



Weekly Geopolitical Report

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

Coverage Period: June 01 – June 07

Publication Date: June 08, 2026



Issue No. 23 | 2026

For analytical and informational purposes only

Horn Review: Weekly Report

June 01 – June 07, 2026

1. Ethiopia

The first week of June 2026 was defined by Ethiopia's successful completion of its seventh general election on 1 June, an event that served as the central political milestone around which the country's diplomatic, economic, and developmental activities converged. Polling stations opened across most parts of the country, enabling millions of registered voters to participate in what Ethiopian authorities described as the largest electoral exercise in the nation's history. The National Election Board reported that the overwhelming majority of polling stations commenced operations on schedule, while thousands of candidates representing dozens of political parties competed for seats in both the federal parliament and regional councils. More than 54 million citizens registered to vote, and despite weather-related and logistical challenges in some areas, the process proceeded peacefully with strong public participation.

In the days following the vote, the Office of the Prime Minister emphasized that the registration of more than fifty-four million citizens reflected growing public confidence in constitutional institutions and democratic practice. Government officials highlighted the contributions of election workers, security personnel, and public institutions in ensuring the orderly conduct of the polls, linking the electoral process to broader national objectives of economic modernization, infrastructure development, and state-building. Observers from the African Union and IGAD commended the overall peaceful and orderly conduct of the election, noting institutional improvements and high voter participation as indicators of continued democratic progress.

A joint statement issued on 3 June by the European Union delegation and its partners welcomed the holding of the election and commended the efforts of the National Election Board, civil society organizations, and domestic observers. While acknowledging that voting remained ongoing or was delayed in certain areas due to security conditions, the statement recognized the significance of the process. Ultimately, the election's legitimacy derives principally from Ethiopia's constitutional framework, its domestic institutions, and the participation of millions of citizens, reflecting the resilience and growing maturity of the country's democratic system under strong federal leadership.

With the peaceful conclusion of voting, attention quickly shifted toward development priorities. The government inaugurated major urban projects, including the Entoto–Kechene Medhanealem Riverside Development in Addis Ababa as part of the broader Sheger initiative. Integrating environmental restoration, urban renewal, agriculture, and community participation, these projects underscored the administration's commitment to sustainable development and improved livelihoods during the post-election period.

Diplomatic engagement also remained highly active throughout the week. Around 1 June, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Miao Deyu met Ethiopia's ambassador, reaffirming the two countries' all-weather strategic partnership and expanding cooperation in trade, infrastructure, and multilateral platforms such as FOCAC. On 7 June, Oman's Foreign Minister received Ethiopia's ambassador to discuss strengthening economic relations, logistics cooperation, investment opportunities, and preparations for a joint business forum. Ethiopia also participated in the 11th BRICS Foreign Policy Dialogue in New Delhi on 7 June, where it advanced priorities related to South-South cooperation, climate action through the Green Legacy Initiative, and digital transformation. At the same time, high-level engagements with Finland resumed, focusing on trade, education, and climate collaboration.

Regional diplomacy remained equally significant, particularly regarding the conflict in Sudan. During the first week of June, Sudanese political actors participated in dialogue initiatives hosted in Addis Ababa, further reinforcing Ethiopia's role as an important convener of Sudanese-led political solutions. Although divisions emerged within the Democratic Bloc over participation and procedural issues, several groups, including SLM-Abdelwahid, joined the discussions. These developments reflected Ethiopia's continued efforts to facilitate dialogue and promote regional stability amid the ongoing Sudanese crisis.

In a comprehensive statement issued around 5 June, the Office of the Prime Minister articulated Ethiopia's vision of legitimacy rooted in performance, resilience, national priorities, and internal democratic evolution rather than external approval alone. It highlighted massive voter registration and participation, extensive domestic oversight, African Union and IGAD observer assessments, infrastructure achievements including the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, industrialization, agricultural transformation, and export growth as evidence of sustained national consolidation and self-reliance, while firmly rejecting armed insurgency as incompatible with constitutional order and emphasizing the need to uphold state authority against destabilizing forces.

The Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government of Ethiopia, extended deepest condolences to the families and communities in Arsi Zone who suffered the loss of loved ones, injuries, and destruction of homes as a result of recent attacks carried out against civilians, including those targeted in their places of worship by OLA-Shene insurgents. These attacks, which occurred in areas such as Asko and surrounding localities in the lead-up to and around election day, were not isolated incidents but formed part of a broader effort by extremists to create instability, undermine public security, inflame ethnic and religious tensions, and disrupt Ethiopia's democratic processes.

Security developments in Tigray required sustained federal attention during the week as concerns persisted regarding activities by factions of the TPLF that continue to challenge

the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement and threaten the stability achieved since the cessation of hostilities. Reports emerging around 6 June indicated security operations near Sheraro targeting armed elements linked to TPLF networks amid growing concerns over attempts to re-establish pre-war administrative structures and parallel authority arrangements outside the agreed constitutional and peace frameworks. Such developments have raised questions about the commitment of certain TPLF actors to the full implementation of the peace process and their willingness to pursue political objectives through institutional rather than confrontational means.

The federal government reinforced its position on these issues through senior security leadership. During a military graduation ceremony on 6 June, Field Marshal Birhanu Jula warned against the so-called Tsimdo Alliance, describing it as a destabilizing political and security project advanced by certain TPLF factions in cooperation with external actors. He characterized the alliance as a potential threat to Ethiopia's national interests, territorial integrity, and regional stability, while emphasizing the responsibility of the country's defense institutions to remain vigilant against emerging security challenges.

These concerns were further amplified by statements from some TPLF-affiliated figures warning of the possibility of renewed conflict, rhetoric that risks undermining confidence in the peace process and reversing gains achieved through the Pretoria Agreement. Against this backdrop, the federal government maintained that preserving constitutional order, protecting civilian populations, and preventing a return to conflict remain overriding national priorities. Consequently, security measures undertaken during the week were presented as necessary actions aimed at safeguarding peace, deterring destabilizing activities, and ensuring that political disputes continue to be addressed through lawful and constitutional mechanisms rather than through coercion or armed confrontation.

Economic developments provided additional momentum during the week. On 3 June, the International Monetary Fund announced a staff-level agreement on the fifth review of Ethiopia's Extended Credit Facility program. The agreement could unlock approximately 468 million USD in additional financing, bringing total IMF support under the program to nearly 2.65 billion USD. The review acknowledged progress in export performance, domestic revenue mobilization, foreign reserve accumulation, and inflation management despite persistent global economic challenges. At the same time, it emphasized the importance of maintaining disciplined macroeconomic policies as reforms continue. The government remains focused on balancing economic growth, financial stability, and national development priorities in the post-election environment.

Taken together, the first week of June 2026 illustrated Ethiopia's determined management of a complex transitional period. The peaceful conduct of the 1 June general election provided a foundation for consolidating democratic gains, while continued diplomatic

engagement, development initiatives, proactive responses to security challenges, and sustained economic reforms reflected a broader effort to strengthen national resilience and advance long-term state-building objectives.

2. Sudan

Sudan entered the first week of June against a backdrop of diplomatic motion and military stalemate. The Addis Ababa consultations convened by the Quintet mechanism produced the most significant nominal alignment among Sudanese civilian forces since the October 2021 coup, yet the agreement was immediately qualified by internal dissent, coalition absences, and the behavior of the African Union itself, which according to sources interviewed by Horn Review moved from facilitating the process to actively distorting it. On the ground, drone strikes killed civilians in North Kordofan, fighting in Blue Nile displaced over 150,000 people, and the RSF continued to consolidate parallel state structures in areas under its control.

The centerpiece of the week was a series of consultations in Addis Ababa facilitated by the Quintet mechanism, comprising the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the Arab League, and IGAD. On June 5, a coalition of forces including the Sumoud Alliance, the Democratic Bloc, the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, the Popular Congress Party, and the National Umma Party, alongside civil society and youth organizations, announced agreement on a joint vision to launch a preparatory committee that would initiate a broader political process. The statement described the consensus as a commitment to a comprehensive peaceful settlement and framed it as a step toward social reconciliation built on equal citizenship and addressing historical marginalization. UN Special Envoy Pekka Haavisto, who visited Khartoum in the days following, urged Sovereign Council Chairman Abdel Fattah al-Burhan to support the consultations, describing any future process as Sudanese-owned. Burhan had announced in late May that arrangements were underway for an internal political dialogue, though concrete preparatory steps on the ground have yet to follow.

What the joint statement obscured, however, was that the consultations themselves had broken down before the document was signed. According to Sumoud representatives who spoke to Horn Review, the collapse was triggered by a unilateral decision by the African Union that participants described as a fundamental breach of the agreed framework. The background is essential. At a prior meeting in Djibouti convened under IGAD, all parties had negotiated and reached agreement on the composition of the Addis Ababa consultations, including which groups would participate and how many seats each would hold. Under that agreement, the Democratic Bloc was allocated 12 seats. The Bloc's leadership requested that it would cover the costs of the additional 7 people in its 19 seats leadership council, including flights and accommodation, for the AU to allow them additional seats so that its representation would be complete. The AU declined. Across all

major participant groups, an average of eleven to thirteen seats was allocated per delegation, and the groups fell broadly into three categories: the non-aligned (Sumoud), the pro-SAF (Democratic Bloc), and the pro-RSF (Tasis).

Against this agreed framework, the AU then proceeded, without consulting any of the other participating groups, to grant an additional sixteen seats to a formation led by Mohamed Ahmed Sir Al-Khatim, known as Al-Jakoumi, who is widely regarded as a firm and unconditional supporter of the Sudanese Armed Forces. The decision had no procedural basis in the Djibouti understandings and was not explained to the other delegations. It was this action that directly caused the consultations to halt. Representatives from Sumoud described it to Horn Review not as an administrative misstep but as a deliberate intervention, one that shifted the balance of the process in favor of a particular political outcome before the process had even formally begun.

What gives this intervention its broader significance is the institutional context in which it occurred. The AUC Chairperson, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, has a biographical profile that is directly relevant to Sudan. Before becoming Djibouti's foreign minister in 2005, a post he held for two decades, Youssouf served as Djibouti's ambassador to Egypt and permanent representative to the Arab League from 1997 to 2001, while simultaneously holding non-resident accreditation to Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey. He also served as chairperson of the Council of Ministers of both the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. His entire diplomatic formation was shaped by the Arab institutional architecture, and his deepest bilateral relationship is with Cairo. Egypt's strategic position on Sudan is well established: Cairo has consistently backed the SAF, views the RSF as a security threat, and has a direct interest in seeing a military-aligned administration consolidate power in Khartoum given its calculations around the GERD, the Nile, and Red Sea stability. The AU representative to Sudan, Mohamed Belaiche, was criticized by Tasis during the week for a lack of neutrality, though the more pointed critique came from Sumoud, which placed the responsibility directly on the institutional behavior of the Commission rather than on any individual envoy.

