



# Weekly Geopolitical Report

Policy, Security, and Strategic Affairs in the  
Horn of Africa and Beyond

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**For analytical and informational purposes only**

# Horn Review: Weekly Report

Apr 06 – Apr 12, 2026

## 1. Ethiopia

Ethiopia experienced a highly productive and strategically significant period under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's leadership, marked by effective management of Tigray's transitional governance, strengthened African Union engagement, and deepened bilateral ties with Burundi, alongside strong global advocacy for Africa's renewable energy transition.

On April 7, high-level engagements reinforced Ethiopia's dual focus on internal stability and multilateral influence, beginning with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's comprehensive review of the Tigray Interim Administration (TIA) performance with Lieutenant General Tadesse Worede, followed by Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos' constructive discussions with AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Bankole Adeoye. These meetings aligned seamlessly with Ethiopia's assumption of the AU Peace and Security Council Chairship for April 2026. Building directly on this momentum, the federal government took a decisive step on April 8 by extending Lt. Gen. Tadesse Worede's mandate as Tigray Chief Administrator by one full year, a move firmly grounded in constitutional provisions. This landmark decision prevented a potential governance vacuum, significantly reduced the immediate risk of renewed conflict in Tigray, and provided critical breathing space for normalization and post-conflict stabilization. While not resolving all underlying tensions, the extension emerged as a cornerstone achievement of the week, demonstrating effective crisis management and reinforcing Ethiopia's steady preparation for the June 2026 national elections amid a complex regional environment.

Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos received the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Bankole Adeoye, in Addis Ababa. The two sides exchanged views on regional and continental peace and security challenges and reaffirmed their strong cooperation. This meeting aligned perfectly with Ethiopia's assumption of the Chairship of the AU Peace and Security Council for April 2026, further positioning the country to contribute meaningfully to multilateral solutions for stability across Africa.

On April 9, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed held high-level talks with the Burundian leader, overseeing the signing of wide-ranging MOUs across defense, health, education, water and energy, agriculture, trade, digital identity, and tourism, marking a shift from longstanding diplomatic ties to action-oriented partnerships rooted in "brotherhood and

mutual respect.” The visit, which concluded with Abiy personally seeing off Ndayishimiye, reflects a deliberate strategy of deepening regional integration, reinforcing Ethiopia’s role as a proactive anchor state, and strengthening its influence within continental leadership frameworks while advancing shared development and African priorities.

On April 8, the Second Ethiopia–Burundi Joint Ministerial Commission concluded its two-day session in Addis Ababa. Led by Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos and Burundi’s Édouard Bizimana, the meetings renewed commitments to strengthen cooperation across key sectors, including defense, trade, transport, agriculture, energy, education, digitization, health, and tourism. Both sides stressed the importance of moving beyond potential to tangible benefits through concrete implementation frameworks and clear timelines, contributing to regional prosperity.

On the same day, April 10, Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos represented Ethiopia at the 2026 International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum. He strongly advocated for Africa’s opportunity to achieve low-carbon industrial growth by harnessing abundant renewable energy resources and adding value to critical minerals. He called for scaled-up concessional finance to address barriers such as energy access and infrastructure gaps, particularly for least developed countries. The Foreign Minister highlighted Ethiopia’s own achievements, delivering around 95 percent clean energy through major investments in renewables and advancing green industrialization, including eco-friendly industrial parks. Bilateral meetings on the sidelines with Austria’s Foreign Minister Beate Meinel-Reisinger and South Sudan’s Foreign Minister Monday Semaya Kumba further explored opportunities in trade, investment, tourism, and renewables. This engagement complemented the week’s diplomatic gains by projecting Ethiopia’s forward-looking development vision globally.

These concrete achievements unfolded against the backdrop of Ethiopia’s ongoing National Dialogue Commission processes. Expert analyses, including the Clingendael Institute’s policy brief, underscore the importance of creating genuine political space, implementing trust-building measures, and prioritizing immediate conflict resolution in regions such as Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia to support credible 2026 elections. The Tigray mandate extension and related diplomatic momentum align with calls for pragmatic stabilization while highlighting the need for sustained inclusivity. Regional assessments further contextualize the period: the extension helped avert short-term war risks in Tigray amid a complex standoff, even as Ethiopia advances strategic energy initiatives like new Nile dams. Overall, the week reflects a balanced and effective strategy, stabilizing internally, leading diplomatically through the AU and bilateral partnerships, and championing sustainable development.

## 2. Sudan

The conflict in Sudan continued to intensify over the past week, marked by escalating violence, deepening humanitarian distress, and growing international engagement, even as divisions over external mediation efforts became more pronounced.

Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces persisted across multiple fronts, with continued reliance on drone strikes and heavy weaponry. Reports of attacks on civilian infrastructure remained prominent, including a drone strike on a hospital that resulted in fatalities and renewed condemnation from humanitarian actors. Health facilities continued to come under pressure, with international organizations warning that attacks on healthcare are severely undermining already fragile service delivery systems.

Civilian areas were also affected by explosive remnants of war. Authorities in Khartoum temporarily closed parts of the capital following a shell explosion linked to buried ordnance, underscoring the growing contamination risk highlighted by the United Nations. The proliferation of unexploded devices is increasingly posing a daily threat to civilians and complicating humanitarian access.

In parallel, reports indicated the continued internationalization of the conflict. Military sources suggested the presence of over 850 foreign fighters supporting the RSF, including specialized personnel involved in operating advanced systems such as drones and artillery. These developments reinforce concerns that Sudan is evolving into a regional conflict hub with transnational security implications.

At the institutional level, the Sudanese military leadership underwent further restructuring. Army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan appointed new senior officials, including a chief of staff, while retiring and reshuffling dozens of officers. These changes appear aimed at centralizing command and streamlining decision-making processes as the conflict enters a prolonged phase.

The humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate sharply. Multiple reports described conditions as catastrophic, with millions facing acute food insecurity. Surveys indicated that a significant proportion of households are now surviving on reduced meals or skipping food entirely, reflecting a near-total collapse of livelihoods across both Sudan and neighbouring host countries.

Displacement remains a defining feature of the crisis. Refugee flows continue across borders, while host communities are reaching saturation point. Reports from humanitarian agencies highlighted that coping mechanisms are exhausted, with increasing reliance on negative survival strategies such as child labour and early marriage.

Healthcare systems are under severe strain, with hundreds of documented attacks on medical facilities since the conflict began. Aid delivery is also being constrained by funding shortfalls, logistical challenges, and insecurity. Volunteer networks attempting to fill gaps in food distribution are struggling amid reduced international assistance, particularly following cuts in external aid.

The protection environment for civilians, particularly women, has worsened. Sexual violence continues to be reported as a method associated with the conflict, contributing to long-term social and psychological impacts. Access to basic services such as sanitation remains limited in displacement settings, increasing exposure to further risks.

Sudan's economic situation showed further signs of strain during the reporting period. Fuel price increases triggered a sharp rise in the cost of living, affecting transportation, food, and essential goods. Market disruptions were reported in several regions, with some businesses suspending operations due to price instability and supply chain uncertainties.

At the macro level, structural weaknesses linked to the war economy persist. The Central Bank announced a second phase of currency exchange reforms aimed at stabilizing the financial system and enhancing confidence in the national currency. However, implementation challenges remain, particularly in conflict-affected areas.

The gold sector, a critical pillar of Sudan's economy, continues to face governance challenges. Industry representatives raised concerns over discrepancies between production and official export figures, pointing to smuggling and regulatory weaknesses. Calls for government intervention reflect broader concerns about lost revenues and their implications for fiscal stability, particularly given the sector's role in financing essential imports such as fuel.

Efforts to diversify the economy were also noted, including plans to revive the leather industry by shifting toward value-added production and export-oriented manufacturing. While these initiatives signal long-term economic intent, their impact remains constrained by the ongoing conflict.

Diplomatic dynamics surrounding Sudan became increasingly complex. The planned Berlin conference on Sudan emerged as a central point of contention. Sudanese authorities formally rejected the initiative, citing their exclusion and framing the process as a violation of national sovereignty. Several domestic political groups also expressed opposition, warning that the conference risks legitimizing parallel governance structures.

Despite this, international actors continue to push forward with the initiative. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development emphasized that the Sudan crisis has become internationalized, requiring coordinated global engagement. The conference is expected to focus on mobilizing humanitarian aid while exploring pathways toward de-escalation.

At the same time, there are indications of evolving international positioning. Discussions around humanitarian access, potential monitoring mechanisms, and the need to align fragmented peace initiatives reflect a growing recognition that current approaches have yielded limited results.

Regional military cooperation also featured during the week. Sudanese and Libyan officials held talks aimed at enhancing intelligence sharing and border security coordination, highlighting concerns over cross-border instability and arms flows.

Meanwhile, the reopening of international diplomatic and operational presence in Khartoum continued. The United Nations resumed activities from the capital, and an African Union delegation visited to assess conditions for reopening its office. These developments suggest cautious efforts to re-establish institutional engagement despite ongoing conflict.

The human cost of the conflict continues to extend beyond Sudan's borders. Reports of Sudanese migrants attempting dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean underscore the desperation driving displacement. Cases of missing families highlight the risks associated with irregular migration routes, particularly during peak danger periods.

Education systems are also under strain. National examinations proceeded in areas under government control and in external centres, but logistical challenges, displacement, and access constraints prevented large numbers of students from participating. This reflects the broader disruption of social services and long-term human capital development.

Overall, the trajectory of the conflict indicates continued fragmentation and entrenchment. While international attention is gradually increasing, divisions over external involvement and the absence of a unified internal political process continue to limit prospects for resolution.

The convergence of intensified violence, economic collapse, and humanitarian deterioration suggests that Sudan is entering a more complex phase of protracted conflict, with implications not only for domestic stability but also for regional security and international engagement.

### **3. Egypt**

Egypt's diplomatic engagements this week underscored President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's calculated push to position Cairo as a pivotal stabilizer in the Middle East, particularly amid escalating Israel-related tensions. Following the announcement of a two-week US-Iran ceasefire, Egypt's Foreign Ministry swiftly welcomed the pause as a "critical opportunity" for negotiations, while Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty engaged US envoy Steve Witkoff to urge diplomacy and respect for Gulf and Jordanian sovereignty—interests Egypt views as inseparable from its own security.

Yet Cairo simultaneously condemned Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque as a violation of international law and the site's historical status quo, and issued sharp rebukes against Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon that killed over 250 civilians and targeted infrastructure just after the ceasefire. In parallel, Washington and Cairo jointly pressed Israel against striking the Masnaa border crossing between Lebanon and Syria.

These moves, far from mere rhetoric, reflect el-Sisi's core strategic calculus: preventing wider regional chaos that could spill into Sinai insurgency, disrupt Gulf financial lifelines vital for Egypt's debt-laden economy, or jeopardize the steady US military aid that underpins regime stability. By condemning Israel publicly while quietly coordinating with Washington, el-Sisi balances domestic and Arab-street pressures without alienating key Western backers, all while safeguarding Suez Canal revenues threatened by any Hormuz or Red Sea escalation.

