁵⁶ i24NEWS. "Israel Continues Striking Hezbollah Targets on One-Year Mark of Ceasefire with Lebanon." i24NEWS, November 27, 2025.

event, therefore, both amplified short-term danger and incentivized a managed containment response by regional states who fear a broadening conflict.

Lebanon's internal politics and security environment became an acute concern. Analysts warned that ongoing strikes and the political fallout could derail fragile domestic dynamics and jeopardize scheduled elections.²⁵⁷ Observers argued that Lebanon's political volatility increases the risk that localized hostilities will have national consequences. That risk is amplified by the political salience of any strike on Lebanese soil and by the potential for popular mobilization.

Egypt, Algeria, and other regional states publicly called for 'halting violations against Palestinians in the West Bank and for restraint in the wider region'. Several states issued joint statements asking for respect for truce arrangements and better protection for civilians.²⁵⁸ Those calls reinforced the diplomatic pressure on both Israel and armed groups to avoid actions that would undercut the UN process.

The Tabatabai strike did not happen in a vacuum. In the weeks leading to late November, there were repeated reports of Israeli strikes and raids that tested the durability of prior pauses.²⁵⁹ Some of those operations targeted suspected Hezbollah logistics and command networks that operate across the Lebanon-Syria axis.²⁶⁰ Israel's strategic logic is consistent: to prevent reconstitution of lethal capacity on its borders, even if that creates episodic violations of ceasefire understandings. From a mediator's perspective, this logic produces localized tactical gains while substantially increasing the probability of miscalculation and inadvertent wider exchange. The northern front thus became the single most important contingency to watch for incidental escalation that could compromise the UN plan's political momentum.

Parallel to kinetic developments on the north and south flanks were legal and political moves in third countries that added reputational pressure on Israel and influenced coalition dynamics. Turkey's courts issued arrest warrants on charges of crimes against humanity against senior Israeli officials, including the prime minister.²⁶¹ Brazilian lawyers moved to seek the arrest of a former Israeli prime minister during a São Paulo visit.²⁶² At the same time, Germany rejected a legal suit that aimed to halt its arms exports to Israel.²⁶³ Those

²⁵⁷ Tello, Anan. "How Lebanon's Political Volatility Risks Derailing Elections Amid Renewed Israel-Hezbollah Hostilities." *Arab News*, November 26, 2025.

²⁵⁸ Hussien Elkabany and Rania Abu Shamala. "Egypt, Algeria Call for Halt to Israeli Violations against Palestinians in Occupied West Bank." *Anadolu Agency*, November 26, 2025.

²⁵⁹ Berman, Lazar. "After Weeks of Warnings Over Slow Hezbollah Disarmament, Israel Shows It's Ready to Escalate." *Middle East Forum Online*, November 25, 2025.

²⁶⁰ Al Amine, Rami. "Hezbollah's Weapons Networks Are Facing Fresh Scrutiny." *Alhurra*. November 26, 2025.

²⁶¹ Humayun, Hira; Betül Tuncer; Tamar Michaelis. "Turkey issues 'genocide' arrest warrants against Netanyahu and other Israeli officials." *CNN*, November 7, 2025.

²⁶² *Middle East Monitor*. "Legal move in Brazil to seek former Israeli PM's arrest during São Paulo visit." *Middle East Monitor*, November 27, 2025.

²⁶³ Şimşek, Ayhan. "German Court Rejects Legal Challenge to Halt Arms Exports to Israel." *Anadolu Agency*, November 12, 2025.

actions were not merely symbolic. They have practical consequences for diplomatic relations, for travel, and for the ability of partner capitals to claim neutrality while preparing to support or resist parts of the UN plan. Legal activism abroad has the effect of mobilizing domestic constituencies and constraining governments; it increases the political cost of open military support. For Israel, this means more diplomatic friction to manage while it pursues operational objectives.

The Muslim Brotherhood's public rejection of a US designation as a terrorist organization and its accusation that the UAE and Israel influenced the move added another vector to regional politics.²⁶⁴ The designation controversy reverberated inside Arab states and among diasporic communities and therefore touched on the broader normative environment in which mediation and state-level diplomacy occur. Regional actors who sought to support the UN plan now faced simultaneous pressure from constituents demanding harsher responses to Israel and from other partners who warned against politicizing militant labels. That tension complicates coalition building for a stabilization presence that would need broad legitimacy.

Netanyahu's decision to tour Israeli positions in the occupied southern Syrian zone on November 19 was an explicit signaling move. Syria condemned the visit as a violation of sovereignty, and domestic critics framed the trip as an effort to normalize Israel's posture in formerly contested areas.²⁶⁵ That visit mattered since it tightened Israel's political and operational posture along the northeastern frontier and reduced room for Syrian negotiating flexibility. It also fed Iranian and Syrian narratives of Israeli measures and justified countermeasures aimed at Israel's supply lines and regional proxies. That public visit also drew condemnations from Gulf capitals. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait publicly condemned the tour as a provocative act that risks inflaming an already volatile environment.²⁶⁶ From a strategic perspective, the tour reinforced hardline elements inside Israel who seek a posture of deterrence, while undermining the confidence-building gestures that mediators require for cross-border de-confliction.