The pattern that emerges, according to those Horn Review spoke with, is that the AU has shifted from providing a venue for Sudanese parties to discuss a way forward to attempting to influence the outcome of that discussion through procedural manipulation. The Al-Jakoumi allocation, unilateral and unexplained, is the clearest instance of this, but it fits a broader trajectory in which the AU's conduct under the current chairperson has tilted the architecture of the process toward outcomes acceptable to Egypt and the SAF. The desired result, as observers close to the civilian blocs described it, is a political process that is nominally inclusive but structurally designed to produce continuity of military governance, using the AU as an instrument of legitimation rather than mediation. Egypt is the sharpest available reference point: the trajectory from popular uprising to

managed military continuity, stabilized by external actors willing to treat governance as secondary to strategic alignment, has already played out there.

Following the breakdown, the process has not entirely collapsed. There are new rounds of indirect meetings underway between the civilian parties, including the Democratic Bloc and potentially Tasis, aimed at reaching agreement on at least the design of the preparatory phase. The question of who participates, in what numbers, and on whose authority remains unresolved, which is to say the question the AU's decision broke open is the same one the new meetings must now close before any process can credibly resume.

The most anticipated bilateral encounter of the week also did not happen: a face-to-face meeting between Sumoud and the Tasis coalition, the political wing of the RSF, failed to materialize despite both groups being present in Addis Ababa, due to a complete absence of communication between them. The Democratic Bloc reiterated its categorical refusal to hold any dialogue with Tasis, describing it as the political arm of a force responsible for ongoing atrocities. Tasis, for its part, dismissed the Democratic Bloc's position as inconsequential, with spokesperson Ahmed Tugod Lisan stating that any political process excluding his coalition would amount to a public relations exercise with no bearing on realities on the ground. The SPLM-N Revolutionary Democratic Current, led by Yasir Arman, filed formal reservations against the preparatory committee document, warning that entering a political track without binding commitments from the warring parties would yield no tangible change. The Sudan Liberation Army led by Abdelwahid al-Nur similarly withheld its signature, citing the absence of explicit language barring the National Congress Party and Islamist movement from any future arrangements.

On the military front, fighting in Blue Nile State remained intense. The Sudanese Armed Forces announced that they repelled a large-scale attack by the RSF and SPLM-N alliance on the town of Al-Barka, while RSF-aligned platforms simultaneously broadcast footage appearing to show their forces inside an army base in the area, leaving control of the town contested. Civil society sources reported that over 150,000 people have been displaced from southern Blue Nile since March, with thousands stranded near the Ethiopian border without food, water, or shelter. Drone strikes killed at least eleven to fifteen civilians in North Kordofan markets, drawing condemnation from human rights organizations.

The RSF continued its construction of parallel statehood. RSF commander Daglo personally launched parallel high school examinations in South Darfur and parts of Kordofan, the first time such tests have been administered in RSF-controlled territory. Educators warned of a permanent administrative split in the country's educational system if the parallel track consolidates. A decree establishing a Transitional Currency Council, with former Sudan Central Bank governor Hussein Yahya Jangoul appointed to oversee monetary operations in RSF-held areas, triggered warnings from analysts of a de facto monetary split, accelerating inflation, and a loss of correspondent banking relationships.

The humanitarian and economic dimensions of the war deepened further, with communal tensions in Kassala prompting emergency security restrictions, and Ethiopian Airlines' decision to require dollar payments in Port Sudan placing the cost of currency market access on ordinary citizens.

3. Egypt

Egypt's diplomatic maneuvering in Seoul this week illustrated a calculated strategy to diversify its global partnerships and position Cairo as an indispensable economic gateway to Africa. By holding a premier strategic dialogue with South Korea and delivering a presidential message, Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty elevated bilateral ties to secure vital Asian investments. Simultaneously, holding targeted discussions with his counterparts from Ghana and Togo during the Korea-Africa forum expanded Egypt's continental reach beyond its immediate neighborhood. The core strategic interest lies in attracting foreign capital and technology while reinforcing Egypt's leadership role in broader multilateral African diplomacy.

Building upon this multilateral momentum, Cairo directed intense focus toward the Horn of Africa to safeguard its critical maritime security interests. By reaffirming absolute support for Somalia's sovereignty and maintaining direct coordination through high-level ministerial phone calls, Egypt is actively countering regional rivalries that threaten Red Sea stability. Integrating the Horn into a comprehensive security review alongside Palestine, Sudan, and Lebanon demonstrates a sophisticated geostrategic calculus. Egypt's genuine strategic priority here is securing the Suez Canal's southern approaches against geopolitical fragmentation, ensuring uninterrupted maritime trade flows that are absolutely essential for the nation's economic survival.

This expansive security approach seamlessly connected with Egypt's diplomatic engagements in North Africa and the broader Islamic world. President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi hosted the foreign ministers of Algeria and Tunisia, highlighting an urgent push to synchronize policies regarding the volatile Libyan transition. Concurrently, Egypt joined a unified Arab-Islamic coalition condemning settler incursions at Al-Aqsa Mosque. The underlying strategic objective uniting these actions is the preservation of regional order on Egypt's porous western border while asserting Cairo's traditional political authority within the Arab world, thereby preempting external interventions that could destabilize its immediate domestic and regional spheres.

While managing these broader geopolitical spheres, Egypt remained deeply entrenched in the urgent crisis on its eastern frontier by hosting fragile Gaza ceasefire negotiations. Despite a severe Israeli military strike that tragically killed seven Palestinians in Gaza on June 6, Cairo persisted in facilitating these high-stakes discussions. By anchoring the mediation process even under heavy fire, Egypt pursues a vital strategic imperative. Preventing a humanitarian collapse or mass displacement into the Sinai Peninsula remains

an existential priority, while maintaining a monopoly on the mediation file preserves Cairo's indispensable geopolitical value to both Washington and key regional powers.

To sustain this extensive diplomatic leverage, Cairo simultaneously advanced critical domestic economic reforms and international energy partnerships. By announcing determined plans to eliminate bureaucratic hurdles and list up to four state-owned enterprises over the coming year, the government directly signaled market resilience. This domestic restructuring aligned seamlessly with Egypt's prominent role at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, where it promoted an ambitious energy trade vision. The foundational strategic interest here is weaponizing economic stability and energy transit capabilities to shield the state from external shocks, ultimately transforming vulnerability into a formidable pillar of foreign policy.

4. Eritrea

On Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki departed for a three-day official visit to Egypt on 7 June, accompanied by Foreign Minister Osman Saleh. According to Eritrean state media, discussions with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi will focus on bilateral cooperation, developments in the Horn of Africa, Red Sea security, and wider Middle East affairs. The visit forms part of an escalating pattern of engagement between Cairo and Asmara. An Egyptian ministerial delegation visited Eritrea in May, while President Isaias made a similar trip to Cairo in late 2025. During that visit, President Sisi reportedly facilitated a meeting between Isaias and Massad Boulos, which helped initiate the current process of U.S.–Eritrea re-engagement. The latest visit is therefore best understood within the context of Egypt's broader regional strategy, in which closer ties with Eritrea serve as an important lever of pressure against Ethiopia amid continuing disputes over the Nile, Red Sea security, and Addis Ababa's maritime ambitions.

Eritrea was elected as one of the Vice-Presidents of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly, which will run from September 2026 to September 2027, and secured a seat on the United Nations Economic and Social Council for the 2027–2029 term. The appointments reflect Eritrea's gradual diplomatic rehabilitation within parts of the international system despite its longstanding record of political repression, indefinite national service, and restrictions on civil liberties. More broadly, they illustrate a growing tendency among states and international institutions to prioritize geopolitical considerations, regional stability over efforts to isolate governments on human rights grounds. The elections suggest that Eritrea's international standing is increasingly being shaped by strategic calculations rather than normative concerns that once dominated external engagement with Asmara.

On 4 March, Japanese Ambassador Matsuo Shinichi paid an inaugural courtesy call on Eritrean Information Minister Yemane Ghebremeskel. According to the Japanese embassy, Ambassador Matsuo expressed his intention to promote greater awareness of

Eritrea in Japan and to further strengthen bilateral relations. The meeting reflects Japan's growing engagement with Eritrea, part of a broader trend in which several Asian countries, including India, have sought to expand diplomatic and economic ties with Asmara. While the scale of engagement remains limited, it underscores Eritrea's gradual reintegration into regional and international diplomatic networks after years of relative isolation.

Eritrea is set to benefit from a new funding package approved by the Global Environment Facility and supported by United Nations Development Programme. The initiative includes a project aimed at restoring degraded land in Eritrea as part of a broader US\$77.6 million programme spanning multiple countries across Africa, Asia, and Central Asia.

PEN International republished its longstanding appeal concerning the fate of 12 Eritrean journalists and writers who were arrested during the 2001 crackdown on independent media and political dissent. The organization renewed calls for proof of life and information regarding the whereabouts of the detainees, who have reportedly been held incommunicado for nearly 25 years without trial.

The republication serves as a reminder that the issue remains one of the most prominent unresolved human rights cases associated with Eritrea. It also highlights the persistence of international advocacy efforts seeking accountability and transparency regarding political prisoners and enforced disappearances in the country, even as Eritrea expands engagement with international and regional institutions.

On 1 June, the Israeli outlet Israel Today published an opinion article titled “From Iran to the Houthis to Eritrea: The Axis of Chaos,” which portrayed Eritrea as aligned with Iran and the Houthis and argued that Western efforts to improve relations with Asmara risk empowering actor’s hostile to Israeli and U.S. interests.

While the article reflects the views of its author rather than official Israeli policy, its publication is indicative of evolving threat perceptions within some Israeli circles regarding developments in the Red Sea and Horn of Africa. More significantly, it suggests that Eritrea's relationship with Iran is attracting greater scrutiny as regional tensions intensify, potentially complicating ongoing efforts by Western states to re-engage with Asmara.

5. Djibouti

The past week of June 2026, Djibouti’s political and diplomatic activity was closely linked to regional stability initiatives across the Horn of Africa, particularly developments in Ethiopia, Sudan, and broader IGAD security frameworks. As Ethiopia conducted its electoral process, Djibouti’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated closely with African Union and IGAD observer mechanisms while prioritizing the uninterrupted operation of the Ethio–Djibouti trade corridor, which remains the backbone of economic connectivity

between the two countries and one of the most important commercial arteries in the Horn of Africa. During the same period, Djiboutian diplomats intensified consultations with regional and international partners regarding the Sudanese crisis, positioning Djibouti as a potential venue for future multi-party Sudanese peace engagements. These efforts reflected Djibouti's continued role as a trusted diplomatic platform for dialogue and mediation, while reinforcing its long-standing commitment to regional peace, stability, and cooperative security across the Horn.

Security development throughout the week centered on maritime protection, border management, and transnational law enforcement cooperation. The Djiboutian Coast Guard, working alongside international naval assets stationed in the country, increased patrol activities in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait following renewed maritime security alerts in the Red Sea. At the same time, Djiboutian security institutions participated in the final technical evaluations of a regional border-security framework designed to strengthen coordination among Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Somalia through improved information sharing and law enforcement communication. Djibouti also concluded an IGAD-supported regional training program that brought together judicial and security officials to strengthen legal and operational mechanisms aimed at combating cross-border wildlife trafficking networks. Collectively, these initiatives demonstrated Djibouti's growing contribution to regional security governance and its continued partnership with neighboring states in addressing emerging transnational threats.

