



# Weekly Geopolitical Report

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

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# Horn Review: Weekly Report

Apr 13 – Apr 19, 2026

## 1. Ethiopia

A central highlight of the week was Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s dual inauguration of transformative projects that underscore Ethiopia’s shift toward sustainable, self-driven growth. The launch of the Assela Wind Farm in the Arsi highlands, developed in partnership with Denmark, adds 100 megawatts of clean energy through 29 modern turbines, reflecting Ethiopia’s rapid expansion in renewable power capacity. This was complemented by the inauguration of the Haroo Dendi Lodge overlooking the Dendi Crater Lake, a flagship eco-tourism project under the “Dine for Generation” initiative. Together, these developments illustrate a coherent strategy: leveraging natural resources for both energy security and high-end tourism, generating jobs, foreign exchange, and long-term, environmentally sustainable economic growth.

This domestic momentum aligned closely with Ethiopia’s proactive economic diplomacy during the 2026 IMF–World Bank Spring Meetings. On the same day, Finance Minister Ahmed Shide engaged senior U.S. Treasury officials to deepen trade links, expand investment flows, and explore private-sector opportunities, including the planned Bishoftu International Airport as a strategic regional connectivity hub. U.S. counterparts welcomed Ethiopia’s reform progress and improving investment climate, agreeing to accelerate cooperation through technical assistance and closer institutional ties, signaling a shift from aid dependence to genuine economic partnership.

The economic engagements gained further strength through parallel IMF interactions validating Ethiopia’s Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda. On 16 April, National Bank of Ethiopia Governor Eyob Tekalign addressed a high-level panel on adapting to tightening global financing conditions, outlining domestically driven reforms that are strengthening the exchange-rate system, modernizing monetary policy, and expanding private sector participation. These efforts are already delivering measurable outcomes, including rising exports, improved reserves, and stronger fiscal performance, positioning Ethiopia as a resilient and reform-driven economy.

Building on these positive signals, Finance Minister Shide met IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on 19 April, who praised Ethiopia’s reform trajectory despite global headwinds. She highlighted sustained growth, easing inflation, and improved fiscal balances, reaffirming strong IMF and World Bank support. This interaction reinforces a virtuous cycle in which Ethiopia’s reform ownership generates tangible results that attract international confidence, further reinforcing the credibility and momentum of its economic transformation.

This expanding confidence extends into Ethiopia's growing role in global climate leadership. On 17 April, Prime Minister Abiy convened the COP32 National Steering Committee to review progress and align preparations with national priorities. By mobilizing cross-sector leadership early, Ethiopia is making a deliberate investment in hosting COP32 in 2027, aiming to secure green finance, technology transfer, and global visibility while strengthening domestic climate resilience and advancing sustainable development objectives.

At the same time, Ethiopia maintained a balanced diplomatic posture through sustained engagement with China. On 14 April, Chinese Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Hu Changchun met Ethiopian officials, with both sides reaffirming their strategic partnership and commitment to practical cooperation. The discussions also advanced the implementation of the "Outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa," reflecting Ethiopia's broader strategy of diversifying international partnerships while preserving stable, long-term relations with key global actors.

This external diplomatic alignment complements Ethiopia's strengthening domestic economic profile, particularly in agriculture, which is increasingly gaining continental recognition. The African Union Commission highlighted Ethiopia's notable productivity gains in wheat, coffee, and livestock value chains, attributing progress to coordinated policy reforms and institutional strengthening. Reinforcing this momentum, visiting African delegations, including from Liberia, pointed to Ethiopia's shift from wheat importer to exporter as a strong example of agricultural modernization and economic self-reliance, further solidifying its role in Africa's emerging food security architecture.

Ethiopia, through Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos, led a high-level discussion placing artificial intelligence at the center of peace and security governance, emphasizing its dual role in strengthening conflict prevention and early warning systems while cautioning against rising risks such as disinformation, cybercrime, and misuse by non-state actors, highlighting the urgent need for coordinated regulatory frameworks across Africa.

Meanwhile, steady progress in post-conflict normalization continued in Tigray. On 15 April, Tadesse Worede, President of the Tigray Interim Administration, rejected opposition to the extension of his mandate and reaffirmed his commitment to implementing federal responsibilities under the Pretoria framework. This includes advancing disarmament and the return of displaced persons, underscoring the consolidation of institutional governance and contributing to a more stable environment necessary for broader economic and diplomatic gains.

## 2. Sudan

The conflict in Sudan entered a more entrenched and internationally entangled phase over the past week, as the war marked its third anniversary with a persistent military stalemate, deepening humanitarian collapse, and expanding external involvement, underscoring the protracted nature of the crisis and the diminishing prospects for a near-term resolution.

Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces continued without decisive territorial shifts, reinforcing a battlefield impasse that has increasingly defined the conflict. Reports indicate that both sides remain locked in a war of attrition, relying on sustained offensives rather than breakthrough strategies. However, internal fractures within armed actors emerged as a notable development, highlighted by the defection of a senior RSF commander, Al-Nour Ahmed Adam “Al-Qubba,” to the Sudanese army. This move, one of the most significant defections in recent months, points to growing internal tensions within the RSF, even as retaliatory actions against associated communities underscore the risks of further localized violence and fragmentation.

At the same time, the internationalization of the conflict continued to deepen. The United States imposed sanctions on a network accused of recruiting foreign fighters, particularly Colombian mercenaries, to support the RSF, reflecting sustained external involvement in the war’s military dynamics. Parallel reports of arms brokerage networks, including links involving Iranian intermediaries, further reinforce concerns that Sudan is becoming an increasingly complex node within transnational conflict systems. These developments, combined with continued regional political engagement, illustrate how external actors are both shaping and prolonging the conflict trajectory.

Humanitarian conditions deteriorated further during the reporting period, with multiple assessments describing the situation as catastrophic. Reports indicate that millions of Sudanese are now surviving on severely reduced food intake, in some cases limited to a single meal per day, reflecting widespread famine-like conditions and the collapse of livelihoods. Displacement continues at scale, both internally and across borders, with Sudanese refugees facing mounting barriers, including legal restrictions and bureaucratic constraints in transit and host countries. The regional spillover of the crisis is becoming more pronounced, as neighboring states and distant transit hubs alike struggle to manage increasing flows of displaced populations.

The health sector has reached critical levels of breakdown. International organizations warned of a deepening health crisis driven by the destruction of infrastructure, shortages of medical supplies, and limited operational capacity. Access to healthcare remains severely constrained, with conflict-affected populations facing heightened risks from preventable diseases and untreated conditions. Simultaneously, protection concerns

intensified, particularly in regions such as Blue Nile and South Kordofan, where renewed hostilities have heightened risks for civilians, including women and vulnerable groups.

Socio-economic conditions continued to deteriorate sharply. The war has triggered widespread disruption to essential services, including electricity, with reports highlighting prolonged power outages that are affecting daily life, education, and economic activity. The cumulative economic impact of the conflict remains severe, with estimates suggesting that Sudan's economy has been set back decades, accompanied by rising poverty and structural collapse. Despite these conditions, the government has initiated efforts to re-engage with international financial institutions, including the World Bank and IMF, signaling an attempt to position itself for eventual reconstruction and debt relief, though such prospects remain contingent on improved stability.

Diplomatic and economic signaling during the week pointed to cautious attempts at long-term recovery planning despite ongoing conflict. Preparations for a Sudanese-Saudi investment forum scheduled for June, alongside proposed large-scale partnership projects, suggest that elements within the state and private sector are seeking to maintain external economic ties and lay groundwork for post-war reconstruction. However, the feasibility of such initiatives remains constrained by the current security environment and institutional fragmentation.

Beyond immediate humanitarian and economic impacts, the conflict is also generating long-term societal and cultural consequences. Reports highlighted the growing risks to Sudan's cultural heritage, including illicit trafficking of artifacts, as well as the broader erosion of social structures under prolonged displacement and violence. At the same time, international advocacy efforts, including religious and humanitarian organizations, continue to call for renewed commitments to peace and justice, though these appeals have yet to translate into meaningful political breakthroughs.

Overall, the trajectory of the conflict reflects increasing entrenchment across military, humanitarian, and geopolitical dimensions. The persistence of battlefield stalemate, coupled with expanding external involvement and accelerating socio-economic collapse, suggests that Sudan is moving deeper into a protracted conflict phase. Without a unified political process or effective coordination among international actors, the crisis is likely to continue evolving as a complex and regionalized instability, with far-reaching implications for both domestic cohesion and broader regional security.

### **3. Egypt**

Egypt has positioned itself as a central diplomatic broker in the escalating Middle East tensions surrounding the US-Iran ceasefire process, forging coordinated outreach that balances its longstanding US partnership with emerging ties to Turkey and key Muslim-majority states. In direct talks on April 14, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty reviewed the fragile ceasefire with Iran and stressed the urgency of securing lasting regional peace, underscoring Egypt's mediation role in hostage releases and Gaza aid flows while advancing post-conflict governance planning that explicitly bars Hamas from future control.