Egypt's role increased after the Beirut strike as Cairo returned to Beirut to discuss mechanisms to defuse tensions and to coordinate on weapons control in the south. Egyptian diplomacy performed a classic containment function.²⁶⁷ Its immediate task was to prevent escalation that could destroy the fragile implementation environment for Gaza. Egypt, therefore, had dual incentives: to reassure Lebanon and to keep lines open to Israel and Hamas so that the UN architecture could be salvaged. Qatar and Turkey performed

2025.

²⁶⁴ Middle East Monitor. "Muslim Brotherhood rejects US terrorist designation, accuses UAE and Israel of involvement." November 27, 2025.

²⁶⁵ Yilmaz, Betül. "Syria, Jordan Condemn Israeli Premier's Visit to South as Violation of UN Resolutions." *Anadolu Agency*, November 19, 2025.

²⁶⁶ Middle East Monitor. "Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait Condemn Israeli Prime Minister's Tour in Occupied Syrian Territory." *Middle East Monitor*, November 20, 2025.

²⁶⁷ Jalkh, Jeanine. "Israeli Escalation: Egypt Returns to Beirut with 'Ideas' on How to Avoid Conflagration." *L'Orient Today*, November 26, 2025.

complementary functions by hosting or facilitating talks and by using their influence with Hamas. The combined Egyptian, Qatari, and Turkish activity, therefore, acted as the operational glue of mediation during a high-risk month.

China and Russia's public postures are worth noting as they reveal how the great power competition frames operational ambiguity. China called for a lasting ceasefire and urged restraint, while Russia warned about potential abuses of the stabilization framework.²⁶⁸ Those statements reflect a broader pattern where Western states endorse the US-led stabilization architecture, but major powers reserve procedural abstention that they can use to influence mandate negotiations. The practical consequence is that the mission's rules, data sharing, and legal protections might be negotiated in an environment of strategic mistrust, which will lengthen deliberations and complicate rapid deployments.

On the domestic political front in Israel, some moves have internal security and social consequences. The government highlighted technology and advanced industries as strategic assets²⁶⁹ and continued to push ahead with bilateral infrastructure projects, such as a train project with the UAE.²⁷⁰ This duality captures Israel's posture: assertively securing the state while attempting to preserve long-term economic and technological partnerships that sustain its international support networks. Those dual tracks provide internal political cover, but they might complicate the moral and diplomatic calculus for partners asked to contribute to a stabilization force.

The month closed with a fragile but urgent dilemma. The UN resolution created a window of opportunity that requires immediate technical follow-up. Implementation depends on a credible troop roster, clear verification instruments, and a transparent sequencing plan that reduces incentives for unilateral attacks. At the same time, the Tabatabai killing, ongoing West Bank operations, and high-profile legal actions abroad increased the probability of episodic escalation. Mediators must therefore balance speed against comprehensiveness as a rushed, inadequately resourced mission risks being perceived as biased and a delayed mission risks appearing irrelevant. The most realistic near-term outcome is a low-intensity containment that holds if mediators find a compromise on mandate detail and if Hezbollah refrains from immediate heavy retaliation. The worst case is a cascade triggered by a miscalculation on the Lebanon border that unravels the nascent stabilization track and draws regional militaries and proxies into expanded operations.

Overall, November delivered a sustained mix of diplomatic opening and battlefield escalation. The UN resolution and the international push for a multinational protection

²⁶⁸ Global Times. "Chinese Envoy to UN Calls on All Parties, Israel in Particular, to Fully Honor Ceasefire Agreement." *Global Times*, November 25, 2025.

²⁶⁹ Teitelbaum, Shlomo. "Israel Innovation Chief: AI, Chips and Quantum Are Now National-Security Assets." *CTech (Calcalist)*, November 27, 2025.

²⁷⁰ Middle East Monitor. "Israel-UAE Train Project Moves to Advanced Stage Despite Wartime Challenges." *Middle East Monitor*, November 25, 2025.

mechanism created a window for de-escalation. The intensified operations in Lebanon, in the West Bank, and in southern Syria heightened the danger that local incidents will cascade into a broader regional confrontation. The balance between diplomacy and force will determine whether the month is remembered as the start of a managed pause or as the opening phase of a prolonged period of instability.

2.4 Türkiye: Legal Pressure and Diplomatic Influence

November marked a pivotal month for Turkey, characterized by intensified diplomatic maneuvering in the Middle East, particularly around Gaza, alongside domestic political tensions and economic stabilization efforts. As a NATO member straddling Europe and Asia, Turkey leveraged its strategic position to mediate conflicts, host international summits, and advance peace initiatives, while grappling with internal challenges like media freedom restrictions and Kurdish-related governance issues. Economically, the country demonstrated resilience with declining inflation and budget deficit reductions, bolstered by diversified energy imports and technological advancements in space.