On the economic and governance front, Djibouti focused on strengthening institutional efficiency and reinforcing its role as a humanitarian and logistics hub for the wider region. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Equipment worked closely with the World Food Program to finalize emergency port-diversion procedures intended to reduce container congestion and accelerate the movement of humanitarian supplies through Djiboutian ports to destinations across the Horn of Africa. Meanwhile, President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh's cabinet reviewed an updated institutional roadmap aimed at advancing civil service reforms and aligning ministerial expenditures with national development priorities for the remainder of the year. These measures highlighted the government's emphasis on administrative modernization, efficient public service delivery, and the continued enhancement of Djibouti's strategic role as a gateway connecting regional trade, humanitarian operations, and economic integration throughout the Horn of Africa.

6. South Sudan

South Sudan this week moved between the arithmetic of displacement and the slower rhythms of institutional initiative, with humanitarian conditions in Jonglei State deteriorating sharply while activity on media governance, financial access, and protection responses pointed to the effort to build functional ground beneath a still-fragile polity.

Neither trajectory resolved anything. The conflict's costs continued to compound faster than the institutions being built to absorb them.

The dominant security story was Jonglei. UNHCR warned on June 5 of a grave protection crisis in the state's eastern reaches, describing it as one of the most severe conflict-related displacement emergencies in recent years. Around 140,000 people have been displaced in Akobo County alone, while more than 300,000 have been uprooted across Jonglei and neighboring states since December 2025. Approximately 100,000 people crossed into Ethiopia in search of safety, with population movements described as fluid and pendular. UNHCR flagged that as heavy rains intensify, displaced families face growing isolation, rising disease risk, and deteriorating access to relief. The situation in Jonglei compounds a wider national displacement picture: nearly two million people are internally displaced, and over 1.3 million people have crossed into South Sudan from neighboring Sudan since April 2023, placing compounding pressure on an already overstretched humanitarian system.

The food security picture remained alarming. The FEWS NET key message update for May to September 2026 described fragile gains in assistance delivery during a relative lull in conflict but warned that famine risk persists, with emergency-level outcomes projected to expand across 34 counties in the north and northeast by September. The Jonglei and Upper Nile counties of Akobo, Fangak, Luakpiny/Nasir, and Ulang remain of the highest concern. An AFP report documented what this looks like in practice: at the refugee settlement of Bazia, stalls are piled with aid rations stamped on "Not for sale" that families are selling in order to pay for medicine and school fees. The South Sudanese pound is the weakest currency in Africa according to the World Bank, with annual food inflation reaching 234 percent in the last fiscal year. One Juba-based economist described what has emerged as displaced communities inventing their own tools for survival, a formulation that doubles as an indictment of both the state and the humanitarian financing architecture. South Sudan lost a large share of its humanitarian support when USAID was shut down, and a WFP funding shortfall of \$355 million in 2026 threatens to reduce coverage by 1.5 million people, with a risk that over nine million lose assistance if conflict continues.

On the protection side, UNFPA reported that child marriage is rising among refugees and host communities in Upper Nile State, where over half a million refugees and returnees from Sudan have sought shelter in Renk County. Approximately 210,900 girls in South Sudan are married before the age of 15, and escalating violence in 2026 is pushing even more adolescent girls through transit centres as child brides and young mothers. Over 100 women and girls are displaced within the country every hour according to the UN, and an estimated 2.8 million require support to prevent and address gender-based violence.

The week also brought institutional development with regional implications. A leadership rift within the Islamic Dawa Organization, a pan-Islamic charity headquartered in Khartoum, widened publicly when newly elected Secretary-General Yahya Adam Osman announced he would run operations from South Sudan, citing administrative restrictions imposed on him in Sudan that prevented him from exercising executive authority. The organization's Board of Trustees had dismissed the incumbent and elected Osman following a court dispute over the removal of the Qatari chairman of the board. Osman stated that his administration controls over 95 percent of the organization's foreign missions and operational capabilities, with only the Khartoum headquarters outside his jurisdiction. The split reflects broader divisions among Islamists in Sudan, with the rival faction reportedly backed by Ali Karti, secretary-general of Sudan's Islamic Movement. The relocating of even a temporary secretariat to South Sudan, with Juba and potential fallback offices in Uganda and Niger named, signals how Sudan's institutional fractures are now dispersing into the region in ways that carry their own governance implications.

On media and governance, UNESCO convened a three-day national press freedom conference in Juba, co-organized with South Sudan's Ministry of Information and supported by JICA, focused on journalist safety ahead of the December 2026 elections. The conference brought together journalists, security officials, civil society, and international partners to address censorship, misinformation, AI and digital governance, and what it would take for the press to operate safely and independently in an electoral period. Information Minister Ateny Wek Ateny called for responsible journalism, describing December as South Sudan's first vote as an independent nation. The formulation was accurate in one sense and revealing in another: the country's difficulty in holding or completing electoral cycles has been one of the defining features of its post-independence political trajectory, and the emphasis on media-security cooperation as a prerequisite for a credible vote underscore how fragile the enabling environment remains.

A separate commentary published this week drew attention to the institutionalization of ethnic associations as vehicles for capturing state resources, arguing that civic channels of the kind that normally mediate power in functional states have been systematically bypassed in favor of formal ethnic blocs in South Sudan. The piece described how access to employment, security, and public services has become tied to tribal affiliation rather than constitutional rights, producing a state that is increasingly carved up into spheres of influence rather than governed as a common political space. The analysis gained additional texture from the week's social media environment, which saw viral exchanges of toxic and polarizing narratives between youth of neighboring communities.

7. Somalia and Somaliland

Somalia

On June 3 heavy gun battles erupted after federal government forces launched an assault on the residence of former Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire who accused the government of attacking him while he was meeting with the Murusade clan chief and traditional elders. Government statements subsequently accused former Prime Minister Khaire of organizing an armed militia that attacked the Howlwadaag Police Station in the Banadir region. The government described the assailants as armed men with covered faces using heavy weapons vowing not to tolerate any attempt to undermine the capital's security. Legal action and an official investigation were announced. Fighting spread from Dabka Junction and Howlwadaag district to densely populated neighbourhoods including Cabdicasiis (Abdulcasis), Hodan, Wardhiigley and parts of Kaaraan with heavy gunfire, explosions and mortar fire reported. Civilians fled their homes.

Clashes persisted through June 4 with government forces deploying heavy artillery across the capital for a second consecutive day. The government characterized its actions as neutralizing disguised opposition militias attacking police facilities while opposition accounts maintained that government forces had attacked a consultative meeting. By June 5 the Somali Information Ministry declared that security forces had restored calm in affected districts principally Howlwadaag, Abdiiaziz and surrounding areas including Hodan. Residents reported reduced violence but noted lingering tension and visible armoured patrols.

On June 6 Somali security forces and intelligence operatives launched a sweeping counter weapons operation across the affluent opposition stronghold of Abdiiaziz district conducting house to house searches. Police Commander Mahdi Omar Mumin stated that the objective was to recover illegal weapons hidden by militias. The operation created a tense military standoff with remaining opposition aligned troops including those loyal to former army chief Odowa Yusuf Rageh raising fears of renewed confrontation. Reports also indicated looting in the district and challenges for displaced residents attempting to return home.

Renewed clashes erupted on the night of June 6–7 near El Macaan village on the route linking Mogadishu to Middle Shabelle between federal government forces including Turkish trained units and opposition aligned Ma'awisley militias. The confrontation involved a convoy of opposition linked militias associated with figures including Abdullahi Mohamed Nur reportedly attempting to move out of the capital. Ambushes and gun battles were reported with disputed outcomes including claims that militias reached Adale or that vehicles were seized. This followed earlier disarmament operations and clashes in districts including Abdiiaziz.

On June 7 fighting between federal government forces and opposition aligned militias erupted again on the northern outskirts of Mogadishu. The Puntland administration condemned what it described as attacks targeting former federal leaders in Mogadishu. Following a cabinet meeting chaired by Vice President Ilyas Osman Lugator, Puntland accused President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of being responsible for attacks reportedly carried out overnight on the residences of former President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and former Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire. The statement explicitly held President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud responsible for the attacks and any resulting damage. Opposition groups rejected the president's extended mandate and vowed to continue pushing for consensus on elections, viewing government actions as aggressive. Planned anti-government protests over the president's term extension were disrupted by the violence. Civil society groups issued calls for the resumption of dialogue between the Federal Government and the Somali Future Council opposition coalition.

Alongside political violence Somalia's National Intelligence and Security Agency reported on going counterterrorism operations against Al-Shabaab. On or around June 3 the agency announced that 29 Al-Shabaab members including a bomb and explosives commander operating in the Hiran region were killed in planned operations in central Somalia. The United States reportedly resumed or continued training for Somali Danab commandos as part of ongoing efforts to build elite counterterrorism capabilities against Al-Shabaab.

The international community actively engaged to de-escalate the crisis. On June 1, a joint statement from the international community, including the United States, United Kingdom, European Union, and United Nations partners, expressed concern over the political situation and urged all Somali leaders to resume dialogue, reach consensus on an election roadmap, and prioritize national interests to avoid escalation.

Following the outbreak of violence, the United Nations Secretary General expressed alarm over the hostilities urging restraint, civilian protection and the immediate resumption of dialogue on an election roadmap. The UN Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia warning against repeating the crisis patterns of 2021. The African Union Commission issued a statement on June 4 expressing serious concern over reports of armed clashes in civilian neighbourhoods in Mogadishu calling on all parties to immediately cease hostilities, exercise full restraint, prioritize civilian protection and resolve disputes through dialogue and established constitutional processes. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development also condemned the violence on June 4 calling for immediate de-escalation, restraint, and inclusive dialogue to preserve stability and national unity while offering support for Somali led talks.

The United States Embassy in Mogadishu issued a security alert on the fighting. Joint urgings from the United States, United Kingdom, European Union, and other partners

emphasized dialogue and national interests. A broader coalition including multiple European nations alongside the UN and EU issued appeals for calm. The United States also reaffirmed its support for Somalia's territorial integrity issuing statements and a major new report to Congress that explicitly reaffirmed Washington's official recognition of Somaliland as part of Somalia providing a diplomatic boost to the Federal Government of Somalia amid ongoing debates over Somaliland's status.

Somalia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdisalam Ali participated in meetings with South Korean President Lee Jae-myung alongside other African foreign ministers focusing on bilateral ties. The Somali Ambassador to Saudi Arabia met with the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council to strengthen cooperation. The Minister of Foreign Affairs also held internal meetings on diplomatic priorities and Somalia participated in broader forums including the Global South Media Forum.

Somaliland

Somalia's Ambassador to the African Union and its Ambassador to Ethiopia, Mr. Abdullahi Mohamed Warfaa stated in an interview with Aljazeera Arabic that the Somali Federal Government is committed to reasserting its power in all regions of Somalia emphasizing that Hargeisa and Berbera are integral parts of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The Ambassador revealed that the Federal Government is focused on rebuilding strong government institutions and strengthening the national army to enable the government to establish its presence in all regions of the country from the south to the north. When asked about the potential impact of political tensions in Mogadishu on the Somaliland dispute, the Ambassador stated that the Somali government will not allow internal issues to be exploited for foreign interests or plans to divide the country. He further noted that there are foreign entities who seek to take advantage of Somalia's problems to create chaos and division, and that the government is actively working to resolve internal issues and prevent external influence. The Ambassador reiterated that the Federal Government considers Hargeisa, Berbera and other northern cities as Somali lands and assured that the federal government will have a presence and administration in all parts of the country. Ambassador Warfaa also specifically stated that Hargeisa and Berbera will be returned to the federal government's control.

