



Weekly Geopolitical Report

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

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Horn Review: Weekly Report

May 25– May 31, 2026

1. Ethiopia

The week leading up to Ethiopia's seventh general election on June 1, 2026, marked a historic chapter in the nation's democratic evolution, distinguishing itself from past cycles through massive institutional expansion and technological integration. Moving past the severe constraints of the 2021 election, which was deeply fragmented by regional conflict and a heavily disrupted voter registration apparatus, the National Election Board of Ethiopia systematically overhauled its operational frameworks to maximize democratic inclusivity. Despite these efforts, voting was ultimately not held in 46 constituencies (all 38 in Tigray and 8 in Amhara) due to insecurity and political tensions, effectively excluding millions of citizens for the second consecutive cycle.

Groundwork for this transformation peaked early in the week when election officials finalized the deployment of standard and specialized polling infrastructure across the country, building a transparent environment for international partners.

The week started on May 25, 2026, when the National Election Board of Ethiopia successfully hosted a comprehensive briefing for Addis Ababa-based diplomats and representatives of international organizations to showcase the country's multi-layered readiness. Board Chairperson Melatwork Hailu announced the successful registration of an unprecedented 50.5 million voters and the deployment of necessary ballot materials across 52,029 newly established polling stations. This briefing effectively highlighted the state's rigorous operational planning, specifically detailing security coordinates, inclusive civic engagement strategies, and specialized arrangements made to protect the voting access of students, military personnel, and internally displaced persons.

Capitalizing on this institutional momentum, the ruling Prosperity Party concluded its final nationwide campaign phase on May 26, 2026, by mobilizing hundreds of thousands of citizens in synchronized rallies across major urban centers and regional hubs. These sweeping public gatherings allowed the party to present its development agenda directly to massive crowds, shifting the country's political discourse toward economic resilience, infrastructure completion, and national unity. Parallel to this civic mobilization, the Council of Ministers enacted crucial structural bills targeting energy regulation, carbon trading, statistical independence, and a national policy on women's empowerment, underscoring a cohesive legislative effort to bolster state capacity.

During this exact same mid-week legislative push, the Council of Ministers held its 55th regular session and approved a comprehensive package of reform bills and policies. This vast agenda specifically advanced amendments to tax administration, a new national trade

policy, an insurance proclamation, an agricultural transformation program, a beneficial ownership transparency regulation for legal entities, and several international loan agreements. This robust governance footprint reflected the government's continued focus on long-term institutional and economic modernization even during a high-stakes, busy national period.

By mid-week, international election observation missions formalized their deployment, transforming the upcoming vote into a clear statement of African democratic agency and continental institutional ownership. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development observation mission, led by Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe, conducted extensive pre-election assessments and consultative meetings with the electoral board and prominent civil society networks, including the Ethiopian Women's Federation. These collaborative discussions verified the structural deployment of over 10,000 trained domestic female observers, while analyzing the board's digital innovative tools, such as the *Mirchaye* application, designed to modernize voter registration and securely manage candidate information.

International and continental support further strengthened the process. By May 30-31, African Union observers led by former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta arrived, framing Ethiopia's election as vital for African democratic self-reliance. Their presence highlighted Pan-African solidarity and ownership of the electoral journey. The coordinated deployment of IGAD and AU observation missions marked a significant expression of African-led electoral oversight. With IGAD's 26 experts under Dr. Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe and the AU's 73 observers from 37 countries led by Uhuru Kenyatta, the missions conducted joint consultations, stakeholder meetings, and field assessments.

Their collaboration, including a high-level meeting on May 31 to harmonize efforts and plan a joint preliminary statement for June 3, reinforced continental commitment to credible, transparent, and inclusive processes. This approach not only enhanced the credibility of Ethiopia's electoral framework but also demonstrated growing regional confidence in homegrown democratic institutions and peer accountability within the Horn of Africa and the wider continent. This prominent, highly visible tier of primary African-led observation stood as a powerful alternative to historical external dependencies, successfully countering broader patterns of international skepticism regarding inclusivity by demonstrating rigorous peer-to-peer continental oversight.

On election day, June 1, polling stations opened smoothly across most of the country. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed cast his ballot in his hometown of Beshasha amid reports of high participation and orderly queues in accessible areas. State media and officials noted a peaceful atmosphere supported by federal and regional security coordination, with African observers monitoring proceedings to affirm transparency. Regional adjustments reflected pragmatic responses to security realities. This civic milestone was further

elevated by the Prime Minister's recent proactive dialogue before the National Dialogue Commission, where he championed progressive constitutional growth by suggesting legal head-of-government term limits to solidify long-term democratic success.

The successful execution of Ethiopia's seventh national general election on June 1, 2026, represents a highly structured administrative achievement, distinctive for its unprecedented scale and specialized voter inclusion mechanisms. Managed under the oversight of the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), the election achieved a historic milestone with over 54 million registered voters, nearly a third higher than the 2021 numbers, demonstrating massive civic mobilization despite complex regional security dynamics. What sharply differentiates this election from previous cycles is the deliberate institutional effort to expand the franchise through targeted, special registration frameworks. For the first time at this scale, the NEBE systematically integrated tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs), university students, and deployed military personnel into the voting grid via specialized polling tracks, shifting the operational paradigm toward a more logistically comprehensive and legally institutionalized process.

Voting proceeded in the vast majority of constituencies, yet it was not held in all 38 Tigray constituencies and eight in Amhara due to prevailing conditions, alongside closures of around 143 stations mainly in Amhara and Oromia. These measures prioritized safety while the interim Tigray administration continued federal coordination efforts.

This defensive security alignment was directly necessitated by localized armed factions actively attempting to halt civic operations. Specifically, the Fano National Movement released an explicit declaration rejecting the general election entirely and warning that anyone participating would be deemed an enemy of the Amhara people, while the Oromo Liberation Army maintained disruptive armed posturing across several western and southern zones, leading to the necessary closure of the 143 localized stations.

While institutional progress defined the national framework, complex regional political adjustments continued to shape the broader security landscape, prompting measured reactions from various local actors. In the north, the interim administration in Tigray worked closely with federal authorities to integrate all thirty-eight regional constituencies into the general election schedule, navigating the complex fallout of the legal deregistration of the Tigray People's Liberation Front. Simultaneously, political analysts noted that regional stability efforts remained paramount as federal forces maintained active security posturing across contested rural zones in Amhara and Oromia to neutralize sporadic opposition rhetoric from localized armed factions.

In northern Ethiopia, political friction in Tigray continued to intensify as the TPLF escalated its unilateral and increasingly confrontational political posture, openly challenging the spirit and implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement through parallel governance claims and contested regional authority structures. In a move widely criticized by federal analysts and regional observers, the TPLF leadership also issued an independent congratulatory message to Eritrea (Shabiya) on its national independence anniversary, an action interpreted as a provocative and diplomatically unauthorized engagement that bypassed official Ethiopian federal foreign policy channels. Critics argue that this step reflects a pattern of parallel diplomatic signaling and political defiance that risks undermining fragile post-conflict normalization efforts, further complicating regional trust-building and exposing the extent to which the TPLF continues to operate outside coordinated state diplomatic frameworks.

2. Sudan

Sudan's conflict entered a new phase during the final week of May as drone warfare intensified across multiple theatres, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) continued its counteroffensive in Blue Nile State, and rival political actors advanced competing visions for the country's future. The cumulative effect was a further militarization of the conflict environment even as diplomatic and civilian initiatives sought to revive discussions around a political settlement.

Military developments were dominated by SAF advances in the Blue Nile region. The army announced that it had recaptured several strategic positions surrounding Kurmuk and was advancing toward the border town from both northern and southern axes. SAF also reported repelling RSF-SPLM-N attacks on Amora Station and other positions near Qaisan, preserving critical supply lines linking government-controlled areas in southeastern Sudan. Kurmuk remains one of the most strategically important locations in the conflict due to its proximity to Ethiopia and its position along the Sudan-Ethiopia frontier. Sudanese authorities continued to accuse Ethiopia of providing logistical support to the RSF-SPLM-N alliance operating in Blue Nile. Addis Ababa has consistently rejected such allegations, and no independently verified evidence emerged during the week confirming direct Ethiopian involvement. Nevertheless, the recurring accusations reflect the growing regional dimension of the Blue Nile theatre and Khartoum's increasing tendency to frame battlefield setbacks and security concerns through a broader geopolitical lens.

At the same time, drone warfare continued to reshape the conflict's operational landscape. SAF claimed to have intercepted a long-range drone carrying eight missiles over White Nile State after a series of attacks targeted fuel depots, warehouses, hospitals, and other strategic infrastructure. Elsewhere, a drone strike on the Abu Zabad-Al Fula road in West Kordofan reportedly killed ten civilians, including eight children, while attacks across

Kordofan and Darfur continued to inflict significant civilian casualties. The increasing use of drones by both sides has transformed the character of the war, enabling strikes far from frontline positions and exposing civilian populations and critical infrastructure to persistent attack. International organizations continued to warn that drone warfare now accounts for a substantial proportion of conflict-related civilian deaths recorded in Sudan during 2026.

Violence against civilians remained severe throughout the week. Reports emerged of RSF attacks on villages around Bara in North Kordofan that left dozens of civilians dead, while tribal clashes between the Salamat and Beni Halba communities in South Darfur resulted in additional displacement and destruction. The use of RSF vehicles by tribal combatants further highlighted the increasingly blurred boundaries between organized armed groups and localized communal conflicts. These developments reinforced concerns that Sudan's war is becoming progressively fragmented, with national military competition increasingly intertwined with local security dynamics and identity-based violence.

