



# Weekly Geopolitical Report

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

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**For analytical and informational purposes only**

# **Horn Review: Weekly Report**

**June 15 – June 21, 2026**

## **1. Ethiopia**

Ethiopia presented its recent democratic and reconciliation efforts at the 62nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council. Ambassador Tsegab Kebebew highlighted the peaceful and inclusive conduct of the 7th General Election as a milestone strengthening institutions and reflecting the people's will. Discussions highlighted the Transitional Justice Policy, the National Dialogue process now entering its final phase with a national conference scheduled for mid-July, and ongoing measures to expand civic space through inclusive, nationally driven engagement.

The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) announced final results for the June 1 polls on June 21, confirming the Prosperity Party secured 438 out of 486 contested seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives. With 501 seats up for election overall (excluding constituencies in Tigray and parts of Amhara), opposition parties and independent candidates collectively won 48 seats. Election officials revoked results in 15 additional constituencies due to irregularities and scheduled fresh voting there. Over 54 million citizens registered, reflecting substantial participation across much of the country despite security challenges in specific regions. This outcome provides a clear mandate for the next federal government, to be formed following parliamentary convening.

Opposition representation includes seats secured by parties such as the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA), the National Movement of Amhara (NaMA), and several smaller parties and independent candidates, maintaining a measure of political diversity within the legislature. The results indicate broad support for the ruling party while demonstrating the continued participation of opposition actors in the electoral process across areas where voting took place.

In a notable diplomatic engagement, Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos delivered a comprehensive address at Chatham House in London on June 17 clearly outlining Ethiopia's foreign policy anchored in development needs, regional interdependence and cooperative solutions. He framed the country's pursuit of reliable maritime access as a structural necessity for trade, logistics, energy security, and long-term economic planning, not as confrontation, but as a driver of shared prosperity and connectivity across the Horn of Africa. The Minister stressed that no nation in the region can achieve lasting peace or development in isolation, while highlighting Ethiopia's constructive peacebuilding roles in Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia.

On shared water resources, Minister Gedion reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to equitable utilization of the Nile and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, guided by principles of cooperation, mutual benefit, and the right to development without causing harm. He called for transcending outdated monopolistic approaches, positioning the GERD as a symbol of self-reliance and a potential catalyst for regional collaboration.

Addressing the situation in northern Ethiopia directly, the Foreign Minister emphasized that full implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement remains essential for post-conflict recovery, reconstruction, and reintegration. While the federal government continues to support humanitarian efforts and rebuilding initiatives, he expressed concern that hardliner elements within the TPLF have not fully committed to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes. These factions are reportedly acquiring arms, forming new alignments with external actors, and diverting resources away from recovery, actions that risk undermining civilian well-being and reversing hard-won stability. Sustainable peace, he noted, depends on all parties prioritizing reconciliation over confrontation.

Complementing these diplomatic efforts, the United States imposed targeted visa restrictions on June 18, on hardline TPLF elements and their families for actions undermining the Pretoria Peace Agreement, including incomplete disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. Reports indicate these factions have acquired arms and formed alliances that divert resources from recovery and risk reigniting tensions, displacing civilians. The federal government continues supporting reconstruction in Tigray, while former TPLF figures have noted insufficient reciprocity on peace commitments. Such measures aim to protect broader regional stability without undermining the aspirations of Tigrayan communities for peace and dignity.

In response to the visa action, the TPLF issued a statement criticizing it as one-sided while reiterating its own grievances over implementation of the peace accord. These exchanges underscore the importance of all stakeholders fully committing to reconciliation processes to prevent reversals in hard-won gains.

Recent media reports regarding potential high-level external interventions in the GERD matter have circulated. Ethiopia maintains that such complex, technical, and sovereignty-related issues are best addressed through direct, regionally led dialogue grounded in mutual respect and equitable principles, as consistently articulated at the highest levels of government.

Amid these political and security developments, Ethiopia advances ambitious infrastructure projects that signal growing execution capacity. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed inspected the Bishoftu International Airport site on June 15, a mega-project employing advanced digital monitoring to manage thousands of workers and equipment efficiently. Designed as a major hub complementing Bole Airport, it targets over 60

million passengers annually in its first phase and is expected to boost aviation, tourism, trade, and regional connectivity while creating opportunities for local communities.