This security-focused diplomacy seamlessly connects to Egypt's economic maneuvers aimed at maximizing revenue from its most critical asset, the Suez Canal. On April 7, the Suez Canal Authority abruptly suspended a 15 percent transit-fee rebate for large containerships three months earlier than planned after originally introducing the discount in 2025 to lure vessels back amid Red Sea disruptions linked to the Gaza conflict and Houthi attacks.

The decision, unexplained in official statements but timed with hopes of post-ceasefire shipping recovery, signals Cairo's confidence that traffic volumes will rebound without incentives, thereby boosting annual canal income that has already plunged from pre-crisis levels of roughly \$10 billion. For el-Sisi, whose government faces persistent inflation, currency pressures, and IMF-mandated austerity to avert social unrest, every dollar of hard-currency earnings directly shores up regime legitimacy; the move reveals a pragmatic prioritization of fiscal survival over short-term carrier goodwill, ensuring the waterway remains Egypt's economic lifeline even as broader Middle East de-escalation efforts unfold.

Complementing these revenue safeguards, Egypt is accelerating long-term energy independence through deepened Russian partnership on the El Dabaa nuclear power plant. During high-level meetings this week between Egyptian Electricity Minister Mahmoud Esmat and a Russian State Duma delegation, both sides committed to expediting construction of the four-reactor 4,800-megawatt facility financed by a \$25 billion concessional Russian loan under a 2015 agreement with the first unit targeted for 2028 operation. The project, Egypt's flagship peaceful nuclear initiative, addresses chronic power shortages exacerbated by population growth, depleting natural gas reserves, and climate-induced variability in Nile hydropower. Strategically, el-Sisi sees nuclear diversification not only as a hedge against upstream Nile disputes but as a technological

anchor strengthening military-civil ties with Moscow, reducing over-reliance on Western donors while projecting an image of modernizing strength essential for domestic control and foreign investment appeal.

Parallel to energy and economic priorities, Cairo advanced military cooperation with Pakistan through the two-week Thunder-II (also referenced as Raad-2) counter-terrorism exercise, which commenced April 6 in Cherat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Special forces from Egypt's army and Pakistan's Special Services Group conducted joint drills focused on urban warfare, rapid-response tactics, and counter-insurgency operations, explicitly aimed at enhancing "professional skills" and longstanding bilateral military relations. For el-Sisi, whose rule rests on the armed forces' loyalty and effectiveness against domestic extremism, such exercises serve dual purposes: bolstering operational readiness against shared Islamist threats (echoing Egypt's crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood and Pakistan's Taliban challenges) and forging deeper ties with a nuclear-armed Muslim power that offers potential arms procurement, intelligence sharing, and diplomatic cover outside Western scrutiny. This partnership quietly reinforces regime security without drawing the same international spotlight as Middle East flashpoints.

Finally, Egypt extended its regional influence southward through a landmark trilateral space initiative with Kenya and Uganda, launching the AI-powered ClimCam payload to the International Space Station aboard SpaceX's Cygnus NG-42 mission on April 8. Developed collaboratively at the Egyptian Space Agency's Cairo facilities, the satellite will deliver near-real-time climate and weather data tailored to East African disaster response, flood-drought monitoring, agriculture, and water-resource management, issues acutely relevant to the Nile Basin. While framed as African solidarity against climate change, el-Sisi's strategic interest lies deeper: by building technical and diplomatic bridges with downstream Nile states, Egypt cultivates a coalition capable of collective pressure on Ethiopia's Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), whose operations directly threaten Egypt's historic water share and agricultural heartland. This soft-power outreach, emphasizing food security and environmental resilience, masks a calculated effort to internationalize Nile diplomacy, mitigate domestic water-stress grievances that could fuel unrest, and project Egypt as a forward-looking African leader—thereby diversifying alliances beyond the Arab world to safeguard existential hydrological interests.

Collectively, these developments paint a portrait of el-Sisi's multifaceted strategy: leveraging diplomacy to contain immediate threats, extracting maximum economic value from strategic chokepoints, investing in energy sovereignty, hardening military capabilities through non-Western partners, and quietly expanding African influence—all calibrated to insulate the regime from external shocks and internal fragility. Far from reactive validation of Egyptian policy, the week's moves reveal a leader acutely aware that stability abroad translates directly into survival at home.

## 4. Eritrea

On April 10, President Isaias Afwerki met China's Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa in Asmara, according to the Ministry of Information Eritrea, with discussions focusing on regional developments and bilateral cooperation. The meeting reflects Eritrea's continued alignment with Beijing, one of the few major powers maintaining steady ties with Asmara, particularly through interests in the mining sector. The envoy's visit also suggests Chinese efforts to assess shifting regional dynamics, notably tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia, where instability carries implications for its broader footprint in the Horn.

On April 6, more than 700 Eritreans crossed into the town of Sheraro in Ethiopia's Tigray region for holiday celebrations, according to Addis Standard. The development reflects a broader and increasingly visible pattern of cross-border interaction between Eritrea and Tigray. Of greater concern is the parallel reporting, by multiple sources, of Eritrean troop movements into Tigray, suggesting that such crossings are not limited to civilians but are occurring alongside renewed military presence. Taken together, these dynamics point to a gradual re-opening of cross-border space under conditions that remain politically and militarily sensitive.

On April 9–10, Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh delivered a statement at a Geneva conference on unilateral sanctions, framing Eritrea's economic and humanitarian challenges as the result of external coercive measures and "over-compliance" by global financial systems. The statement reflects a broader effort by the regime to reinsert itself into international diplomatic discourse, particularly within UN platforms, while shifting the focus away from longstanding scrutiny by human rights mechanisms. By foregrounding sanctions as the central explanatory factor, the regime advances a narrative that seeks to recast its international position from that of a subject of criticism to that of a victim of systemic external constraints, even as engagement with Western actors remains limited and contested.

On April 10, the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization (RSADO), an increasingly prominent opposition movement, released a statement accusing the regime of Isaias Afwerki of systematic persecution against the Red Sea Afar population. The statement alleges long-term economic exclusion, particularly denial of access to coastal livelihoods, alongside patterns of forced displacement, arbitrary detention, and extrajudicial violence, which it claims have driven large-scale exile into neighbouring countries. It also directly rejects recent remarks by Eritrea's foreign minister at a Geneva conference, dismissing the government's attribution of human rights concerns to external sanctions as a deflection from internal practices. The release reflects the growing assertiveness of Eritrean opposition actors in articulating ethnically grounded grievances, while seeking to internationalize scrutiny through calls for independent investigations and sustained UN

monitoring.

On April 9, Eritrea's participation in upcoming AFCON qualifiers was cast into doubt after seven national team players disappeared during transit in South Africa following a victory over Eswatini. The incident reflects a recurring pattern in which Eritrean athletes fail to return after international competitions, often seeking asylum abroad. Beyond its immediate sporting implications, the development points to deeper structural dynamics driving outward flight, with repeated cases of defection underscoring persistent pressures shaping mobility out of Eritrea and the regime's limited ability to retain even state-affiliated representatives during overseas engagements.

On April 9, Eritrea participated in the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States summit, according to the Ministry of Information. The engagement reflects Asmara's continued effort to maintain visibility within multilateral forums and sustain external diplomatic links, even as its broader international relations remain constrained and periodically scrutinized.

## **5. Djibouti**

The African Union officially announced the arrival and deployment of its short-term Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) for the April 10 presidential election. The mission was invited by the Djiboutian government and approved by AU Commission Chairperson H.E. Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, following a proposal from Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye. The mission is led by H.E. Bernard Makuza former Prime Minister of Rwanda and comprises 26 observers from 16 AU member states Benin, Cameroon, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. The observers engaged with government officials, election bodies, political parties, candidates, and civil society. The mission's mandate runs from April 3–14, with a preliminary statement scheduled for release on April 12 at the Djibouti Palace Kempinski Hotel.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation issued a statement confirming 67 observers invited to monitor the electoral process. The breakdown includes African Union (47, led by Bernard Makuza), IGAD (16, led by former Ethiopian President Mulatu Teshome), League of Arab States (2), and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (2). The observers were tasked with providing independent and impartial assessments of the electoral process, including meetings with candidates and institutions.

H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf Chairperson of the African Union Commission released an official statement congratulating President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh on his re-election. The statement noted the official results announced by Djibouti's electoral authorities

commended the peaceful participation of the Djiboutian people and highlighted the country's role in regional peace, security, and cooperation in the Horn of Africa.

On April 8, supporters of incumbent President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh gathered for a campaign rally in the capital, Djibouti City. The event featured flags and displays of support for the Union for the Presidential Majority candidate ahead of the April 10 vote. The rally represented one of the final major campaign activities before polling day and was conducted without reported disruptions or tensions.

On April 10, President Guelleh voted before noon at the City Hall polling station in Djibouti City alongside his wife. He told reporters: "By the grace of God, we have arrived here, and we hope that this will end in victory." Challenger Mohamed Farah Samatar of the Unified Democratic Center voted earlier in the day. Voter interviews reflected strong support for Guelleh and limited name recognition for Samatar. An early AFP tally of partial results from 6% of votes across 38 polling stations in Djibouti City showed Guelleh leading with 96.47% to Samatar's 3.52%.

On April 11, Djibouti's Ministry of Interior released provisional results showing President Guelleh (Union for the Presidential Majority / People's Rally for Progress) winning with 97.81% of the vote. His sole opponent, Mohamed Farah Samatar (Unified Democratic Centre), received 2.19%. Turnout was reported at approximately 80.33%. President Guelleh had already declared victory earlier that morning via a social media post stating "Re-elected" after early tallies showed a landslide lead. The results require validation by the Constitutional Council before final certification and swearing-in.

: The AUEOM, led by H.E. Bernard Makuza, was explicitly scheduled to deliver its preliminary findings and recommendations at 10:30 a.m. on April 12 at the Djibouti Palace Kempinski Hotel. The statement was expected to assess the electoral process and offer recommendations on democratic governance, transparency, and the rule of law. The mission's mandate continues until April 14.

## **6. South Sudan**

Developments in South Sudan over the past week reflect a worsening humanitarian and protection crisis, alongside fragile political dynamics and limited but notable diplomatic and regional engagement.

The humanitarian situation in South Sudan continued to deteriorate, with increasing reports of displacement, aid obstruction, and civilian vulnerability. In Jonglei State, particularly in Akobo County, escalating violence has triggered new waves of displacement, further straining already fragile local coping mechanisms. Humanitarian actors reported severe access constraints, with insecurity and logistical barriers limiting the delivery of essential assistance.

A central concern throughout the week has been the obstruction of humanitarian aid. Reports indicate that parties to the conflict are restricting aid flows and contributing to forced displacement, exacerbating food insecurity and undermining relief operations. This has compounded an already critical situation in which large segments of the population depend on humanitarian support for survival.

The operational environment for humanitarian agencies remains uneven. While areas such as Maban County continue to host a significant presence of aid organizations, access disparities across regions highlight the fragmented nature of response efforts. The uneven distribution of assistance risks deepening regional inequalities and leaving high-risk populations without adequate support.