Politically, Nairobi hosted a significant gathering of Sudanese civilian, political, and armed actors under the framework of the Sudanese Declaration of Principles for Building a New Homeland. Participants approved a new roadmap aimed at ending the conflict and establishing a civilian-led political transition. The initiative emphasized that Sudan's crisis cannot be resolved through military means alone and called for the creation of a broad anti-war civilian coalition capable of shaping the country's future beyond the battlefield. While the coalition lacks direct leverage over the principal belligerents, the Nairobi discussions highlighted continued efforts by civilian actors to prevent Sudan's political trajectory from being monopolized by either SAF or the RSF.

Meanwhile, competing narratives regarding the future political order continued to emerge. Sovereign Council Chairman Abdel Fattah al-Burhan renewed calls for national dialogue while maintaining military pressure on the RSF. Parallel reports suggested ongoing regional efforts to facilitate indirect communication between Sudan and the United Arab Emirates through Bahraini mediation channels. Although Sudan's Sovereign Council publicly denied reports that Burhan had expressed readiness for direct talks with Abu Dhabi, the emergence of such reports reflects growing recognition among regional actors that external dimensions of the conflict will remain central to any eventual settlement process.

Economic and humanitarian pressures continued to deepen despite localized signs of recovery. Khartoum witnessed a cautious return of residents to some districts, while organized repatriation efforts facilitated the return of thousands of Sudanese from Egypt and Libya. The Argeen border crossing resumed normal operations after severe congestion earlier in the month, easing movement between Sudan and Egypt. Nevertheless, humanitarian indicators remained alarming. New arrivals into neighboring

countries continued, food insecurity persisted across multiple regions, and teacher strikes expanded in Khartoum and other states as salary arrears and economic hardship intensified.

The economic significance of gold became increasingly apparent during the week. Sudan exported nearly five tonnes of gold during April and May, surpassing total exports recorded during the first quarter of the year. Gold remains the backbone of Sudan's wartime economy, accounting for the majority of export earnings despite persistent smuggling and limited state oversight in conflict-affected mining regions. At the same time, Sudan secured additional external support through an \$83 million agreement with the African Development Bank focused on food security and agricultural resilience in key producing regions.

Taken together, developments during the week underscored a conflict that remains characterized by simultaneous military escalation, political fragmentation, and humanitarian deterioration. While SAF appears to be consolidating tactical gains in Blue Nile and other fronts, neither side has demonstrated the capacity to secure a decisive victory. The expansion of drone warfare, the persistence of civilian suffering, and the emergence of competing political initiatives suggest that Sudan's war is entering a more complex and prolonged phase in which battlefield developments, regional rivalries, and civilian-led political efforts will continue to shape the trajectory of the conflict.

3. Egypt

Egypt's intensified diplomatic mobilization across multiple regional theaters is fundamentally shaped by its core national interests in economic stability and state security. This reality was underscored on May 31, when Egypt's ambassador in Washington detailed the severe economic repercussions the country faces due to the ongoing conflict between the United States and Iran, specifically pointing to trade disruptions, energy stress, and regional instability. Facing significant macroeconomic pressures, Cairo's foreign policy is highly sensitive to external shocks. Any prolonged disruption to global shipping lanes or regional commerce directly impacts vital state revenues, particularly from the Suez Canal and tourism, making the de-escalation of regional conflicts a matter of direct domestic necessity.

The most acute threat to Egypt's immediate border security remains the ongoing conflict to its east, where the potential for regional escalation carries significant strategic risks. On May 30, Egypt launched an urgent diplomatic push to rescue the Gaza ceasefire, warning Israel that further escalation would threaten the truce. Cairo's primary objective is to prevent a total breakdown of order that could lead to mass displacement toward the Sinai Peninsula, which Egypt views as a major security and demographic challenge. Concurrently, by maintaining its position as the indispensable intermediary between the

conflicting parties, Egypt secures vital diplomatic leverage with Western partners, reinforcing its role as an essential pillar of regional management.

This defensive posture extends to preventing a broader realignment of the regional balance of power that could compromise its security architecture. On May 31, Egypt accused Israel of attempting to impose a new military reality in Lebanon and renewed its call for a full Israeli withdrawal, a stance reaffirmed the same day in high-level consultations with Nawaf Salam. Cairo views the potential destabilization of Lebanon or a protracted military occupation as a destabilizing factor that would expand conflict zones closer to its borders. By advocating for Lebanese sovereignty and border integrity, Egypt seeks to uphold established international norms and contain the spread of proxy warfare that could trigger wider economic and political shocks.

To address the broader structural drivers of these interlocking crises, Egypt has actively engaged with the primary state actors involved in the wider regional standoff. On May 26, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi spoke with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian regarding US-Iran negotiations and regional de-escalation, framing diplomacy as the only viable path to contain the crisis. This engagement was broadened on May 30 when Egypt's foreign minister reviewed the status of these negotiations with the UAE foreign minister and the chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, focusing on non-proliferation and regional fallout. By positioning itself as a diplomatic bridge between regional and international actors, Egypt aims to mitigate the risk of a direct confrontation between the United States and Iran, which would have catastrophic consequences for Red Sea commerce.

Actively managing relations with Iran also allows Egypt to demonstrate its strategic utility to its key financial partners in the Arabian Gulf. On May 28, Egypt strongly condemned the attacks on Kuwait, backing the country's security and sovereignty as the wider regional crisis expanded. While framed in terms of Arab solidarity, this position reflects Egypt's vital interest in the stability of the Gulf Cooperation Council states, which provide critical economic support through investments, central bank deposits, and energy partnerships. Ensuring the security of these partner nations is essential for Cairo to maintain the steady flow of capital necessary to support its own economic stabilization programs.

Egypt successfully translates this multi-faceted regional engagement into enhanced political and economic cooperation with its Western allies. This dynamic was evident on May 31 during a comprehensive call between President el-Sisi and French President Emmanuel Macron, covering the interconnected tracks of Gaza, Lebanon, and the US-Iran negotiations. By demonstrating a capacity to engage effectively across multiple geopolitical flashpoints simultaneously, Egypt reinforces its status as a critical security partner for Europe. This diplomatic relevance is a key asset for Cairo as it navigates

complex international financial arrangements, seeks macroeconomic assistance, and pursues favorable trade frameworks with the European Union.

While Cairo's primary diplomatic focus is directed toward the geopolitical volatility to its north and east, it must concurrently manage a quieter, structural challenge along its southern frontier. On May 31, the UNHCR reported a continuous influx of new arrivals into Egypt from Sudan, reflecting the ongoing spillover of the Sudanese civil war. This steady humanitarian influx places an incremental burden on Egypt's public infrastructure and resources during a period of economic adjustment. Consequently, Egypt must balance its international humanitarian commitments with the urgent necessity of securing its southern border against asymmetric threats, demonstrating how domestic stability remains inextricably linked to the resolution of surrounding regional conflicts.

4. Eritrea

On 24 May, President Isaias Afwerki delivered his annual Independence Day address marking Eritrea's 35th anniversary of its secession from Ethiopia. The speech largely followed previous iterations, focusing heavily on external interference, regional instability, and critiques of the prevailing international order, with comparatively limited emphasis on domestic governance issues. He reiterated long-standing positions on Horn of Africa security, calling for regionally driven frameworks in place of external involvement. The address also included more direct criticism of U.S. foreign policy, particularly regarding Iran and Venezuela, underscoring a continued sceptical stance toward Washington and suggesting limited prospects for near-term diplomatic rapprochement despite broader international engagement efforts.

On 25 May, Egypt's Supreme Council of Universities approved the establishment of a Cairo University branch in Eritrea, as part of a broader strategy to internationalise Egyptian higher education and expand institutional presence across Africa. The initiative is framed by Cairo as an academic cooperation project, including administrative and digital transformation components within its university system. Politically, the development reflects a gradual deepening of Egyptian engagement with Eritrea through soft-power instruments, particularly education and institutional linkages. In the context of persistently strained Egypt–Ethiopia relations over Nile governance, the move can also be read as part of Cairo's wider regional posture of strengthening ties with actors positioned along Ethiopia's periphery, including Eritrea. While presented in educational terms, such initiatives contribute to an incremental densification of bilateral relations between Cairo and Asmara amid broader regional strategic competition.

According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), representatives of several advocacy organizations held their annual vigil outside the Eritrean Embassy in London on 21 May, marking 23 years since Eritrea effectively prohibited religious groups operating outside officially recognized denominations. The organizations sought to deliver a letter to

Eritrean diplomatic officials expressing concerns over alleged religious freedom restrictions and broader human rights violations but reported that embassy staff declined to receive the correspondence. The episode reflects the continued engagement of international advocacy groups with Eritrea's human rights record, particularly regarding religious freedom and political repression. It also underscores the limited dialogue between Eritrean authorities and external civil society actors, despite signs of increased international engagement with Asmara in other diplomatic forums.

On 28 May 2026, a UNESCO delegation led by Acting Assistant Director-General Mohamed El Faranawy held meetings in Asmara with senior Eritrean officials, including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Information, and Education, as well as the Commissioner of Culture and Sports. The discussions focused on expanding cooperation in education, heritage documentation, and the application of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in education and information systems, with the UN Resident Coordinator in Eritrea also participating. The engagement reflects continued gradual integration of Eritrea into select multilateral technical cooperation frameworks, particularly in education and cultural sectors. While presented as capacity-building and knowledge exchange, such interactions also indicate a cautious expansion of Eritrea's external institutional linkages following years of relative diplomatic isolation, albeit within tightly circumscribed and non-political domains.