United States diplomatic engagement with Somaliland continued prominently during the reporting period. A United States State Department report to Congress, reported on June 2, explicitly reaffirmed Washington's recognition of Somalia's territorial integrity, classifying Somaliland as part of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The report balanced this official policy position with notes on practical engagement, security cooperation via the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), and potential economic opportunities including Berbera port development for Ethiopia transit. This reaffirmation was viewed as

a diplomatic setback for Somaliland's recognition push while allowing continued tactical cooperation between the United States and Somaliland authorities.

Around this same period, the United States reaffirmed its recognition of Somalia's territorial integrity, stating that Somaliland remains part of the Federal Republic of Somalia in a congressional report outlining United States engagement with Somaliland within that framework balancing practical cooperation with official policy.

Following the release of the congressional report, a high-level United States diplomatic visit to Hargeisa took place. President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro hosted Justin Davis, the United States Chargé d'Affaires and Deputy Chief of Mission at the United States Embassy in Mogadishu, along with a United States delegation at the Presidential Palace in Hargeisa. Discussions covered a broad range of bilateral issues including regional security, Red Sea maritime security, intelligence sharing, defense cooperation, investment, trade and economic infrastructure, minerals, energy, and democratic governance. The meeting followed the recent United States State Department and congressional report outlining potential areas for improved engagement with Somaliland while still operating within a One Somalia framework. Both sides expressed interest in deepening practical cooperation based on shared strategic interests. President Irro highlighted Somaliland's stability and reliability, while Mr. Davis praised Somaliland's democratic record and importance.

8. Yemen

In a report published by Middle East Eye on 5 June, correspondent Nasser al-Sakkaf describes growing tensions in low-skilled labour markets in Yemen, particularly in cleaning, restaurant work, and agriculture, where Yemeni workers claim they are being displaced by lower-paid Ethiopian migrants. The article cites individual Yemeni workers and employers who argue that wage differentials and labour conditions make Ethiopian migrants more competitive in the informal sector. The report also notes, citing the International Organization for Migration, that Yemen continues to host large flows of Ethiopian migrants transiting toward Saudi Arabia, many of whom take temporary work to fund onward movement. While the piece frames the issue as "unfair competition" in certain labour segments, it attributes these claims to interviewees and local perspectives rather than verified structural conclusions.

A joint assessment by the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Food Programme, and United Nations Children's Fund released on June 3, warns that about 47% of people in government-controlled areas face crisis-level or worse food insecurity, with 5 million currently affected and conditions expected to worsen as funding cuts reduce humanitarian support.

The report links the deterioration to economic collapse, conflict disruption, and declining aid, noting that reduced assistance is increasingly limiting basic survival support across health, nutrition, and food system.

On 5 June, Yemen's Houthi leader Abdulmalik al-Houthi delivered a televised speech via Houthi-affiliated Al-Masirah TV, stating that the group is prepared for "any level of escalating conflict" amid rising regional tensions. He linked the group's position to developments in Gaza and Lebanon and U.S. military activity in the region, warning against what he described as plans tied to a "Greater Israel" project and cautioning regional actors against aligning militarily with Israel. The statement reflects the group's continued framing of its military posture within broader regional conflict dynamics and deterrence messaging.

In an analytical report published on 3 June by The National, correspondent Nada AlTaher argues that Yemen's peace process has stalled as regional tensions involving Iran and broader Middle East security dynamics take precedence over domestic negotiations. The article, citing Yemeni officials and regional analysts, states that talks remain limited to narrow de-escalation measures such as prisoner exchanges, while more substantive issues are deferred. It reports that Yemeni government officials acknowledge the absence of a functioning negotiating team, with the process described as being in "crisis-management" mode and effectively sidelined amid shifting regional priorities.

9. Kenya

Between June 1 and 7, 2026, Kenya went through a politically active week that revealed the connection between its domestic pressures and its wider geopolitical ambitions. The week showed a country trying to present itself as a stable regional hub for diplomacy, investment, health security, trade, and climate focused development, while also facing serious internal challenges linked to public trust, taxation, policing, gender-based violence, education unrest, and resistance to foreign linked projects. Kenya's government under President William Ruto continued to look outward, but the events of the week showed that its external influence depends heavily on how well it manages political legitimacy at home.

The week began with Madaraka Day on June 1, Kenya's annual celebration of internal self-rule. The decision to hold the national celebration in Wajir was politically significant because Wajir is part of northern Kenya, a region that has historically experienced marginalization, insecurity, weak infrastructure, and limited state investment. By taking the national ceremony there, the Ruto administration attempted to show that northern Kenya is no longer only a security frontier, but part of the national development agenda. The government highlighted infrastructure improvements, including road works, airstrip upgrades, public facilities, and urban development projects.

At the same time, the week exposed how quickly domestic mistrust can challenge state messaging. One of the most important events was the protest in Nanyuki against a planned United States linked Ebola quarantine facility at Laikipia Air Base. The facility was reportedly intended to serve as a quarantine site for Americans who might be exposed to Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo or Uganda. Kenyan officials defended the project as part of health preparedness and cooperation with Washington. Many local residents, however, viewed it as a foreign imposed risk placed on Kenyan soil without enough public consultation or transparency. The protest turned deadly, with two people reported killed, and the High Court extended the suspension of the project while requiring the government to disclose relevant agreements.

This controversy was one of the most geopolitically relevant issues of the week because it exposed the tension between Kenya's role as a trusted Western partner and the domestic politics of sovereignty. Kenya has often been treated by the United States and other Western actors as a reliable hub for regional security, humanitarian logistics, health response, counterterrorism, and diplomacy. The Nanyuki dispute showed that these partnerships can become politically costly when citizens feel excluded from decisions that affect their safety and territory. The issue was not only about Ebola. It was about public consent, legal accountability, foreign influence, and whether strategic cooperation with external powers can be sustained without domestic trust.

The Ebola facility dispute also fits into the broader geopolitics of health security in Africa. Disease outbreaks in the Great Lakes region often require regional response systems, and Kenya's infrastructure makes it attractive as a logistical and medical support hub. Yet the Nanyuki reaction showed that African states must carefully manage the politics of risk. A project that may appear practical to foreign planners can appear unequal or dangerous to local communities. The Kenyan court's intervention also highlighted the role of legal institutions in checking executive agreements with foreign partners. This may shape how Kenya handles future foreign backed health, security, or emergency response arrangements.

Another important domestic issue was the Nairobi protest against femicide and gender based violence. Hundreds of women and rights activists marched to demand stronger state action and called for gender based violence to be treated as a national crisis. Although this was mainly an internal governance issue, it also affected Kenya's political image. Kenya is often seen internationally as one of East Africa's more open civic spaces, but repeated protests over killings, disappearances, police conduct, and accountability challenge that image. The protest showed that public frustration is not limited to taxes or party politics. It also concerns the state's basic responsibility to protect citizens and respond seriously to violence against women.

Budget politics and education unrest added pressure to Kenya's national mood during the week. Parliament approved the 2026 to 2027 budget framework, with major allocations to education, health, housing, social protection, energy, digital infrastructure, and public services. Although the government presented it as service oriented, the budget came amid high debt servicing, frustration over taxation, and suspicion toward public spending. Opposition leaders warned that the new Finance Bill could revive the anger behind the 2024 youth led protests, especially as citizens remain sensitive to taxes and the housing levy. At the same time, school fires, student unrest, closures, and safety concerns followed the deadly Utumishi Academy fire that killed 16 students. By June 6, officials linked some unrest to exam pressure and ordered a national safety audit of boarding schools, showing that youth frustration remains an important political pressure point in Kenya.

Externally, President Ruto continued to strengthen Kenya's diplomatic profile. On June 3, he received new ambassadors and high commissioners at State House, including envoys from Kuwait and New Zealand. While this was a routine diplomatic event, it fit Kenya's broader effort to diversify relationships beyond traditional Western partnerships. Nairobi has been working to deepen ties with the Gulf, Europe, Asia, and other African states as part of its strategy to attract investment and maintain diplomatic relevance.

The most important foreign policy event of the week was Ruto's state visit to South Africa from June 3 to 5. He met President Cyril Ramaphosa in Pretoria, with discussions focused on trade, investment, business cooperation, migration, and continental affairs. Kenya and South Africa are two major African diplomatic and economic centers, but they operate from different regional bases. South Africa remains the strongest economy in Southern Africa, while Kenya positions itself as the commercial and diplomatic gateway to East Africa. Stronger relations between Nairobi and Pretoria could influence African Union politics, continental trade, private sector cooperation, and migration debates.

The South Africa visit also took place against a sensitive migration background. Ramaphosa addressed concerns about xenophobic violence and attacks on foreign nationals, saying South Africa would send envoys to other African countries and beyond to discuss migration issues. This mattered because African migration politics is increasingly linked to economic pressure, nationalism, public services, and security fears. Kenya's engagement with South Africa therefore had both economic and political meaning. It showed Nairobi seeking continental partnerships while entering difficult conversations about mobility, labor, and the treatment of African migrants.

By June 7, Ruto had shifted toward European economic diplomacy, departing for Belgium, Finland, and Norway. The trip was framed around green investment, renewable energy, electric mobility, climate smart agriculture, clean technology, digital transformation, education technology, and implementation of the Kenya and European

Union Economic Partnership Agreement. Kenya is trying to market itself as a green investment hub and a stable entry point into East Africa. This reflects a broader foreign policy strategy: using Kenya's renewable energy base, private sector networks, port access, and diplomatic visibility to attract European and Nordic capital.

This European outreach showed Kenya's ambition to move beyond security diplomacy and become a major economic platform. It also reflected the growing importance of climate finance and green industrialization in African foreign policy. Kenya wants to be seen as a serious partner for clean energy, technology, sustainable agriculture, and regional trade. However, the same week also showed the weakness in this strategy. Foreign investment branding depends on domestic stability. Protests, court disputes, public mistrust, budget tension, and social unrest can weaken the image Kenya is trying to project abroad.

Former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta was also active in regional diplomacy during the week, serving as head of the African Union Election Observation Mission for Ethiopia's June 1 general elections, with IGAD also involved in the observation process. His role reflected Kenya's continued visibility in African Union and IGAD related political processes, especially through former senior leaders who remain active in regional diplomatic assignments.

10. The Gulf Countries

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's security strategy remained closely tied to the economic ambitions of Vision 2030. The kingdom's rapprochement with Iran, brokered in Beijing in 2023, had evolved into a functional relationship marked by open embassies, active security channels, and the absence of major missile or drone attacks on Saudi territory. Riyadh's diplomatic agenda remained dominated by two major files. The first was negotiations with the United States on a formal defense treaty, civilian nuclear cooperation, and a pathway to normalization with Israel. Although talks had lost momentum, Saudi Arabia continued to insist that normalization would require an irreversible path toward Palestinian statehood and that a security pact was essential for regional stability. The second priority was Yemen, where the 2022 UN-brokered truce had effectively become a semi-permanent ceasefire. Riyadh remained invested in direct talks with the Houthis, focused on salary payments, port revenues, road access, and a gradual Saudi withdrawal. At home, security efforts increasingly concentrated on protecting strategic Vision 2030 projects, including NEOM, Red Sea tourism developments, and major entertainment hubs. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's rehabilitation of Syria, despite mixed results in curbing the captagon trade, continued to reflect Riyadh's broader preference for de-escalation, dialogue, and economic integration as foundations of regional security.