This engagement flowed seamlessly into Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan's phone diplomacy the following day, when he conferred separately with Abdelatty and Iraq's Fouad Hussein to align positions on the ceasefire's current state and upcoming negotiation rounds. These bilateral exchanges culminated in Türkiye's announcement to host the third quadrilateral foreign ministers' meeting—Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye—on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, explicitly aimed at crafting joint responses to the US-Israel war on Iran and pushing forward a durable US-Iran deal. Collectively, these moves reflect Egypt's strategic calculus: by embedding itself in multiple overlapping channels, Cairo seeks to shape any post-ceasefire order, protect its Suez-dependent trade interests, and prevent spillover instability that could inflame domestic economic pressures.

Complementing this diplomatic activism, Egypt is methodically diversifying its energy and logistics architecture to insulate itself from chokepoint vulnerabilities exposed by the Iran conflict. On April 14, Azerbaijani Energy Minister Parviz Shahbazov met Egypt's Ambassador to Baku, Houssam-Eldine Reda, to advance large-scale bilateral cooperation; both sides welcomed a framework agreement between Azerbaijan's SOCAR and Egypt's General Petroleum Corporation while exploring renewable-energy ventures with Elsewedy Electric to satisfy Azerbaijan's surging electricity demand from data-center expansion.

In parallel, Cairo and Riyadh are quietly constructing a new maritime-logistics corridor that bypasses the Strait of Hormuz entirely, rerouting Gulf-bound supplies through Egyptian ports and Saudi facilities to shorten transit times, cut costs, and shield trade from Persian Gulf volatility. Yet these proactive steps come against a sobering IMF assessment released this week that Egypt's economic growth has been materially eroded by global commodity shocks—chiefly energy-price surges—prompting a cumulative 1.1-percentage-point downgrade in growth forecasts for fiscal 2026 and 2027, given the country's heavy reliance on imported oil.

To translate economic hedging into tangible self-reliance, Egyptian authorities are accelerating domestic industrial capacity along the Suez Canal corridor. The Suez Canal Authority formally launched its new fleet of Azima tugboats in Ismailia, a deliberate investment in local shipbuilding that simultaneously enhances canal operational safety and reduces dependence on foreign vessel maintenance providers. This initiative forms part of a broader push to localize critical maritime services, thereby safeguarding the

waterway's \$9-billion-plus annual revenue stream at a moment when global supply-chain rerouting and regional conflicts threaten its primacy.

At the political level, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has drawn a firm red line on Arab sovereignty, signaling that Egypt will not tolerate external aggression against Gulf partners. During high-level consultations with Kuwaiti officials on April 19—including Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah—Sisi explicitly rejected any infringement on Kuwait's sovereignty or that of any Arab state, declaring their security an “integral part” of Egypt's own national security and pledging unequivocal support for protective measures over Kuwaiti resources. In the same strategic vein, Sisi held direct talks with Djibouti's president to deepen bilateral cooperation, focusing on security and economic linkages across the Red Sea and Horn of Africa—waters vital to Suez traffic and increasingly contested by external powers.

Taken together, this week's developments paint a clear strategic portrait: Egypt is not merely reacting to regional turmoil but actively constructing a layered security-and-prosperity architecture. By weaving US, Turkish, and Gulf diplomacy around the Iran file, diversifying energy away from traditional suppliers, fortifying the Suez through indigenous industry, and anchoring Arab solidarity against perceived threats, Cairo aims to convert geopolitical flux into leverage—preserving revenue lifelines, cushioning economic shocks, and elevating its role as indispensable regional stabilizer. The approach reveals a pragmatic realism: stability abroad is the prerequisite for growth at home, and Egypt intends to shape both.

#### **4. Eritrea**

On April 14, a delegation led by Hagos Gebrehiwot and Eritrea's Minister of Trade and Industry Nesredin Salah visited Egypt for a series of high-level meetings with senior officials, including Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and multiple sectoral ministers. The talks covered industrial cooperation, transport and maritime links, renewable energy, agriculture, and pharmaceutical regulation, indicating a widening scope of economic engagement between Cairo and Asmara. The visit reflects a broader pattern of deepening Eritrea–Egypt relations, with Cairo increasingly expanding its presence in the Horn of Africa through economic and infrastructural channels. This growing engagement is also occurring against the backdrop of Egypt's evolving regional strategy toward Ethiopia, particularly its Nile-related tensions, where closer ties with Eritrea appear to form part of a wider effort to build indirect leverage in the sub-region.

On April 14, President Isaias Afwerki received the credentials of two resident and five non-resident ambassadors in Asmara, including envoys from Japan, India, Brazil, Canada, Thailand, Slovakia, and Armenia. The meetings included general pledges to expand cooperation across various sectors, with some envoys pointing to development and diaspora-related engagement, particularly in the case of Canada. The simultaneous

accreditation of multiple ambassadors reflects a gradual uptick in diplomatic engagement with Eritrea, as a range of states expand their formal presence and channels of contact with the regime. This increased activity also aligns with Asmara's ongoing efforts to broaden external ties, while external actors appear increasingly attentive to Eritrea's strategic location in the Horn of Africa.

Canada's participation in this round is notable, as its ambassador publicly emphasized a shift toward "mutually beneficial partnerships" despite political differences, alongside references to shared commitments on sovereignty and regional stability. This signals a broader pattern in which parts of the West appear increasingly willing to deepen engagement with Eritrea, even in the absence of governance reforms or changes in its long-standing political trajectory. The trend suggests a gradual recalibration in external approaches toward Asmara, shaped less by conditionality and more by shifting geopolitical and regional considerations in the Horn of Africa.

On April 15, Eritrea's ambassador to Qatar, Ali Ibrahim Ahmed, met Qatari Education Minister Lolwah Al Khater in Doha to discuss expanding educational opportunities for Eritrean students, particularly members of the diaspora living in Qatar. While formally centred on education cooperation, the meeting also reflects the continued durability of Eritrea's relationship with Qatar, a long-standing external partner whose ties with Asmara have periodically carried wider political and regional significance beyond the immediate sectoral agenda.

## **5. Djibouti**

During the period of April 13 to April 20, 2026, Djibouti's political and diplomatic landscape was dominated by the aftermath of the April 10 presidential election, with developments centered on the formal validation of President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh's sixth-term victory and a wave of international diplomatic endorsements. The African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) released their preliminary observer statements praising the electoral process for its calm and peaceful atmosphere, affirming that it met national and international standards for transparency and credibility, while provisional results confirmed a high voter turnout of 86.52% (226,552 voters) out of 256,467 registered citizens.

International recognition further reinforced the outcome, as reports such as those from Xinhua described the election as a "well-coordinated" process reflecting the Djiboutian people's commitment to national stability despite surrounding regional security challenges. At the domestic level, state media and Associated Press coverage emphasized continuity and stability as the Ministry of the Interior moved to finalize the official tally for submission to the Constitutional Council, while diplomatic momentum was strengthened by a formal congratulatory message from Chinese President Xi Jinping expressing confidence in Guelleh's leadership and highlighting deepened political trust,

alongside additional regional and international messages publicized by the Djibouti News Agency (ADI), reinforcing Djibouti's strategic role as a stable partner for major foreign military powers including the United States, China, and France.

Throughout the period, the security environment remained tight but stable, with the government maintaining order following the landslide victory of 97.8% of the vote and mitigating risks of unrest from opposition groups that had boycotted the election. Despite ongoing regional tensions, Djibouti sustained its position as a secure hub for international maritime commerce and a key partner in counter-terrorism efforts, preserving internal stability while reinforcing its geopolitical importance.

## **6. South Sudan**

Developments in South Sudan over the past week point to a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian and security environment, marked by escalating violence, mounting famine risks, and increasing international concern, as the country approaches a critical inflection point with limited institutional capacity to contain the crisis.

Renewed violence across multiple regions has intensified pressure on already fragile communities, with the United Nations warning that the country stands at a “dangerous crossroads.” Clashes and insecurity continue to drive displacement and undermine local stability, while newly reported burial sites linked to recent violence highlight the hidden and often underreported human cost of the conflict. These dynamics reinforce a pattern of localized but persistent instability that continues to erode the fragile peace framework established in previous years.

The humanitarian situation has worsened significantly, with multiple agencies warning that South Sudan is at risk of descending into full-scale famine. Intensifying conflict, combined with disrupted livelihoods and restricted humanitarian access, has pushed large segments of the population toward extreme food insecurity. The convergence of these factors reflects not only immediate crisis conditions but also structural vulnerabilities in food systems and governance, leaving millions increasingly dependent on external assistance for survival.

Humanitarian operations remain severely constrained. Aid agencies report limited response capacity due to insecurity, logistical barriers, and resource shortages, creating uneven assistance coverage across regions. The spillover effects of the crisis are also becoming more visible, with continued refugee movements into neighboring countries such as Ethiopia placing additional strain on regional humanitarian systems. At the same time, the return of deportees from Sudan underscores the cyclical and multidirectional nature of displacement affecting South Sudanese populations.

Protection concerns are escalating in parallel with the humanitarian crisis. Reports of attacks on healthcare facilities and rising threats to medical personnel highlight the

shrinking operational space for essential services. These incidents not only disrupt immediate care but also signal a broader erosion of humanitarian norms, further exposing vulnerable populations to preventable risks.