5. Djibouti

Between May 25 and May 30, 2026, Djibouti's political and diplomatic agenda was shaped by parliamentary diplomacy, regional integration planning, and the strengthening of long-standing partnerships with key international actors. A delegation from Djibouti's National Assembly visited Paris for a series of engagements with officials from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French National Assembly under the framework of the Djibouti–France Friendship Group. The discussions focused on expanding bilateral cooperation and building on the momentum generated by France's high-level participation in President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh's inauguration earlier in the month. At the same time, Djibouti continued consultations with IGAD regarding the organization's 2026–2030 strategic roadmap, reflecting the government's broader commitment to regional integration, economic resilience, and collective security initiatives across the Horn of Africa.

Security developments during the week were dominated by maritime concerns in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Western Indian Ocean. The Chair of the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) issued a strong statement condemning the resurgence of piracy and armed robbery at sea, calling on member states to intensify efforts to safeguard commercial shipping routes and protect vessels operating in strategically sensitive waters. Djibouti maintained its role as a central security hub in the region, continuing close coordination

with international partners involved in maritime security operations. Foreign Affairs Minister Abdoukader Houssein Omar publicly praised the European Union's ASPIDES naval mission for its contribution to securing Red Sea shipping lanes, highlighting the importance of international cooperation in preserving freedom of navigation and protecting global trade flows passing through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

Economically, the week was marked by growing attention to the Damerjog Liquid Bulk Port (DLBP) and oil depot project, which increasingly emerged as a cornerstone of Djibouti–Ethiopia energy cooperation. As the Horizon Oil Terminal approached full operational capacity, Djibouti accelerated diplomatic and infrastructural efforts aimed at positioning Damerjog as the next major energy gateway for the region. The project gained additional strategic significance in light of Ethiopia's expanding energy demand and its broader efforts to diversify logistical and industrial infrastructure. For both countries, the initiative represents more than a commercial investment; it reflects the continuing evolution of the Djibouti–Ethiopia strategic partnership, where maritime access, energy security, and regional connectivity remain deeply interconnected. Against a backdrop of shifting Red Sea geopolitics, the advancement of the Damerjog project reinforced Djibouti's ambition to remain Ethiopia's principal maritime partner while strengthening its own role as a critical logistics and energy hub for the wider Horn of Africa.

6. South Sudan

South Sudan's political and security environment remained under growing international scrutiny during the reporting period, with the renewal of United Nations sanctions highlighting persistent concerns regarding implementation failures of the 2018 peace agreement, political repression, and the country's deteriorating security outlook. The decision underscored widening divergence between Juba's calls for normalization and the international community's assessment that fundamental conditions for lifting restrictions have yet to materialize.

The most significant development was the renewal of the UN arms embargo, travel bans, and asset freezes by the United Nations Security Council for an additional year. The resolution passed despite opposition from South Sudan's government and abstentions from several Council members who questioned the long-term effectiveness of sanctions as a conflict management tool. The United States strongly supported the extension, explicitly citing political tensions, delays in implementing transitional arrangements, and renewed violence as evidence that the conditions required for sanctions relief remain unmet.

Juba responded by arguing that the arms embargo continues to weaken the state's ability to protect civilians and confront armed groups operating across various regions of the country. Government officials maintained that restrictions imposed on national security institutions undermine stabilization efforts at a time when South Sudan faces growing internal security challenges. However, human rights organizations, including Amnesty

International, welcomed the renewal, arguing that the embargo remains one of the few available mechanisms to reduce civilian harm amid rising political tensions and localized conflict.

The sanctions debate unfolded against a backdrop of increasing concern regarding the future of the 2018 peace process. International actors, including the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, issued renewed calls for dialogue, compromise, and political restraint amid fears that the country is entering another period of heightened instability. UNMISS warned that the political environment remains fragile and urged South Sudanese leaders to prioritize consensus-building and implementation of outstanding peace provisions rather than confrontation and unilateral decision-making.

Regional and domestic observers increasingly linked the sanctions renewal to broader concerns regarding stalled transitional arrangements. Civil society groups and political activists argued that continued delays in implementing governance reforms, security sector restructuring, and preparations for a credible democratic transition have contributed to declining international confidence. Several South Sudanese analysts described the Security Council decision as a reflection of growing frustration with the pace of political reform rather than solely a response to military developments.

The reporting period also highlighted continuing concerns regarding accountability and transitional justice. In a landmark development, proceedings concluded in Sweden in the first major international war crimes trial connected to South Sudan's civil conflict. The case represents a significant step toward international accountability efforts and reflects growing pressure on South Sudanese actors to address longstanding impunity issues that have persisted since the country's civil wars.

Financial pressures facing peacekeeping operations emerged as another source of concern. Reports indicated that budgetary constraints continue to affect the operational capacity of UNMISS, raising questions regarding the sustainability of international stabilization efforts at a time when political tensions remain elevated. Observers warned that reductions in peacekeeping resources could create additional security risks in vulnerable regions if not addressed through alternative funding arrangements.

Beyond political and security developments, humanitarian vulnerabilities remained acute. The country continues to face overlapping challenges stemming from food insecurity, displacement, climate-related shocks, and economic fragility. These pressures have been compounded by continued refugee inflows from neighboring Sudan, placing additional strain on already overstretched humanitarian systems and local communities.

Overall, the reporting period reflected a widening gap between South Sudan's formal transitional framework and the realities on the ground. The renewal of international sanctions, continued concerns over peace agreement implementation, warnings from UN

officials, and ongoing accountability debates collectively indicate that the country's transition remains fragile. Rather than signaling movement toward political normalization, recent developments suggest that international actors increasingly view South Sudan as entering another period of heightened uncertainty, where unresolved governance challenges and security risks continue to threaten the sustainability of the peace process.

7. Somalia and Somaliland

Somalia

Political instability intensified in Somalia this week centered on armed challenges to federal authority and internal governance disputes. On May 30 forces loyal to ousted former South West State President Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen launched an early morning attack on Baidoa city briefly seizing control of several neighbourhoods including the Afar Irdoodka area before clashing with federal troops and local security forces. The attackers were subsequently repelled and withdrew to positions outside the city with calm later restored. Multiple casualties were reported during the fighting though official figures have not been released.

In the aftermath Somali army commanders from the 60th Division held an emergency meeting to strengthen security in the city. Despite the violence, the Southwest State parliament proceeded with the swearing in of newly elected lawmakers on the same day advancing the federal backed electoral process. This military confrontation followed the federal government's earlier ouster of Laftagareen in March.

Separately a deep political rift emerged between Somalia's presidency and the national spy chief over the point Galmudug regional vote threatening to destabilize security. Meanwhile mediation efforts between the Somali Federal Government and the Somali Salvation Forum an opposition coalition have reportedly stalled according to elders involved in the process. The stalling followed the post-May 15 crisis concerning term extensions and the government's direct elections plan for 2027. Al-Shabaab exploited these political vulnerabilities issuing statements claiming that the political crisis demonstrates foreign influence in Mogadishu specifically alleging that the United States and the European Union are pulling strings in the capital.

The United States Africa Command confirmed on May 29 that it had conducted a total of 63 strikes in Somalia to date in 2026 primarily targeting Al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia. This tally explicitly addressed and denied US involvement in an earlier reported civilian casualty incident near Qandala in Puntland. An airstrike by a foreign military partner however, killed a pregnant woman and her three daughters last Thursday near Somalia's northeastern town with the civilian toll from the protracted air war continuing to rise.

On May 31, the Somali National Army conducted a targeted operation in Hanti Wadaag, Lower Shabelle, killing two Al-Shabaab members including a senior commander according to the Defence Ministry. The operation eliminated Abu Abdalla who had long been involved in organizing and executing terrorist attacks against local communities and played a key role in planning and directing Al-Shabaab activities in the region. Separately Puntland forces intensified Operation Hilaac against ISIS-Somalia in the northeast specifically in the Golis Mountains area with increased activity reported throughout May 2026. The United Arab Emirates and the United States continued to provide air support to Puntland forces. Despite ongoing pressure Al-Shabaab maintained rural influence and shadow governance in south-central areas. Al-Shabaab also continued to exploit political instability for recruitment and attacks.

On May 25, the Somali Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned a terrorist bomb attack on a passenger train in Quetta, Pakistan, expressing solidarity with Pakistan.

A diplomatic crisis emerged on May 31 when Somalia recalled its ambassador to Kenya, Jibril Abdulle following a social media backlash sparked by a photograph showing him standing alongside Israel's envoy. The recall came amid sensitivities regarding Somaliland's reported moves related to Jerusalem. Also on May 31 Somalia's State Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Bal'ad a close confidant of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud issued and subsequently publicly scolded Washington over direct engagement with Somali regional administrations signaling friction in bilateral relations.

On May 30 Somalia condemned missile and drone attacks targeting Kuwait and reaffirmed its support for the Gulf country's sovereignty, security, stability, and territorial integrity. In a statement Somalia expressed full solidarity with Kuwait and stated that such attacks threaten regional peace and contravene international law and the United Nations Charter.

On May 27, Russia's Deputy Defence Minister Vasily Osmakov held talks in Moscow with Somalia's State Minister of Defence Omar Ali Abdi during which the two sides discussed prospects for expanding bilateral defence cooperation. According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, the officials reviewed promising areas of bilateral cooperation in the defence sphere. The parties confirmed their commitment to developing constructive dialogue and mutual interest in the gradual strengthening of military ties. The Russian statement did not disclose specific agreements, military assistance packages, or defence contracts resulting from the talk.