In the Horn of Africa, Saudi Arabia's engagement centered on securing the Red Sea corridor and managing the consequences of the Sudan conflict. Jeddah remained a key venue for Sudan peace diplomacy, with renewed discussions likely focused on humanitarian access and ceasefire arrangements involving regional and international stakeholders. Alongside diplomatic efforts, Saudi Arabia continued expanding its economic footprint through agricultural investments in Sudan and Ethiopia aimed at strengthening food security, while the Saudi Fund for Development provided infrastructure support to Djibouti and Eritrea as part of a broader Red Sea strategy linking development assistance to security cooperation. Military and security engagement also remained active, including discussions with Djibouti on maritime patrols and intelligence sharing to safeguard the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a critical artery for global trade and Saudi Arabia's long-term economic ambitions.

UAE

The United Arab Emirates continued to pursue its foreign policy with a combination of strategic security calculations and pragmatic diplomacy. While its commitment to the Abraham Accords remained intact, Abu Dhabi deliberately reduced the public profile of its relationship with Israel, maintaining trade and diplomatic ties while insisting that any significant role in Gaza's reconstruction must be tied to an irreversible path toward Palestinian statehood. This approach allowed the UAE to preserve its role as a valuable intermediary between Washington, Israel, and Iran, while quietly maintaining de-escalation channels with Tehran. Security priorities remained firmly focused on the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, with the UAE continuing to strengthen its layered defence architecture through South Korean Cheongung II and Israeli Barak-8 systems, alongside expanded maritime surveillance cooperation with India and France. At the same time, it sustained its influence through port networks and security partnerships in southern Yemen and the Horn of Africa, while reinforcing its reputation as a mediator through Russia–Ukraine prisoner exchanges, management of Kabul airport, humanitarian assistance to Gaza under Operation Gallant Knight, and advocacy for a Gulf-led regional security architecture less dependent on any single great power.

In the Horn of Africa, the UAE continued to expand its strategic presence through a combination of security, diplomacy, and humanitarian engagement. Maritime surveillance operations supported by facilities in Assab, Eritrea, and Berbera, Somaliland, strengthened round-the-clock monitoring of Red Sea shipping lanes and regional security threats. Emirati diplomats remained actively engaged in regional conflict management, including efforts to facilitate progress in the stalled Ethiopia–Sudan border discussions, a mediation role the UAE has cultivated since 2023 through political engagement and economic incentives. Simultaneously, Abu Dhabi maintained humanitarian operations in Sudan through its Chadian aid corridor while preserving relationships with the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sovereignty Council. Framed as stabilization efforts rather than

geopolitical competition, these initiatives reflected the UAE's broader strategy of combining logistics, mediation, aid, and security cooperation to consolidate its influence across the Horn of Africa and the wider Red Sea region.

Qatar

During the first week of June 2026, Qatar remained heavily focused on its role as a mediator, maintaining open channels with the United States, Iran, the Taliban, Hamas, and other regional actors. Gaza remained its primary diplomatic file, with Doha continuing to support the ceasefire-hostage framework while working on humanitarian access and reconstruction mechanisms designed to bypass Hamas's military wing. Despite criticism over hosting Hamas's political office, Qatar maintained that engagement was necessary to facilitate ceasefires, hostage releases, and broader de-escalation. At the same time, it continued serving as a key Western channel to the Taliban, handling consular issues and advocating for girls' education and inclusive governance. Qatar also strengthened its reputation as a humanitarian mediator through efforts to reunite Ukrainian children with their families. On the security front, the expansion of the North Field gas project increased the importance of protecting offshore infrastructure, prompting deeper naval cooperation with the United States, the United Kingdom, and Italy, while Al-Udeid Air Base remained central to Qatar's security. Relations with Iran and fellow Gulf states remained stable, although competition over regional influence and post-war Gaza arrangements persisted beneath the surface.

In the Horn of Africa, Qatar's engagement reflected its humanitarian and mediation-oriented approach. Doha continued delivering aid to drought-affected communities in Somalia and Sudanese refugees in Chad through Qatar Charity and the Qatar Fund for Development. Diplomatically, it maintained contacts with Somalia's federal government and explored opportunities to revive dialogue between Mogadishu and Somaliland. Qatar also coordinated closely with Turkey to sustain back-channel communications between Sudanese civilian actors and elements of the armed forces, ensuring its continued role in Sudan's peace process while complementing, rather than directly competing with, Saudi and U.S.-led diplomatic efforts.

11. Africa and The Sahel Region

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo remained shaped by the convergence of insecurity in the east and growing Gulf interest in its critical mineral sector. Continued M23 activity around Sake in North Kivu displaced thousands of civilians and prompted UN Security Council consultations. Against this backdrop, the UAE expanded its mining footprint through Primera Gold, which reached an agreement with Congolese authorities to extend its artisanal gold operations into Maniema province, further strengthening Emirati

influence over eastern DRC's official gold exports. This commercial expansion was accompanied by security cooperation, including the training of a specialized mine-convoy protection unit in Bukavu and the donation of patrol vehicles to the mining police, reflecting the close link between mineral interests and security engagement.

Saudi Arabia pursued a more investment-driven approach. A delegation from Ma'aden assessed lithium and cobalt opportunities in Haut-Katanga and reached a preliminary understanding for a potential \$2.6 billion mining and processing project, subject to further studies and government approval. Riyadh also signaled its willingness to facilitate dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda if requested. Meanwhile, Qatar focused on humanitarian relief and peacebuilding, delivering emergency medical and shelter assistance to displaced populations in Goma and supporting discussions with Congolese civil society on local peace initiatives. Although Doha did not publicly assume a mediation role, it continued to leverage its humanitarian presence and quiet diplomacy to maintain influence in the Congolese peace process.

Mali

Mali's military government remained entrenched in early June 2026 despite ongoing insurgent violence, including a deadly convoy attack near Mopti on 2 June. With French forces long withdrawn and cooperation with Russia's Africa Corps deepening, Bamako continued to navigate persistent insecurity in the center and north while widening its external partnerships, particularly with Gulf states.

The UAE stood out as Mali's most significant non-Russian partner, combining security assistance with growing investment in the mining sector. An Emirati military cargo flight delivered surveillance and armored equipment to Bamako on 4 June, while Emirati advisors trained Malian special forces in counter-IED operations linked to the protection of mining sites. An Emirati-led consortium also secured a new industrial gold mining permit in Kayes, paired with a solar energy project, reinforcing the integration of resource extraction and infrastructure development.

Saudi Arabia's role was more restrained, centered on diplomacy and counter-extremism outreach. The Saudi embassy engaged religious leaders in Bamako on 5 June to promote anti-radicalization messaging, while a Saudi envoy proposed a track-two dialogue in Riyadh aimed at reviving elements of the stalled Algiers peace process. Qatar maintained a quieter but strategically relevant presence through humanitarian access and selective contacts with northern armed groups. A Qatari delegation met Azawad representatives in Nouakchott on humanitarian ceasefires and aid corridors, while Qatar Charity delivered food assistance in Gao. Although operating discreetly and without formal alignment to the junta, Qatar preserved channels across actors, keeping its mediation potential intact..

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso's military-led government continued to confront a persistent jihadist insurgency while deepening its strategic realignment away from Western partners. The formal accreditation of a new Russian ambassador on 3 June underscored the growing importance of Moscow in Burkina Faso's security landscape. At the same time, Gulf states remained important actors in the country's economic and security sectors. The United Arab Emirates strengthened its security engagement through the delivery of counterterrorism assistance, including mine-resistant vehicles, night-vision equipment, and medical supplies, while Emirati advisors worked with Burkinabe forces on drone-assisted convoy protection. These initiatives supported both Burkina Faso's counterinsurgency efforts and the protection of Emirati economic interests. Economic ties were further reinforced through the approval of a new mining venture involving an Emirati-linked consortium in the Nord region, highlighting the continued importance of gold exports and investment links with Dubai.

Saudi Arabia maintained a lower profile but significant presence through development and stabilization initiatives. The Saudi Fund for Development advanced support for solar-powered water systems and health clinics in conflict-affected regions, while Saudi officials promoted religious dialogue and counter-extremism initiatives through engagement with Burkinabe religious leaders. Qatar continued its humanitarian-focused approach, delivering aid to displaced communities and maintaining contacts with religious and community leaders. Although no formal mediation process emerged, Doha signaled its willingness to facilitate dialogue between the authorities and non-Jihadist armed groups should become conducive to negotiations, preserving its role as a potential neutral mediator in Burkina Faso's evolving conflict environment.

Niger

Niger's military-led government continued to diversify its international partnerships following its break with ECOWAS and the withdrawal of Western forces. The United Arab Emirates remained one of Niamey's most important non-Russian partners, sustaining fuel supplies and expanding economic cooperation. An extension of a \$200 million concessional credit facility for road infrastructure linking Agadez to the Algerian border highlighted the UAE's growing role in Niger's development and security priorities. Security cooperation also deepened through joint training exercises focused on border surveillance and counter-smuggling operations. Economic ties were further strengthened by plans to establish an artisanal gold traceability system in partnership with Niger's mining authorities, linking Nigerien gold production more closely to Dubai's bullion market while improving compliance standards.

Saudi Arabia's engagement was primarily diplomatic and economic. Saudi officials offered to facilitate dialogue between Niger's military authorities and regional partners,

while signaling support for a future donor conference tied to a constitutional transition roadmap. Economic cooperation advanced through agricultural investments in the Dosso region, reflecting the link between Saudi food security interests and Niger's stability. Qatar maintained its humanitarian and mediation-oriented approach, providing assistance to displaced populations in the Diffa region and quietly facilitating discussions among community leaders and civil society actors on local peacebuilding initiatives in Agadez. While avoiding overt political engagement with the junta, Doha continued to position itself as a neutral actor capable of supporting dialogue and conflict resolution efforts.

Chad

Chad remained a critical strategic hub for Gulf engagement in both Sudan and the wider Sahel. Following the consolidation of President Mahamat Déby's government, N'Djamena continued balancing traditional security ties with France while deepening partnerships with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. The UAE remained the most prominent external actor, using the Amdjarass logistics hub to deliver humanitarian assistance to Sudanese refugees and expanding infrastructure that strengthened Chad's role as a regional operational base. Security cooperation also intensified through intelligence-sharing on arms trafficking from Libya, while economic ties advanced with plans for a new dry port linked to the N'Djamena–Douala trade corridor, reflecting Abu Dhabi's growing influence in Chad's logistics and security sectors.

Saudi Arabia combined humanitarian, diplomatic, and economic engagement. Riyadh increased food assistance for refugees in eastern Chad, explored N'Djamena as a complementary venue for Sudan-related consultations alongside the Jeddah process, and expanded agricultural investments through long-term land leases aimed at supporting Gulf food security. Qatar maintained a lower-profile but important presence through refugee assistance, support for humanitarian operations, and engagement with civil society, religious leaders, and opposition-linked actors. While not competing directly with Emirati and Saudi influence, Doha preserved its role as a trusted humanitarian and diplomatic actor, ensuring it remained well positioned should future mediation opportunities emerge in Chad or the wider Sudan crisis.