In a bold escalation of its stance on the Gaza conflict, Turkey issued arrest warrants on November 7 for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and 36 officials, accusing them of genocide and crimes against humanity, including deliberate aid blockades and hospital bombings.²⁷¹ This move, building on Turkey's prior involvement in ICJ and ICC cases, interpreted Israel's actions as systematic atrocities amid over 68,000 Palestinian deaths,²⁷² aiming to galvanize global accountability. It exposed Turkey's willingness to confront a former ally, risking economic repercussions like halted trade, while boosting its credibility among Muslim nations. Domestically, it unified public sentiment against perceived injustices, but strained relations with the West, highlighting Turkey's delicate balance between humanitarian advocacy and NATO obligations. This judicial pressure cohesively extended earlier diplomatic critiques, potentially isolating Israel further and positioning Turkey as a moral leader in post-conflict narratives, though enforcement challenges underscore the limits of symbolic actions in international law.

Turkey's mediation efforts peaked with a summit in Istanbul, uniting diplomats from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, Pakistan, and Indonesia to condemn Israel's ceasefire violations, reporting nearly 250 Palestinian deaths since the October 10 truce.²⁷³ Advocating for a UN-mandated international stabilization force, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan highlighted inadequate aid of only 145 trucks daily against 600 agreed, interpreting it as deliberate sabotage²⁷⁴. This event revealed Turkey's shift from rhetoric to coalition-building,

²⁷¹ Anadolu Agency. "Türkiye Issues Arrest Warrants for Netanyahu, Israeli Officials on Charges of Crimes Against Humanity, Genocide." November 7, 2025.

²⁷² "Updates: Israel Accused of Using 'Starvation Warfare' as It Blocks Gaza Aid," Al Jazeera, October 22, 2025.

²⁷³ Fiona Kelliher, "Türkiye Hosts Summit on Gaza, Says Israel Must Stop Ceasefire Violations," Al Jazeera, November 3, 2025.

²⁷⁴ Türkiye Says Countries Will Decide on Gaza Troop Deployment Based on UNSC Resolution," TRT World, November 3,

fostering unity for Palestinian governance and exposing humanitarian gaps that could prolong instability. Connecting to broader regional dynamics, it foreshadowed challenges from Israel's opposition to Turkish involvement, yet amplified Turkey's influence in Muslim-majority forums. The summit's emphasis on sustained pressure for aid and peace coheres with subsequent bilateral talks, illustrating Turkey's multifaceted strategy to counter dominance while promoting stability, potentially easing paths for reconstruction despite geopolitical frictions.

In a direct response to Turkey's push for involvement in a Gaza stabilization force, an Israeli government spokesperson firmly ruled out any Turkish military presence, declaring, "There will be no Turkish boots on the ground."²⁷⁵ This statement, amid discussions of a US-proposed international force to assume security from Israeli troops, interpreted Israel's stance as a categorical veto driven by security concerns and historical frictions with Ankara. It highlighted the obstacles to Turkey's ambitions for a monitoring role, even as US officials like Ambassador Tom Barrack and Vice President JD Vance suggested a "constructive" place for Turkey without imposing it on Israel. This development is cohesively linked to the summit's outcomes, exposing the limits of multilateral proposals absent UN Security Council backing, and potentially compelling Turkey to pivot toward indirect influence through allies like Qatar and Egypt. It underscored the ceasefire's precariousness, reinforcing the need for broader diplomatic pressure to navigate Israeli red lines while advancing post-war governance.

Amid ceasefire fragility, Turkey disclosed that Hamas was prepared to cede Gaza control to a Palestinian committee, following consultations with its political bureau and coordination with Qatar and Egypt.²⁷⁶ This pragmatic concession, amid unconfirmed disarmament commitments, interpreted intense pressure on militants to prioritize transitional structures for enduring peace. This positioned Turkey as a discreet facilitator, cautioning against frameworks risking future conflicts while advocating Palestinian-led security. This revelation connected seamlessly to summit outcomes, underscoring Turkey's advisory role in de-escalation and governance transitions. However, fragmented militant groups complicate implementation, highlighting Turkey's challenge in bridging divides. The development enhanced Turkey's centrality in post-war planning, potentially mitigating truce collapses and influencing UN-backed initiatives, revealing an evolution from vocal critic to indispensable mediator in regional diplomacy.

Bilateral engagements advanced when Turkish and Egyptian foreign ministers convened in Ankara to consolidate the ceasefire and plan Gaza reconstruction, with Fidan commending

2025.

²⁷⁵ Israeli Government Spokesperson Rules Out Turkish Forces in Gaza." *Al Arabiya English*, November 9, 2025.

²⁷⁶ Fidan, Hakan. "Turkey's Fidan Says Hamas Ready to Cede Gaza Control Amid Trump's Ceasefire Push." *Al-Monitor*, November 3, 2025.