Somaliland

Approximately fifty Somaliland Special Forces soldiers returned from advanced training in Tel Aviv, Israel during the reporting period. The returning personnel were welcomed in a formal ceremony held in Hargeisa where an Israeli delegation presented President

Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Irro with a fragment of an Iron Dome missile interceptor. This public ceremony scored the growing military cooperation between Somaliland and Israel marking a notable evolution in their security partnership.

Former President Muse Bihi Abdi issued a statement marking the end of May as a symbol of Somaliland's struggle, sacrifice, and bravery offering historical reflections on the region's political identity and path.

Somaliland's relations with Israel entered a new phase during the reporting period. An Israeli delegation reportedly presented President Irro with a symbolic component linked to Israel's Iron Dome defence system during a ceremony held at the Presidential Palace in Hargeisa. According to a lengthy report published by The Jewish Chronicle, which explored the rapidly growing diplomatic, security, and economic partnership between Somaliland and Israel following Israel's recognition of Somaliland in December 2025, the Israeli delegation also presented President Irro with a ceremonial menorah during the official meeting underscoring what both sides described as an expanding strategic alliance. The Jewish Chronicle report indicated that cooperation between Somaliland and Israel now extends into security, intelligence, technology, trade, and diplomatic engagement, with Somaliland specialists and security personnel reportedly receiving training in Israel in recent months.

Somaliland President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro gave a notable interview defending ties with Israel stating that critics, particularly in the Muslim world, should mind their own business. He described the relationship as open, strategic, and evolving rapidly. In the same interview President Irro challenged the United Kingdom to recognize Somaliland's reality and appealed to Ethiopia, Kenya, and the United Arab Emirates to follow Israel's lead in extending recognition.

On or around May 27, the Somali federal President criticized Somaliland-Israel ties as a disgrace, stating that Somalia cannot remain silent. This criticism reflected ongoing tensions over sovereignty claims and the federal government's opposition to Somaliland's independent international engagements.

On May 28, Somalia's federal government stated that the door remains open for talks with Somaliland, despite political challenges and external interference delaying negotiations. Deputy Prime Minister Salah Ahmed Jama, speaking on Dawan Media's Mizan Podcast, said the federal government remains committed to achieving a negotiated, peaceful resolution with Somaliland. He stated that the federal government has always been ready for talks but in recent years there have been political challenges including interference from foreign countries, without naming specific nations. He acknowledged that these factors caused delays in past negotiations but stressed that the federal government still believes a political settlement based on dialogue and mutual understanding is possible. The Deputy Prime Minister further stated that the delays affected the talks, but the Somali

federal government remains determined to bring Somaliland into a peaceful process built on dialogue, power sharing, justice, and unity.

8. Yemen

On 29 May 2026, the UN warned that Yemen is “hanging by a thread” after more than a decade of war between Houthi forces and the internationally recognised government backed by a Saudi-led coalition. The assessment highlighted worsening humanitarian conditions, with widespread malnutrition, collapsing public services, and severe underfunding of aid operations affecting millions across the country. Despite a relative reduction in large-scale fighting since the 2022 truce, Yemen remains in a fragmented “neither war nor peace” condition marked by economic breakdown and competing regional influence, particularly between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which continues to complicate prospects for political stabilization and recovery.

On 25 May 2026, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty met Yemen’s Foreign Minister Shaya Mohsen al-Zindani in Cairo, where both sides rejected efforts to “internationalize or militarize” the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Egypt reiterated its position that maritime security should remain the exclusive responsibility of littoral Arab and African states and called for activating the Council of Arab and African States bordering the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden as a coordination framework. The meeting reflects Cairo’s intensified diplomatic activity around Red Sea governance at a time of increasing external military and strategic presence in the waterway, including by non-regional actors and more capable regional powers. Within this context, Egypt’s emphasis on exclusive littoral control and institutional mechanisms can be read as an attempt to reassert regulatory and agenda-setting influence over a strategic corridor where its relative regional power has eroded in recent years. The positioning also aligns with Cairo’s broader effort to prevent the consolidation of competing security architectures in a maritime space increasingly shaped by external intervention and shifting balances of power.

On 28 May 2026, former Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi died in Riyadh at the age of 80, according to reports citing Yemeni presidency sources. Hadi had fled to Saudi Arabia in 2015 following the Houthi takeover of Sana’a and remained in the kingdom thereafter, formally stepping down in 2022 when he transferred authority to the Presidential Leadership Council. His death marks the passing of a central figure in Yemen’s post-2011 political transition and the early phase of the civil war, during which his Saudi-backed government lost territorial control to Houthi forces. Hadi’s long residence in Saudi Arabia and limited political role in later years also reflect the extent of external dependency of Yemen’s internationally recognised leadership during the conflict, while reactions to his death have been mixed and muted across Yemeni political actors, including the Houthis.

9. Kenya

The final week of May 2026 was an important political moment for Kenya because it brought together the major themes shaping the country's current direction: public concern over taxation, the government's effort to show visible development, security questions around the presidency, legal disputes in county governance, and early political positioning ahead of the 2027 general election. Between May 25 and May 31, Kenyan politics was not defined by one single event, but by several connected developments that showed how the country is balancing economic pressure, coalition politics, infrastructure promises, and public accountability.

One of the clearest national issues during the week was the return of Parliament and the debate around the Finance Bill 2026. On May 26, the National Assembly resumed sittings with a heavy agenda that included the Division of Revenue Bill, the Finance Bill 2026, and the 2026/27 budget estimates. This mattered because the Finance Bill was tied directly to how the government planned to raise revenue for the coming financial year. In Kenya, finance bills are never only technical documents; they quickly become political tests of public trust because they affect taxation, household costs, businesses, and the relationship between citizens and the state. The memory of previous tax controversies meant that even before the full parliamentary process advanced, the public was already sensitive to possible new levies.

That public concern was especially visible in the debate over mobile money. Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi moved to reassure Kenyans that the Finance Bill would not introduce new charges on ordinary MPesa or mobile money transfers. His clarification was politically important because MPesa is not just a financial service in Kenya; it is part of daily life for families, workers, small traders, and businesses. Any rumor of new mobile money taxes can quickly create anger because it touches ordinary people directly. Mbadi explained that the target was foreign owned digital payment platforms and card service providers, not regular MPesa users. Even so, the fact that the government had to publicly clarify the issue showed how little room the administration has when it comes to tax politics. The public is watching closely, and opposition actors are likely to keep the Finance Bill alive as a rallying issue if they believe it can expose the government as insensitive to economic hardship.

At the same time, President William Ruto continued to use infrastructure and development projects to strengthen the government's public message. On May 25, he commissioned the Sh3 billion Mariakani power substation in Kilifi County, a project meant to improve electricity reliability in the coastal region. The event also included the launch of a Last Mile Connectivity effort expected to connect more than 24,000 households to electricity. Politically, this was not only about energy supply. It was part of the administration's broader attempt to show that its economic agenda is producing practical benefits. By emphasizing electricity access, industrial growth, and household

connection, the government was trying to link national development promises with everyday needs.

However, the same coast visit also raised a serious security issue. After a May 24 incident in Ganze, Kilifi County, where a young man broke through security and approached President Ruto during a public event, Inspector General Douglas Kanja ordered changes to the presidential security detail. Kanja described the breach as a serious security lapse and announced an investigation into how it happened. The President himself tried to calm the moment and urged security officers not to mistreat the young man, but the incident still carried political weight. In a country where presidents frequently address large crowds and depend on public rallies as a tool of political communication, presidential security is also a question of state confidence. The event exposed the tension between Ruto's public style, which often involves close contact with crowds, and the need for strict security control around the head of state.

County governance also entered the national picture during the week. On May 27, the Employment and Labour Relations Court dismissed an application by the Homa Bay County Government seeking to challenge a petition that had stopped the appointment of a new deputy governor and two County Executive Committee members. The court declined to lift the earlier injunction, meaning the appointments could not proceed until the case was heard and determined. Although this was a county level dispute, it reflected a wider Kenyan political issue: the struggle to ensure that county appointments follow legal, gender equity, and governance standards. Devolution has given counties more power, but it has also created new arenas for political contestation, legal challenges, and disputes over public appointments.

On May 29, President Ruto assented to three major bills at State House: the National Disaster Risk Management Bill, the Forest Conservation and Management Amendment Bill, and the Equalisation Fund Appropriations Bill. These laws touched on governance, environmental protection, and equitable development. Their timing was significant because they allowed the government to present itself as active on both national planning and long term institutional reform. The Disaster Risk Management law was especially important in a country frequently affected by floods, drought, and other emergencies. The forest law spoke to environmental governance, while the Equalisation Fund Appropriations Bill connected to the long standing question of how historically marginalized regions receive development support.

The politics of inclusion became even more visible at the end of the week as Wajir prepared to host the 63rd Madaraka Day celebrations. On May 31, Government Spokesperson Isaac Mwaura described Wajir's hosting of the national celebration as a milestone for the North Eastern region, which has often been politically and economically marginalized. The government highlighted road upgrades, a new stadium with a capacity

of more than 10,000 people, street lighting, a mini State Lodge, modern markets, student centres, libraries, and affordable housing projects across Wajir, Garissa, and Mandera. This was geopolitically and politically meaningful inside Kenya because North Eastern Kenya sits at the intersection of national security, border politics, trade, pastoral livelihoods, and historical marginalization. Hosting a national celebration there was therefore not just ceremonial; it was a statement that the region should be seen as part of the center of national life.