Protection risks are also intensifying. United Nations experts warned of a growing child trafficking crisis linked to conflict conditions, displacement, and weakened institutional oversight. Children are increasingly exposed to exploitation, recruitment, and abuse, reflecting broader systemic vulnerabilities.

Human rights concerns remain central to South Sudan's crisis trajectory. Advocacy groups have raised alarm over ongoing violations, including restrictions on humanitarian access and civilian targeting. Calls have been made to preserve the mandate and capacity of the United Nations peacekeeping mission, amid concerns that any reduction could further destabilize the security environment.

Domestically, governance challenges continue to surface. A media watchdog called for a review of the country's cybercrimes law, citing concerns over its potential use to restrict press freedom and limit civic space. This reflects broader tensions between state authority and civil liberties in a context where political stability remains fragile.

At the societal level, voices within the country are increasingly emphasizing the need for generational change and long-term reform. Calls for youth engagement and national renewal highlight growing awareness of structural challenges that extend beyond immediate conflict dynamics.

South Sudan's political landscape remains constrained by limited institutional capacity and resource challenges. Reports suggest that President Salva Kiir's diplomatic outreach efforts are facing setbacks, largely due to financial and logistical limitations that hinder sustained engagement at the regional and international levels.

At the same time, shifts in international engagement were observed. The appointment of a new United Nations envoy to South Sudan signals continued external commitment to managing the crisis and supporting political processes. This comes amid broader concerns about the effectiveness of existing peace frameworks and the need for renewed diplomatic momentum.

Religious and community actors also continue to play a role in peacebuilding efforts, with messaging focused on reconciliation, forgiveness, and social cohesion. While these initiatives remain largely symbolic, they contribute to maintaining dialogue in a highly fragmented environment.

Localized violence remains a persistent feature of South Sudan's security landscape. Intercommunal clashes and armed confrontations continue to drive displacement and undermine stability, particularly in conflict-prone regions such as Jonglei State.

These dynamics are compounded by weak state presence and limited enforcement capacity, allowing cycles of violence to persist. The absence of durable security arrangements continues to hinder efforts to consolidate peace gains and protect civilian populations.

Despite internal challenges, South Sudan continues to pursue limited regional cooperation initiatives. Notably, Ethiopia is reportedly advancing toward an air services agreement with South Sudan, signaling ongoing efforts to strengthen economic and connectivity ties within the region.

Such developments suggest that, even amid crisis conditions, there remains an underlying push toward regional integration and economic engagement. However, the extent to which these initiatives can translate into tangible benefits will depend on improvements in security and governance.

Overall, South Sudan's trajectory remains defined by a convergence of humanitarian deterioration, governance challenges, and localized insecurity. While international engagement continues, structural constraints and fragmented authority limit the effectiveness of both domestic and external interventions.

The persistence of aid blockages, rising protection risks, and weak institutional capacity suggests that without significant improvements in access, coordination, and political commitment, the crisis is likely to deepen further in the near term.

## **7. Somalia and Somaliland**

### **Somalia**

On April 10 Somalia's Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Abdisalam Abdi Ali held high level consultations in Tripoli with Libya's Acting Foreign Minister H.E. Taher Al-Baour. Discussions focused on strengthening bilateral relations curbing irregular migration and human trafficking and dismantling transnational criminal networks. The meeting culminated in an agreement on April 12 to repatriate approximately 400 Somali nationals held in Libyan prisons. Minister Abdi Ali also paid a working visit to the Somali Embassy in Tripoli to enhance consular services following Somalia's participation in the reopening of the CEN-SAD headquarters in Libya.

On April 10 the Turkish deep sea drilling vessel Çağrı Bey arrived in Mogadishu marking Türkiye's first overseas deep sea hydrocarbon exploration mission. A high level Turkish energy delegation supported the launch with operations expected to last nearly 10 months. On April 11 President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud met with Türkiye's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Alparslan Bayraktar to discuss strategic cooperation in energy, natural resources and the blue economy. The president formally welcomed the vessel underscoring the operation as a step for Somalia's energy sector development.

On April 8 State Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E. Ali Mohamed Omar received Swiss Ambassador H.E. Mirko Giuliatti in Mogadishu. Discussions focused on strengthening bilateral ties with emphasis on development, governance, humanitarian support and resilience. Both sides agreed to advance a more structured framework to deepen cooperation in support of Somalia's state building efforts.

On April 8 Somalia officially assumed its seat on the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) for the 2026–2028 term a historic first. Ambassador Abdullahi Warfaa raised the Somali flag at the council's headquarters in Addis Ababa marking enhanced regional diplomatic engagement on peace and security archetype.

On April 12 President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud addressed a commemorative ceremony in Mogadishu marking the 66th anniversary of the Somali National Army. The president praised the army's role in defending national sovereignty and protecting civilians describing the forces as central to state building and national stability. He also laid the foundation stone for the Somali National Army Orphans Care Agency to honour fallen soldiers and support their families.

Between April 6–7, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) in coordination with the Federal Government of Somalia conducted airstrikes against ISIS-Somalia militants in the Golis Mountains area approximately 55–75 kilometers southeast of Bossaso in Puntland. The strikes aimed to degrade the group's ability to plan and conduct attacks. The operation forms part of ongoing counterterrorism cooperation between the United States and Somalia.

On April 6 Somali government forces supported by international partners conducted a targeted military operation near Baidoa and Daynuunay in the Bay region. The operation struck Al-Shabaab positions along a key corridor linking Mogadishu and Baidoa resulting in 12 militants killed. The action reflects on going counterterrorism efforts amid persistent threats from the group.

On April 11 Somali security forces conducted an operation in and around the Dayniile district of Mogadishu. They intercepted a motorcycle concealed with at least five mortar shells and other explosive devices hidden in sacks of vegetables. Authorities described the seizure as preventing a planned attack by suspected Al-Shabaab militants. No casualties were reported in the operation.

On April 11 the federal government airlifted dozens of Turkish trained special police officers to Baidoa expanding its security presence in the recently contested Southwest State capital. The deployment aims to stabilize the city and reinforce federal security architecture following the military takeover of the region.

On April 8 Puntland President Saeed Abdullahi Deni ordered regional security forces to remain on full alert citing concerns over potential federal government intervention similar to recent military actions in Southwest State. Deni warned of the possible replication of such scenarios in Puntland and directed regional forces to prepare for contingencies.

On April 7 reports indicated that Somalia's federal government is weighing a move to capture the border town of Dolow following the federal military takeover of Baidoa. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud concluded a multi-day visit to Baidoa on April 8 focused on restoring order and consolidating political alliances after the ousting of Southwest State leader Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagaren. On April 6, two civilians from Laftagaren's clan were killed and their bodies burned inside the parliament speaker's home in Baidoa. Separately, the president ordered several cabinet ministers competing for the Southwest regional presidency to return to Mogadishu and resume ministerial duties.

Speaking in Qardho district on April 7 President Deni accused the federal government of pursuing a political strategy aimed at weakening Somalia's federal system. Deni specifically cited remarks attributed to presidential adviser Sheikh Ali Wajjiis suggesting that the federal government should directly administer regional states. Deni described the statement as a direct threat to Somalia's federal system, warning of continued centralization efforts.

On April 6, two civilians from the clan of toppled Southwest state leader Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagaren were killed and their bodies burned inside the parliament speaker's home following the Baidoa takeover. The incident has raised concerns among local elders and human rights advocates regarding post-conflict accountability and inter-clan tensions.

## **Somaliland**

On April 10 Bashir Goth Somaliland's representative to the United States addressed a Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) Africa Program event. He emphasized Somaliland's stability, democratic credentials and strategic value stating that U.S. recognition would lead Somaliland to join the Abraham Accords. Discussions covered security cooperation, economic opportunities including mineral resources and the port of Berbera and Somaliland's pro-Western stance while explicitly rejecting ties with adversarial powers including China. The event explored potential U.S. policy shifts following Israel's earlier recognition of Somaliland.

**Livestock Minister Meets World Food Programme on Sector Cooperation:** On April 10 Somaliland's Minister of Livestock held talks with the World Food Programme (WFP) to

enhance collaboration on livestock sector initiatives. Discussions focused on economic development, food security, and resilience in rural areas. The engagement represents on going practical international cooperation in technical and humanitarian fields notwithstanding Somaliland's limited formal diplomatic recognition.

On April 10 the Somaliland government ordered armed militias to stand down in the western regions of Salal and Awdal warning that those defying the peace process would face legal consequences. The move aimed to halt ongoing clan clashes that have caused instability and displacement. The directive reflects efforts to strengthen internal security and governance amid broader regional challenges though no further operational details or reported ceasefire compliance were available during the reporting period.

On April 6 Somaliland's President issued a sweeping presidential decree dismissing, appointing, and reassigning senior officials across several key ministries and advisory positions. Notable among the changes was the appointment of Lawyer Barkhad Jama Hirsi Batoon, a prominent former parliamentarian to a senior role. Analysts described the reshuffle as an effort to consolidate the administration's reform agenda, improve public sector efficiency and strengthen governance amid broader political pressures. Full details of affected ministries and appointees were not specified in the initial decree.

## **8. Yemen**

On April 6, the Houthis launched a limited strike on Israel, claiming a coordinated operation with Iran and Hezbollah involving cruise missiles and UAVs targeting sites in Eilat; the attack was intercepted without damage. The operation formed part of a calibrated and short-lived escalation, with no further strikes conducted that week, as the group subsequently adhered to a two-week ceasefire pause in its external operations.

On April 9, Houthi leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi outlined a longer-term strategic posture, stating that operations are guided by a “planned strategy” designed for a potentially protracted conflict. While warning of escalation and “surprise actions,” the absence of immediate follow-through suggests a posture of controlled signaling rather than sustained engagement, calibrated to broader regional dynamics.

On April 9–10, UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg conducted diplomatic visits to Aden and Riyadh, meeting Yemeni government officials and Saudi counterparts to assess the impact of regional escalation on the peace process. Discussions focused on stabilizing government-held areas and advancing political, economic, and security tracks, though no concrete breakthroughs were announced.

Throughout April 6–13, the Houthis, alongside Iranian officials, continued to signal the possibility of targeting the Bab el-Mandeb Strait if Gulf states join U.S.–Israeli operations. Despite repeated warnings, no maritime attacks or disruptions were recorded,

indicating that the threat remains a strategic lever rather than an immediate operational shift.

## **9. Kenya**

Kenya has remained broadly stable internally, but with several interconnected developments shaping its peace and security outlook. The government of William Ruto continues to sustain heightened counterterrorism vigilance against Al-Shabaab, particularly in northeastern and coastal regions bordering Somalia. Security operations, intelligence coordination, and border surveillance remain active, reflecting concern over potential infiltration despite the absence of a major large-scale attack this week. At the same time, internal stability is being shaped by socio-economic pressures, including persistent public dissatisfaction over the cost of living and taxation policies, which continue to generate political tension and periodic mobilization by opposition actors. While these have not escalated into widespread unrest in the past week, they remain a latent risk factor for internal security. Additionally, Kenya continues to manage localized intercommunal tensions in some regions, often linked to resource competition and historical grievances, underscoring the layered nature of its domestic security environment. These combined dynamics highlight a relatively resilient state structure, but one that must continuously manage both conventional and non-traditional security pressures.