Politically, the situation remains fragile and contested. International actors, including the United Kingdom and the United States, have expressed concern over the current trajectory, emphasizing that only inclusive dialogue and an immediate cessation of hostilities can stabilize the country. Criticism of government actions, particularly those perceived as destabilizing, reflects growing external frustration with the lack of progress in consolidating peace.

At the institutional level, the government approved amendments to the 2018 peace agreement, indicating ongoing attempts to recalibrate the political framework. However, the effectiveness of these adjustments remains uncertain in the absence of sustained political consensus and improved security conditions. Simultaneously, continued engagement with international actors, including planned economic reviews by the International Monetary Fund and leadership changes within the United Nations peacekeeping mission, suggests ongoing but constrained external support for stabilization efforts.

Overall, South Sudan's trajectory is increasingly defined by the convergence of escalating violence, deepening humanitarian distress, and fragile political processes. The growing risk of famine, coupled with limited response capacity and persistent governance challenges, indicates that the country is entering a more acute phase of crisis. Without immediate de-escalation and meaningful political engagement, the current trajectory points toward further deterioration, with significant implications for both domestic stability and regional humanitarian dynamics.

## **7. Somalia and Somaliland**

### **Somalia**

**U.S. AFRICOM Strike Against ISIS-Somalia:** In coordination with the Federal Government of Somalia, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) conducted a precision airstrike targeting ISIS-Somalia militants on April 17. The strike took place in the vicinity of the Golis Mountains approximately 50 kilo meters southeast of Bossaso in the Puntland region. The operation was designed to degrade the group's capacity to threaten U.S., Somali and regional interests. Initial assessments reported no civilian casualties.

**Presidential Thanks to Turkey for Military Support Against Al-Shabaab:** On April 13 President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud extended special gratitude to Turkey for its sustained military support in the ongoing campaign against Al-Shabaab. The acknowledgment

scores the continued operational cooperation between Somali forces and Turkish military advisors and equipment providers.

**Deployment of Elite Forces to Avert Potential Rebellion:** On April 18, the federal government deployed heavily armed Turkish trained Gorgor special forces around a military camp on the outskirts of Mogadishu. The deployment followed concerns over a possible rebellion led by an army officer commanding the camp reflecting persistent internal security challenges as political transitions loom.

**International Condemnation of Israel's Diplomatic Engagement with Somaliland:** A major diplomatic crisis unfurled following Israel's appointment of a diplomatic representative to Somaliland which Mogadishu condemned as a violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. On April 16 Somalia formally rejected the move. Somaliland rejected Mogadishu's position asserting its independent right to engage internationally.

On April 18, a joint statement was issued in Islamabad by foreign ministers from 12 Muslim majority nations including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Türkiye, Pakistan, Indonesia, and others strongly condemning the Israeli decision as a flagrant violation of Somalia's sovereignty and a threat to Horn of Africa stability. The Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation issued parallel condemnations.

On April 19, the African Union Commission formally expressed deep concern and condemned the appointment of an envoy to Somaliland reaffirming the AU's support for Somalia's unity and territorial integrity and stressing that the AU does not recognize Somaliland as an independent state.

**Somalia Warns of Repercussions for Sovereignty Violations:** In direct response to the Israel-Somaliland issued Somalia's Ambassador to Ethiopia and the African Union, Abdullahi Warfaa, issued a warning on April 18 that any country interfering in Somalia's internal affairs could face repercussions including potential restrictions on access to the strategic Bab-el-Mandeb Strait.

**Somalia-Turkey High-Level Talks on Energy and Trade:** President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud held discussions with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul focused on strengthening energy and trade cooperation. The Somali delegation included the Minister of Ports and Marine Transport and the state minister for Foreign Affairs. The talks built on existing agreements including offshore oil exploration efforts involving Turkish drilling assets in Somali waters.

**Somalia-India Bilateral Reaffirmation:** Somalia and India reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties following the formal presentation of credentials by India's newly appointed Ambassador to Somalia resident in Nairobi H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika. Somalia's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, H.E. Abdisalam

Abdi Ali hosted the meeting in Mogadishu with both sides emphasizing concrete results-oriented cooperation in economic projects, technical assistance, and development.

**Somalia at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum:** Somali officials including State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ali Mohammad Omar actively participated in panels and bilateral meetings at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Türkiye from April 17–19. Discussions focused on regional ownership in Horn of Africa mediation, Somalia-Türkiye cooperation and broader diplomatic issues. Somalia used the platform to reaffirm its positions on sovereignty and international partnerships.

**Parliament Term Expires Amid Political Uncertainty:** On April 14 the term of Somalia's federal parliament officially expired with no elections planned to raise fears of a political crisis. Former Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid warned on April 15 that the country had entered a difficult phase of a constitutional vacuum. The federal government subsequently informed foreign ambassadors in Mogadishu of a one-year mandate extension under the new constitution seeking to reassure international partners of its legal continuity.

**Controversy Over Southwest State Election and Direct Vote Pledge:** On April 16 a late-night meeting at the presidential palace sparked controversy after President Mohamud anointed a sole candidate for the Southwest state presidency. Separately on April 19 a former adviser to the President stated that the President's pledge to hold a direct vote was a smokescreen for an indirect electoral model raising further questions about political transparency.

**Domestic Criticism of Turkey's Resource Agreements:** On April 17 a Somali senator publicly labeled Turkey a resources pirate following the launch of offshore oil exploration in Somali waters. The senator alleged deception in the underlying agreements and warned that the Somali public would not forget what was termed a betrayal of national interests.

## **Somaliland**

**Israel Appoints First Non-Resident Ambassador to Somaliland:** In a diplomatic development Israel officially appointed Michael Lotem formerly Ambassador to Kenya as its first non-resident Ambassador to Somaliland. The announcement reported prominently on April 15 followed Israel's earlier recognition of Somaliland. Concurrently Somaliland's Presidential Adviser Mohamed Hagi received diplomatic approval to serve as Somaliland's first Ambassador to Israel. Somaliland officials and media welcomed the move as a step in bilateral ties emphasizing cooperation in security, trade, and regional stability. President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro in his annual address subsequently hailed Israel as a reliable partner.

**Somaliland Rejects International Condemnations and Defends Sovereign Right to Engage:** Following widespread regional and international backlash against the Israel diplomatic move the Government of Somaliland issued multiple formal responses

defending its independent foreign policy. On April 16 Somaliland rejected Somalia's strong condemnation describing Mogadishu's objections as misleading and asserting its sovereign right to conduct foreign relations. Officials highlighted Somaliland's effective governance, democratic credentials and practical contributions to counter terrorism and maritime security as justification for deepening international partnerships.

On April 18, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released an official statement responding to growing international criticism reaffirming Somaliland's sovereign right to independent foreign policy and rejecting external interference. On April 19 Somaliland issued a response rejecting the joint statement by foreign ministers from multiple Arab and Muslim majority countries as well as the African Union Commission's formal condemnation describing the criticisms as politically motivated and asserting that its status is grounded in historical facts, effective governance and international law. Officials stressed that such engagements enhance regional stability rather than undermine it.

Presidential Annual Address: President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi delivered his annual address before a joint session of parliament outlining Somaliland's achievements, key challenges, and future vision. The speech highlighted Somaliland's positioning, stability, and push for broader international engagement including in security and economic areas. The President specifically hailed Israel as a reliable partner following its recognition of Somaliland and ongoing bilateral cooperation.

Maritime Security Coordination Meeting in Hargeisa: The Somaliland Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted a high level Maritime Security Coordination Meeting in Hargeisa on April 13. Director General Mohamed Abdirahman opened the session which reviewed emerging maritime risks in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Participants agreed to enhance inter agency coordination, strengthen Maritime Domain Awareness and improve timely information sharing. A communiqué was issued reaffirming Somaliland's commitment to maritime security and regional stability. The engagement scored Somaliland's proactive role in addressing Red Sea threats, including those linked to Houthi activities and broader Horn of Africa security challenges.

Quarterly Coordination Mechanism Addresses Terrorism and Transnational Crime: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs convened a quarterly Maritime Security Coordination Mechanism meeting in Hargeisa with participants from key government institutions reviewing emerging threats in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The meeting explicitly addressed efforts to combat terrorism, transnational crime, smuggling networks and other persistent threats along the coastline. Somaliland reaffirmed its commitment to working with regional and international partners to enhance maritime domain awareness, information sharing, and the safety of vital sea lanes.

International Condemnations of Israel-Somaliland Ties: April 18 saw the release of a high profile joint statement by foreign ministers of 16 Arab and Islamic nations including

Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Bangladesh, Algeria, Palestine, Türkiye, Indonesia, Pakistan, Mauritania, Jordan, and Oman. The statement, issued from Doha, strongly condemned Israel's appointment of a diplomatic envoy to Somaliland as a flagrant violation of Somalia's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, warning of risks to regional stability in the Horn of Africa. The African Union Commission issued a separate formal statement on April 19 expressing deep concern and reaffirming support for Somalia's sovereignty, while stating that the AU does not recognize Somaliland as an independent state. Somaliland viewed these condemnations as politically motivated attempts to undermine its de facto independence.