Overall, this period reflects Ethiopia's focus on consolidating democratic gains, pursuing development-driven foreign policy, safeguarding peace agreements, and delivering large-scale projects. These interconnected efforts aim to foster inclusive prosperity, strengthen institutions, and contribute positively to Horn of Africa stability through cooperation and home-grown solutions.

## **2. Sudan**

The third week of June was dominated by a single developing threat: the RSF's methodical encirclement of El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan State, which has drawn the most concentrated international alarm since the fall of El Fasher last October. While drone strikes continued to kill civilians and the country's monetary and humanitarian systems deepened their fracture, the prospect of a ground assault on a city of 500,000 people placed the question of atrocity prevention squarely before the UN Security Council, the Human Rights Council, and a coalition of nearly 30 states. The warnings were urgent. The leverage behind them was not apparent.

The RSF has conducted more than ten consecutive days of drone strikes on El Obeid and surrounding North Kordofan areas, killing at least 50 civilians according to the 29-nation coalition statement delivered at the Human Rights Council on June 18. The strikes have targeted fuel stations, civilian infrastructure, and the city's main power station, which was knocked out last week, cutting water supply to thousands of homes and halting operations at several hospitals. RSF forces have reportedly issued warnings to El Obeid residents via widely circulated video to stay clear of military installations, a pattern that preceded the final offensive on El Fasher.

On June 18, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk issued an explicit warning that an imminent ground offensive risked the commission of serious international crimes, drawing a direct parallel to El Fasher and describing the situation as an impending human rights disaster. UN Secretary-General António Guterres echoed the alarm, noting that far too many times in this conflict, clear warnings had failed to trigger concerted action.

On June 20, the UN Security Council issued a statement demanding the RSF immediately halt its assault, reaffirming Sudan's territorial integrity, and explicitly rejecting any parallel governing authority in RSF-controlled areas. The Council also called on all UN member states to refrain from external interference that could fuel the conflict, a formulation directed at documented supply relationships that Khartoum has attributed specifically to the UAE. The RSF denied responsibility for ethnically targeted killings and stated that those responsible for abuses would be held to account.

The El Fasher comparison is analytically exact in ways that matter. El Obeid is the SAF's primary logistics hub connecting central Sudan to Kordofan and Darfur. Its fall would sever the western supply corridor and leave the RSF in control of a contiguous arc from Darfur through Kordofan toward the Nile, a territorial consolidation that would fundamentally alter the strategic geometry of the war. El Fasher's fall in October was followed by a wave of ethnically targeted atrocities that triggered international condemnation and no enforceable response. The Security Council's June 20 statement acknowledged this dynamic implicitly by referencing resolution 2791 and the Jeddah Declaration commitments that both parties have continued to violate without consequence.

In eastern Sudan, prominent leaders in Kassala issued warnings of dangerous tribal polarization following statements by the Nazir of the Hadendowa tribes in early June that broad local communities interpreted as an assault on their identity and a call to redraw ethnic boundaries. The Bani Amer leadership publicly demanded that Burhan hold the Interior Minister accountable for his silence during the remarks, describing the governor and minister's presence at the ceremony as implicit state endorsement of exclusionary discourse. Civil society figures interviewed by Sudan Tribune offered a more structural analysis: that the Port Sudan authorities have a deliberate interest in manufacturing tribal friction in the East because the region's social cohesion and attachment to land represents an obstacle to extractive deals on its agricultural and mineral resources. Abla Karrar of the Sudanese Congress Party warned that a single bullet fired in eastern Sudan could trigger a war of all against all, citing unprecedented weapons proliferation across the region's tribal and armed formations.