From a regional and geopolitical perspective, Kenya is maintaining and even expanding its strategic role as a security provider and diplomatic anchor. A central development remains its leadership of the multinational security mission in Haiti, where Kenyan police forces are actively deployed as part of a UN-backed stabilization effort targeting gang violence. This mission continues to evolve operationally and diplomatically, reinforcing Kenya's global security profile while also exposing it to new external risks and scrutiny. Regionally, Kenya remains deeply engaged in peace processes and stabilization efforts, particularly within East African Community frameworks addressing crises in South Sudan and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the same time, Nairobi continues to balance strong security and economic ties with the United States and other Western partners, while maintaining pragmatic engagement with emerging global actors, reflecting a diversified and interest-driven foreign policy. Importantly, Kenya's strategic geographic position as a logistics, financial, and diplomatic hub in East Africa continues to enhance its geopolitical relevance. Taken together, the week's developments show a country managing internal pressures while projecting influence externally combining counterterrorism vigilance, diplomatic activism, and global security engagement to sustain its role as a pivotal actor in both regional and international peace and security dynamics.

## 10. The Gulf Countries

### Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia continued to face Iranian missile and drone threats amid the broader US-Israel-Iran conflict, even after the announcement of a US-Iran ceasefire. Air defenses intercepted multiple waves of projectiles targeting the Eastern Province, with successful intercepts reported on or around April 7 seven ballistic missiles and April 8 five ballistic missiles. Debris from interceptions caused limited damage near energy facilities, though no major ground incursions or large-scale impacts were reported. Security alerts remained in effect, with ongoing monitoring of maritime routes in the Gulf and Red Sea. Economic strains persisted from earlier disruptions to oil and energy infrastructure.

Diplomatically, Riyadh aligned with GCC partners in multilateral efforts, including support for the Bahrain-proposed UN Security Council draft resolution on Strait of Hormuz security voted on April 7. The Kingdom maintained a public stance emphasizing de-escalation and sovereignty while privately coordinating on regional defense. Relations with the US showed continued scrutiny over protection guarantees, with broader GCC-level reviews of strategic autonomy and diversified partnerships with Ukraine and others. No major new bilateral initiatives were announced, but the week underscored Saudi Arabia's focus on protecting Vision 2030 goals amid sustained aerial risks.

### UAE

The UAE's security situation remained under pressure from repeated Iranian drone and ballistic missile barrages. On April 7, air defenses intercepted one ballistic missile and 11 drones. Additional alerts and interceptions occurred around April 8 as part of region-wide threats. Cumulative impacts since the conflict escalated included damage to energy and civilian infrastructure, though interception rates stayed high over 90% in some official tallies. Maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz and energy assets stayed under heightened monitoring, with civilian areas and tourism sites on alert.

On the diplomatic front, Abu Dhabi continued pushing for UN Security Council measures to secure the Strait of Hormuz, including potential Chapter VII actions, and supported GCC-coordinated efforts. The UAE expressed willingness to work with allies on reopening the waterway. Ties with the US faced ongoing review over defense adequacy, alongside diversification e.g. anti-drone tech cooperation.

### Qatar

Qatar experienced direct threats on April 5, when Iranian forces launched a number of drones and two cruise missiles toward its territory and economic waters. Qatari air defenses successfully intercepted and neutralized all incoming threats, with no reported casualties or major damage though earlier weeks had seen strikes near Ras Laffan. Alerts

and monitoring continued for the Ras Laffan LNG hub and maritime zones, underscoring risks to global energy supply chains.

Diplomatically, Doha remained active in GCC coordination and multilateral forums, supporting the April 7 UNSC draft on the Strait of Hormuz and emphasizing dialogue/de-escalation. Qatar signed or advanced defense cooperation ties with Ukraine on counter-missile/drone systems while navigating US relations strained by the conflict. The week highlighted Qatar's dual role in mediation and Gulf unity.

### **Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman**

These GCC states reported continued exposure to Iranian aerial threats, with successful interceptions alongside isolated debris impacts on energy or desalination facilities in Kuwait. They aligned fully with GCC positions, issuing alerts and participating in joint diplomatic efforts, including the April 7 UNSC briefing and resolution push under Bahrain's coordination. Oman maintained de-escalatory outreach all emphasized sovereignty and inclusive regional security. Economic strains from disrupted shipping remained a secondary concern.

### ***Overall GCC Dynamics***

The week reinforced GCC unity in condemning Iranian aggressions while highlighting fractures in external security dependencies. The central event was the April 7 UN Security Council vote on the Bahrain-proposed draft resolution for Strait of Hormuz security and freedom of navigation including defensive coordination and escorts. It received 11 votes in favor but was vetoed by Russia and China Colombia and Pakistan abstained. GCC leaders, via the Secretary-General, expressed strong regret, noting the failure encouraged further Iranian actions and undermined global trade.

Collectively, members reviewed US partnerships, explored alternative defense ties, and asserted greater autonomy in protecting critical infrastructure. Public resilience was projected alongside private concerns over economic volatility and the reliability of Western guarantees. The Gulf remained a frontline node in the escalating crisis, with attacks persisting post-ceasefire announcement.

## **11. Africa and The Sahel Region**

### **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

Democratic Republic of the Congo has remained at the center of one of Africa's most complex and volatile conflict environments, with developments reflecting a convergence of internal insecurity, regional tensions, and active diplomatic engagement. In the eastern provinces, particularly North Kivu and Ituri, fighting involving the March 23 Movement has continued to dominate the security landscape, with persistent clashes against

government forces (FARDC) and allied militias. The humanitarian situation remains severe, marked by continued displacement, civilian casualties, and restricted humanitarian access. Tensions between Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda remain a central geopolitical fault line, as Kinshasa continues to accuse Kigali of supporting M23, an allegation Rwanda denies thereby sustaining a fragile and highly militarized standoff along the border. At the same time, the drawdown and transition of MONUSCO continues to shape the security vacuum, placing increased pressure on national forces and regional mechanisms to fill the gap. These dynamics collectively reinforce a pattern of protracted instability in which local conflicts are deeply intertwined with interstate tensions and international peacekeeping transitions.

On the diplomatic and regional front, Democratic Republic of the Congo has intensified its engagement in multiple mediation frameworks aimed at de-escalating the eastern conflict.

Efforts under both the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community continue to shape negotiations, with regional troop deployments and political dialogue mechanisms forming parallel tracks toward stabilization. However, progress remains limited, as ceasefire agreements face repeated violations and trust deficits between key actors persist. Internally, the government of Félix Tshisekedi is balancing military operations with diplomatic outreach, while also managing domestic political pressures tied to security failures and governance challenges. Geopolitically, the DRC's vast mineral wealth critical to global supply chains continues to attract international interest, further complicating the conflict environment as external actors maintain strategic stakes in stability outcomes. Additionally, the presence of multiple armed groups beyond M23, including local militias and foreign fighters, underscores the fragmentation of the conflict and the limits of purely military solutions. Taken together, the week's developments highlight a deeply entrenched crisis characterized by active armed conflict, regional rivalries, humanitarian distress, and complex diplomacy positioning Democratic Republic of the Congo as a pivotal but persistently unstable arena in Africa's peace and security landscape.

## **Mali**

Mali has continued to deepen its political and diplomatic transformation under military rule, with significant implications for governance, regional relations, and international alignment. The transitional authorities, led by Assimi Goïta, remain firmly committed to extending the transition period, reinforcing a sovereignty-driven political doctrine that places security stabilization above democratic timelines. This posture is increasingly institutionalized through legal and administrative measures that limit political pluralism and consolidate executive authority. At the same time, Mali's diplomatic orientation continues to shift decisively away from traditional Western partners, particularly

following the sustained fallout from the withdrawal of MINUSMA and the earlier exit of French forces. In their place, Bamako is strengthening alternative security and political partnerships, most notably with Russia, reflecting a broader recalibration of external alliances. Regionally, Mali remains a central pillar of the emerging Sahel bloc alongside Burkina Faso and Niger, reinforcing a shared agenda centered on regime security, non-interference, and resistance to external pressure from actors such as ECOWAS. This evolving political trajectory underscores a structural shift in Mali's governance model and its place within both regional and global diplomatic frameworks.

On the security front, Mali remains one of the most volatile theaters in the Sahel, with intensifying insurgent activity and complex conflict dynamics continuing to undermine stability. Armed groups linked to Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin and Islamic State Sahel Province remain highly active, with their rivalry driving increased violence, particularly in central and northern regions. This competition is not only escalating internally but also contributing to cross-border instability, with direct spillover effects into Niger and Burkina Faso, reinforcing the regionalization of conflict across the Sahel. Internally, large areas remain outside effective state control, with continued attacks on civilians, mass displacement, and the erosion of local governance structures. The Malian military, supported by allied paramilitary elements and external partners, has intensified counterinsurgency operations; however, these efforts are increasingly accompanied by allegations of human rights violations, complicating both domestic legitimacy and international engagement. Geopolitically, Mali's trajectory reflects a broader reordering of Sahelian power structures, where security pragmatism, regime survival, and strategic autonomy are prioritized over liberal governance norms. Taken together, the week's developments highlight a convergence of entrenched military governance, escalating insurgency, humanitarian strain, and shifting alliances positioning Mali as a central but deeply fragile actor in the evolving architecture of regional peace and security.

### **Burkina Faso**

Burkina Faso has experienced a critical consolidation of military authority with far-reaching implications for peacebuilding and governance. The most defining political development remains the firm stance of junta leader Ibrahim Traoré, who reiterated that democratic transition is secondary to security stabilization, effectively postponing electoral processes and signaling a prolonged period of military rule. This position is not an isolated statement but part of a broader restructuring of state power, including restrictions on political activity, shrinking civic space, and heightened control over public discourse. In parallel, international scrutiny has intensified following renewed documentation of alleged mass atrocities committed by both state security forces and armed groups, reinforcing concerns that counterinsurgency operations are increasingly accompanied by violations of international humanitarian law. These dynamics deepen internal polarization and complicate prospects for inclusive national dialogue, while also

straining relations with Western partners who continue to link cooperation to governance and human rights benchmarks.