Political positioning also intensified in Nyanza and within the Orange Democratic Movement. On May 30, Energy Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi announced that he would become more actively involved in Siaya politics. His statement came as local realignments began to take shape ahead of the 2027 general election, especially with Governor James Orengo expected to complete his final term. Wandayi said he would no longer stay on the sidelines and would be involved not only in development matters but also in the political affairs of the county. This mattered because it showed how the broad based political arrangement between President Ruto and ODM leader Raila Odinga is reshaping local politics. Leaders who were once understood mainly through opposition politics are now operating in a more complicated political environment, where cooperation with government can be defended as a development strategy.

The following day, ODM held the Kirembe rally in Kisumu, an event that became one of the week's most important political gatherings. The party issued resolutions emphasizing regional unity, loyalty to Raila Odinga, and commitment to the broad based government arrangement. ODM also addressed national concerns, including fuel related pressures, education safety after the Utumishi Academy tragedy, and public health messaging. The rally showed that ODM was trying to do two things at once: maintain its identity and regional base while also defending its participation in the current political arrangement. This balancing act is politically delicate. If ODM appears too close to government, it risks losing some opposition credibility; if it distances itself too much, it may lose influence within the broad based arrangement. The Kirembe rally therefore functioned as both a unity exercise and a message to supporters that the party still controls its political direction.

The Utumishi Academy tragedy also remained part of the national conversation during the week. ODM leaders used the Kirembe rally to call for a review and implementation of school safety recommendations after the incident. This issue added a social accountability dimension to the week's politics. While taxation, rallies, and infrastructure dominated headlines, the school safety debate reminded the country that governance is also measured by whether institutions protect children and respond properly to preventable disasters. Such tragedies often become political because they raise questions about inspection, enforcement, emergency response, and whether past recommendations were ignored.

Taken together, the week of May 25 to May 31 showed a Kenya moving deeper into pre election political realignment while still dealing with immediate governance pressures. The Finance Bill debate showed the government's difficulty in raising revenue without provoking public anger. The Mariakani substation and Wajir Madaraka Day preparations showed the administration's effort to answer criticism through development visibility. The presidential security breach exposed vulnerabilities around high profile public events. The Homa Bay court ruling showed the continuing importance of law in county governance. The assent to three bills allowed the government to project institutional action. Meanwhile, Wandayi's Siaya intervention and ODM's Kirembe rally showed that the road to 2027 is already shaping political behavior, especially in Nyanza.

The most important meaning of the week is that Kenyan politics is currently being fought on several fronts at once. Economic anxiety is shaping public reaction to policy. Development projects are being used to build legitimacy. Coalition politics is becoming more fluid. Regional inclusion is being emphasized through national ceremonies and infrastructure. Public safety, both around the presidency and in schools, is becoming a governance concern. For the Ruto administration, the challenge is to convince citizens that taxation, spending, and development are connected in a fair way. For ODM and other political actors, the challenge is to remain relevant in a political environment where the line between government and opposition is less clear than before. By the end of May 2026, Kenya's politics had not reached a crisis point, but the week made clear that the country was entering a more intense period of negotiation, messaging, and political positioning.

10. The Gulf Countries

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's security strategy is centered on its rapprochement with Iran, efforts to secure a lasting ceasefire in Yemen, and protecting Vision 2030 projects from regional instability. Through talks with the Houthis, supported by Oman and the UN, Riyadh continues to pursue a political settlement while strengthening border surveillance and counter-drone capabilities. In the Horn of Africa, Saudi Arabia remains an important diplomatic and security actor, advocating for a ceasefire and political transition in Sudan, leading the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Council on maritime security, counter-terrorism, and anti-smuggling efforts, and expanding naval cooperation with Djibouti and Somaliland to address arms trafficking and irregular migration.

Diplomatically, Saudi Arabia is pursuing a potential normalization agreement with Israel tied to a US security guarantee, a civilian nuclear program, and progress toward Palestinian statehood, while maintaining strong ties with Qatar, Turkey, and Syria and supporting mediation efforts on regional and international conflicts. In the Horn, Saudi development funding and agricultural investments in Sudan and Ethiopia are increasingly

used as stabilization tools. At the geopolitical level, Riyadh balances strategic partnerships with both the United States and China, participates in BRICS and OPEC+, and advances major connectivity projects such as NEOM, positioning itself as a central actor in global energy security, trade, Red Sea stability, and Horn of Africa affairs.

UAE

The UAE continues to place maritime security and air-defence integration at the center of its peace and security strategy. Through the Combined Maritime Forces and bilateral partnerships, Abu Dhabi has expanded counter-smuggling and freedom-of-navigation operations from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, while maintaining close air-defence coordination with the United States and Israel under the CENTCOM framework. Emirati-backed forces in southern Yemen continue to support stability around the Bab el-Mandeb and counter extremist threats. The UAE's security footprint also extends deeply into the Horn of Africa through its military and logistics presence in Assab, Eritrea, and its naval and air facilities in Berbera, Somaliland. In addition, it supports Puntland and Somali federal-state security forces through training, intelligence-sharing, and coast guard development programs aimed at combating Al-Shabaab, ISIS-linked groups, piracy, and threats to Red Sea shipping lanes.

Alongside its security role, the UAE has expanded its humanitarian, diplomatic, and economic influence across the Middle East and Horn of Africa. It continues to deliver humanitarian assistance in Gaza, Sudan, and Somalia while promoting food, water, and energy resilience projects and agricultural investments in Ethiopia and Sudan to address drivers of instability. Diplomatically, Abu Dhabi maintains dialogue with Iran, supports a two-state solution, facilitates regional mediation efforts, and leverages its relationships with Egypt, Jordan, and Horn of Africa states to encourage de-escalation on issues ranging from Somalia's internal disputes to Nile water tensions. Geopolitically, the UAE is strengthening its position as a global logistics and connectivity hub through the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor and DP World's network of ports, including Berbera, Bosaso, and other East African logistics facilities. Combined with strategic partnerships with the United States, India, France, and East Asian powers, as well as engagement through the I2U2 framework and climate-security diplomacy, these initiatives reinforce the UAE's role as a key connector shaping regional security, trade, and geopolitical dynamics.

Qatar

Qatar's security strategy is built on making itself indispensable through a combination of hard security, economic resilience, and diplomacy. Hosting the largest US military base in the region, Al Udeid Air Base, provides a strong security guarantee, while domestic food-security programs and the Barzan defense industry support self-sufficiency. Qatar's most significant contribution, however, lies in its mediation role. Doha remains a key

intermediary between Israel and Hamas on hostage releases and ceasefire negotiations, while also engaging the Taliban on humanitarian issues and supporting diplomatic efforts involving Ukraine, Chad, Sudan, and Lebanon. In the Horn of Africa, Qatar has hosted negotiations involving Sudanese civilian and military actors, mediated between Sudan and Chad as well as Djibouti and Eritrea, and built a reputation as a trusted neutral venue for conflict resolution. Its humanitarian and development assistance to Somalia and Sudan, including drought resilience and refugee support programs, complements these mediation efforts and aims to promote regional stability.

Following the Al-Ula reconciliation, Qatar has normalized relations with Gulf neighbors while maintaining constructive ties with Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somali stakeholders, often serving as a bridge between Horn of Africa actors and Gulf powers. Although its infrastructure investments are smaller than those of the UAE, Doha supports strategic connectivity projects that strengthen trade and energy links. Geopolitically, Qatar's influence is anchored in its liquefied natural gas sector, with the North Field expansion expected to significantly increase export capacity and reinforce long-term energy partnerships with major global economies. Combined with the international reach of Al Jazeera and its ability to maintain relations with the United States, Iran, and Hamas simultaneously, this energy and diplomatic leverage has cemented Qatar's role as a central actor in regional crisis diplomacy, including across the Horn of Africa and the Bab el-Mandeb region.

11. Africa and The Sahel Region

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain at the center of one of Africa's most severe security crises. The resurgence of the M23 has led to the capture of significant territory in North Kivu, large-scale displacement, and mounting pressure on Goma. The security environment is further complicated by the presence of numerous armed groups, including the Allied Democratic Forces and local militias, while the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate with millions displaced and widespread food insecurity. Tensions between the DRC and Rwanda remain high, with Kinshasa accusing Kigali of supporting M23, a claim that has become a major source of regional instability.

Diplomatic efforts led by regional organizations and African mediators have sought to de-escalate the conflict, including the deployment of regional forces and the transition from the East African Community mission to a more robust Southern African Development Community force. At the same time, the gradual drawdown of MONUSCO has raised concerns about security gaps. Geopolitically, the conflict is closely linked to competition over the DRC's vast reserves of cobalt, copper, lithium, and other critical minerals essential to the global energy transition. As China, the United States, and the European

Union expand efforts to secure access to these resources through investment and infrastructure initiatives such as the Lobito Corridor, stability in eastern Congo has become a matter of both regional security and global strategic importance.

Mali

Mali remains at the center of the Sahel's security crisis and a key arena for Russia's growing military presence in Africa. Since the 2021 military takeover, the transitional authorities have intensified counterinsurgency operations in the north and center with support from Africa Corps and Russia. These operations have enabled the government to reassert control over strategic areas, including Kidal, but have also been accompanied by allegations of civilian casualties and displacement that have drawn international concern. Despite military gains, insecurity persists as jihadist groups affiliated with ISIS and al-Qaeda continue to compete for influence, exploit local grievances, and expand their presence in rural areas. The collapse of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement has further complicated prospects for dialogue with northern armed groups and raised concerns about renewed separatist tensions.