Egypt's aid role and pledging Turkish support.²⁷⁷ Interpreting mutual breach accusations as leverage opportunities, the talks inaugurated a joint planning group, emphasizing world power pressure for compliance. Turkey's monitoring force offer, despite Israeli vetoes, signaled active post-war ambitions, exposing alliance-building amid humanitarian shortfalls. This meeting cohesively extended multilateral efforts, fostering long-term cooperation and critiquing violations as unity catalysts. It strengthened Turkey's regional ties, addressing aid denials and phases ahead, while revealing a strategic pivot toward collaborative reconstruction, potentially enhancing its soft power in the Arab world despite historical rivalries.

High-level coordination intensified as Turkey's intelligence chief joined Egypt and Qatar in Cairo for second-phase ceasefire discussions, committing to U.S.-enhanced efforts against Israeli violations.²⁷⁸ Interpreting strikes and barriers as intentional undermining, the trio focused on demilitarization via the Civil Military Coordination Center. This clearly elevated Turkey to a core mediator, pushing stability without direct troops amid vetoes. Building on prior mediations, it reflected evolving influence, emphasizing obstacle removal and truce fragility as collaboration imperatives. Cohesively tied to diplomatic pushes, the talks highlighted Turkey's indirect leverage through allies, potentially shaping UN plans and revealing a capacity to navigate exclusions while advancing peace, with implications for broader Middle East dynamics.

In sum, Turkey's diplomacy shows a clear shift from vocal criticism to active, coalition-driven mediation: through legal actions, regional summits, and close coordination with Qatar and Egypt, Ankara has boosted its relevance in shaping Gaza's post-conflict arrangements, but Israeli resistance to Turkish military roles and potential strains with Western and NATO partners limit its reach. To make this ascendancy durable, Turkey must turn symbolism into concrete results such as reliable aid corridors, coordinated reconstruction projects, and institutionalized planning mechanisms, while managing alliance frictions through discreet diplomacy; success will depend on delivery rather than rhetoric.

²⁷⁷ "Turkish, Egyptian Foreign Ministers to Discuss Gaza Ceasefire, Post-War Efforts." *The Times of Israel*, Nov. 11, 2025.

²⁷⁸ Celiker, Gokhan, and Seda Sevensan. "Türkiye's Intelligence Chief Meets Qatari, Egyptian Officials in Cairo, Discusses Gaza." *Anadolu Agency*, November 25, 2025.

2.5 Gulf States: Diplomatic, Security and Geopolitical Engagement in the Horn of Africa

2.5.1 UAE: Strategic Diplomatic and Economic Influence

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) enhanced its comprehensive role in the Horn of Africa (HoA) by advancing economic investments, security cooperation, and diplomatic mediation aimed at safeguarding Red Sea trade routes and combating extremism. As a member of the regional Quad alongside the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, the UAE engaged to promote ceasefires in Sudan's civil conflict, despite persistent allegations of proxy involvement, notably through ties with Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF). With over \$110 billion invested in the HoA since 2019, Abu Dhabi's multifaceted engagement also extended into global forums, aligning with U.S. strategic priorities under President Donald Trump.

The UAE's peace and security initiatives focused heavily on Sudan. As a Quad lead, the UAE co-facilitated a proposed three-month humanitarian truce in Sudan.²⁷⁹ High-level diplomacy included Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed's meeting with U.S. Secretary Marco Rubio in Abu Dhabi,²⁸⁰ pressing for civilian protections in conflict zones such as El Fasher. While the RSF accepted this deal, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) rejected it, accusing the UAE of neutrality.

In media appearances, UAE advisor Anwar Gargash denied allegations that the UAE supplied arms to the RSF, framing humanitarian flights to eastern Libya as aid, not military resupplies.²⁸¹ Nonetheless, Abu Dhabi justified its involvement as essential to regional stability, linking it to President Trump's designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization to counter Islamist factions.

A key diplomatic moment was the meeting in Dubai between Ethiopian Ambassador Jemal Beker and DP World CEO Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, reaffirming a combined economic support and maritime agreements designed to stabilize trade corridors.²⁸² Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed also met with His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, who led the UAE delegation on behalf of President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The bilateral discussions focused on strengthening strategic partnerships between Ethiopia and the UAE, exploring opportunities for enhanced cooperation in key sectors such as trade, investment, infrastructure, and renewable energy.

²⁷⁹ Aljazeera, RSF announces unilateral three-month 'humanitarian truce' in Sudan, November 24, 2025

²⁸⁰ U.S. Department of States, Secretary Rubio's Call with UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, November 21, 2025

²⁸¹ Voice of Emirates, Gargash: The UAE did not provide any support to the warring parties in Sudan, November 26, 2025.