From a security and geopolitical perspective, the situation remains highly volatile and regionally interconnected. Burkina Faso continues to sit at the epicenter of Sahelian insurgency, where escalating violence involving groups such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin and Islamic State Sahel Province is not only intensifying domestically but increasingly spilling into neighboring states, particularly Niger. This reflects a broader pattern of conflict regionalization, where porous borders and weak state presence allow armed actors to maneuver strategically across territories. Internally, large portions of the country remain outside effective government control, with continued mass displacement, humanitarian strain, and reliance on pro-government militias as force multipliers. At the same time, the country's external alignment is undergoing a visible shift: Ouagadougou is deepening its strategic coordination with Mali and Niger under the Sahel security framework, while distancing itself from traditional Western security partnerships and opening space for alternative actors, including Russia. This evolving posture signals not just a tactical adjustment but a structural geopolitical realignment, where sovereignty, regime survival, and security pragmatism are prioritized over liberal governance norms. Taken together, the week's developments illustrate a convergence of authoritarian consolidation, intensifying insurgency, humanitarian stress, and shifting alliances positioning Burkina Faso as both a central battlefield and a strategic pivot in the future of Sahelian security order.

## **Niger**

Niger has continued to consolidate its post-coup political order while navigating sustained diplomatic recalibration and internal strain. The military leadership under Abdourahamane Tchiani has maintained its firm rejection of accelerated democratic transition timelines, reinforcing a governance model centered on sovereignty and security-first priorities. This has been accompanied by continued institutional restructuring, tighter control over political space, and a cautious normalization of relations within the region following the earlier tensions with ECOWAS. Diplomatically, Niger remains deeply aligned with Mali and Burkina Faso under the emerging Sahel security framework, signaling a consolidation of an alternative regional order that challenges Western-backed governance norms. At the same time, the country continues to deal with economic aftershocks linked to sanctions, reduced external assistance, and humanitarian pressures, particularly in conflict-affected regions where state capacity remains limited. These dynamics collectively underscore a fragile internal equilibrium in which regime survival, economic resilience, and diplomatic repositioning are tightly interconnected.

On the security and geopolitical front, the most significant development this week is the intensification and geographic expansion of jihadist violence into Niger territory, driven

by escalating rivalry between Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin and Islamic State Sahel Province. This spillover, particularly from eastern Burkina Faso, marks a critical shift as Niger transitions from a relatively contained security environment into a more active conflict theater within the Sahel. The tri-border region remains highly volatile, with continued attacks against civilians and military targets, population displacement, and the erosion of local governance structures. Simultaneously, Niger's geopolitical orientation is undergoing a deeper transformation: the withdrawal of Western military presence has created space for expanded cooperation with alternative partners, notably Russia, while reinforcing a broader narrative of strategic autonomy. This shift is not merely symbolic but reflects changing security dependencies and external influence patterns across the Sahel. Taken together, the week's developments capture a comprehensive picture of Niger's trajectory marked by entrenched military governance, intensifying insurgent threats, humanitarian stress, and a reconfiguration of regional and global alliances positioning Niger as a central, yet increasingly vulnerable, actor in the evolving Sahelian security and geopolitical landscape.

## **Chad**

Chad's peace and security landscape has been overwhelmingly shaped by the escalating regional fallout of the Sudan war, which continues to spill across borders and deepen both humanitarian and military pressures. The most urgent development is the severe deterioration of the refugee crisis: over 1.3 million Sudanese refugees inside Chad are now facing drastic aid cuts due to a major international funding shortfall, with humanitarian agencies warning that only a fraction of those in need are receiving assistance and many are experiencing extreme food and water insecurity. This crisis is not only humanitarian but also a core security issue, as resource scarcity risks triggering local tensions and destabilizing already fragile host communities. Parallel to this, the security situation along the Chad–Sudan border remains volatile, with continued cross-border violence, including earlier drone strikes and militia incursions, prompting Chad to reinforce military deployments, relocate refugees away from the frontier, and maintain strict border control measures. These actions underline a clear shift in N'Djamena's posture from passive containment to active border securitization, as the state attempts to prevent further spillover while avoiding direct entanglement in Sudan's internal conflict. The cumulative effect is the transformation of eastern Chad into a high-risk geopolitical frontier where humanitarian emergency and military tension are increasingly intertwined.

At the diplomatic and geopolitical level, Chad is simultaneously projecting itself as a regional stabilizer while managing mounting internal vulnerabilities. A significant development this week is Chad's active participation in international security governance, marked by the deployment of its troops as part of a UN-backed multinational force in Haiti, with the first contingent already arriving to support efforts against armed gangs. This move reflects Chad's strategic ambition to reposition itself as a contributor to global

peace operations, expanding its diplomatic relevance beyond Central Africa. At the same time, earlier commitments to send hundreds of security personnel to Haiti reinforce this outward-looking security diplomacy.

However, this external engagement contrasts sharply with internal and regional pressures, particularly the continued closure and militarization of the Sudan border following repeated incursions by armed groups, a policy aimed at preserving territorial integrity and preventing conflict diffusion. The broader geopolitical picture suggests that Chad is increasingly caught between competing demands: acting as a humanitarian hub, a frontline security state, and an emerging diplomatic actor. This balancing act highlights both its rising strategic importance in African and international security architecture and its structural vulnerability, as external shocks from Sudan.

### **Equatorial Guinea**

Equatorial Guinea has maintained a relatively stable internal security environment, yet beneath this surface calm, important political and diplomatic dynamics continue to shape its peace and governance trajectory. President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo remains firmly in control, with no visible movement toward political liberalization, reinforcing one of the most enduring authoritarian systems on the continent. While no major domestic unrest or armed conflict has been reported in the past week, the broader governance context characterized by restricted political space, limited opposition activity, and tight state control over institutions continues to raise structural concerns about long-term stability and resilience. At the same time, international attention remains intermittently focused on transparency, corruption, and human rights issues, which continue to influence the country's diplomatic engagements, particularly with Western partners. These underlying governance patterns, although not manifesting in immediate instability, remain central to understanding the country's long-term peace and security outlook.

From a geopolitical and diplomatic perspective, Equatorial Guinea continues to leverage its strategic position as a hydrocarbon-producing state in the Gulf of Guinea to maintain relevance in regional and global affairs. The country remains engaged within regional frameworks such as the Economic Community of Central African States, contributing to collective security discussions, particularly around maritime security and anti-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Guinea. While no major new defense or security agreements were announced this week, ongoing cooperation with international partners including Western states and emerging actors like China continues to shape its external posture, especially in the energy and infrastructure sectors. Additionally, Equatorial Guinea's strategic interest in safeguarding offshore oil installations and maritime routes remains a key component of its national security agenda. In the broader regional context, the absence of acute conflict does not diminish its geopolitical importance; rather, it highlights a model of stability rooted in centralized authority and resource-backed state capacity. Taken together, this

week reflects continuity rather than disruption: a tightly controlled domestic order combined with cautious but pragmatic diplomatic engagement, positioning Equatorial Guinea as a stable yet structurally constrained actor within Central Africa's evolving security landscape.

## **12. North Africa**

### **Algeria**

Algeria has welcomed a preliminary agreement reached by concerned parties to halt military operations across the Gulf region and the broader Middle East. In an official statement issued on April 8, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed sincere appreciation for the international mediation efforts that made the accord possible, describing it as a constructive step toward containing escalation and advancing radical solutions to all outstanding disputes. This position underscores Algeria's consistent emphasis on dialogue as the path to lasting regional stability.

Complementing this focus on de-escalation, the United States marked the anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Amity signed with Algeria in 1795, reaffirming one of America's longest-standing diplomatic relationships. On April 9, the US Embassy in Algiers highlighted the historic pact as the foundation for enduring bilateral ties, noting its relevance as the United States reflects on partnerships shaped over more than two centuries. The gesture illustrates the resilience of Algerian-American relations even amid complex regional dynamics.

Nevertheless, Algeria has taken a firm stance against ongoing violence, condemning in the strongest terms the brutal and barbaric Zionist strikes that continue to target various parts of Lebanon. In a statement released on April 9, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs voiced full solidarity with the Lebanese leadership and people, following air strikes that killed over 200 and wounded more than 1,000 in areas including Beirut and southern villages. The declaration reflects Algeria's broader commitment to sovereignty and humanitarian principles in the face of persistent Middle East tensions.

### **Libya**

Libya is advancing its economic diversification through deepened ties with Oman, where high-level officials convened in Muscat on April 8. Anwar bin Hilal al Jabri, Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, met with Libya's Acting Minister of Oil and Gas Khalifa Rajab and Minister of Economy and Trade Suhail Bou Sheikha. The talks concentrated on expanding commercial, industrial and trade cooperation while exploring joint projects in energy, infrastructure and food security to increase bilateral trade volumes. This engagement highlights Tripoli's proactive strategy to secure fresh investment channels and foster resilient economic partnerships beyond traditional spheres.

Complementing this regional outreach, Libya's Government of National Unity has begun preliminary discussions with Italy, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom on practical cooperation for natural gas transport and crude oil exports to European markets. The conversations focus on streamlining logistical routes for Libyan hydrocarbons, capitalizing on the country's Mediterranean location and substantial reserves. With national oil output recently attaining a 10-year peak of 1.43 million barrels per day, these talks position Libya as a more reliable supplier amid Europe's ongoing efforts to diversify energy sources and enhance supply security.

These energy-focused diplomatic moves occur against a complex security landscape that has drawn Libya deeper into global tensions. Libyan officials confirmed that Ukrainian covert forces, operating from western bases including Misrata and a Tripoli military facility under a Western-endorsed arrangement with the Government of National Unity, launched a sea-drone strike on March 3 against the Russian-flagged Arctic Metagaz tanker. The vessel, part of Moscow's sanctions-evading shadow fleet and carrying 61,000 tonnes of liquefied natural gas, sustained heavy damage near Maltese waters before drifting toward Libya's coast; its crew was safely evacuated to Benghazi.

Demonstrating its broader commitment to regional stability that underpins such economic and security engagements, the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed the recent ceasefire agreement in the Arabian Gulf. In an official statement issued on April 9, the ministry praised the mediators' responsible efforts and expressed full support for diplomatic initiatives aimed at achieving a lasting settlement. It stressed the value of dialogue, peaceful solutions and respect for state sovereignty in reducing tensions and strengthening international peace and security.

## **Morocco**

In a notable diplomatic realignment, Mali has suspended its recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic after reviewing the Western Sahara dispute's effects on sub-regional peace and security. Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop announced the decision following talks in Bamako with his Moroccan counterpart Nasser Bourita, declaring support for Morocco's Autonomy Plan as the sole credible and realistic solution under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2797. The move, shared with regional and international bodies, joins a growing number of nations backing Rabat's position.

This shift echoes recent high-level Morocco-Egypt engagement, where the first session of their Coordination Follow-up Committee convened in Cairo on April 6. Moroccan sources reported Egyptian endorsement of Morocco's territorial integrity and the same UN resolution amid expanded cooperation in agriculture, industry, energy and digital sectors. Algerian activists and media reacted sharply, accusing Rabat of disinformation and claiming Cairo had abandoned neutrality, though Egyptian officials reiterated support for UN principles without explicit reference to sovereignty.

These diplomatic currents underscore the enduring Morocco-Algeria rivalry over Western Sahara that continues to drive an intense regional arms race. Morocco is overhauling its military aviation with a 2026 defense budget of \$15.3 billion, up 17.7 percent, to modernize its air force through F-16 upgrades, advanced drones from Israeli, Turkish and Chinese suppliers, Apache helicopters and layered air defenses. The push includes local industry incentives for maintenance, repair, overhaul and drone production to reduce import dependence and balance Algeria's superior Russian-sourced fleet.