## **8. Yemen**

On April 16, Houthi leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi said the current ceasefire is fragile and could collapse, pointing to possible escalation in Gaza and continued Israeli military activity in Lebanon as key risks. He stated that the truce is limited to roughly two weeks for negotiations, adding that the first round had failed over U.S. demands while efforts continue to hold another round that could produce a longer period of stability. The speech warned that conflict may expand across the region if attacks continue, describing developments as part of a wider confrontation involving Iran-aligned forces, and linked ongoing escalation to growing economic and political pressures beyond the immediate war zones.

In addition, on April 19, Major General Mohammed al-Atifi, defence minister in the Houthi authorities, stated that the Houthis are "on high alert to confront any aggression against the Yemeni people," signalling continued military readiness alongside the political messaging of the leadership.

On April 19, the Houthis warned that the Bab el-Mandeb Strait could be closed, with senior official Hussein al-Ezzi stating that no force would be able to reopen the waterway if such a decision were taken. The threat targets one of the world's most important maritime corridors linking the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, through which major volumes of global trade and energy supplies pass. At the narrative level, the warning appears aimed at increasing pressure on the United States and Israel to seek a more durable solution to shipping disruptions. Its coverage by Chinese and Iranian outlets suggests this rhetoric may also be being capitalized on to amplify wider strategic messaging.

On April 19, the Houthis condemned Israel's expanding ties with Somaliland, describing any Israeli presence there as a "red line" and warning it could heighten tensions across the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. The statement follows Israel's appointment of its first ambassador to Somaliland after recognizing the territory in December, moves that have been strongly rejected by Somalia as violations of its sovereignty. For the Houthis, the issue carries strategic significance beyond diplomacy: Somaliland's location across the Gulf of Aden from Yemen raises concerns that closer Israeli ties could evolve into

security or military cooperation, adding a new dimension to the wider Red Sea confrontation.

Following a recent visit to Yemen earlier in April, UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg warned the Security Council on April 14 that the country remains highly exposed to renewed regional shocks despite relative de-escalation since the 2022 truce. He noted that rising fuel and food costs linked to wider Middle East tensions are compounding long-standing structural issues, including divided state institutions, blocked exports, and delayed salaries in areas under the internationally recognized government led by the Presidential Leadership Council. Humanitarian officials added that over 22 million people require assistance, with acute hunger, malnutrition, and strained health services worsening, while access constraints and detentions of aid workers continue to disrupt relief operations.

## **9. Kenya**

Kenya held steady through the week of April 13–19, 2026, as President William Ruto’s government juggled everyday coalition strains inside the Kenya Kwanza alliance while rolling out quick economic relief to keep public frustration in check. ODM partners voiced complaints about lawmaker harassment and UDA plans to contest seats in their traditional strongholds, but the friction stayed contained without any formal split. At the same time, Parliament fast-tracked a VAT cut on fuel from 16 percent down to 8 percent for three months, bringing pump prices noticeably lower and giving ordinary Kenyans a bit of breathing room on transport and living costs. Opposition voices kept up their criticism, yet nothing boiled over into protests or major unrest, leaving the domestic scene tense but manageable as all sides quietly eyed the 2027 race.

On the regional and global front, Kenya quietly pushed forward its role as East Africa’s practical diplomatic and economic player, focusing on Europe to feed the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda. Midweek, Portuguese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Paulo Rangel held the first formal high-level talks in Nairobi since the two countries opened relations in 1977; Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi led the sessions, Ruto joined at State House, and the conversation stayed grounded in real deliverables: EU trade access, Portuguese investment in farming and tech, plus joint efforts on the blue economy, ocean protection, energy, and climate. The week ended with Ruto flying to Italy on Sunday the 19th for a three-day state visit that included meetings with President Sergio Mattarella and Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni plus an economic forum aimed at unlocking dam financing, expanding trade, and tapping the Kenyan diaspora. With no big crises or summits pulling focus, these steps simply reinforced Nairobi’s steady habit of turning bilateral ties into tangible gains while keeping its position as the region’s logistics, finance, and investment hub firmly in place. Taken

together, the week showed Kenya balancing routine political housekeeping at home with deliberate, low-drama outreach abroad to lock in longer-term stability and growth.

## **10. The Gulf Countries**

### **Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia has concentrated on reinforcing its security posture and carefully balancing its geopolitical alignments: it heightened vigilance over Red Sea maritime routes amid continued spillover risks from the Gaza war and persistent Houthi threats linked to Yemen, while maintaining internal counterterrorism stability; diplomatically, Riyadh sustained coordination with key Middle Eastern partners including Egypt, the UAE, and Qatar on regional de-escalation tracks, particularly on Yemen and Sudan, while preserving cautious engagement dynamics with Iran under the China-brokered normalization framework; at the same time, it deepened strategic defense and security consultations with the United States, signaling continued reliance on Western security guarantees, even as it expanded parallel ties with China and Russia to diversify its geopolitical leverage.

Overall Saudi Arabia weekly focus remains on structured diplomacy and security coordination. Riyadh is positioning itself as a stabilizing actor, particularly around Red Sea security and the Sudan crisis. Its approach is formal and state-centric, relying on official agreements and partnerships, including security cooperation with Somalia. It continues to support negotiated outcomes in Sudan, aiming to contain the conflict without becoming directly entangled.

### **UAE**

United Arab Emirates has maintained an assertive but calibrated security and geopolitical posture: it remained highly engaged in Red Sea and Gulf maritime security amid continued fallout from the Gaza war and Houthi-linked disruptions, while sustaining strong internal security and counterterrorism coordination.

Diplomatically, Abu Dhabi worked closely with Saudi Arabia and Egypt on de-escalation efforts in Yemen and Sudan, while also keeping pragmatic channels open with Iran to avoid direct confrontation; in the broader Middle East, it continued positioning itself as a flexible mediator, balancing ties across rival camps; with Western partners, particularly the United States, the UAE reinforced defense, intelligence, and economic cooperation, while simultaneously deepening strategic relations with China and maintaining dialogue with Russia as part of its multi-alignment approach; overall, its policy reflects a steady effort to protect trade routes, expand geopolitical influence, and hedge between global powers without overcommitting to any single bloc.

The United Arab Emirates continues to operate through a more flexible and network-driven model. This week reinforces its influence in Sudan through indirect partnerships that shape the conflict's trajectory. Beyond Sudan, its presence in the Horn is anchored in port infrastructure, logistics, and relationships with local actors, particularly in Somaliland. This gives it operational leverage in fragmented political environments where formal state authority is limited.

## **Qatar**

Qatar has taken a careful but active approach to regional security and geopolitics, shaped largely by rising tensions around Iran. Doha pushed back firmly against claims that it was striking side arrangements with Tehran, emphasizing that its actions are coordinated with regional partners rather than pursued independently. At the same time, it remained deeply involved in diplomatic efforts, supporting mediation channels and calling for a broader political resolution instead of short-term ceasefires.

On the security front, Qatar increased its vigilance following attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure and concerns over LNG supply disruptions, underscoring the fragility of regional energy and maritime routes. In its external relations, it continued close coordination with the United States on security while maintaining a balanced line with Iran keeping communication open but clearly opposing escalation in sensitive areas like the Strait of Hormuz. Taken together, Qatar's posture reflects a deliberate balancing act: staying anchored to Western security ties while preserving its role as a regional mediator and limiting the risk of wider conflict.

In Qatar, the approach is quieter but strategically deliberate. Doha maintains open channels across competing actors, focusing on mediation and diplomatic access rather than direct involvement. This week reflects a strategy of selective engagement, allowing it to remain relevant without being tied to a single alignment.

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

Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain play more limited but still meaningful roles. Kuwait continues its humanitarian and financial contributions, Oman maintains a neutral and mediating posture, and Bahrain aligns closely with Saudi Arabia's broader security perspective. While they are not leading actors, they contribute to the overall Gulf presence that shapes engagement patterns in Africa.

The intersection of all these dynamics is most visible in the Horn of Africa, where Gulf engagement is deeply embedded. In Sudan, the war continues to fragment with no meaningful diplomatic breakthrough this week. External involvement, particularly from Gulf states, is now structural rather than peripheral, shaping both the duration and intensity of the conflict. This has direct spillover effects on neighboring states and turns Sudan into the central node of regional instability.

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

Across the Sahel the regional path continues to harden around security-first governance and resistance to external pressure, but the internal situations differ in important ways.

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

Further south, Democratic Republic of the Congo remains centered on its eastern conflict, which continues to draw in regional actors and complicate diplomatic efforts. This week shows continued reliance on multilateral mechanisms and peacekeeping structures, even as their effectiveness is increasingly questioned. The conflict is becoming more regionalized, linking Central Africa to broader instability patterns across the continent. Unlike Sahel military regimes, Kinshasa is not rejecting external engagement, but it is increasingly frustrated by its limits.