²⁸² EBC, Ethiopia, DP World Vow to Deepen Strategic Partnership to Cement Africa's Logistics Hub Status, November 25, 2025

The UAE's \$50 billion portfolio in renewables and port infrastructure in the HoA shows its geoeconomic ambitions but provoked accusations of proxy wars and contested resource exploitation. However, The Quad's call for halting external arms flows contrasted with allegations linking the UAE to political narratives on platforms condemning the UAE for allegedly exporting conflict dynamics through RSF support in Sudan,²⁸³ drone, and mercenary supplies.²⁸⁴

In the broader diplomatic arena beyond the Horn, the UAE aligned closely with U.S. and AU efforts. At the Ninth AU-UN Annual Conference in New York, the UAE backed regional peace roadmaps,²⁸⁵ urging African Union action on arms control while denying alleged proxy allegations. High-level discussions with U.S. officials in Abu Dhabi reinforced Quad coordination, with military exercises integrating UAE-developed AI for enhanced regional monitoring. The UAE also co-chaired EU talks on Libya and Horn of Africa security during the GCC Summit in Bahrain, and progressed bilateral diplomatic initiatives with Norway on border management.

UAE's November focused on balancing mediation with proxy allegations. Though Quad diplomacy fosters dialogue on Sudan's conflict and broader regional stability, entrenched accusations, especially from Sudanese military actors, challenge the UAE's neutrality and credibility. Its significant investments in port and renewable infrastructure secure vital trade routes but intensify strategic rivalries, notably with Egypt and Qatar. Underlying these dynamics is the UAE's increasingly sophisticated "tech diplomacy," leveraging AI and security innovations to buttress its regional role, while proxy involvements and accusations of fueling instability present ongoing diplomatic hurdles in a volatile Horn of Africa landscape.

2.5.2 Qatar: Constructive Diplomatic and Strategic Meditation

Qatar's economic partnerships totaling over \$103 billion have been pledged for Africa since 2024, and by 2025, it is a \$218 billion investment that shows an increase through the years. To promote stability amid Sudan's civil war, al-Shabaab threats in Somalia, and Red Sea volatility. This approach, blending soft power, positioned Doha as a diplomatic "bridge" while deepening alignments with the U.S. under President Trump.

Qatar's peace and security initiatives centered on Sudan and Somalia, utilizing Doha as a mediation hub for truces and counter-terrorism aligned with AU-UN frameworks. Minister of State Dr. Mohammed Al-Khulaifi hosted U.S. talks urging ceasefires between Sudan's SAF and RSF, emphasizing civilian safeguards in famine-threatened El Fasher,²⁸⁶ complemented

²⁸³ The Washington post, UAE faces growing outrage over support for paramilitary in Sudan,

²⁸⁴ Mziar Motamedi, Sudan army chief rejects the Quad's truce proposal, citing UAE role, Al Jazeera, November 15, 2025.

²⁸⁵ UN News, Secretary-General's Joint Press Conference following 9th Annual AU-UN Conference, November 12, 2025

²⁸⁶ Al Monitor, Sudan's RSF agrees to U.S. proposal for humanitarian ceasefire, November 6, 2025

by Qatar's airbridge delivering 673 tonnes of aid since 2023. Doha reaffirmed Sudan's unity, denying RSF affiliations while channeling \$86 million in relief.

At the G20 Summit in South Africa and the Ninth AU-UN Conference, Qatar advanced HoA roadmaps tied to Gaza reconstruction, pledging renewable MoUs with Horn Africa countries. U.S. Senior Advisor Massad Boulos commended efforts during dialogues,²⁸⁷ with "Ferocious Falcon 6" exercises framing Qatari security as a U.S. priority. Qatar's IMO Council election potentially bolstered Red Sea maritime roles. Qatar's November engagements show mediation as soft power, yielding DRC-M23 advances and Somalia pacts across 10 active talks,²⁸⁸ yet proxy allegations and UAE rivalries exist in this month.

2.5.3 Saudi Arabia: Defense pacts, Mediation, Diversified Diplomacy, and Economic leadership

The period of November saw Saudi Arabia undertake a series of consequential initiatives that collectively altered its external partnerships and internal policy course. Several high-profile developments occurred, including the conclusion of a major defense agreement with the United States, continued diplomatic engagement with multiple global and regional actors, and the announcement of large-scale investment commitments tied to Vision 2030.

Key initiatives during this period included the advancement of a principal bilateral defense agreement, the expansion of dialogues and economic partnerships with additional global and regional actors, and proactive diplomatic participation in Middle Eastern conflict management and reconstruction processes. This external posture was complemented by progress on the domestic economic front, including major investment agreements, technological alliances, and internal policy reforms. The combined effect of these international and domestic initiatives points to a coherent national strategy leveraging a fortified core alliance for strategic depth while actively engaging with multiple other centers of power to diversify economic and political risk.

Defense and Deterrence Review

Saudi Arabia's external security posture underwent a strategic adjustment to national defense policy. This external reorientation, designed to counter persistent non-state threats, coincided with a sustained focus on internal security controls.