Compounding these geopolitical strains, Spanish authorities dismantled a sophisticated drug-smuggling tunnel network linking Morocco and Spain via the enclave of Ceuta. Discovered on March 26 and raided by March 31, the operation which is allegedly co-led by a Moroccan-Dutch suspect and a local businessman featured a multi-level underground passage with rails, pulleys and cranes capable of moving around 2,000 kilograms of hashish weekly. Coordinated raids across 29 sites yielded 27 arrests, 17 tons of hashish seized and highlighted persistent transnational crime challenges along Morocco's northern borders.

## **13. Middle East**

### **Iran – Israel Conflict**

The week opened amid escalating military clashes as Iranian missiles struck Haifa late on 5 April, killing four people when rescuers pulled bodies from a collapsed building. Israeli forces confirmed the fatalities, underscoring Tehran's reach into civilian areas and fueling immediate calls for stronger defenses while heightening regional alarm over potential wider retaliation.

Simultaneously, an Israeli airstrike near a UN-run school in Gaza on 5 April claimed at least ten Palestinian lives, mostly women and children, with dozens wounded. Hamas reported civilians sheltering at the site, and the Gaza Health Ministry condemned the attack, illustrating how localized violence persisted independently of the broader US-Iran truce and complicated humanitarian access across fronts.

These security incidents unfolded against a backdrop of diplomatic deadlock when Iranian officials rejected any short-term ceasefire on 6 April, deeming it unreasonable and insisting instead on a permanent end to hostilities with full guarantees. They conditioned future talks on halting all strikes and lifting sanctions, while President Trump issued stark threats of infrastructure destruction if demands went unmet, intensifying the war of words.

Yet momentum shifted the next day when Trump announced a two-week ceasefire on 7 April, framing it as a US victory after dropping earlier vows to devastate Iran's civilization. Iran viewed the pause as a necessary concession rather than resolution, opening a fragile window for negotiations in Pakistan even as mutual mistrust lingered over the truce's limited scope and exclusion of allied fronts.

Iran quickly clarified its stance by setting firm preconditions for any lasting peace discussions, demanding an immediate and permanent halt to US and Israeli operations, sanctions relief, compensation, and inclusion of Lebanon in all talks. Officials even proposed legitimate tolls on ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz as part of reparations, signaling Tehran's determination to secure tangible leverage before committing further.

The ceasefire took effect on 8 April, but implementation faltered instantly when Israel conducted its heaviest strikes yet on Lebanon that same day, killing at least 254 people—mostly civilians—in what became the war's deadliest single day. Hezbollah responded with rocket barrages into northern Israel, and UN human rights chief Volker Türk labeled the assault "horrific," exposing how the truce failed to encompass all regional actors and risked immediate collapse.

In the wake of these devastating Lebanon operations, Iranian leaders declared the US-Iran talks unreasonable unless the ceasefire extended to halt Israeli actions there, with parliament speaker Mohammed Bagher Qalibaf warning that violations undermined the entire agreement. This stance highlighted deepening rifts, as Israel maintained Lebanon was never party to the deal, further straining the fragile diplomatic architecture.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed the initial truce announcement on 8 April, urging full compliance with international law and describing it as a vital window to address root causes. The statement reinforced global calls for restraint while implicitly pressuring all parties, including Israel, to avoid actions that could unravel the pause and endanger civilians across multiple theaters.

European leaders echoed this optimism in a joint statement on 8 April, praising Pakistan's mediation and the two-week ceasefire while stressing civilian protection and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. The UK, France, Germany, Italy, and EU representatives pledged support for a durable peace, subtly urging inclusion of Lebanon to prevent spillover and preserve regional stability.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, meeting Trump around the same time, acknowledged that some allies had fallen short in supporting the campaign yet affirmed a large majority had fulfilled commitments through logistics and basing. His remarks aimed to mend transatlantic fractures exposed by the conflict, even as they revealed underlying tensions within the alliance over burden-sharing.

As fighting continued despite the truce, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced direct talks with Lebanon on 9 April focused on disarming Hezbollah and forging peaceful relations. He simultaneously lifted Israel's state of emergency, allowing his corruption trial to resume on 12 April, intertwining domestic politics with ongoing military strategy amid Iran's muted response.

This pivot toward Lebanon negotiations reflected broader Israeli planning for a protracted "forever war," as defense officials prepared buffer zones in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria to

counter Iranian proxies indefinitely. Analysts noted that such fortification signaled acceptance of low-intensity conflict rather than swift resolution, complicating any comprehensive diplomatic breakthrough.

Trump's approach faced domestic scrutiny in the United States, where prolonged engagement tested his political leverage and drew criticism for apocalyptic rhetoric followed by concessions. Public skepticism grew over the war's costs, exposing limits to a strategy of maximum pressure and raising questions about long-term US credibility in the Middle East.

In a new economic escalation, Trump threatened 50 percent tariffs on nations supplying Iran with weapons, implicitly targeting China and Russia to isolate Tehran further. Allies and critics viewed the move as an attempt to broaden the conflict into trade warfare, potentially alienating Beijing and complicating multilateral efforts already strained by the Islamabad talks.

Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz reinforced alliance cohesion on 9 April by insisting NATO must not fracture over the Iran war, while announcing resumed direct talks with Tehran and conditional German support for Hormuz shipping under a UN mandate. His comments balanced European unity with pragmatic engagement, distancing somewhat from unilateral US pressure tactics.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, hosting the negotiations, urged both Washington and Tehran on 11 April to uphold the ceasefire despite no final deal emerging after marathon sessions. He emphasized positive momentum and durable peace, positioning Islamabad as a steadfast mediator even as core disputes over nuclear curbs, sanctions, and Lebanon remained unresolved.

The talks' failure prompted swift US action when Central Command announced a full naval blockade of Iranian ports, set to begin at 10 a.m. ET on 13 April to enforce truce terms. Trump warned of severe consequences for any interference, while Iran's IRGC vowed retaliation against vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, raising stakes for global energy flows and maritime security.

Al Jazeera reporting reinforced the blockade's immediacy, noting IRGC declarations that military-controlled shipping would breach the ceasefire. Neutral traders faced heightened risks at this critical chokepoint, amplifying fears of renewed confrontation and broader international entanglement in the standoff.

Civilian suffering intensified when an Israeli strike on 12 April hit the Saeed family home in southern Lebanon during a funeral, killing a 1.5-year-old girl and four others while wounding many more. Israel cited ongoing Hezbollah threats but pledged efforts to minimize harm, drawing fresh global condemnation and renewed humanitarian appeals.

Pope Francis used his Easter address on 12 April to express solidarity with Lebanon's civilians and reiterate a moral duty to shield non-combatants from war's horrors. The Vatican's call amplified international pressure for an immediate ceasefire, framing the conflict's human toll as a shared ethical imperative across faith communities.

The International Committee of the Red Cross president, Mirjana Spoljaric, repeatedly stressed that rules of war must govern both rhetoric and actions, warning against targeting civilian infrastructure or nuclear sites. Documentation of violations signaled future accountability, reinforcing legal norms amid threats that risked setting dangerous precedents.

Economists warned that the conflict's disruption to Hormuz shipping had triggered profound global oil shocks, with prices surging and supply chains strained. Experts described it as a potential "new oil world order," predicting sustained inflation, energy realignments, and shifts in geopolitical leverage that could endure well beyond any temporary truce.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer linked the war's volatility to Britain's need for closer EU economic and defense ties, rejecting US pressure and signaling a post-Brexit pivot toward European solidarity. The stance reflected broader strains on traditional alliances, as the conflict prompted nations to reassess long-term strategic partnerships.

Analysts across outlets concluded that the war produced no clear victors, only severe costs including energy crises and eroded international norms. Iran's ten-point proposal, largely reflected in the ceasefire framework, underscored persistent divides, leaving the region poised between fragile de-escalation and the risk of renewed multi-front confrontation.

## **Turkey**

Turkey faced immediate security challenges when a gunfight erupted outside the Israeli consulate in Istanbul's Şişli district on 7 April, leaving one attacker dead and two wounded after police intervened. Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu identified the assailants as linked to a group exploiting religion, with one previously flagged under anti-ISIS measures. Authorities detained ten suspects on 8 April, including relatives, as investigations examined possible motives amid heightened regional tensions.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan opened the week on 6 April with sharp criticism of Israel, accusing its leadership of sabotaging Middle East peace efforts by fueling Lebanon and Syria tensions, restricting Al-Aqsa access, and imposing harsh measures on Palestinians. He pledged Turkey would continue pressing for comprehensive ceasefires, framing Ankara as an active advocate for de-escalation.

Despite these tensions, Erdoğan welcomed the US-Iran ceasefire on 8 April, urging full implementation and warning against provocations or sabotage. Speaking after a cabinet

meeting, he positioned Turkey as a guarantor of lasting regional peace and expressed relief that the conflict, which had claimed thousands of lives, appeared to be winding down.

Turkey's National Security Council, chaired by Erdoğan on 8 April, welcomed de-escalation while noting global and economic risks. The council reaffirmed border vigilance and citizen security, strongly condemned Israeli ceasefire violations in Gaza, the West Bank, Al-Aqsa, and Lebanon for triggering humanitarian crises, and called on the international community to intervene and protect civilians.

Diplomatic friction with Israel escalated on 11-12 April when the Turkish Foreign Ministry responded to criticism from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by labeling him "the Hitler of our time" and accusing Israel of undermining Gaza and Lebanon ceasefires to distract from domestic legal troubles, intensifying a bitter exchange.

The rhetoric reached its peak on 12 April at the International Asia-Political Parties Conference in Istanbul. Erdoğan issued a direct military warning, stating that had Pakistan not mediated the US-Iran war, Turkey would have shown Israel its place: "Just as we entered Karabakh, just as we entered Libya, we will do the same to them." He cited Israeli actions in Palestine and Lebanon despite the ceasefire as a "blood-stained genocide network."

In the same address Erdoğan cautioned regional powers against being drawn into the 2026 escalation as a "trap" that could pit "brother against brother," instead positioning Turkey as a moral and diplomatic stabilizer committed to preventing wider conflict and supporting lasting peace.

Throughout the week Turkey sustained high-level diplomatic messaging supporting full US-Iran de-escalation and its own mediation role building on Pakistan's efforts. Back-channel contacts with Washington and Tehran continued, reinforcing Ankara's image as a responsible regional broker.

Energy security remained stable, with Minister Alparslan Bayraktar assuring on 7 April that Turkey faced no immediate problem despite the war, thanks to diversified supplies. Officials nonetheless stressed preparedness for potential disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz or Black Sea, including safeguards for the TurkStream pipeline.

Economically, the conflict prompted some Asian and Gulf firms to explore relocating to Turkey's new Istanbul Financial Center, according to IFC CEO Ahmet Erdem on 6 April. Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek added on 9 April that Ankara stood ready with new fiscal and monetary tools if war-related shocks to inflation and reserves persisted, while supporting global efforts to ease tensions.