### **Mali**

In Mali the leadership is no longer treating the insurgency as a temporary crisis but as a long-term restructuring of state authority. Military operations expanded in the north and center, yet territorial control remains uneven. More significant is the diplomatic posture: Bamako is consolidating its break from ECOWAS and Western partners while deepening security cooperation with Russia and other non-Western actors. Its role within the Alliance of Sahel States is becoming more institutional, suggesting a shift from ad hoc coordination to a more durable political and security bloc. The state is prioritizing regime survival and strategic autonomy over reintegration into previous regional frameworks.

### **Burkina Faso**

In Burkina Faso, the situation remains the most fragile among the Sahel core states. This week, the government intensified its reliance on civilian auxiliaries to compensate for limited military capacity. While this has helped secure parts of urban territory, it is also deepening cycles of violence in rural areas where insurgent groups remain highly mobile. The conflict is structurally embedded and no longer episodic. Politically, Ouagadougou is fully aligned with Mali and Niger, reinforcing a shared rejection of external pressure and a redefinition of sovereignty centered on internal mobilization. Even if security conditions improve, this ideological shift is unlikely to reverse.

### **Niger**

Niger is moving in the same direction but with more caution. The military leadership continues to resist external demands for a transition while attempting to avoid complete isolation. This week reflects a balancing act between consolidating internal control and maintaining limited diplomatic engagement. However, security cooperation has decisively

shifted away from Western partners, and Niger is embedding itself more deeply within the Sahel bloc. The space for neutrality is narrowing as regional alignments solidify.

## **Chad**

In Chad, the posture is more flexible but increasingly constrained by geography. The country is dealing directly with spillover from Sudan, including refugee inflows and cross-border insecurity. This week shows a continued focus on internal stability and border management. Unlike Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, Chad has not broken with Western or regional frameworks, but it is quietly recalibrating. It is aware that the Sahel is fragmenting into competing systems and is hedging its position to avoid isolation while preserving strategic flexibility.

## **Equatorial Guinea**

In Equatorial Guinea, internal stability contrasts with growing geopolitical awareness. The government continues to leverage its energy resources while monitoring instability in neighboring regions, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea. This week reflects a strategy focused on protecting economic infrastructure and maintaining political control rather than projecting influence. It represents a model of insulation in a region otherwise defined by conflict spillover.

## **12. North Africa**

### **Morocco**

Morocco is methodically expanding its network of parliamentary and diplomatic partnerships to diversify alliances beyond traditional European and Gulf partners, positioning itself as a proactive player in South-South cooperation amid regional flux. On April 16, during Azerbaijani Parliament Speaker Sahiba Gafarova's working visit to Istanbul, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Azerbaijan's Milli Majlis and Morocco's House of Councilors. The pact, formalized after direct talks between Gafarova and House President Mohamed Ould Errachid, commits both legislatures to deepen committee-level contacts, activate friendship groups, and coordinate more closely inside the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network.

Officials from both sides hailed the move as a practical tool to translate existing political goodwill and mutual support in international forums into tangible institutional ties. For Rabat, this agreement is not merely ceremonial: it locks in a channel with a resource-rich, strategically located partner that shares Morocco's preference for pragmatic, multi-vector diplomacy and can offer quiet backing on core files such as Western Sahara.

This outward diplomatic layering dovetails directly with Morocco's calibrated management of inward migration pressures, particularly the sharp rise in Sudanese arrivals fleeing the three-year civil war. Since April 2023, Sudanese nationals have become the largest group of new asylum seekers reaching Morocco's eastern border via Libya and Algeria, with UNHCR registering 5,290 by December 2025 out of 22,370 total refugees and asylum seekers from 67 countries. Despite being a 1951 Refugee Convention signatory, Morocco has yet to enact the long-promised national asylum law outlined in its 2013 National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum.

In practice, UNHCR conducts registration and status determination, while the Ministry of Interior issues residence cards with minimal accompanying support—no state housing, severely restricted secondary healthcare, and formal employment accessed by fewer than 0.5 percent of recognized refugees. Aid groups report consistent pushbacks toward the Algerian border or forced relocations southward, even for documented individuals, as authorities treat the influx primarily as a border-management rather than a protection issue. Personal accounts, such as that of 17-year-old Amir Ali—who survived family massacre in Darfur, trafficking in Libya, and beatings in Algeria before reaching Rabat—illustrate the human cost: untreated heart conditions, rough sleeping under bridges, and constant fear of further displacement despite UNHCR papers.

## **Libya**

The UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2819 (2026) on 14 April, extending Libya's sanctions regime until August 2027 under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The measure renews controls on illicit petroleum exports, including high-seas inspections and port denials, alongside the arms embargo, while introducing narrow exemptions that permit the Libyan Investment Authority to adjust its global custodian bank and allow technical assistance for reunifying security forces. It further requests a comprehensive audit of frozen assets to confirm their value and ensure they serve the Libyan people. This step reinforces the international framework for economic governance and regional stability.

This diplomatic foundation has enabled tangible economic coordination, highlighted by the 18 April joint statement from Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The group welcomed the 11 April signing of Libya's first unified national budget in over a decade, which covers the full 2026 fiscal year and includes the National Oil Corporation's operational funding for the first time in years. The agreement fosters institutional alignment between eastern and western authorities, strengthens the Central Bank and Audit Bureau, defends the dinar, and supports development projects while curbing illicit oil flows.

Economic integration is now reinforced by practical military collaboration through Flintlock 2026, which opened in mid-April with ceremonies in Sirte. Hosted for the first time in Libya by US Africa Command alongside Italy, the multinational exercise involving around 30 nations brought eastern and western Libyan forces together in shared uniforms to train on counter-terrorism, border security, and joint operations. Commanders described the participation as essential for building a unified national military, directly advancing stability and countering external threats in a manner that complements the broader political and economic progress. Taken together, these developments reflect incremental yet interconnected advances toward overcoming Libya's institutional divide, with no major security incidents reported during the week.

## **13. Middle East**

### **Iran Israel Conflict**

The week marked a critical phase in the US-brokered Iran ceasefire, where Washington's naval blockade of Iranian ports emerged as the central instrument of economic coercion, deliberately calibrated to extract nuclear and proxy-related concessions while testing the truce's durability amid parallel de-escalation on the Lebanon front. Implemented east of the Strait of Hormuz on April 13 and encompassing inspections of all vessels regardless of flag, with humanitarian aid exempted after verification, the operation reflected a calculated shift from kinetic strikes to sustained maritime pressure.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu immediately endorsed it as indispensable leverage against Tehran, aligning US and Israeli strategic aims even as analysts flagged heightened risks of Iranian-backed Houthi retaliation in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which could cascade into broader Red Sea instability and further strain global supply chains already reeling from prior Gulf disruptions.

By April 14, US Central Command confirmed early operational success, reporting no unauthorized passages in the first 24 hours and six merchant ships forced to divert, a tally that climbed to 23 vessels turned away by April 18. This effectiveness amplified the blockade's role not merely as a tactical barrier but as a deliberate economic siege, tightening Iran's fiscal isolation and underscoring how naval dominance could substitute for direct confrontation while preserving the fragile two-week ceasefire framework.

Iran's responses oscillated between defiance and tactical signaling, revealing internal calculations over whether to endure the squeeze or force a diplomatic breakthrough. On April 15, Tehran's joint military command threatened total closure of the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, and Sea of Oman if the blockade persisted, framing it as an existential provocation. Yet the same period saw Iran express openness to Pakistani-mediated talks and limits on uranium enrichment, a nuanced overture that hinted at willingness to trade temporary restraints for sanctions relief without yielding permanent nuclear curbs.

Russia's offer to store enriched uranium as a confidence measure was swiftly rejected by Washington, illustrating the US insistence on irreversible steps rather than interim storage. Fresh Treasury sanctions, coupled with explicit warnings to two Chinese banks about secondary penalties, reinforced this maximalist posture, described internally as the "financial equivalent" of sustained military operations, while prompting Beijing's sharpest rebuke yet of the blockade as a violation of international norms, given China's heavy dependence on Hormuz-bound oil. President Trump countered by claiming private Chinese acquiescence to the reopening of shipping lanes and a tacit agreement against arming Iran, exposing the layered great-power maneuvering beneath the surface.

These naval and sanctions pressures intersected directly with diplomatic channels, where Pakistani mediation served as the primary conduit for US-Iran engagement. Tehran signaled receptivity to discussing enrichment caps during potential face-to-face sessions in Islamabad, yet Iranian officials stressed by April 18 that no date had been set and decried Washington's "maximalist" demands as incompatible with sovereignty. Parliament Speaker remarks on April 18 highlighted the widening gap, noting a "long way to go" before any comprehensive accord despite the ceasefire now stretching into its 49th to 50th day.

Cross-cutting strategic divergences between the US, prioritizing a negotiated framework that preserved leverage, and Israel's preference for decisive degradation of Iranian proxies, particularly Hezbollah, further complicated convergence. This tension manifested in Netanyahu's April 16 praise of the Lebanon truce as a pathway to "historic peace" with Beirut, conditional on full Hezbollah disarmament, even as opposition leader Yair Lapid criticized the deal for leaving northern Israeli communities exposed and the group intact.