Diplomatically, Mali's relations with Western partners and ECOWAS have deteriorated, prompting Bamako to pursue alternative partnerships and regional arrangements. Mali co-founded the Alliance of Sahel States with Burkina Faso and Niger, strengthened ties with Russia and other non-Western partners, and withdrew from the G5 Sahel framework. Geopolitically, the country has become a testing ground for an alternative security model centered on sovereign-led governance, reduced dependence on Western military support, and closer cooperation with Russia. This shift is reshaping regional security dynamics and challenging long-standing approaches to counterterrorism, peacekeeping, and international engagement in the Sahel.

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso, under the leadership of Ibrahim Traoré, has pursued one of the most significant shifts away from Western security partnerships in the Sahel. The country continues to face a severe security crisis, with large areas affected by armed Islamist groups that have disrupted governance, transportation, and economic activity. To address these challenges, authorities have expanded the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland program and strengthened security cooperation with Russia, including support from Africa Corps personnel, following the departure of French forces. Despite these efforts, insecurity remains widespread, and concerns persist over civilian protection, displacement, and reports of internal political tensions.

Diplomatically, Burkina Faso has emerged as a leading member of the Alliance of Sahel States alongside Mali and Niger, advocating deeper political, economic, and military integration while reducing reliance on ECOWAS-led initiatives. The country has

expanded relations with partners including Russia, Iran, Turkey, and others, while relations with France have significantly deteriorated. Geopolitically, Burkina Faso's gold sector remains central to both the national economy and the broader conflict environment. While industrial mining continues in relatively secure areas, competition over artisanal mining revenues among state actors, armed groups, and other networks highlights the close link between resource governance, economic stability, and long-term security.

Niger

Niger's security landscape has been transformed since the July 2023 military takeover that brought the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland to power. Facing escalating attacks from jihadist groups linked to ISIS and Boko Haram, as well as pressure from ECOWAS, the transitional authorities have shifted away from Niger's traditional Western security partnerships. French forces were withdrawn, military cooperation with the European Union was terminated, and ties with Russia were strengthened through the deployment of Africa Corps personnel for training, security assistance, and support operations. Niger also joined Mali and Burkina Faso in the Alliance of Sahel States, creating a mutual defense bloc that seeks greater regional security cooperation while reducing reliance on ECOWAS and former Western partners.

Domestically, the transitional leadership has emphasized sovereignty and national self-determination while expanding local defense initiatives, although insecurity, displacement, and humanitarian challenges remain significant. Diplomatically, Niger has become more distant from Western partners and ECOWAS while strengthening relations with Russia and other non-Western actors. Geopolitically, the government is reviewing uranium agreements that have long played a key role in European energy security, signaling a possible diversification of partnerships that could reshape regional resource politics and influence global nuclear supply chains.

Chad

Chad is navigating a complex political transition under Mahamat Idriss Déby while confronting multiple security challenges. Following the death of former President Idriss Déby in 2021, the country has sought to consolidate political authority through constitutional and electoral processes. At the same time, Chad continues to face attacks from Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region, growing communal violence linked to climate pressures and resource competition, and the humanitarian impact of large refugee flows from the conflict in Sudan. Chad remains an important contributor to regional security through its participation in the Multinational Joint Task Force and continues to host French military forces, although it has increasingly diversified its security partnerships, including engagement with the UAE and other external actors.

Diplomatically, Chad maintains a balanced foreign policy, preserving relations with France and the United States while engaging pragmatically with neighboring Sahel states, including members of the Alliance of Sahel States. This positioning allows N'Djamena to play a bridging role between competing regional blocs. Geopolitically, Chad's location along major trans-Saharan migration and trade routes, combined with its oil resources, makes it strategically important to a range of international actors, including China, Gulf states, and European partners. As a result, Chad remains a significant, though often understated, player in the evolving security and geopolitical landscape of the Sahel.

Equatorial Guinea

Equatorial Guinea presents a distinct security profile shaped by political stability, strong state control, and resource-driven diplomacy. Under the leadership of Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, the country has avoided major armed conflict and insurgency, with security priorities focused largely on protecting offshore oil and gas infrastructure, combating piracy, and addressing illicit maritime activities in the Gulf of Guinea. To strengthen maritime security, Malabo has expanded naval cooperation with regional and international partners through the Yaoundé Architecture, including joint exercises and intelligence-sharing initiatives.

Diplomatically, Equatorial Guinea has diversified its external partnerships beyond its traditional ties with Western countries, strengthening relations with China, the UAE, and Russia while maintaining an active role in the African Union, OPEC, and the UN system. Geopolitically, its importance is closely linked to its hydrocarbon resources. As oil production gradually declines, the country is investing in natural gas development and positioning itself as a potential liquefied natural gas hub for the Gulf of Guinea. Through resource diplomacy, strategic partnerships, and its geographic location, Equatorial Guinea seeks to maintain regional relevance and attract external investment while safeguarding economic and political stability.

12. North Africa

Morocco

Morocco used Africa Day to present its African policy as a security-development doctrine rather than a ceremonial one. Bourita's framing linked water security, migration, terrorism and development into one strategic package, which is significant because it shows Rabat treating domestic resilience and continental influence as the same project. That is also why Morocco keeps describing its African policy as a "policy of belonging": the goal is to turn geography and history into leverage, not simply goodwill.

The France track deepens that logic. Rabat and Paris are preparing a treaty that would be Morocco's first with a European country, and the timing matters because France's

recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara has already shifted the regional balance. The treaty is therefore not just a bilateral upgrade; it is a consolidation of Morocco's diplomatic gains and a sign that Rabat is converting the Sahara file into wider strategic capital.

Security cooperation is becoming the hard edge of that diplomacy. African Lion 26 showcased Morocco's role in a large multinational exercise, while the successful Arabic-to-English AI translation over tactical radios points to a more modern, capability-driven partnership with the United States. The broader implication is that Morocco is using defense technology, interoperability and military partnership to reinforce its image as a stable hub in a volatile neighborhood.

Algeria

Algeria's week was marked by a familiar tension: it wants to repair relations with France, but it cannot escape the wider politics of dissidence and covert pressure. The Hichem About case revived suspicion around how Algerian opponents abroad are treated, and that comes just as Paris and Algiers are trying to rebuild security and judicial cooperation. The result is a fragile thaw, because every sign of normalization is still vulnerable to one damaging file involving regime critics overseas.

Western Sahara remains the structural issue underneath that fragility. The dispute is increasingly being crowded out by other regional crises, but that does not make it less important; it means the negotiations are losing attention while the core positions stay unchanged. As long as Morocco keeps building diplomatic momentum and Algeria remains tied to the Polisario line, the Sahara question will continue to shape Algeria's strategic posture toward both Rabat and Western capitals.

Libya

Libya's most important signal this week was diplomatic rather than military. By reaffirming support for nuclear disarmament and a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, Tripoli was trying to project itself as a responsible regional actor at a time when its internal politics remain fragmented. That message was reinforced by the U.S.-French emphasis on a comprehensive, Libyan-led process to unify institutions under the UN roadmap, which keeps outside powers formally aligned with the idea that Libya's settlement must be owned from within.

The Chad kidnapping case shows why that diplomatic language matters. The release of four Libyan nationals after an armed group abducted them on the southern route is a reminder that Libya's instability continues to spill across borders through criminal and logistical networks. The episode is not just a border-security incident; it is evidence that

Libya's political fragmentation still creates openings for predation far beyond Tripoli or Benghazi.

13. Middle East

Iran-Israel Conflict

The opening signal was political rather than military: Netanyahu's private admission that he had little ability to shape Trump's Iran decisions showed Israel was no longer steering the main channel of escalation management. That matters because it weakens Jerusalem's leverage just as Washington was trying to assemble a framework that could sideline Israel's preferred strike-first approach.

From Tehran's side, the message was carefully calibrated. Officials said substantial conclusions had been reached on many items in a potential memorandum with Washington, but they also stressed that no agreement was near. The deeper read is that talks were advancing procedurally while the political trust needed to lock them in was still missing.

Domestic control remained part of the diplomacy. Iran's move to restore international internet access after an 88-day blackout was not simply a technical reversal; it suggested the authorities were responding to the economic drag of isolation while keeping the option to tighten the screws again if unrest or war pressure returned.

Military pressure remained active even as channels stayed open. U.S. forces carried out fresh strikes on an Iranian military site and shot down drones near the Strait of Hormuz, showing that Washington was treating the ceasefire as conditional enforcement rather than as a pause that constrained its own freedom of action.

Tehran's response was to frame those strikes as a breach of the ceasefire rather than a defensive action. That accusation is important because it turns every American hit into evidence that the United States is negotiating and punishing at the same time, which makes compromise harder to sell inside Iran.

The first Hormuz-related idea to surface was a draft arrangement that would reopen shipping within a month if terms were agreed. That is revealing because it tied maritime access directly to the larger ceasefire bargain, meaning the strait had become not just a shipping issue but a currency of political recognition.

Trump's immediate rejection of any outside control over Hormuz showed how central sovereignty had become in the debate. His insistence on no tolls and no single-country management was less about procedure than about preserving the image of U.S. command over a strategic chokepoint that Iran was trying to turn into leverage.

Washington then moved from rhetoric to financial pressure by sanctioning the Persian Gulf Strait Authority. That step shows the U.S. was not waiting for a final deal to keep shaping the terms of maritime access; it was trying to make the price of any Iranian gatekeeping higher before talks even finished.

The tentative 60-day ceasefire extension mattered because it suggested both sides still saw value in buying time. Yet the fact that Trump's approval was still required meant the process remained deeply personalized and fragile, with one political decision capable of freezing the entire negotiating architecture.