Turkey also pushed forward European missile-defense cooperation through the SAMP/T project with France and Italy, prompted by alleged Iranian missile incidents near its borders earlier in the crisis. This move underscored Ankara's determination to bolster national security without direct involvement in the wider fighting.

Domestically, Erdoğan's assertive foreign-policy rhetoric helped consolidate nationalist support amid opposition scrutiny from parties such as the CHP over inflation and economic fallout. The approach maintained internal cohesion even as foreign policy dominated headlines.

Turkey asserted its broader role in European and global stability by offering reconstruction aid to Syria, promoting trade normalization, and countering external interference. These efforts reinforced Ankara's self-image as a responsible actor balancing NATO obligations with independent regional leadership.

The deepening partnership with Syria's transitional government formed a stabilizing pillar of Turkey's regional strategy. Ankara continued strong support for SDF integration into national structures as a core security priority, with military and economic backing in northern Syria proceeding uninterrupted and directly aiding Damascus's transition success. No new bilateral crises emerged, and alignment between the two countries only strengthened amid the volatile post-ceasefire landscape.

## Syria

Syria's transitional government under President Ahmed al-Sharaa maintained steady progress toward stabilization throughout 6–12 April 2026, focusing on consolidating power after the fall of Assad while shielding the country from spillover of the US-Iran war. The administration advanced the January 2026 SDF integration agreements through phased handovers of Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, and Hasakah, prisoner exchanges, oil-field oversight, and border management, with no major clashes reported. Turkey expressed satisfaction with the alignment, viewing it as essential for neutralizing PKK-linked threats in the north.

The UN Security Council received regular briefings on Syria's political and humanitarian situation. Envoys, including Deputy Special Envoy Claudio Cordone and OCHA representatives, highlighted inclusive governance, intercommunal tensions, terrorism risks, and the need to protect the transition from external interference tied to the wider regional conflict. Monitors such as the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights provided daily civilian casualty and incident updates amid lingering post-Assad instability, underscoring the fragile security environment.

On the diplomatic front, President Sharaa pursued balanced outreach to insulate Syria from war fallout. A key milestone came on 5 April when he hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in Damascus for trilateral talks mediated by Turkish Foreign

Minister Hakan Fidan. The leaders agreed on enhanced security cooperation, defense training, border security, counter-terrorism measures, and restored grain exports, marking Syria's first major new international partnership since the regime change.

Economic reconstruction gained momentum through deepened ties with Turkey. On 7 April Trade Minister Ömer Bolat announced advancing bilateral banking cooperation, with Syrian and Turkish central banks planning correspondent accounts and Turkish lenders Ziraat Bank and Aktif Bank preparing operations inside Syria. By 10 April Syria's Central Bank Governor Abdulkader AlHussrieh confirmed a correspondent banking deal and currency-swap discussions were nearing completion, easing cash-based trade barriers and supporting a 60 percent surge in Turkish exports.

Syria also demonstrated caution regarding the regional war. On 7 April US-mediated talks involving Lebanon and Syria led Israel to refrain from striking the Masnaa border crossing, averting a potential humanitarian crisis after Syrian authorities insisted the facility served only civilian purposes. President Sharaa reiterated a neutral stance, deploying troops along the Lebanon and Iraq borders while maintaining active US-Syria-Israel coordination through the joint fusion mechanism on southern security arrangements for Druze and Alawite areas.

The government continued advancing its counter-IS coalition role with detainee transfers and anti-terror commitments, while Sharaa's administration stressed unity and inclusive governance to mitigate sectarian risks. Minority communities in Alawite and Druze areas remained largely stable under monitoring. Russia retained influence through its bases, Israel conducted limited southern monitoring, and the US envoy stayed engaged, all complementing Syria's internal consolidation and broader international normalization efforts.

## **14. Europe**

Over the past week, the United Kingdom has maintained a consistent strategic posture combining diplomatic de-escalation, rejection of coercive maritime enforcement, and limited coalition-based maritime coordination. Following the collapse of U.S.–Iran negotiations in Islamabad and Washington's subsequent signaling of a naval blockade, Prime Minister Keir Starmer publicly confirmed that the UK would not participate in any blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. British policy has instead centered on preventing escalation and prioritizing freedom of navigation through political and diplomatic channels rather than force-based control of maritime access.

This position has been reinforced through sustained diplomatic engagement with Gulf partners. UK officials conducted high-level consultations in the region aimed at supporting stabilization of shipping routes and encouraging a return to negotiations between Washington and Tehran. These engagements are framed around reopening the

Strait and reducing escalation risks rather than enforcing maritime restrictions. London has simultaneously participated in broader multilateral discussions involving multiple states on non-offensive mechanisms to secure maritime passage, reflecting a preference for coalition coordination without entering a blockade framework.

At the policy level, the UK has maintained a clear distinction between maritime security support and participation in offensive escalation. While acknowledging the need for defensive maritime capabilities in the region, including minesweeping and protection of commercial shipping where necessary, Britain has explicitly avoided aligning these assets with U.S.-driven enforcement operations. The emphasis remains on deterrence of disruption rather than coercive control of the Strait.

France has positioned itself as one of the principal European actors attempting to structure a coordinated, non-escalatory maritime response to the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz. President Emmanuel Macron has led diplomatic messaging centered on preventing fragmentation of international shipping and avoiding unilateral military escalation. France has consistently rejected any concept of a blockade or coercive interdiction regime, instead promoting a framework based on maritime facilitation and defensive coordination.

Paris confirmed during the week that it is working with more than a dozen partners to organize a multinational arrangement aimed at ensuring safe passage through the Strait. This initiative focuses on escort coordination, risk monitoring, and de-escalatory signaling rather than enforcement operations against Iranian vessels. The French position has been to preserve freedom of navigation while explicitly avoiding alignment with U.S. blockade proposals following the breakdown of negotiations in Islamabad.

At the diplomatic level, France has maintained open channels with both Gulf partners and Iran-linked interlocutors through European and regional mechanisms, emphasizing crisis containment and preventing further militarization of the maritime domain. French messaging has repeatedly framed the situation as requiring political resolution rather than military pressure, particularly after the collapse of the U.S.–Iran negotiation track.

On the other hand, Hungary has undergone a major political shift following the parliamentary election held on 12 April 2026. The vote resulted in the defeat of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán after 16 years in power, marking one of the most significant political transitions in the European Union in recent years. Preliminary and subsequently confirmed results show that the opposition Tisza party, led by Péter Magyar, secured a decisive parliamentary majority, winning approximately 138 seats in the 199-seat National Assembly, compared to roughly 55 seats for Orbán’s Fidesz–KDNP alliance.

## **15. Global Superpowers**

Tensions escalated sharply ahead of the U.S. deadline for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, with Donald Trump issuing explicit threats of large-scale strikes targeting

Iranian power plants and critical infrastructure. Under pressure, a temporary de-escalation was reached on April 7: the United States and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire brokered by Pakistan. The arrangement included conditional safe passage through the Strait during the truce period. The announcement was made by Washington and formally acknowledged by Iran's Supreme National Security Council, with follow-on negotiations scheduled in Islamabad on April 11.

Between April 8–10, the ceasefire held but remained structurally fragile. Washington suspended offensive operations while maintaining defensive readiness. Simultaneously, the U.S. Department of Defense expanded rules of engagement for naval forces in and around the Strait, authorizing interdiction of vessels suspected of supporting Iranian logistics. This marked a transition from rhetorical deterrence to operational preparation, effectively laying the groundwork for a selective maritime control regime—short of a formal blockade but functionally proximate.

Parallel to this, the United States initiated consultations under the International Maritime Security Construct framework to build coalition backing. The United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and French Ministry for the Armed Forces signaled conditional support for escort operations, though both stopped short of endorsing blockade enforcement. This indicates a U.S. effort to multilateralize maritime control measures to enhance legitimacy and burden-sharing.

Talks held in Islamabad on April 11–12 failed to produce a final agreement despite extended negotiations. Iran tabled a 10-point counterproposal addressing nuclear constraints, missile limitations, proxy activity, and security guarantees. Initial U.S. signaling described it as a potential basis for progress, but it was subsequently rejected as insufficient. Following the breakdown, Trump announced that the U.S. Navy would move to enforce a blockade of the Strait, warning that any Iranian interference would trigger direct military response.

On the Iranian side, while formal adherence to the ceasefire was maintained, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps escalated its operational posture. Patrol density increased, accompanied by expanded drone surveillance and electronic interference activities. These “grey-zone” tactics—harassment of commercial vessels and close-proximity maneuvers—signal a calibrated strategy to contest U.S. presence without crossing escalation thresholds that would justify immediate large-scale retaliation.

External actors have adopted hedging strategies rather than alignment. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China publicly opposed unilateral maritime restrictions and emphasized the need to secure energy flows. In practice, Chinese-linked shipping firms began risk-adjusted routing, while Beijing intensified quiet diplomatic engagement with Gulf producers. Parallel reports suggest ongoing discussions regarding potential air defense support to Iran, though no confirmed transfers have occurred..

As of April 13, the ceasefire remains in effect but is increasingly unstable. The United States maintains defensive posturing while preparing enforcement options in the maritime domain. Oil markets have reacted sharply, with prices rising over 8% amid fears of disruption. Washington has also issued warnings to Beijing regarding potential military support to Iran, signaling concern over external involvement. The broader trajectory indicates a shift toward controlled confrontation, where both sides are positioning for escalation while attempting to avoid immediate full-scale conflict.

On the other hand, China maintained a consistent public position throughout the week, repeatedly urging all parties to respect the ceasefire and avoid actions that could destabilize the Strait of Hormuz. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China described U.S. naval measures as risky and emphasized that uninterrupted passage through the Strait serves the broader international community. Beijing continued to oppose unilateral maritime restrictions while sustaining diplomatic engagement with Gulf energy producers to secure supply continuity.

On April 7, China, alongside Russia, vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution intended to coordinate international efforts to protect commercial shipping in the Strait. China's Permanent Representative to the UN, Fu Cong, argued that the draft resolution was imbalanced, overly focused on constraining Iran, and risked escalating tensions rather than promoting de-escalation. Beijing maintained that the proposal did not adequately address what it described as the underlying drivers of the crisis, particularly prior U.S. and Israeli military actions. The veto prevented the establishment of a UN-backed framework for coordinated maritime security operations.

During April 8–10, China sustained its diplomatic messaging while adjusting its operational posture indirectly. Chinese-linked shipping companies began recalibrating routes in response to elevated risk levels in the Strait of Hormuz. At the same time, Beijing intensified quiet diplomatic contacts with Gulf states to ensure continuity of energy flows. Public statements continued to stress restraint and dialogue, without direct alignment with either Washington or Tehran.

Parallel to its diplomatic stance, U.S. intelligence assessments indicated that China may be preparing to expand security-related cooperation with Iran. Reports referenced potential discussions involving air defense systems, including man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADS), although no confirmed transfers were recorded during the reporting period. Additional reporting suggested that certain Chinese commercial entities were continuing to supply dual-use materials—including chemicals, fuel, and industrial components—that could support Iran's domestic production capacity.