Equatorial Guinea

Equatorial Guinea had further consolidated its role as a stable entry point for Gulf investment and maritime security cooperation in Central Africa. The UAE, led by DP World, remained the dominant economic partner. On 4 June, DP World inaugurated a new container terminal at the port of Bata in a high-profile state ceremony, marking the port's emergence as a regional transshipment hub. The company also announced a \$120 million logistics zone to serve landlocked Central African markets. Alongside this, the UAE maintained discreet security cooperation, with maritime advisors beginning a

training program for the Equatoguinean coast guard focused on anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Guinea, reinforcing shipping lane security critical to Emirati trade interests.

Saudi Arabia's engagement centered on energy diplomacy and emerging maritime security cooperation. A high-level call between energy ministers on 2 June advanced cooperation on gas flaring reduction, while Saudi technical teams prepared assessments of LNG infrastructure. Riyadh also engaged the Gulf of Guinea Commission on regional maritime security coordination, signaling a broader ambition to expand its influence through energy and security financing mechanisms. Qatar maintained a lighter but steady presence, combining humanitarian outreach and educational engagement. The embassy distributed aid to island communities in Bioko, while Qatari officials participated in maritime security discussions and explored scholarship opportunities for Equatoguinean students, sustaining soft-power influence alongside its passive energy investments.

12. North Africa

Morocco

King Mohammed VI's reception of 12 foreign ambassadors in Rabat signaled a steady diplomatic calendar and the continued centrality of the palace in foreign-policy accreditation. The broader story of the week, though, was economic pressure from the outside conflict environment: Morocco's trade deficit widened 18.4 percent in January-April, with energy imports up 12 percent as Middle East tensions lifted fuel costs. OCP's decision to bring maintenance forward and cut production reinforced the same point: regional instability was feeding into Morocco's external balance and phosphate earnings at the same time.

Algeria

Algeria's biggest verified items in that window were mostly economic and sporting rather than diplomatic. Sonatrach cut June LPG selling prices sharply, reflecting higher supply in the Mediterranean market and showing how Algerian energy pricing still tracks regional market shifts. On the softer-power side, Algeria extended Vladimir Petkovic's contract to 2028 after a strong turnaround that carried the team back to the World Cup and lifted its international standing. Together, those stories point to a country using energy leverage on one side and football momentum on the other to project stability and confidence.

Libya

The UN mission in Libya warned that misinformation, disinformation, and inflammatory rhetoric on social media were becoming a security problem, not just an online nuisance. That warning matters because it points to the way Libya's instability now moves through the information space as much as through armed actors or institutions. When false or

inflammatory narratives target specific groups, they can accelerate mistrust, sharpen social fault lines, and make local tensions easier to weaponize. In that sense, the UN was treating the communication environment as part of the conflict architecture itself, rather than a separate background condition.

Anti-migrant mobilization then became the week's clearest domestic flashpoint when hundreds of demonstrators blocked the UNHCR office in Tripoli. The protest was not only about migration policy; it reflected a broader politics of blame in which migrants are treated as symbols of economic stress, governance failure, and national insecurity. The UN's response was notable because it rejected the rumor of a resettlement scheme and framed the unrest as driven by incitement. That suggests the protest was being amplified politically, with disinformation helping turn social frustration into organized pressure on a UN site.

Italy's appeal for the release of two detained activists pushed Libya's eastern authorities into a diplomatic spotlight. The pair, held after a Gaza-bound aid attempt, had gone on a hunger and water strike, turning their detention into a human-rights and consular issue as well as a security case. Their treatment matters because it shows how eastern Libyan institutions are handling foreigners through a highly securitized lens, with non-civilian detention settings and limited transparency. That approach may project control locally, but it also raises the diplomatic cost of each arrest and makes foreign cases more politically combustible.

The activists' case also exposed how Libya's internal security logic now intersects with the Gaza war and wider regional activism. Their attempt to move aid toward Gaza made them more than ordinary detainees; they became a test of how far local authorities are willing to tolerate transnational political action passing through Libyan territory. The fact that Italy had to intervene underscores that Libya's fragmented authority structure creates different legal and political realities in the east and west. It also shows how external actors are drawn into Libyan detention disputes quickly, especially when humanitarian symbolism and regional conflict overlap.

Libya's return to the UN Security Council's 60-day briefing cycle kept the country embedded in international diplomacy even without headline battlefield escalation. Security Council reporting on the Libyan file shows that the Council continues to treat the country as a standing governance and security concern, with UNSMIL remaining central to political monitoring and institutional coordination. That regular briefing rhythm matters because it prevents Libya from disappearing between crises. It also means that even modest internal unrest, migration pressure, or detention controversies can quickly become part of a wider multilateral conversation about Libya's political trajectory and fragile security balance.

Taken together, the week showed a Libya where the main contest was not only over territory or armed power, but over narrative control, migration politics, and the handling of outsiders. Disinformation helped turn anti-migrant anger into a public crisis, the detention of activists exposed the diplomatic consequences of securitized governance, and the UN and Security Council remained engaged because these seemingly separate issues all point to the same underlying problem: fragmented authority with weak trust. The result is a country where internal disorder, external diplomacy, and regional conflict keep feeding one another rather than staying in separate lanes.

13. Middle East

Iran-Israel Conflict

The week opened with a ceasefire in Lebanon that looked real on paper but remained fragile in practice. Fighting continued in the south, which meant the pause around Beirut did not yet control the wider battlefield. Iran tied diplomacy directly to that violence, warning that worsening conditions could push it to abandon talks with Washington. The deeper pattern was not just military pressure but political linkage: every strike in Lebanon was feeding the bargaining environment, making diplomacy depend on whether the battlefield could be restrained enough to sustain it.

That fragility became clearer when Israel kept striking southern Lebanon even after Trump urged Netanyahu not to hit Beirut. The restraint Washington wanted was partial and tactical, not decisive. Israel could pause one threatened move and still continue the campaign elsewhere, showing that U.S. influence was real but limited when Israeli security calculations were still being shaped by Hezbollah fire and the logic of deterrence. In practical terms, the war was no longer being managed by diplomacy alone; diplomacy was trying, and only partly succeeding, to contain an escalatory cycle already in motion.

The conflict then widened into the Gulf when Iranian drones struck Kuwait's main airport, killing one person and injuring dozens. That was a major threshold moment because it shifted the war from a Levant-centered confrontation into a broader regional risk environment involving Gulf infrastructure and civilians. The strike also showed that the conflict's geography was no longer confined to direct Israeli Iranian exchanges or the Lebanese front. Once airport facilities and Gulf territory came under attack, the war had effectively begun pulling regional states into its orbit, even if they were not formal belligerents.

The same report also showed how quickly the battlefield was translating into energy risk. Oil rose sharply, while U.S. military activity near the Strait of Hormuz reinforced the sense that shipping and energy flows were now part of the conflict's center of gravity. A ceasefire announcement between Israel and Lebanon briefly raised hopes of a wider off-ramp, but the market reaction showed how conditional that hope was. The key issue was

not only whether the shooting would stop, but whether the strategic routes and infrastructure that underpin regional energy security could be kept open long enough for diplomacy to matter.

On the nuclear file, the IAEA's first report since February suggested that the war had not resolved the underlying problem. The agency saw little overall change, but access to bombed sites and the full accounting of enriched uranium were still unresolved. That matters because destruction alone does not equal clarity: if the location and status of nuclear material remain uncertain, military action can actually make verification harder. The nuclear issue was therefore becoming more political, not less, because every unanswered question about stockpiles, inspections, and damaged facilities made future diplomacy more dependent on trust that was already badly damaged.

The Lebanon ceasefire track then ran into a political wall. Hezbollah rejected the push, and Israel said it would not withdraw troops, which meant the arrangement lacked the basic mutual buy-in needed to become durable. This was not simply a negotiation disagreement; it was a structural problem. A ceasefire that excludes the actor most able to spoil it cannot stabilize the front for long, especially when withdrawal, legitimacy, and battlefield control are all contested at once. That is why the Lebanon track kept feeding the wider Iran conflict rather than separating from it.

Washington responded by shifting the confrontation into multilateral pressure politics. The draft IAEA resolution demanded that Iran explain bombed sites and enriched uranium stocks, and it pressed Tehran for full access and transparency without delay. The goal was to turn military damage into a verification obligation, but that also risked hardening the stand-off. Iran could read the move as coercive rather than procedural, especially because it came while talks were still alive. The result was a familiar pattern in this war: diplomacy advanced, but in a way that deepened the terms of confrontation rather than dissolving them.

Sanctions and frozen assets became another front in the same struggle. Trump said he would not unfreeze Iranian assets before a peace deal was done, keeping relief tied to compliance and final settlement rather than to partial restraint. Iran rejected the idea that its frozen funds should be used to pay damages to U.S. allies, framing the proposal as illegitimate coercion. That exchange shows how the war had moved beyond missiles and aircraft into financial leverage, compensation claims, and the right to define who pays for regional damage. In other words, money itself became part of the battlefield.

Military pressure then snapped back into the center. Israel struck Hezbollah targets in Beirut's southern suburbs, a move that re-energized the Lebanon front and made another Iranian response more likely. Qalibaf answered by warning that U.S. bases and Israeli assets in the Middle East could be treated as legitimate targets, which widened deterrence beyond the two main combatants. That warning mattered because it turned the conflict

into a regional targeting problem: once bases and assets become fair game, even third countries and allied facilities start shaping the escalation ladder.

The week ended with direct Israel-Iran exchanges. Israel struck military targets in western and central Iran after Iranian missile fire, while Trump urged restraint but did not stop the exchange from continuing. AP also noted a missile launched from Yemen, which showed the conflict's widening footprint beyond the two main belligerents, and Tehran temporarily closed airspace around its main airport. Oil surged again, with prices moving above \$96 a barrel, underscoring the market's reading of the crisis as a live energy shock rather than a contained military episode.

Turkey

The upcoming NATO summit in Ankara is becoming a central venue for transatlantic diplomacy and security strategy. United States leadership will be highly visible through Donald Trump's planned attendance, highlighting the meeting's significance and positioning Turkey at the alliance's recalibration center. European allies, including Latvia, are demanding stronger collective defense to address global threats. By hosting this summit, Turkey becomes a key architect in shaping the alliance's unified response to shifting deterrence strategies, reinforcing its essential role in transatlantic security.

Parallel to its transatlantic commitments, Turkey is rapidly expanding domestic defense manufacturing and international market share. National defense exports reached \$10 billion last year, marking a milestone reflecting Turkish military technology's global competitiveness, particularly in unmanned systems and advanced munitions. As global rearmament accelerates, Ankara is pushing for deeper penetration into Western and European defense markets. This export strategy injects vital capital into the national economy while establishing Turkey as a critical independent supplier in the restructuring global security landscape.

Beyond transatlantic and industrial growth, Turkish foreign policy actively confronts regional destabilization. Authorities severely rebuked Israel's expanding occupation in Lebanon, warning that territorial encroachments exacerbate regional instability and undermine peace efforts. Simultaneously, Turkey supports Syria's chemical weapons cleanup by aligning with Syrian-led disarmament, aiming to mitigate border threats while projecting stability in volatile post-conflict transitions. These actions demonstrate a comprehensive strategy to contain military escalation and restore predictability across the Eastern Mediterranean.