Trump's own language reinforced that fragility. By saying he would soon decide on an Iran deal while demanding that Hormuz reopen immediately, he turned diplomacy into a deadline-driven test of submission, not a negotiated convergence. That raises the pressure on Tehran while also narrowing Washington's room for a gradual climbdown.

The sanctions track did not stop at the strait. Fresh U.S. counter-terrorism sanctions on Iranian individuals and entities showed that pressure policy stayed active even while a ceasefire extension was being discussed, which suggests Washington wanted to preserve bargaining asymmetry rather than move into a pure confidence-building phase.

A wider strategic read was already forming: Trump's room to maneuver was narrowing as a framework deal took shape. That analysis matters because it shows the talks were no longer only about whether a deal could be reached, but about whether Israel, the Pentagon, Congress, and regional allies would allow the deal to define the next phase of the war.

That tension was visible in Hegseth's warning that the U.S. was ready to restart strikes if no deal emerged. The message was designed to keep Iran's negotiators under military shadow, but it also exposed a real policy contradiction: the U.S. was asking for restraint while preserving the option to escalate immediately.

Inside the nuclear file, Iran's enriched uranium stockpile remained its strongest bargaining chip. That means the negotiation was never just about ending hostilities; it was also about whether Tehran could convert a latent nuclear capability into sanctions relief and security guarantees without surrendering its strategic hedge.

On the Israel-Lebanon front, the conflict widened again when Israel struck Beirut's southern suburbs. Hitting the capital's edge carried more than tactical value: it signaled that Israel was no longer confining punishment to the border zone and was willing to reintroduce Beirut as a pressure point in the broader deterrence equation.

The humanitarian cost in southern Lebanon made that escalation more than a military footnote. Israeli evacuations and air strikes had pushed civilians from a growing swathe of

the south, turning the campaign into a de facto restructuring of population space rather than a narrow anti-Hezbollah operation.

Israel's buffer-zone logic became clearer with its push to the Litani River. By framing the south as a security zone, Israel was trying to translate battlefield gains into a new border reality, but that also raised fears of a prolonged occupation and made the war look less like retaliation and more like territorial reordering.

That logic became operational when Israeli forces advanced across the Litani in an expanded ground offensive. Crossing that line matters because it turns a symbolic security demand into a concrete military presence north of a long-recognized frontier, which raises the costs of any quick ceasefire restoration.

The seizure of Beaufort Castle deepened that message. Capturing a historic stronghold gave Israel both tactical depth and symbolic momentum, especially because the site sits above a corridor that has long shaped military movement in southern Lebanon.

Washington tried to interrupt that escalation with a new plan to ease Israel-Lebanon tensions. But the proposal's phased logic exposed the problem at the heart of the conflict: Hezbollah wants mutual restraint, Israel wants verified quiet before concessions, and the U.S. is stuck trying to bridge incompatible sequencing demands.

Iran's criticism that contradictory U.S. positions and Israeli attacks were delaying diplomacy cut to the core of the problem. Tehran was effectively saying that no nuclear or ceasefire package can survive if Lebanon keeps exploding, because the regional fronts are now linked in both military and political bargaining terms.

Defense industry developments showed how quickly war is reshaping procurement. Elbit's stronger profits and larger backlog reflected global demand for military hardware, but the more important point is that the Lebanon front is feeding Israeli defense innovation and expanding the market for counter-drone systems.

That is why Elbit's work on hardware aimed at Hezbollah drones matters beyond corporate news. It shows the conflict is now pushing both sides into an adaptation cycle, where every battlefield method creates a new procurement need and every new system is built in anticipation of the next battlefield surprise.

The economic institutions were reading the situation as a supply shock, not a local war. Warnings from the IMF, World Bank, IEA and WTO made clear that the Middle East conflict was straining energy supplies and hitting vulnerable economies hardest, especially because Hormuz remains the hinge between military tension and global price stability.

Oil's sharp jump captured that vulnerability in real time. The market reacted not just to headlines but to the possibility that diplomacy had stalled and the strait might be choked

further, which shows traders now price Iran policy as a direct energy-security variable rather than a distant geopolitical risk.

The shipping picture made the market reaction rational. Traffic through Hormuz had fallen far below prewar levels, and Washington said the blockade pressure was still active through direct interdictions, so the route was operating less like a normal commercial channel and more like a managed conflict zone.

Taken together, the week's story is not a simple ceasefire narrative. It is a bargaining system built on three linked pressures: military coercion, control of maritime chokepoints, and a Lebanese front that keeps widening the diplomatic cost of inaction. That is why progress looked real and reversible at the same time.

Turkey

The CHP crisis has become the week's defining domestic story. The court-driven removal of Özgür Özel, the police eviction from party headquarters in Ankara, the blockade of an Izmir rally, and the reinstatement of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu show a struggle that is no longer just about party procedure but about who controls opposition legitimacy in Turkey. DEM's condemnation matters because it links the dispute to broader democratic backsliding and even to the fragile Kurdish peace track.

The market reaction was sharp but not catastrophic. After the initial shock, equities, the lira and bonds steadied, which suggests investors still expect Turkey's economic managers to contain the damage; even so, the episode exposed how quickly political interference can spill into pricing, capital flows and confidence. In other words, the economy is not separate from the political fight; it is one of its main transmission channels.

Erdogan's regional calls point to a deliberate attempt to project calm beyond Turkey's borders. His conversations with Oman's sultan, Iran's president and Pakistan's prime minister all carried the same message: escalation helps no one, diplomacy should be protected, and Ankara will keep backing negotiations and regional stability. That posture matters because Turkey is trying to preserve room to maneuver as a mediator even while its domestic scene looks unstable.

The Gaza file sits at the center of that diplomacy. Erdogan used Eid al-Adha to underscore solidarity with Palestinians and sharpen his criticism of Netanyahu, reinforcing Turkey's role as one of Israel's loudest regional critics. At the same time, Trump's push to fold Turkey into a broader Abraham Accords expansion shows how Ankara is being pulled in two directions: public alignment with Gaza sympathy on one side, and pressure to fit into a normalization architecture on the other.

The flotilla controversy widened that pressure into a legal and diplomatic issue. Activists deported to Turkey alleged mistreatment in detention, and France's request for a prosecutorial probe shows the episode is moving from street activism into state-level accountability debates. Turkey's role as the landing point for the deportees also makes it a key transit hub in the wider Gaza solidarity network, not just a commentator on it.

The Aegean remains a durable fault line. Discussion in Greece over marine parks and possible territorial-water adjustments, set against Ankara's Blue Homeland agenda, keeps maritime sovereignty high on the bilateral agenda; Turkey's own foreign ministry has already said Greek marine parks would carry no legal consequence for the broader dispute. The issue is less about one plan than about a recurring pattern of signaling, counter-signaling and legal contestation.

Away from immediate neighborhood disputes, Ankara is also trying to widen its strategic options. Hakan Fidan's signal that Turkey is open to UAV cooperation with Japan suggests a move to turn drone production into a foreign-policy lever, linking defense industry ambition with a broader effort to diversify partnerships beyond the region. That is a useful reminder that Turkey is still looking for long-term strategic depth even while absorbing short-term political turbulence at home.

Syria

On May 31, Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa and U.S. President Donald Trump discussed regional stability and economic recovery during a phone call. Al-Sharaa emphasized that lifting remaining American sanctions is vital for attracting foreign investment and revitalizing Syria's economy. While the United States has repealed sweeping measures like the Caesar Act following Bashar al-Assad's ouster, targeted restrictions remain against Assad's associates, captagon traffickers, and other destabilizing actors. Both leaders agreed on the necessity of continued coordination and diplomatic engagement to prevent further regional escalation as Syria's transitional government works to stabilize the nation.

Complicating these diplomatic efforts to prevent regional escalation is a sustained foreign military presence on Syrian borders. An Al Jazeera investigation published on May 29 revealed that Israel currently occupies approximately 1,000 square kilometers of territory across Syria, Lebanon, and Gaza. Utilizing satellite imagery, the report demonstrated that Israeli concrete barriers frequently extend beyond official military boundaries. Israel's defense minister confirmed that these buffer zones will be maintained to separate opposing forces from Israeli communities. For Syria's transitional leadership, this extended military footprint in the south adds a formidable geographic challenge to an already precarious security environment.

This fragile security landscape is further burdened by the grim legacy of the former regime's atrocities. On May 26, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announced the discovery of dozens of undeclared Assad-era munitions, including aerial bombs and rockets. Working alongside Syrian authorities, inspectors recovered raw sarin ingredients, chemical mixing equipment, and hexamine from three previously hidden sites. These materials resemble those used in the devastating 2013 Ghouta and 2017 Ltamenah attacks. In a significant step toward accountability, Syrian authorities arrested 18 suspects, including senior military officials, for their alleged roles in the clandestine program.

The remnants of Syria's civil war continue to produce international legal consequences, particularly concerning the country's former role as an Islamic State stronghold. Following the recent arrival of a second group of ISIS-linked women and children from Syrian refugee camps, Australian authorities charged 34-year-old returnee Rayann El Houli with terrorism offenses. This follows earlier prosecutions of repatriated women facing charges including the enslavement of Yazidi women and entering declared conflict zones. Carrying potential decade-long sentences, these cases underscore how the complex legal and humanitarian reckoning from Syria's multifaceted conflict extends far beyond Middle Eastern borders.