The month's most consequential development involved finalizing a foundational defense pact²⁸⁹, a process completed during the Crown Prince's diplomatic visit to the United States. The accord confers upon Saudi Arabia the formal status of a Major Non-NATO Ally and sanctions the transfer of advanced military systems, including F-35 fifth-generation fighter

²⁸⁷ African Union, G20 South Africa Summit: Leaders' Declaration, November 22, 2025

²⁸⁸ The Peninsula, Widespread praise for Qatar's mediation in brokering DRC-M23 framework peace deal, November 17, 2025

²⁸⁹ Al Arabiya, "US Names Saudi Arabia a Major Non-NATO Ally as Trump, MBS Sign Strategic Defense Agreement." *Al Arabiya English*, November 19, 2025.

aircraft, three hundred advanced main battle tanks, and sensitive semiconductor technologies.²⁹⁰ Analytically, this package constitutes a qualitative leap in capabilities, specifically engineered to counter the missile and drone threat posed by Iranian-aligned Houthi forces in Yemen and to prop up conventional deterrence vis-à-vis regional adversaries.²⁹¹ A critical delineation within the pact was the explicit exclusion of domestic uranium enrichment rights, a concession to enduring U.S. non-proliferation imperatives that Riyadh accepted to secure the broader strategic guarantee. This agreement effectively resets the security basis of the bilateral relationship, though legacy complexities persist as evidenced by a U.S. appellate court's reinstatement of a lawsuit about the 2019 Pensacola attack²⁹².

Demonstrating a parallel strategy of diversification, Saudi Arabia signed a substantive defense pact with Pakistan,²⁹³ a nuclear-armed state. This move signals Riyadh's intent to cultivate strategic depth beyond its traditional Western alliances, thereby complicating adversarial threat calculations and reinforcing a pattern of pragmatic alignment with capable Muslim-majority nations.

The persistent threat from regional proxies was reaffirmed early in the month when a senior Houthi representative publicly issued renewed threats of military action and lodged accusations of non-compliance with existing truce terms.²⁹⁴ On November 1, al-Asad publicly accused Saudi Arabia of breaching its commitments under the Yemen ceasefire originally brokered in 2022 and informally extended. He specifically cited alleged Saudi incursions into Houthi-held territories and support for anti-Houthi factions as violations that undermined de-escalation efforts. In response, he warned of sustained and intensified missile and drone attacks targeting Saudi border regions, including Jizan and Najran provinces, as well as critical infrastructure like oil facilities and ports. This serves as a sobering reminder that while enhanced defensive capabilities are paramount, the underlying regional contest with Iran and its network of affiliates remains an enduring feature of the security landscape.

Political & Diplomatic Engagements

Saudi diplomacy in November exhibited dexterity, securing a partnership while simultaneously advancing an independent, principled, and expansive regional agenda. The Crown Prince's Washington visit was a diplomatic tour de force, blending substantive achievement with high symbolism. The ceremonial reception, including a state dinner and military flyover, was arranged to signal a formal bilateral rehabilitation. This was

²⁹⁰ Roque, Ashley. "US to Sell F-35s, Tanks to Saudi Arabia under New Defense Pact." *Breaking Defense*, November 18, 2025.

²⁹¹ CNBC. "From \$1 Trillion Spending to F-35s, U.S.-Saudi Pledges Aren't Done Deals Yet." *CNBC*, November 19, 2025.

²⁹² Harper, Jake. "US-Saudi Defense Pact Sparks Discussion After F-35 Sale Announcement." *Baltimore Chronicle*, November 22, 2025

²⁹³ Shah, Saeed, Maha El Dahan, Sudipto Ganguly, Yousef Saba, and Ariba Shahid. "Saudi Arabia, Nuclear-Armed Pakistan Sign Mutual Defence Pact." *Reuters*, Accessed november

²⁹⁴ The Soufan Center. "Saudi Arabia Faces Challenges and Opportunities." *The Soufan Center IntelBrief*, November 6, 2025.

substantiated by President Trump's closure of the Khashoggi file and a reciprocal goodwill gesture from Riyadh in releasing American detainee²⁹⁵ Saad Almadi.²⁹⁶

A central feature of the political strategy was the successful decoupling of the U.S. defense pact from the normalization track with Israel. Saudi officials consistently reiterated, both before and during the visit, that the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state remains an indispensable prerequisite for normalization²⁹⁷. This principled stance allows Saudi Arabia to secure core security interests while upholding a fundamental tenet of its foreign policy, thereby preserving its credibility and leadership role within the Arab and Islamic worlds. Beyond the U.S. relationship, Saudi diplomacy pursued an assertive and multiple course. The Kingdom emerged as a focal, if discreet supporter of the U.S.-hosted Syrian President Ahmad alSharaa, pledging nearly one million barrels of crude oil to carry stabilization efforts.²⁹⁸

This engagement reflects an interest in fostering stability and countering extremist factions within a cleave state. The visit of Chinese Vice President Han Zheng, featuring discussions on deepening Belt and Road Initiative investments and joint naval exercises, reaffirmed Riyadh's commitment to a multi-polar foreign policy²⁹⁹. This continued sturdy engagement with Beijing illustrates strategic autonomy, balancing deepened security ties with Washington against expansive economic and strategic cooperation with the East.