This regional stabilization focus connects directly to broader Middle Eastern crises impacting global resource networks. Geopolitical volatility has prompted Turkish leadership to classify energy supply continuity as fundamental national survival, treating regional shocks as existential threats. Diplomacy has mobilized through intensive

discussions with Qatar regarding Iran-U.S. negotiations. Rather than remaining passive, Turkey actively manages the crisis while offering maritime security solutions, including willingness to support mine-clearing operations in the Strait of Hormuz if requested, ensuring uninterrupted energy flows and regional equilibrium.

Expanding beyond the Middle East, Turkey executes structured engagement across Africa. This approach is demonstrated through sweeping cooperation agreements with Niger, encompassing defense pacts, military training, and intelligence sharing. Beyond security, the partnership includes arrangements covering education, trade, healthcare, and diplomatic coordination. Turkish leadership frames these African ties as commitments to equal partnership, emphasizing solidarity with Sahel nations battling terrorist insurgencies and managing socio-economic instability.

Further extending global diplomatic reach, Turkey intensifies operational engagement in the Asia-Pacific region. A high-level diplomatic tour included a crucial Singapore stop to expand bilateral commercial ties and deepen involvement with regional institutions. This geopolitical expansion remains intertwined with humanitarian advocacy. During a Bangladesh mission, officials pushed for permanent structural solutions for the displaced Rohingya population.

Expanding geographic outreach matches assertive stances on global economic policies and technological governance. At the OECD Paris summit, Turkish delegates championed a rules-based global trade system to withstand protectionist pressures. Concurrently, domestic regulators address monopolistic risks in digital infrastructure. The competition authority launched an investigation and imposed interim measures against Meta regarding artificial intelligence practices. This regulatory intervention underscores recognition that managing technological dimensions of strategic competition is as vital as securing physical borders and maintaining commercial trade routes.

Underpinning all global initiatives is continuous effort to fortify foundational geopolitical networks regionally. Active preparations for the tenth trilateral foreign ministers' meeting with Azerbaijan and Georgia demonstrate enduring diplomatic mechanisms designed to synchronize regional policies, enhance cross-border infrastructure, and present unified fronts against external destabilization in the Caucasus. By institutionalizing these trilateral dialogues, Ankara solidifies a geopolitical corridor linking European energy demands with Caspian resources, serving as the resilient bedrock for the nation's intercontinental ambitions.

Syria

On Syria's most revealing development is economic rather than military: the war around it is briefly making Syrian airspace useful again. With carriers avoiding other regional corridors, transit over Syria has surged, and the state is now collecting meaningful

overflight revenue after years of being commercially isolated. That is strategically important because it gives Damascus a narrow source of external income without requiring full reconstruction or sanctions relief. At the same time, the benefit is structurally fragile: it depends on regional insecurity, not on a durable restoration of trust in Syrian aviation. In other words, Syria is monetizing disorder, not escaping it.

The phone call between Ahmad al-Sharaa and Donald Trump fits the same logic of moving from survival to conditional reintegration. By putting sanctions relief, reconstruction, and regional stability on the agenda, Damascus is trying to convert political recognition into economic access. The key point is that Syria is no longer only asking for humanitarian easing; it is trying to reposition itself as a state whose recovery matters to the regional order. That is a bid for leverage, not just sympathy. The discussion also suggests Washington sees Syria less as a frozen problem than as a file that could still be used in wider bargaining over security and regional de-escalation.

The chemical-weapons file shows the same effort to redefine Syria's post-Assad identity. The recovery of chemical munitions is not just a technical discovery; it is a political instrument for the new authorities, because it helps them expose the former regime's legacy while presenting themselves as the government capable of cleaning it up. That matters internationally. It gives Damascus a way to claim procedural seriousness, encourage outside engagement, and reduce the perception that the country remains trapped inside Assad-era secrecy. The discovery also turns disarmament into state-building: uncovering the program is part of proving that a different political authority now controls the territory and is willing to open it to inspection.

Türkiye's backing of the cleanup effort adds regional weight to that same re-legitimation strategy. Ankara is not only endorsing disarmament; it is helping normalize the new Syrian authorities as interlocutors in a security process. That matters because Turkish support gives Damascus more than moral encouragement. It links Syria's recovery track to a major regional power that has direct security interests in Syrian stability and border management. The move also shows how Türkiye is trying to shape the post-Assad order from within the region, not leave it to European institutions or Gulf sponsors alone. Support for chemical cleanup therefore functions as both nonproliferation policy and geopolitical positioning.

The courtroom cases in Austria and the Netherlands show that the Syria file is still being internationalized through justice systems even as politics shifts. These prosecutions are not only about individual guilt. They preserve the legal memory of Assad-era repression and Islamic State mobilization, preventing the conflict from being reframed purely as a postwar stabilization story. Foreign courts are effectively turning Syria into a transnational accountability case, which matters because many perpetrators, victims, and families now live outside the country. For the new Syrian authorities, that creates both an

opportunity and a risk: it helps discredit the old order, but it also keeps the world focused on unresolved wartime crimes that cannot be erased through diplomatic rebranding alone.

The arrest of a former Assad-era commander inside Syria moves that same accountability dynamic back onto domestic terrain. It signals that the new authorities are not leaving wartime justice entirely to Europe but are trying to demonstrate that they can police former regime figures themselves. Strategically, this serves three purposes at once: it deters remnants of the old security network, strengthens the new leadership's claim to monopoly over coercion, and gives the government a way to present itself as an orderly successor rather than a revolutionary rupture. Still, such arrests also reveal how contested control remains, because a state that must publicly stage accountability is usually still consolidating authority.

Trump's praise for Syria's leadership is another important signal because it suggests Washington is still willing to deal with the new authorities if they keep projecting order. That is not full endorsement; it is conditional acceptance. The message is that stability, cooperation, and regional usefulness can translate into political space, even for a government that only recently emerged from war and sanctions isolation. For Damascus, this is valuable because it shows that external legitimacy is now tied less to ideology than to performance: contain instability, help manage regional spillovers, and keep channels open on Lebanon and security. The United States is effectively rewarding a government it sees as usable, not necessarily fully trusted.

Israeli incursions into southern Syria underline the limits of all this diplomatic movement. They show that even as Damascus seeks recognition and rehabilitation, it does not fully control its southern front in practice. Repeated incursions keep the border zone militarized and remind everyone that Israel is willing to enforce its own security logic inside Syrian territory. That has two consequences. First, it weakens the new Syrian government's claim to restored sovereignty. Second, it pressures Damascus to balance external outreach with internal military restraint, because any response that looks too weak invites further probing, while any escalation risks derailing the diplomatic opening with Washington and regional partners.

The temporary airspace restrictions by Iraq and Syria show how quickly the regional conflict can still override Syria's tentative recovery. Just as Syrian airspace had become a source of revenue and a symbol of partial re-entry into regional connectivity, renewed escalation forced a return to precaution and disruption. That is the core strategic contradiction of the moment: Syria can benefit from regional turbulence, but it cannot control the turbulence that benefits it. The airspace closures also show how tightly Syria remains bound to the Iran-Israel confrontation, even when its own leadership is trying to focus on reconstruction and international normalization. Its strategic environment still

determines whether it can act like a state of recovery or has to behave like a state in containment mode.

14. Global Powers

One of the week's most consequential diplomatic developments occurred when President Donald Trump intervened directly to stop Israel from carrying out a major strike on Beirut's southern suburbs. Following a tense phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump claimed he had secured understandings that would halt further escalation between Israel and Hezbollah. The intervention reflected growing concern within the White House that a major attack on Beirut could collapse ongoing U.S.-Iran negotiations and trigger a wider regional war. The episode exposed an increasingly visible divergence between Washington's priority of de-escalation and Israel's preference for maintaining military pressure on Hezbollah.

Iran responded by warning that indirect negotiations with the United States could be suspended if Israeli operations in Lebanon continued. Tehran linked developments on the Lebanese front directly to broader regional diplomacy and reiterated warnings regarding strategic maritime chokepoints, particularly the Strait of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb. The statements heightened concerns in Washington over energy security and global shipping routes, although the Trump administration continued to signal that negotiations were making progress.

As diplomatic efforts intensified, Secretary of State Marco Rubio appeared before Congress for the first time since the Iran conflict began. Rubio revealed that Iran had agreed to discuss aspects of its nuclear program that it had previously refused to negotiate. He stressed that reopening the Strait of Hormuz remained an essential first step toward a broader agreement and rejected suggestions that Washington would provide sanctions relief merely in exchange for restoring maritime access. Rubio maintained that any sanctions relief would remain tied to significant nuclear concessions, including restrictions on uranium enrichment and stockpiles.

At the same time, Washington continued intensive diplomacy between Israel and Lebanon to prevent the collapse of the fragile ceasefire. Discussions focused on establishing security zones south of the Litani River, expanding the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces, and reducing Hezbollah's military presence near the border. The United States viewed the arrangement as essential not only for stabilizing Lebanon but also for safeguarding the broader diplomatic track with Iran. Hezbollah, however, rejected key provisions and insisted that Israeli forces must withdraw completely before any lasting arrangement could be implemented.

Domestic debate over Iran policy also intensified. The U.S. House of Representatives advanced a bipartisan War Powers resolution aimed at restricting further military action

against Iran without congressional authorization. The measure reflected growing concern among lawmakers that the United States could become drawn into a prolonged regional conflict. During related hearings, members of Congress also questioned proposed reductions to State Department funding while defense expenditures continued to rise, highlighting broader disagreements over the balance between diplomacy and military power in U.S. foreign policy.

Beyond the Middle East, the United States also turned its attention to developments in the Horn of Africa. The U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu issued a security alert after clashes erupted between Somali federal government forces and clan-based opposition groups in the capital. Washington warned that the violence could have lasting consequences for Somalia's stability and urged all parties to exercise restraint. The alert reflected growing concern that political tensions ahead of Somalia's electoral transition could undermine security gains and further fragment the country's already fragile political environment.

Meanwhile, the U.S.-backed ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah came under increasing strain as Israeli forces continued strikes in southern Lebanon and Hezbollah maintained rocket attacks into northern Israel. The deterioration exposed the limits of U.S. diplomatic efforts and reinforced concerns within Washington that renewed fighting could derail negotiations with Tehran. Throughout the week, the administration worked to prevent local violations from escalating into a broader regional confrontation.

Those concerns materialized when Iran launched ballistic missiles toward northern Israel in response to Israeli operations in Lebanon. The attack marked Tehran's most significant direct military action against Israel since the April ceasefire. President Trump immediately sought to prevent further escalation, arguing that an Israeli response could jeopardize months of diplomatic progress with Iran. The episode underscored the increasingly difficult balancing act facing Washington as it attempted to support Israel's security while preserving a path toward negotiations with Tehran.

Following the Iranian missile attack, Israel carried out strikes against military-related targets inside Iran, including facilities near Tehran, Tabriz, and Isfahan. Despite the escalation, the Trump administration maintained that diplomacy remained viable. White House officials continued to describe negotiations as active and stressed that the exchange of strikes should not be interpreted as the collapse of the diplomatic process. Washington's immediate objective became preventing the Israel-Iran confrontation from expanding into a wider regional conflict involving maritime chokepoints, Gulf states, and multiple proxy actors.