The Lebanon theater provided a parallel but interconnected arena for de-escalation, offering temporary relief that both stabilized the broader ceasefire and exposed its limits. On April 16, Trump announced a US-facilitated 10-day Israel-Lebanon truce following direct talks in Washington, the first in over three decades, set to begin that evening as a goodwill gesture enabling permanent security negotiations. Despite the announcement, an Israeli strike on Ghaziyeh hours earlier killed at least seven and wounded 33, underscoring enforcement fragility and the enduring shadow of proxy entanglements.

The truce held tenuously through April 19, with thousands of displaced Lebanese returning home amid reported violations and continued Israeli operations against Hezbollah strongholds, yet it drew EU endorsement as civilian relief and G7 calls for an urgent halt to hostilities following UN peacekeeper deaths. Turkey's President Erdogan actively worked to extend the US-Iran pause, warning that Lebanon strikes were eroding the diplomatic window, while the EU's von der Leyen pledged aid and affirmed Lebanese sovereignty. These moves collectively illustrated how the Lebanon ceasefire functioned as

a pressure-release valve, indirectly bolstering US-Iran talks by reducing proxy flashpoints, even as Israel's security cabinet weighed formalization under US urging.

The ICRC separately condemned consecutive Israeli strikes on its Lebanon facilities, which killed a volunteer and damaged vehicle, labeling them “gravely concerning” violations of medical neutrality despite Israeli claims of targeting militants. These developments highlighted how the pause in direct airstrikes enabled safer access yet failed to mitigate cumulative suffering, positioning humanitarian corridors as both moral imperative and potential confidence-building measure in negotiations.

International stakeholders amplified the week's complexity through coordinated yet divergent interventions. France and the UK co-hosted a Paris meeting on April 17 involving roughly 50 countries to blueprint post-conflict “purely defensive” naval deployments for Hormuz security, including possible German minesweepers, while more than a dozen nations volunteered assets for a future mission framed explicitly as peacetime stabilization.

China's criticism of the blockade as destabilizing rule-of-law erosion contrasted with Trump's assertions of Beijing's private satisfaction, revealing fault lines in global energy-security calculations. A former senior Israeli general, Giora Eiland, publicly warned that prolonged conflict with Iran eroded Israel's global standing, largely due to Gaza spillover, injecting a rare note of strategic introspection into domestic discourse. NATO allies and the G7 pressed for Lebanon de-escalation, while the US signaled delays in arms shipments to European partners to conserve stockpiles for the Iran theater, exposing alliance strains.

Energy-market volatility and broader geopolitical windfalls emerged as unintended byproducts of Hormuz brinkmanship. Iran declared the strait “completely open” on April 17 under ceasefire terms, prompting a brief ~9% oil-price drop and tentative tanker movements, only to reverse course on April 18 by reclosing it and citing US “breaches of trust,” with forces firing on several ships and bringing traffic to a standstill per Lloyd's List. Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei warned via state TV on April 19 that Iran's navy stood ready for “new bitter defeats” against the US and Israel if Hormuz tensions escalated, reinforcing Tehran's red lines.

Meanwhile, cumulative strikes on Gulf energy infrastructure had already damaged dozens of oil and gas sites, generating massive profits for Saudi Aramco, Gazprom, and ExxonMobil even as global prices fluctuated wildly. US Defense briefings on April 18 described the blockade as “ironclad” and warned of infrastructure strikes if Iran “chose poorly,” framing the operation as “Operation Epic Fury” designed to compel compliance without full-scale resumption of hostilities.

Domestic Israeli sentiment and Iranian leadership postures revealed the domestic political stakes anchoring the diplomatic stalemate. A Reuters poll released April 13 found roughly two-thirds of Israelis opposing the US-negotiated Iran ceasefire, with respondents split almost evenly on adherence versus resumed strikes and over 61% insisting Hezbollah remain excluded from any truce; Netanyahu's approval continued sliding amid war fatigue.

Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian reaffirmed on April 19 that Tehran would not relinquish its "peaceful nuclear rights," complicating talks by rejecting any deal perceived as denying enrichment capacity. Trump, for his part, repeatedly praised Israel as a "courageous, bold, loyal, and smart" ally, signaling unwavering political backing even as negotiators eyed an interim framework freezing highly enriched uranium at Fordow. These positions illuminated how public opinion in Israel and ideological rigidity in Iran constrained flexibility, rendering the ceasefire's extension dependent on bridging maximalist demands over sanctions relief, proxy disarmament, and nuclear thresholds.

## **Turkey**

The 5th Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF2026) convened April 17-19 in Antalya under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's auspices and organized by Turkey's Foreign Ministry, crystallized Ankara's ambition as a diplomatic nerve center amid the Iran war spillover and its regional reverberations. With the theme "Mapping Tomorrow, Managing Uncertainties," the gathering drew leaders from over 150 countries, including more than 20 heads of state or government and 50 ministers, to confront intertwined global crises, security dilemmas, and the imperative for proactive diplomacy in an era of cascading uncertainties.

Erdoğan's opening address framed the moment as a "dangerous threshold" marked by a "deep legitimacy crisis" in the global order, where traditional institutions have faltered and weapons increasingly eclipse dialogue; Turkey's strategic imperative here is clear, positioning itself as an indispensable peace broker to fill the vacuum left by great-power retrenchment and assert influence in a multipolar landscape where convening power translates directly into leverage.

Building directly on this diagnosis of systemic fragility, Erdoğan used the forum platform to accuse Israel of systematically undermining Middle East peace efforts through actions that risk broader instability, framing Ankara's stance as both moral imperative and pragmatic necessity to rally regional consensus. This rhetoric, echoed in week-long analyses referencing Turkey's successful interventions in Karabakh and Libya, underscored Erdoğan's readiness for "all scenarios" amid heightened Israel tensions; strategically, it reinforces Turkey's role as defender of Muslim causes while signaling deterrent credibility, deterring further escalation and preserving Ankara's maneuverability as a pivotal actor unbound by Western hesitations.

Complementing these pointed critiques, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh addressed the forum on April 18, lambasting U.S. "maximalist" demands as obstacles to face-to-face talks and firmly rejecting any handover of enriched uranium. His presence amid the ceasefire context highlighted the forum's value as neutral ground; for Turkey, hosting such voices advances its mediator credentials, allowing Ankara to shape post-ceasefire narratives and extract concessions in a region where balanced engagement with all parties, including Tehran, safeguards energy routes and prevents spillover into its own borders.

These exchanges flowed seamlessly into trilateral security consultations on April 17-18 involving Erdoğan, Qatar's Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, where leaders welcomed the U.S.-Iran ceasefire while decrying attacks on Iran as heightening regional risks and jointly advocating a robust new security architecture. Turkey's urging of all parties to honor the two-week ceasefire and back broader talks reflects its strategic calculus: leveraging alliances with Gulf and South Asian partners to architect alternatives to U.S.-centric frameworks, thereby hedging against volatility and embedding itself as indispensable coordinator in de-escalation efforts that protect trade corridors and refugee dynamics.

This momentum carried into Erdoğan's April 18 phone call with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, in which he described the post-Iran-intervention Middle East war as a "geostrategic impasse" requiring urgent collective action to resolve, even as he highlighted Turkey's parallel Ukraine mediation role. The discussion reaffirmed Ankara's growing indispensability within the alliance amid shifting power balances; strategically, it allows Turkey to extract concessions on defense and energy while signaling that NATO relevance now hinges on accommodating Ankara's regional priorities, preventing isolation in a multipolar contest.

Against this backdrop of high-stakes multilateralism, Erdoğan's intensive bilateral talks with Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa on the forum sidelines, alongside Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan's parallel meeting, propelled post-Assad normalization forward by addressing bilateral ties, reconstruction, and shared regional concerns. These engagements form the cornerstone of Turkey's southern strategy: securing border stability, enabling refugee repatriation, and neutralizing Kurdish militant threats through pragmatic engagement, thereby converting a former adversary into an economic partner whose stabilization directly bolsters Turkish influence and domestic security.

Reinforcing this normalization drive, U.S. special envoy on Syria and ambassador to Turkey Tom Barrack, speaking at the forum on April 18, praised Turkey's constructive regional contributions and explicitly cautioned against framing Ankara as an adversary, while advocating deeper cooperation. Barrack's endorsement, timed amid ceasefire fragility, underscores Washington's recognition of Turkey's leverage; strategically, it

mitigates sanction risks like those over S-400 systems and aligns U.S. Syria policy with Turkish priorities, allowing Ankara to extract F-35 program benefits and cement its role as indispensable stabilizer without ceding ground.

Parallel to these security-focused dialogues, Erdoğan stated on April 18 that foreign military units deployed to Cyprus under the Iran war pretext “must not be permanent,” implicitly referencing Turkey’s own longstanding presence while linking the issue to broader regional pretexts. This assertion advances Ankara’s long-term Cyprus strategy: preserving strategic depth on the island, deterring European overreach, and framing any future settlement as one that respects Turkish Cypriot equities, thereby maintaining leverage in NATO and EU accession dynamics amid Eastern Mediterranean energy rivalries.