Beyond these formidable security and diplomatic hurdles, Syria faces immediate internal humanitarian shocks that compound its recovery efforts. Following heavy regional rainfall, authorities were forced to open the Euphrates Dam gates to relieve structural pressure, causing rapid flooding across Raqqa and Deir el-Zour. Surging water levels inundated agricultural fields, businesses, and homes, prompting urgent evacuations of riverbank residents. While no casualties were reported, rescue teams worked through late May to save stranded farmers. This environmental disaster exacerbates the hardships in eastern Syria, a region already destabilized by recent armed clashes, adding another layer to the nation's arduous reconstruction.

14. Global Powers

The United States remained heavily focused on managing tensions with Iran while simultaneously advancing its Indo-Pacific strategy and engaging key regional partners.

On 25 May, U.S. forces conducted what U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) described as limited defensive strikes against Iranian missile launch sites and fast boats operating near the Strait of Hormuz after assessing an imminent threat to U.S. forces and maritime security. Iran condemned the strikes and claimed retaliatory actions, highlighting the continued risk of escalation despite ongoing diplomatic efforts.

Diplomatic engagement nevertheless advanced during the week. By 28 May, U.S. and Iranian negotiators reportedly reached a tentative framework to extend the ceasefire for an

additional 60 days, reopen the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping, and begin structured negotiations on Iran's nuclear program, including discussions related to enriched uranium limits and verification mechanisms. The proposed arrangement also reportedly included phased sanctions-relief elements, although significant disagreements remained over implementation, monitoring, and maritime security arrangements. President Donald Trump emphasized that no single state, particularly Iran, would be allowed to control the Strait and reiterated opposition to any arrangement resembling the 2015 nuclear agreement. Oil markets reacted cautiously positively, although shipping activity through the Strait remained below normal levels.

At the same time, Washington maintained its pressure campaign against Tehran. The U.S. administration announced additional sanctions targeting Iranian-linked oil transportation and financial networks, signaling that negotiations would proceed alongside continued economic pressure rather than replacing it.

Another notable diplomatic development was the visit of Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar to Washington. Meetings with senior U.S. officials focused on regional security, developments surrounding Iran, and broader bilateral relations. The discussions reflected Pakistan's continuing relevance to U.S. regional diplomacy at a time of heightened tensions across the Middle East.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Marco Rubio concluded a visit to India from 23–26 May. Discussions centered on strengthening trade relations, maritime security cooperation, critical minerals, energy security, artificial intelligence, supply-chain resilience, and coordination within the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. Rubio emphasized the growing strategic alignment between Washington and New Delhi and extended an invitation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the White House.

Coming to China, the most significant engagement was Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Beijing. During meetings with Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang, both sides agreed to accelerate the modernization of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), expand development of Gwadar Port, deepen cooperation in artificial intelligence, agriculture, industry, and infrastructure, and strengthen security cooperation to protect Chinese investments. Beijing also praised Pakistan's role in Iran-related diplomacy and regional de-escalation efforts.

Chinese diplomacy scored another success in Europe as Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić visited Beijing. More than twenty cooperation agreements were signed covering trade, technology, digital economy, education, artificial intelligence, and green development. The visit demonstrated China's continued expansion of influence in the Balkans despite Serbia's formal EU accession aspirations.

China and India held the 35th Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) meeting in Beijing. Discussions focused on managing the Line of Actual Control, maintaining border stability, and gradually normalizing bilateral relations. The talks indicated that both countries continue to prioritize crisis management and strategic stabilization despite persistent rivalry.

The most significant diplomatic event was the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi, bringing together India, the United States, Japan, and Australia. The meeting produced several concrete outcomes, including a new Indo-Pacific Energy Security Framework, cooperation on critical minerals, maritime security initiatives, and plans for the Quad's first joint infrastructure project—a port development initiative in Fiji. The ministers also discussed disruptions stemming from the Strait of Hormuz crisis and concerns over China's activities in the South China Sea.

China hosted senior officials from Moldova, including Foreign Minister Mihai Popșoi, reflecting Beijing's continued efforts to expand diplomatic and economic ties in Eastern Europe amid broader geopolitical competition.

The security situation around Taiwan remained tense. Taiwan reported a second major Chinese joint combat readiness patrol within a week, involving aircraft and naval vessels operating around the island. The patrols underscored Beijing's continued military pressure campaign against Taiwan and its opposition to any moves toward formal independence.

On 25 May, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov informed U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio that Russia had decided to conduct systematic strikes against facilities in Kyiv linked to Ukraine's military command structure. Moscow framed the strikes as retaliation for Ukrainian attacks on Russian territory.

Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval visited Moscow to participate in international security forums and hold consultations with Russian officials. The engagement underscored the durability of the India-Russia strategic partnership despite India's expanding relations with the United States and other Western partners.

Russia used Africa Day (25 May) to reaffirm its commitment to expanding relations with African states. During official events in Moscow, Lavrov highlighted Russia-Africa cooperation in trade, security, education, and diplomacy and pointed to implementation of commitments made during the Russia-Africa summits.

The most consequential development after Ukraine was President Vladimir Putin's state visit to Kazakhstan from 27–29 May. Russia and Kazakhstan agreed to move forward with a major nuclear power project, expected to become Kazakhstan's first nuclear power plant in decades. Discussions also focused on increasing Russian oil exports to China through Kazakhstan and deepening Eurasian economic integration.

On 26 May, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov chaired discussions focused on expanding cooperation with BRICS partners and countries of the Global South. Russia emphasized political coordination, economic cooperation, and security collaboration with countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

15. Europe

The UK's most significant foreign-policy development was the negotiation of a new strategic treaty with Poland. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk advanced plans for a defense and security pact focused on deterring Russia, strengthening cybersecurity cooperation, and enhancing military coordination. The agreement reflects London's growing effort to become a leading European security actor outside the EU.

The British government announced a major diplomatic initiative toward both China and India. Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper prepared visits to Beijing and New Delhi to discuss the Ukraine war, the Strait of Hormuz crisis, trade, technology, and broader geopolitical coordination. The move highlights Britain's attempt to balance security concerns with economic engagement in Asia.

The government increasingly linked economic policy with national security. Chancellor Rachel Reeves pushed a "Buy British" approach in sectors such as shipbuilding, energy, steel, and artificial intelligence, reflecting concerns about supply-chain resilience and strategic competition.

France devoted considerable diplomatic attention to preparations for the Choose France Summit, designed to attract foreign investment and reinforce France's position as a major destination for international capital. The initiative reflects Paris's effort to combine industrial policy with foreign economic engagement.

Sweden's major diplomatic role was hosting the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Helsingborg, its first such event since joining NATO. Stockholm used the opportunity to reinforce its status as a fully integrated NATO member and a contributor to European security.

Dutch authorities joined Germany, Norway, Poland, and the EU in summoning Russian representatives over Moscow's threats toward Kyiv.

16. International and Regional Organizations

United Nation

The United Nations remained actively engaged in supporting and monitoring political dialogue in Somalia. The organization continued to coordinate with the AU, IGAD, and other partners in facilitating dialogue, humanitarian assistance, and support for AUSSOM operations. Together with international partners, including the United Nations Transitional Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS), the UN reiterated calls for restraint and renewed negotiations to prevent further political fragmentation.

Africa Union

The African Union commemorated Africa Day on May 25, 2026, highlighting themes of African unity, peace, and the implementation of Agenda 2063. Through the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) and other channels, the AU reaffirmed its commitment to Somalia's stabilization efforts. The organization remained engaged in Somalia's ongoing electoral and constitutional challenges, encouraging continued dialogue among political actors amid tensions related to elections and institutional mandates.

The AU also deployed an election observation mission to Ethiopia, working alongside IGAD and other partners to support credible, transparent, and peaceful electoral processes.

African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM)

On May 25, 2026, coinciding with Africa Day celebrations, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC) and Head of AUSSOM, Ambassador El Hadji Ibrahima Diene, issued a statement reaffirming the mission's commitment to Somali-led peacebuilding initiatives, the strengthening of national security institutions, civilian protection, and stabilization efforts.

The statement emphasized African solidarity, recognized the sacrifices made by Somali security forces and African Union personnel, and underscored continued cooperation with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in pursuit of sustainable peace and the objectives of Agenda 2063. Throughout the reporting period, AUSSOM continued operational activities, training programs, and coordination with Somali security forces in response to ongoing Al-Shabaab threats and financing challenges. The mission's mandate remains in effect until December 31, 2026.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

IGAD focused primarily on supporting Ethiopia's general election while maintaining engagement in Somalia's political process. On May 27, 2026, IGAD announced the

arrival of its Election Observation Mission (IGAD EOM) in Addis Ababa to observe Ethiopia's 7th General Election, held on June 1. The mission was deployed at the invitation of the Ethiopian government and the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE). It was led by H.E. Dr. Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe, former Vice President of Uganda, and deputized by H.E. Mohamed Ali Houmed, former President of Djibouti's National Assembly. The mission consisted of 26 short-term observers from IGAD member states, representing election management bodies, civil society organizations, women's groups, and youth organizations.

Observers were deployed across most regional states, including Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, to assess polling-day procedures, including the opening of polling stations, voting, vote counting, and closing processes. Their assessment was guided by Ethiopia's legal framework, the IGAD Draft Protocol on Democracy, Governance and Elections, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and relevant international principles and standards. On May 31, the Head of Mission met with H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, Head of the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM), to coordinate observation efforts and prepare a preliminary statement scheduled for release on June 3.

IGAD also continued monitoring political developments in Somalia following the stalled negotiations held from May 13 to 15. The organization maintained its earlier calls for inclusive dialogue and restraint, which continued to shape its engagement with Somali stakeholders throughout the reporting period.



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