Saudi Arabia also intensified its role as a regional mediator and convening power. It hosted discreet follow-up talks on Gaza ceasefire implementation under UN Security Council Resolution 2803,³⁰⁰ and Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan attended a Cairo summit, proposing policies for Palestinian Authority reforms. Furthermore, Riyadh convened an international coalition of over 90 countries to advocate for Palestinian state recognition and hosted a multilateral meeting on Syrian sanctions relief, which notably showed the first foreign minister-level exchange with Syria's new government.³⁰¹ An instructive diplomatic episode involved Iran's Supreme Leader publicly denying reports of using Saudi channels to communicate with Washington, while a denial, this incident implicitly acknowledges Riyadh's perceived centrality as a potential mediator in any future U.S.-Iran dialogue, a role

²⁹⁵The New Arab Staff and Agencies. "Trump 'Played Role' in Release of Saudi Dissident Saad Almadi during MbS Visit." *The New Arab*, November 20, 2025.

²⁹⁶The Washington Post. "Since Khashoggi's Killing, Here's How U.S.-Saudi Relations Have Changed." *The Washington Post*, November 19, 2025.

²⁹⁷Atlantic Council. "Digging into the Details of the US-Saudi Deals." *Atlantic Council Fast Thinking*, November 18, 2025

²⁹⁸The National. "First Crude Oil Shipment under Saudi Grant Reaches Syria." *The National*, November 18, 2025.

²⁹⁹The National. "Chinese Vice President Meets Saudi Crown Prince as Beijing Aims to Develop Gulf Ties." *The National*, Accessed November , 2025.

³⁰⁰Weller, Marc. "What Is Security Council Resolution 2803, and What Does It Mean for the Trump Gaza Plan?" *Chatham House*, November 21, 2025.

³⁰¹Arab News. "Saudi Arabia Calls for Global Recognition of Palestine and End to Israeli Aggression in Gaza." *Arab News*, Accessed November , 2025.

further hinted at by private Iranian requests for Riyadh to lobby Washington on reviving stalled nuclear negotiations.³⁰²

Section Three: International Organizations and Global Powers Engagement

International organizations and global powers engaged actively with African geopolitical challenges in November 2025, prioritizing dialogue, mediation, and stability initiatives amid ongoing conflicts and access disputes. Key developments centered on the African Union (AU)-United Nations (UN) partnership, China's Horn of Africa diplomacy, Russia's neutral stance on Ethiopia's sea access, and U.S. strategic endorsements, all framed within frameworks of international law and cooperation.

AU-UN Partnership: Reinforcing Peace and Development Frameworks

The foundation for cooperative action on Africa's urgent issues was established by the Ninth AU-UN³⁰³ annual conference, which took place in New York between November 12-13. This event, which was co-chaired by AU Commission chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssef and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, called attention to the world's disdain for international law and promoted preventative diplomacy. Terrorism in the Sahel, JNIM disruptions in Mali, instability in Madagascar, enforcement of Great Lakes peace agreements (particularly the June 2025 DRC-Rwanda accord), tensions in the Horn of Africa, AUSSOM funding gaps in Somalia, South Sudan's impasse, Sudan's atrocities with outside interference, Abyei reconciliation, and Libya's election delays are among the regional priorities.

The commitments included funding AU operations through UNSC Resolutions 2719, supporting digital governance, empowering women and youth, advancing climate resilience, and aligning with Agenda 2063 for sustainable development. Results from Namibia's Ninth Africa Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction were also anticipated by the conference. In addition to strengthening the AU-UN alliance, this meeting set the stage for more extensive international engagement in the stability of Africa. Following these multilateral collaborations, major world powers expanded their diplomatic reach in an effort to influence regional dynamics through pointed initiatives.

China's Diplomatic Outreach: Emphasizing Stability and Legal Ties

China's initiatives³⁰⁴ reflected its dedication to advancing economic and peaceful relations. Dr. Hodan Osman Abdi, the ambassador of Somalia, opened the 2025 forum on China-Africa Legal Communication in Jinhua on November 4. He stressed youth training under the Global

³⁰² Hafezi, Parisa. "Edgy Iran Seeks Saudi Leverage to Revive Stalled Nuclear Talks with US." *Reuters*, November 20, 2025.

³⁰³ United Nations, "Joint Communiqué of the Ninth African Union–United Nations Annual Conference," Notes to Correspondents, November 13, 2025.

³⁰⁴ Xinhua, "China Ready to Explore Industrial Cooperation Potential with Zambia, Says Chinese Premier," Gov.cn, November 21, 2025.

Development Initiative, FOCAC alignment, and rule-of-law coordination. This session aligned with China's 15th Five-Year Plan and was integrated with larger FOCAC objectives.

Reaffirming the Horn Peace and Development Initiative's focus on security, development, and governance, special envoy Hu Changchun convened Horn of Africa ambassadors in Beijing on November 20. Premier Li Qiang's November 20 visit to Zambia also increased trade in mining and new energy by offering zero-tariff treatment. China's approach to promoting shared prosperity and offsetting other powers is reflected in these actions. Other major regional actors like the US and Russia took nuanced positions on important regional issues as well. Particularly, Ethiopia's sea access ambitions complement China's approach.