While the forum dominated headlines, Turkey simultaneously hosted the 152nd IPU Assembly in Istanbul from April 15-19, convening parliamentarians from dozens of countries to push urgent action on Middle East ceasefires and peacebuilding. This parliamentary track complements executive diplomacy by embedding grassroots legitimacy and legislative buy-in; strategically, it amplifies Turkey’s convening power beyond state leaders, fostering cross-parliamentary networks that sustain momentum on issues like Gaza and Syria where executive talks alone risk fragility.

Translating diplomatic openings into tangible economic architecture, Transport Minister Abdulkadir Uraloğlu announced a trilateral Turkey-Syria-Jordan agreement to revive and modernize the historic Hejaz Railway, extending connectivity toward Saudi Arabia and Oman as part of a broader Europe-to-Gulf corridor. This project embodies Ankara’s post-conflict vision: reviving Ottoman-era infrastructure as soft-power infrastructure, slashing logistics costs, boosting exports, and locking Syria into Turkish-led supply chains that generate transit revenues while facilitating refugee-linked reconstruction, thereby securing long-term strategic depth through interdependence rather than occupation.

Closely aligned with rail revival, Syria neared finalization of a correspondent banking account with Turkey’s central bank while advancing currency-swap discussions to streamline trade and payments, removing decades-old frictions. These financial breakthroughs are not mere technicalities but deliberate levers for Ankara to dominate Syria’s reconstruction economy, bypass sanction bottlenecks, and integrate Damascus into Turkish financial ecosystems, strategically ensuring that any post-Assad prosperity flows first through Turkish channels, stabilizing borders and reducing migration pressures at home.

Amid these outward-facing initiatives, Erdoğan firmly rejected mid-week opposition CHP calls for early or by-elections, insisting that government priorities, chiefly foreign policy execution and economic stabilization, must remain uninterrupted amid domestic tensions. This stance reflects a calculated imperative for continuity: insulating high-stakes regional

diplomacy from electoral volatility, preserving the AKP-MHP alliance's cohesion, and signaling to international partners that Turkey's strategic posture remains predictable and resolute through 2028.

Further illustrating coalition dynamics, MHP deputy chairman discussions in Moscow advanced potential Turkey-Russia-China strategic alignment against a perceived U.S.-Israel axis, building on party leader Devlet Bahçeli's earlier overtures. While not official government policy, these talks hedge Ankara's bets: cultivating Eurasian options as insurance against Western unreliability, appealing to nationalist constituencies, and creating leverage in NATO and energy negotiations, ensuring multipolarity works in Turkey's favor rather than isolating it.

The forum's success was amplified by participation from over 75 international organizations and high-level delegations, underscoring Turkey's emergence as premier diplomatic convenor. This breadth translates into soft-power dividends: amplifying Ankara's agenda on global legitimacy, Gaza accountability, and uncertainty management while forging networks that outlast any single crisis, positioning Turkey as the indispensable node where East, West, and South converge.

These convening achievements dovetail with broader NATO and EU context discussions at the forum, which highlighted Turkey's elevated strategic weight amid shifting global balances and the need for alliance adaptation. Ankara's calculus is pragmatic: extracting tangible benefits, defense modernization, energy security, and Cyprus equities, while demonstrating that its regional indispensability now dictates NATO's relevance in the Middle East, turning potential friction into bargaining power.

Capping the forum's diplomatic momentum, additional bilaterals with leaders from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova reinforced Turkey's multifaceted engagement across neighborhoods, weaving energy, security, and connectivity threads into a cohesive regional web. These interactions illustrate Ankara's holistic strategy: layering bilateral gains atop multilateral platforms to create interlocking dependencies that amplify leverage, deter adversaries, and ensure that post-Iran uncertainties ultimately redound to Turkish advantage through sustained, proactive outreach.

## **Syria**

Syria's post-Assad transition under President Ahmad al-Sharaa gained decisive momentum during the week of April 17-19, 2026, with the Antalya Diplomacy Forum serving as the central platform where stabilization efforts, Kurdish integration, and regional security converged amid the lingering effects of the Iran war ceasefire. Al-Sharaa's high-profile attendance at ADF2026 enabled a series of pivotal bilaterals, including direct engagements with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on April 17, alongside discussions with Qatar's Emir Tamim bin

Hamad Al Thani and Kurdish leaders, all focused on advancing bilateral ties, reconstruction priorities, and a unified regional security posture.

Strategically, these interactions underscored al-Sharaa's imperative to embed the new Syrian government within established diplomatic networks, converting post-conflict isolation into leverage that secures Turkish and Qatari support for border management and economic recovery while signaling to global audiences that Damascus prioritizes inclusive dialogue over factional retrenchment.

This diplomatic opening directly facilitated breakthroughs in Kurdish integration, as al-Sharaa held targeted meetings with leaders including Nechirvan Barzani to accelerate the incorporation of Syrian Democratic Forces into national security structures and advance the next phase of political unity. Building on the January 2026 framework, the government and Kurdish-led forces formalized a comprehensive ceasefire that operationalizes military and administrative mergers, neutralizing fragmentation risks that had long undermined Syrian sovereignty.

For al-Sharaa, this process represents a core strategic necessity: forging a cohesive national army from former adversaries to eliminate parallel power centers, deter external meddling, and create the internal stability required for credible governance, all while preserving Kurdish rights to foster long-term social cohesion in a multi-ethnic state.

The integration momentum aligned seamlessly with the United States' completion of its military withdrawal from Syria, marked by the full handover of major bases such as Qsarak Air Base in Hasakah province and the end of over a decade of counter-ISIS operations. This conditions-based transition, executed amid the SDF agreement, transferred facilities to Syrian control without creating security vacuums, reflecting Washington's recalibrated regional posture. Al-Sharaa's administration strategically capitalizes on the drawdown to reclaim full territorial sovereignty, redirecting resources toward domestic reconstruction and reducing dependency on foreign military footprints that previously complicated normalization with neighbors like Turkey.

Parallel to these security realignments, the European Union signaled deeper engagement by preparing to relaunch formal political contacts, resume the 1978 cooperation agreement, and expand economic and security ties with Damascus through a high-level dialogue scheduled for May. Brussels' policy shift, including adaptive sanctions reframing to target spoilers while supporting transition milestones, opens pathways for trade, migration management, and investment. For Syria's leadership, this engagement delivers a vital strategic lifeline: attracting European capital and technical assistance to rebuild institutions, offset war-induced losses, and accelerate refugee-linked development, thereby diversifying partnerships beyond immediate regional actors and reinforcing the transition's international legitimacy.

Yet these gains unfolded against the sobering backdrop of Iran war spillover effects, where UNDP assessments highlighted a reversal of recent economic progress, intensified refugee pressures, regional losses approaching \$190 billion, and spikes in poverty that directly strain Syrian recovery. Officials noted how energy disruptions and trade volatility exacerbated domestic vulnerabilities, underscoring the fragility of post-Assad stabilization. Al-Sharaa's government confronts this as a pressing strategic challenge: mitigating external shocks through diversified alliances at forums like ADF2026 to safeguard reconstruction gains, while prioritizing resilient supply chains that prevent humanitarian reversals from derailing political consolidation.

In this context of heightened sensitivities, northeast Syria's internal security forces, the Asayish, conducted operations on April 19 in Qamishli, arresting an Arab tribal leader accused of firing at a Kurdish party flag, an incident that illustrates ongoing efforts to maintain order amid integration. Such actions, while localized, reinforce the broader imperative of enforcing national unity without alienating communities, allowing al-Sharaa to project governance authority in former autonomous zones and preempt escalations that could invite external intervention.

Economic adaptation complemented these security and diplomatic moves, as Damascus initiated rerouting of Iraqi oil exports through the Baniyas refinery for sea loading and re-export, circumventing Strait of Hormuz disruptions tied to the Iran conflict. This pragmatic pivot not only sustains fuel supplies for domestic power generation but also positions Syria as an alternative transit corridor, generating revenue streams critical for reconstruction. Strategically, it demonstrates al-Sharaa's foresight in transforming geographic vulnerabilities into assets, fostering energy interdependence with Iraq that bolsters fiscal autonomy and reduces exposure to Gulf volatility while aligning with Turkey's connectivity initiatives discussed at the forum.

Reinforcing this pragmatic internationalism, U.S. special envoy Tom Barrack, speaking at ADF2026, described Israel's adversarial approach toward Syria and Turkey as strategically counterproductive, while praising Damascus's restraint regarding IDF actions and advocating normalized relations. Barrack's remarks, delivered amid his own meetings with al-Sharaa, highlight Washington's recognition of the transition's stabilizing potential. For Syrian leadership, this endorsement advances a key imperative: leveraging American influence to deter Israeli overreach, secure sanctions relief pathways, and embed the new government within a balanced U.S.-led framework that complements rather than competes with Turkish and European outreach.