Following the breakdown of U.S.-Iran talks in Islamabad on April 11–12, China maintained its call for de-escalation and a return to negotiations. Beijing avoided direct endorsement of Iran's position while continuing to criticize unilateral U.S. actions in the

maritime domain. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China reiterated that stability in the Strait is essential for global economic security and called for renewed diplomatic engagement.

Amid the deteriorating ceasefire environment, attention also turned to broader U.S.-China engagement. Preparations continued for a planned meeting between Xi Jinping and Donald Trump, scheduled for May 14–15 in Beijing. The upcoming summit is expected to address bilateral trade tensions alongside the evolving Middle East situation, with both sides signaling interest in stabilizing relations amid rising geopolitical pressure.

## **16. International and Regional Organizations**

### **United Nation**

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), under the Presidency of Bahrain, was dominated by failed attempts to secure a maritime resolution for the Middle East and urgent debates on the protection of humanitarian workers in conflict zones such as Gaza and Sudan.

On April 8, 2026, the US Mission to the UN issued a formal explanation of vote noting that a resolution condemning Iranian threats had achieved 136 co-sponsors despite divisions within the Council, while member states including the UK and Australia called for full implementation of Resolution 2730 on the protection of humanitarian personnel, with the UK criticizing the lack of accountability two years after the World Central Kitchen strike in Gaza, and co-chairs Colombia and Panama organized a meeting on the impact of climate-induced flooding on stability and security in South Sudan.

On April 9, 2026, member states led by Latvia and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) held a briefing for the ten non-permanent members focusing on human rights in South Sudan, while the Council also convened for a regular briefing on the situation in Kosovo featuring the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. On April 10, 2026, UN agencies warned in Geneva that the escalating Middle East war had increased delivery costs for humanitarian aid to Sudan due to reliance on logistics hubs in the United Arab Emirates, while the UN Secretary-General condemned a series of 100 Israeli strikes across Lebanon occurring within ten minutes and urged adherence to Resolution 1701.

On April 12, 2026, following the failure of peace talks in Islamabad, the Council announced an emergency meeting to address the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East, while between April 7 and 8, 2026, after the Russian and Chinese veto of a resolution on the Strait of Hormuz, diplomats engaged in closed consultations to salvage a compromise on commercial navigation safety, and on April 10, 2026, Bahrain circulated a

concept note for a high-level debate on the impact of rapid technological change including AI and ICTs on peacekeeping and international security.

## **Africa Union**

During the period of April 8 to April 12, 2026, the African Union (AU) focused heavily on electoral observation in Djibouti, humanitarian advocacy for the ongoing conflict in Sudan, and reinforcing internal security governance under the new PSC chairmanship.

The African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) was active in Djibouti for the April 10, 2026 presidential election, led by H.E. Bernard Makuza, former Prime Minister of Rwanda, where the mission monitored the April 10 vote and issued its Preliminary Statement on April 12 outlining findings on democratic governance and transparency, and following the vote, AUC Chairperson Mahamoud Ali Youssouf issued a statement on April 11 congratulating H.E. Ismail Omar Guelleh on his re-election.

On April 8, the AUC Chairperson officially welcomed the US-Iran Ceasefire Agreement, urging both parties to maintain dialogue to ensure lasting international peace, and also received letters of credence from the new Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Starting in April 2026, Ethiopia assumed the rotating chairmanship of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), and on April 8 a high-level meeting was convened to review the Provisional Programme of Work, which includes thematic sessions on hate crimes and country-specific reviews for the Central African Republic.

As the conflict in Sudan approached its third year, the AU continued to push for a humanitarian truce and unhindered access for aid workers, particularly in North Darfur, reiterating that there is "no viable military solution" and calling for an inclusive, civilian-led dialogue, while also issuing warnings regarding South Sudan emphasizing the need for credible December 2026 elections and the release of political detainees to prevent a return to civil war.

From April 8 to April 10, the Second Africa Urban Forum (AUF2) was held in Addis Ababa focusing on sustainable urban growth as a pillar of continental stability and Agenda 2063, while commemorative events for the 32nd anniversary of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda continued at AU Headquarters throughout the week under the theme "Remember – Unite – Renew."

## **Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)**

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was primarily engaged in election observation in Djibouti and coordinating regional responses to the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan.

On April 8, 2026, the IGAD Election Observation Mission (IGAD EOM) held high-level consultations with Djibouti's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Constitutional Council, and the National Human Rights Commission to ensure a peaceful and transparent electoral process, and on April 9, 2026, the IGAD EOM, led by H.E. Dr. Mulatu Teshome, intensified its pre-election activities by conducting training sessions for its 17 short-term observers from Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda.

Following the national vote, on April 11, 2026, IGAD Executive Secretary Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu issued an official statement congratulating H.E. Ismail Omar Guelleh on his re-election and commended the people of Djibouti for their peaceful participation in the democratic process, and on April 12, 2026, the IGAD EOM released its Preliminary Statement in Djibouti City offering an initial assessment of the election day's conduct and transparency.

On April 8, 2026, IGAD continued its advocacy for the Sudan Peace Process with the Executive Secretary coordinating with international partners to push for a humanitarian ceasefire and a return to civilian-led dialogue, while in South Sudan IGAD monitors (CTSAMVM) continued investigating reported ceasefire violations in the Upper Nile region emphasizing the need for all parties to adhere to the Permanent Ceasefire ahead of the December 2026 elections.

Between April 7 and 10, 2026, IGAD held a regional technical write-shop in Naivasha, Kenya to develop guides and tools for Preventing and Responding to Misinformation (PRM) aimed at mitigating election-related security risks across the Horn of Africa, and from April 8 to 10, 2026, IGAD representatives also participated in the Africa Urban Forum in Addis Ababa discussing how urban displacement in the IGAD region affects regional security and long-term integration.

## **European Union (EU)**

The European Union (EU) was primarily engaged in managing a major diplomatic rift with the United States regarding the conflict in Iran and preparing for internal strategic security reforms under the Cyprus Presidency.

On April 8, 2026, European Council President António Costa publicly condemned U.S. threats toward Iran citing parallels with Russian aggression and warning against a "double standard" in international law, while the U.S. Ambassador to the EU Andrew Puzder formally protested proposed EU safety rules that American carmakers claim would block full-size pickup trucks from European markets.

On April 10, 2026, the European Commission welcomed the full operationalization of the Entry/Exit System (EES) as a major milestone in digitalizing border management and internal security, while several EU Commissioners including Valdis Dombrovskis and

Dubravka Šuica traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the 2026 Spring Meetings of the World Bank and IMF.

On April 12, 2026, following the failure of high-stakes U.S.-Iran peace talks in Pakistan, the EU reiterated its call for diplomatic de-escalation and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to prevent a global energy crisis.

On April 8, 2026, internal EU reports highlighted growing frustration over unanimity voting with diplomats calling for a radical overhaul of the bloc's foreign policy system to unblock a €90 billion loan for Ukraine, while on April 10, 2026, the Council of the EU published its Forward Look outlining that the upcoming Foreign Affairs Council will focus on the fourth year of Russia's war in Ukraine and the escalating maritime crisis in the Middle East.

On April 12, 2026, EU security agencies began monitoring potential hybrid threats and cyberattacks ahead of the summer's World Cup focusing on protecting critical infrastructure and broadcasting signals, while work continued under the Cyprus Presidency on developing a new European Security Strategy to replace the 2022 Strategic Compass in response to the "unbound" posture of the U.S. administration, and on April 12, 2026, an Ad Hoc Committee of the Council of Europe supported by EU member states deployed to observe parliamentary elections in Hungary to ensure adherence to democratic standards.

## **ECOWAS**

On April 8, 2026, the ECOWAS Election Observation Mission (EOM), led by former Ghanaian President H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo, arrived at Cotonou International Airport to monitor the April 12 presidential election in Benin, and on April 10, 2026, Head of Mission Nana Akufo-Addo and Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security Dr. Abdel-Fatau Musah held a briefing session for 120 ECOWAS observers in Cotonou covering the political situation, security challenges, and observation methodology. On the same day, the Federal Government of Nigeria reaffirmed its leadership role within ECOWAS during a forum in Abuja emphasizing the link between Nigeria's progress and regional democratic stability, and on April 12, 2026, ECOWAS observers were deployed across Benin to monitor the conduct of the presidential election focusing on transparency and the peaceful nature of the voting process.

On April 8, 2026, the ECOWAS Commission continued high-level mobilization for its 50th Anniversary celebrations in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire promoting a "more integrated and resilient West Africa" amidst regional security threats, while on April 10, 2026, ECOWAS officially adopted a Three-Year Regional Action Plan on border governance during a meeting in Abidjan aimed at aligning border management with

regional priorities on peace, security, and cross-border cooperation to address terrorism and organized crime.

On April 12, 2026, reports highlighted ongoing efforts to restructure the budget for the ECOWAS Standby Force focusing on self-financing and regional troop contributions to combat the expansion of terrorism beyond the Sahel, while on April 10, 2026, the ECOWAS Court of Justice moved toward the launch of its Strategic Plan 2026–2030 aimed at strengthening the regional judicial system and ensuring the rule of law as a foundation for peace, and on April 12, 2026, the commission highlighted its active recruitment drive to fill strategic roles across its departments to strengthen administrative capacity to implement Vision 2050.

## NATO

On April 8, 2026, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte met with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House to address growing friction over burden-sharing, during which President Trump criticized European allies as a "paper tiger" for their perceived lack of support during tensions with Iran and reignited controversy by questioning the strategic management of Greenland, while Rutte also held separate meetings with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth to discuss long-term security guarantees for Ukraine and the Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL).

On April 9, 2026, Rutte delivered a keynote speech at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation Institute emphasizing the "shift in mindset" among European allies who reached the 2% GDP defense spending target by the end of 2025, while in Ankara the Turkish Defense Ministry hosted a roundtable to coordinate logistics for the July 2026 NATO Summit.

Between April 8 and 12, 2026, NATO intelligence and maritime assets monitored the implementation of the humanitarian truce in the Strait of Hormuz following the "Epic Fury" campaign focusing on the safety of commercial shipping lanes, while on April 10, 2026, NATO's Military Committee reviewed the status of "Eastern Sentry" and "Baltic Sentry," two deterrence initiatives aimed at protecting undersea and eastern flank infrastructure from hybrid threats.

Between April 10 and 12, 2026, Rutte attended the Bilderberg Meeting in Washington where discussions focused on the future of the transatlantic bond and the impact of "America First" policies on global security architecture, and on April 12, 2026, NATO reported ongoing progress on the UNITE – Brave innovation program, a joint initiative with Ukraine to accelerate battlefield technology such as counter-drone systems and AI-driven reconnaissance, while ongoing exercises Sea Shield 26 in the Black Sea and Romania and Neptune Strike 26-1 in the North Atlantic and Baltic regions continued to test multinational interoperability and high-end strike integration.



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