Russia and US Positions: Navigating Ethiopia's Sea Access and Counter-Terrorism

On November 1, Russia's Ambassador Evgeny Terekhin³⁰⁵ stressed addressing Ethiopia's Red Sea access through direct dialogue and international law, noting landlocked states' challenges. Their non-aligned posture matches with developing solutions concerned with Ethiopia's peaceful pursuits. Ethiopia's mediation requests to Russia, China, the US, the EU, and the AU highlight the international dimension of this quest. These diplomatic initiatives overlap with current talks in Sudan's protracted conflict, where joint efforts are met with resistance.

Broader Multilateral Engagements: EU-AU Summit and G20 Milestone

On November 24-25, the Seventh EU-AU³⁰⁶ summit was held in Luanda to commemorate 25 years of collaboration, promoting trade, vital mineral chains, and immigration regulations. In a context of great power competition among China, the US, and Russia, figures like EU President Antonio Costa drew attention to Africa's human capital. Through joint international engagement, a unified declaration promoted peace.

Simultaneously, solidarity, equality, and sustainability were the key themes at the milestone G20 summit³⁰⁷ in Johannesburg on November 22-23, the first in Africa. It amplified the AU's voice following its 2023 admission, tackling debt restructuring, climate measures, and infrastructure funding. Priorities of the Global South were reinforced by Chinese Premier Li Qiang and others.

Concerning bilateral talks, during her 8–13 November 2025 state visits to Angola³⁰⁸ and Botswana³⁰⁹, Indian president Droupadi Murmu oversaw MoUs on fisheries, marine

³⁰⁵ Ethiopian News Agency. "Ethiopia's Quest for Sea Access Need to Be Resolved Through Mutual Agreements: Russia's Ambassador." November 1, 2025.

³⁰⁶ Council of the European Union. "European Union–African Union Summit, 24–25 November 2025." Last reviewed November 26, 2025.

³⁰⁷ G20 South Africa 2025. "G20 South Africa Summit: Leaders' Declaration, 22 and 23 November 2025." November 22, 2025, PDF.

³⁰⁸ "President Murmu Angola Visit Updates, November 9, 2025," *The Hindu*, November 9, 2025,

³⁰⁹ "President Droupadi Murmu's Botswana Visit Strengthens a New Era of India–Africa Cooperation," *Diplomat Today*,

resources, wildlife conservation, biofuels, civil aviation, and consular cooperation, and welcomed Angola's decision to join Indian led initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance, the Global Biofuels Alliance and the International Big Cat Alliance. Africa's push for much larger climate funding was highlighted at COP30 in Belém³¹⁰ (10–21 November), which built on the COP29 pledge for at least 300 billion dollars a year in climate finance for developing countries by 2035 and a tripling of adaptation funding within that total.

On the regional side, IGAD had the third ministerial³¹¹ stock take Support meeting to evaluate the Nairobi Declaration's progress, evaluate the integration of refugees into national systems, and develop shared stances in advance of the 2025 Global Refugee Forum. Gebeyehu states in his opening remarks that displacement in the IGAD region is now a long-term reality, emphasizes the Nairobi Declaration as an African-led framework, and urges sustained political commitment, improved regional coordination, and steady long-term funding to manage displacement and advance stability.

Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki³¹² met with UN Special Envoy Guang Cong in Asmara on November 12, 2025, to talk about regional matters, particularly the Sudanese conflict. Afwerki criticized the UN and regional organizations for being ineffectual and skewed by outside agendas, citing Eritrea's historical role and a 2022 concept paper on citizenship-based governance. Guang Cong promised to collaborate with Asmara to advance peace and stability in the Horn of Africa and applauded Eritrea's positive engagement.

Overall, significant international engagement in African issues was apparent in November 2025, from major summits like EU-AU and G20 to AU-UN partnerships, encouraging discussion in the midst of conflicts across Sudan and the Horn. While progress in economic ties and peacebuilding frameworks gives grounds for optimism, persisting problems such as financing gaps, external interference, and humanitarian crises require sustained commitment. Africa's expanding role is demonstrated by the active role of global actors, but durable peace demands an inclusive approach, African-driven responses to ensure security and inclusive growth.

November 13, 2025,

³¹⁰ Vera Songwe, "COP30 in Belem Must Secure Africa's Future and That of Humanity," *Africa Renewal*, November 3, 2025,

³¹¹ Mohamed Djama, "Opening Statement from H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu for the 3rd Ministerial Stock-take Meeting of the IGAD Support Platform," *IGAD*, November 27, 2025, accessed November 30, 2025.

³¹² "President Isaias Afwerki Met and Held Talks with UN Special Envoy to Horn of Africa," *Shabait*, November 12, 2025,



HORN **REVIEW**

IDEAS CONNECTIONS SYNERGY

Ideas | Connections | Synergy