These developments were further contextualized in United Nations Security Council briefings, which featured April's monthly forecast on Syria's political and humanitarian trajectory alongside reflections on the March 15 anniversary of the 2011 uprising, emphasizing the need for sustained ceasefires and peacebuilding. Concurrently, the UK's

April 2026 policy update assessed the new authorities' performance, noting challenges around media regulation and security force conduct, while the IPU Assembly in Istanbul integrated Syria into broader discussions on Middle East ceasefires and the incorporation of former opposition structures. Al-Sharaa's administration strategically utilizes these multilateral arenas to demonstrate accountability, attract governance support, and frame the transition as a model of inclusive post-conflict management that merits continued international investment.

Humanitarian progress offered a tangible counterpoint to these pressures, with over 1.6 million displaced Syrians having returned home in the preceding period, though officials linked recent slowdowns and reversals explicitly to Iran war fallout. The scale of returns underscores both the population's stake in stability and the urgent requirement for housing, services, and jobs to sustain momentum. For al-Sharaa, prioritizing returnee reintegration constitutes a foundational strategic goal: converting demographic repatriation into political capital that legitimizes the government, eases regional burdens on neighbors like Turkey, and accelerates reconstruction by harnessing returning human capital.

Collectively, these intersecting threads, amplified by ADF2026's convening power and Turkey-Syria coordination, position al-Sharaa's government to navigate the delicate balance between internal consolidation and external engagement. By weaving Kurdish integration with U.S. withdrawal, EU overtures, economic rerouting, and humanitarian returns into a cohesive strategy, Damascus asserts sovereign agency while mitigating war spillovers, ensuring that the post-Assad era translates diplomatic openings into enduring stability rather than renewed fragmentation.

## **14. Europe**

European responses coalesced around a distinct but cautious framework. Keir Starmer, alongside Emmanuel Macron, co-chaired a virtual conference in Paris on April 17 involving leaders from 49 countries. The meeting focused on accelerating planning for a neutral and defensive multinational mission to secure maritime navigation in the Strait of Hormuz once conditions permit. The United Kingdom emphasized diplomatic backing for safe passage while explicitly distancing itself from direct participation in the U.S.-led blockade. Starmer underscored that any future mission would need to remain strictly defensive, legally grounded, and institutionally separate from active belligerents.

France reinforced a similar position, with Macron announcing the acceleration of military planning for the proposed mission and scheduling a follow-up conference in London. French policy has been consistent in rejecting the feasibility of forcibly reopening the strait through military means, instead prioritizing de-escalation and adherence to ceasefire commitments. French naval assets remained deployed in the eastern Mediterranean in a defensive escort capacity, reflecting preparedness without direct escalation.

Germany, under Friedrich Merz, maintained a restrained stance, ruling out participation in military operations in the Strait of Hormuz during active hostilities. Berlin's focus has centered on reinforcing European cohesion, advancing discussions on strategic autonomy, and increasing defense spending in response to both energy volatility and external pressure. German officials have consistently highlighted concerns about the fragility of the ceasefire and the broader risks associated with prolonged disruption to global energy flows.

## **15. Global Powers**

The ceasefire that followed the collapse of the Islamabad talks on April 12 has remained fragile and increasingly contested. In the immediate aftermath, Donald Trump announced that the United States would enforce a naval blockade targeting Iranian ports in and around the Strait of Hormuz. The measure was framed as a selective maritime control mechanism rather than a full closure of the strait, focusing on vessels entering or leaving Iranian ports to constrain oil exports and logistical support networks. Iran rejected this framing, describing the action as a violation of the ceasefire, and responded through calibrated grey-zone tactics. These included intensified patrols by the IRGC, expanded drone surveillance, and electronic interference designed to harass commercial shipping without crossing the threshold into open confrontation. The immediate market response was sharp, with oil prices rising by more than eight percent amid fears of renewed disruption.

Between April 16 and 17, Iran signaled tactical flexibility by temporarily reopening the Strait of Hormuz for commercial transit within the broader ceasefire framework, while warning that the arrangement would not hold if the U.S. blockade persisted. Washington maintained its position, with Trump indicating that the blockade would remain in force until a comprehensive agreement was reached. During this period, U.S. authorities confirmed the seizure of an Iranian-flagged cargo vessel, the *TOUSKA*, near the entrance to the strait, marking the first interception since enforcement began. Tehran characterized the seizure as a direct breach of the ceasefire and issued warnings of retaliation. Indirect negotiations continued through mediators, with preparations underway for a second round of talks in Pakistan, though both sides remained significantly divided on core issues, including nuclear constraints, missile programs, proxy networks, and security guarantees. Parallel signals from Washington suggested that limited military strikes remained a viable option should diplomatic efforts fail.

By April 18 and 19, tensions escalated further as Iran moved to reimpose restrictions on the Strait of Hormuz, effectively tightening control in response to what it described as a sustained U.S. "siege" of its ports. The United States accused Iran of firing on vessels attempting transit and violating the ceasefire terms, reinforcing a pattern of mutual accusations. Trump publicly condemned Iran's actions while confirming that negotiations

would continue. The regional environment simultaneously deteriorated, as Israel Defense Forces conducted strikes on targets linked to Lebanese actors amid a fragile and overlapping ceasefire along the Israel–Lebanon front. The humanitarian situation worsened, with displacement in Lebanon surpassing one million people. Throughout this period, the United States maintained a forward-deployed military posture in the region, including naval and ground assets configured for rapid escalation if required.

As of April 20, the ceasefire is under severe strain and approaching its initial expiration window. While no major kinetic exchanges have been reported in the past 24 hours, the maritime standoff in the Strait of Hormuz continues, and energy markets remain volatile. The U.S. position reflects a dual-track approach, combining openness to continued negotiations with sustained military pressure. At the systemic level, the crisis is already generating broader ripple effects, including persistent stress on global energy markets and a diversion of U.S. strategic attention from other theaters, notably Ukraine.

In parallel, coordination between Russia and China intensified during the same period. Sergey Lavrov visited Beijing on April 14 and 15, holding discussions with Wang Yi and Xi Jinping. The talks covered the U.S.–Iran confrontation, the broader Asia-Pacific context, and developments in Ukraine. Russia indicated its readiness to expand energy exports to China to mitigate potential supply disruptions linked to Hormuz instability, while Xi emphasized the strategic value of deepening bilateral ties. Both countries aligned diplomatically by vetoing a United Nations resolution aimed at protecting shipping in the strait, arguing that such a framework risked further escalation rather than stabilization.

By April 19 and 20, China maintained a carefully calibrated posture, calling for restraint and a negotiated political settlement while positioning itself as a potential mediator. This approach reflects a balance between safeguarding its energy security interests and avoiding direct alignment with either Washington or Tehran.

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

### **United Nation**

The United Nations played a central role in the Quintet statements on Sudan April 15 and follow-up on April 17, emphasizing the need for reduced violence, civilian protection, humanitarian access and support for a Sudanese led political transition. The Secretary-General’s Personal Envoy participated in the Berlin Sudan Conference.

### **Africa Union**

The African Union Commission issued a strong statement condemning reports of Israel’s decision to appoint a diplomatic envoy to Somaliland. The AU reaffirmed its commitment to Somalia’s sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, stressing that any unilateral recognition of Somaliland would be null and void. It warned that such moves risk

destabilizing the Horn of Africa and undermining peace and governance efforts in Somalia, in line with AU principles and the 1324th Peace and Security Council meeting outcomes. The statement was issued around April 19, 2026.

On April 15, 2026 a new AU ambassador arrived in Mogadishu to assume leadership of the African Union mission in Somalia, signaling renewed efforts to strengthen coordination with Somali authorities amid ongoing security and stabilization work under the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia.

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

IGAD advanced regional cooperation on education and the Djibouti Declaration through the second cluster of national consultations involving Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Somalia. The IGAD Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI) unit convened the meetings from April 14–16, 2026 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to support implementation of the declaration in priority sectors.

On April 17, 2026 IGAD partnered with Ethiopia’s Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) to hold a three-day National Consultation Workshop in Bishoftu, Ethiopia. The workshop focused on policy awareness, operationalization of refugees’ right to work and advancing refugee inclusion across the region.

IGAD also joined the Quintet AU, IGAD, League of Arab States, EU, and UN in issuing a joint statement on April 15, 2026, welcoming a civilian-led call for de-escalation and an end to the war in Sudan on the conflict’s third anniversary.

### **Multilateral and Quintet Engagements**

On April 15, 2026, the Quintet grouping. African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), League of Arab States, European Union, and United Nations released a joint statement marking the third anniversary of the Sudan conflict. The Quintet welcomed a civilian call for an immediate end to the war, de-escalation, and advancement of peace processes.

This statement aligned with broader diplomatic activity around the Sudan conference co-hosted by Germany and the AU on April 14 - 15, 2026, which aimed to mobilize humanitarian support and advance peace efforts.

### **Broader International Response Tied to Regional Organizations**

On April 18, 2026, foreign ministers from 16 Arab and Islamic nations (including Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Somalia, Sudan, and others) issued a joint statement strongly condemning Israel’s announced appointment of a diplomatic envoy to Somaliland. The statement cited violations of international law, the UN Charter, and the AU Constitutive Act, warning of risks to stability in the Horn of Africa.



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