Regarding China, its Coast Guard said it conducted "law enforcement" patrols east of Taiwan after Japan and the Philippines announced plans to start maritime boundary talks in waters that Beijing claims overlap with Chinese territory. Taiwan condemned the move

and said it detected only two Chinese ships near Orchid Island that did not enter restricted waters, making the episode another sign of rising maritime pressure around Taiwan.

South Korea and China agreed to expand weekly flight rights for the first time in seven years, a practical step that signals a modest thaw in bilateral ties. Seoul said the move would improve air connectivity and reflects a broader effort by both governments to stabilize relations after years of regional tension.

Ahead of Xi Jinping's visit to Pyongyang, Kim Yo Jong said North Korea would never give up its status as a nuclear-armed state and warned that it would not tolerate threats. Her statement signaled that Beijing was entering a summit environment in which Pyongyang was publicly hardening its nuclear position rather than softening it for China's benefit.

Xi Jinping arrived in North Korea for a rare two-day summit with Kim Jong Un, his first visit there in seven years and his first foreign trip of 2026. In a message published ahead of the visit, Xi called China-North Korea ties a "new historical starting point," pledged deeper cooperation, and stressed opposition to "hegemony" and militarism, showing Beijing's intent to keep Pyongyang within its strategic orbit despite North Korea's growing ties with Russia.

Russia's main diplomatic event of the week was the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), where President Vladimir Putin met foreign business leaders, journalists, and international delegations. The forum highlighted two competing visions within Russia. Some officials and nationalist figures argued that Russia should prepare for a prolonged confrontation with the West, while others warned that continued war risks deeper economic stagnation and international isolation. The forum served as Moscow's principal platform for projecting economic resilience despite Western sanctions and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The same week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy publicly proposed a face-to-face meeting with Putin to discuss ending the war. The Kremlin declined the proposal, with Putin stating that he saw no basis for such a meeting at present.

India and the United States conducted the 29th Army-to-Army Staff Talks in Hawaii, where military officials discussed operational cooperation, interoperability, training, and regional security challenges. The talks underscored the continued importance of defense ties between New Delhi and Washington despite broader trade and geopolitical disagreements that have emerged over the past year.

Venezuelan Interim President Delcy Rodríguez arrived in India for a five-day visit aimed at strengthening cooperation in energy, trade, investment, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, and renewable energy. The visit came as India significantly increased imports of

Venezuelan crude oil amid disruptions linked to tensions in the Middle East and concerns over energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz.

15. Europe

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper completed a high-level visit to India and China, meeting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Discussions focused on the Strait of Hormuz crisis, Russia's war in Ukraine, artificial intelligence cooperation, and broader economic relations. The trip reflected London's effort to deepen engagement with major Asian powers while addressing global security challenges.

The British Foreign Office summoned Russia's ambassador after Russian strikes on Ukraine and a Russian drone incident that struck a residential building in Romania, a NATO member. London described the incident as a serious escalation and reaffirmed its commitment to defend NATO territory while continuing support for Ukraine. The move underscored Britain's increasingly hardline position toward Moscow.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer hosted John Mahama in London, where both leaders welcomed the new UK-Ghana Growth Partnership. Discussions covered trade, migration cooperation, Middle East security, and the importance of reopening the Strait of Hormuz. The meeting highlighted Britain's continued effort to strengthen ties with key African partners.

Starmer joined French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a joint meeting that reaffirmed European support for Ukraine. The four leaders stressed that Europe must play a central role in any future peace settlement and pledged continued coordination with both Kyiv and Washington.

President Emmanuel Macron announced €93 billion in investment commitments during the annual Choose France summit, including a major SoftBank-backed artificial intelligence and data center project. The initiative forms part of France's strategy to position itself as Europe's leading AI and advanced computing hub while strengthening economic competitiveness.

France emerged as one of the leading European countries pushing for coordinated sanctions against individuals and organizations linked to settler violence and settlement expansion in the West Bank. Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot indicated that additional sanctions could be announced within days as Paris sought to increase pressure on the Israeli government over actions viewed as undermining prospects for a Palestinian state.

The European Commission began weighing legislation that would force companies in sensitive sectors to reduce dependence on single suppliers, especially those in China, and diversify to at least three sources. EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic framed the idea as a supply-chain resilience measure, but the proposal clearly reflects Europe's growing concern over China's export restrictions and industrial leverage.

16. International and Regional Organizations

United Nation

In June, the Security Council is expected to hold a private meeting on the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia, with anticipated briefers including Deputy Special Representative for Somalia and Officer in Charge of the UN Transition Assistance Mission in Somalia Raisedon Zenenga and Special Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson for Somalia and Head of AUSSOM El Hadji Ibrahima Diene. Resolution 2809 of 23 December 2025, which extended the authorization for AUSSOM until 31 December, requested the Secretary-General to report by 31 May on recommendations for appropriate adaptations to the support provided by the UN Support Office in Somalia to AUSSOM and an update on the status of voluntary resource mobilization towards AUSSOM's budget, with this report circulated to Council members on 29 May.

Key recent developments included Somalia's Federal Parliament approving constitutional amendments on 4 March extending the terms of the Federal Parliament and the Federal Government President from four to five years, which President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud signed into law on 8 March, drawing strong reactions from opposition leaders including the Somali Future Council and former presidents who cited a lack of political consensus. Tensions also escalated between the Federal Government and the leadership of South-West state, which suspended relations with Mogadishu following the constitutional amendments, with subsequent armed clashes leading to federal forces taking control of Baidoa and the resignation of President Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed.

High-level talks between the FGS and the Somali Future Council facilitated by the US and the UK were held in Mogadishu from 13 to 15 May but reportedly ended in a stalemate amid continued disagreements over the electoral model and the president's mandate. The UN monitored Somalia developments closely, including political tensions and clashes in Mogadishu reported around June 3 and 4, while supporting dialogue, humanitarian efforts, and AUSSOM coordination.

Africa Union

On June 2, 2026, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development issued a media advisory inviting representatives of the media to a joint press conference

on their preliminary statements regarding the 1 June 2026 general elections in Ethiopia. The press conference was scheduled for Wednesday, 3 June 2026, in Addis Ababa, where H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of Kenya and Head of the African Union Election Observation Mission, and H.E. Dr. Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe, former Vice President of Uganda and Head of the IGAD Election Observation Mission, were to brief the press on the preliminary findings of their respective missions. The AU collaborated with IGAD on election observation in Ethiopia, and their reports noted some differences in voter registration figures and participation details but broadly supported the conduct of the elections amid ongoing regional challenges.

On Thursday, June 4, 2026, the African Union Commission expressed deep concern from its headquarters in Addis Ababa over recent security developments in Mogadishu, including armed clashes in civilian areas, and called on all parties to immediately stop the fighting, exercise maximum restraint, protect civilians, and refrain from actions that could further escalate tensions. The appeal followed rising political friction in the country marked by recent armed confrontations in the national capital, and the AU urged all Somali stakeholders to resolve their differences through dialogue and established constitutional processes rather than through force. The Commission further encouraged the continuation of efforts by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and other political actors to promote national dialogue, reconciliation, and consensus-building to ensure long-term stability, while stating that it would continue to monitor the situation on the ground closely. The AU reiterated the readiness of its Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia to continue to render full support towards the restoration of peace and security in the Horn of Africa nation.

In early June 2026, the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) continued its operational activities, focusing on environmental action and national commemorations, even as it continues to face threats from Al-Shabaab and funding challenges

On June 4, 2026, Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) troops serving under AUSSOM, alongside the United Nations Guard Unit 12, commemorated World Environment Day in Mogadishu. The celebration featured a tree-planting exercise and a beach cleanup along the Indian Ocean coastline, aligning with the 2026 theme, "Inspired by Nature, For Climate, For our Future". Colonel Francis Aragamo Obita, the Uganda Contingent Deputy Commander, emphasized the importance of a healthy environment for military operations and urged troops to prioritize conservation, noting the visible greening of the area since their deployment in 2007.

Separately, on June 6, 2026, Djiboutian troops deployed under AUSSOM celebrated the 49th anniversary of the Djibouti Armed Forces Day. Commemorations were held in both Djibouti and Beledweyne, Somalia, where the Djiboutian contingent is stationed as part of

AUSSOM's Sector 4 operations. Djibouti remains a key contributor to the mission, with approximately 1,500 troops deployed to Somalia as part of its long-standing commitment to peacekeeping in the region

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

The IGAD Election Observation Mission deployed to Ethiopia for the 7th General Election held on 1 June 2026 observed that the election represented a significant milestone in the country's democratic evolution, characterized as an Election of Many Firsts due to major institutional and technological reforms. A total of 54,057,861 voters were registered across 501 of 547 constituencies, with elections not held in Tigray and in eight constituencies in the Amhara Region due to security concerns. The Mission commended NEBE for innovations including the "Mirchaye" digital voter registration system, GIS-based polling station mapping, and special voting frameworks for internally displaced persons and defense forces personnel. However, concerns remained regarding the underrepresentation of women among candidates and polling station managers. On election day, observers visited 208 polling stations and reported that polling opened on time, voting proceeded smoothly with no incidents, and security personnel maintained a professional and non-intrusive presence. High voter turnout was observed throughout the day, though inconsistencies were noted in the implementation of a six-hour voting extension due to communication challenges between NEBE headquarters and local polling stations.

In its preliminary assessment, the Mission concluded that election officials, security personnel, political actors and citizens largely discharged their responsibilities with professionalism enabling voters to freely express their democratic rights despite long polling hours. The Mission offered recommendations to NEBE including reducing the maximum number of voters per polling station to 1,000, enhancing cybersecurity, and strengthening voter education in remote areas. Political parties were encouraged to introduce policies to boost women's candidacy, while security agencies were advised to maintain neutrality and strengthen community engagement. Civil society organizations were urged to enhance domestic observation and peacebuilding initiatives, and the government was called upon to provide adequate institutional and logistical support to NEBE while ensuring equitable access to digital reforms across all regions. The IGAD EOM commended the Ethiopian people for their commitment to a peaceful electoral process and reaffirmed IGAD's support for democracy, good governance, and credible elections in Ethiopia.

On June 4, 2026, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development issued a statement from its headquarters in Djibouti expressing deep concern over reports of violence in Mogadishu amid heightened political tensions in Somalia. IGAD condemned all acts of violence and called on all parties to exercise maximum restraint, de-escalate tensions, and

resolve their differences through peaceful, inclusive, and constructive dialogue. H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD, stated that at this critical moment, preserving peace, stability, national unity, and the gains made in Somalia's state-building efforts is of paramount importance, and urged all stakeholders to place the interests of the Somali people first and to pursue peaceful solutions through dialogue and consensus. The statement further noted that as a founding member state of IGAD, Somalia remains central to the region's peace, security, and development, and IGAD reaffirmed its solidarity with Somalia while standing ready to support efforts that advance dialogue, national cohesion, and lasting stability.



HORN **REVIEW**

IDEAS CONNECTIONS SYNERGY

Ideas | Connections | Synergy