Sudan's monetary fragmentation continued to deepen. Central Bank officials confirmed that transactions in RSF-controlled border areas are now being conducted in Chadian francs, South Sudanese pounds, and US dollars, with the cancelled 500 and 1,000 pound notes circulating in those areas carrying no legal tender status in government territory. Analysts described Sudan as now effectively divided into two monetary zones, with government areas holding new currency under high inflation from supply chain disruption, while RSF areas hold rapidly depreciating old notes with no external recognition. The RSF's civil administration announced steps to build a parallel banking infrastructure including a Future Bank, a Currency Council, and digital financial applications designed to bypass Port Sudan's authority.

UNHCR reported that Sudan remains the world's largest displacement crisis, with approximately nine million internally displaced and 4.5 million who have fled to neighboring countries. The agency cited a 72% funding gap as the primary constraint on its ability to respond to new waves of displacement, particularly in Darfur, Kordofan, and Blue Nile. Civil society activists in Ed Damazin warned that the onset of the rainy season has compounded the crisis for over 200,000 displaced people across the Blue Nile region,

with those stranded near the Ethiopian border in Geissan facing conditions described as catastrophic. The Africa Intelligence reporting on internal fractures within Sudan's Emergency Response Rooms, which have been the primary civilian humanitarian coordination mechanism since the war began, added a further structural concern: that the networks enabling aid delivery in contested areas are themselves under strain from the same political and factional pressures that have fragmented the civilian political space.

## **Outlook**

El Obeid has become the defining test of whether the international atrocity prevention architecture assembled around Sudan's war is capable of altering outcomes or only of documenting them. The sequence of the past week, ten days of drone strikes, a 29-nation statement at the Human Rights Council, a UN Secretary-General alert, and a Security Council demand, is precisely the sequence that preceded El Fasher's fall and the atrocities that followed it. What is missing is not warning or documentation but enforcement: the states with the most direct influence over the RSF's operational capacity are the same states the Security Council obliquely referenced when it called for an end to external interference. The monetary fracture, the eastern Sudan polarization, and the humanitarian funding gap each constitute separate crises that compound without resolving. Sudan this week moved closer to a second major urban catastrophe without any evident mechanism to prevent it.

### **3. Egypt**

At the G7 session in Évian, Sisi framed Middle East stability as a collective priority, urging faster implementation of Trump's Gaza plan and a comprehensive settlement based on two states. António Costa echoed the importance of Egypt as a strategic partner and a regional anchor, linking the summit's Middle East discussion to wider European security concerns.

The summit also turned to debt pressure. G7 leaders pledged stronger action on global debt vulnerabilities, especially for developing and middle-income economies outside the G20 Common Framework, and the joint declaration was shaped with guest countries including Egypt. The message was that financial fragility now sits squarely inside the stability agenda.

The next day, Sisi met Trump on the sidelines of the summit in Évian, and both sides used the encounter to keep Egyptian-American coordination moving on regional and international issues. The presidency said the exchange was centered on bilateral ties, but it also carried clear implications for Gaza and the wider de-escalation effort.

In Luxembourg, the 11th EU-Egypt Association Council reaffirmed the Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership signed between the two sides. The meeting built on the first leaders' summit in 2025 and reinforced cooperation on security, migration, investment,

and political coordination, giving Egypt another institutional channel for its regional role and economic agenda.

Gaza remained the most urgent pressure point. By June 18, the Palestinian death toll from Israeli fire since the ceasefire had crossed 1,000, even as mediators kept working on a new truce push. The figures underlined why Cairo's diplomacy was so focused on preventing the conflict from widening beyond Gaza.

Cairo then became a gathering point for broader mediation. On June 19, AFP said Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Türkiye were due to meet in Egypt the following Sunday, and on June 20 Sudan's foreign minister met Badr Abdelatty in Cairo to discuss bilateral ties, embassy operations, and consular services for Sudanese citizens. Both meetings showed Egypt using routine diplomacy to support crisis management.

The same Cairo circuit also covered the Iran file directly. On June 20, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and U.S. adviser Massad Boulos held talks in Cairo on Iran and other regional issues, while Ahram said the four-way meeting focused on building on the U.S.-Iran memorandum of understanding to reduce tension and strengthen stability.

That track moved to Switzerland as Iranian negotiators departed, and JD Vance prepared to join talks in Bürgenstock. By June 22, mediators said the first round had ended with a 60-day roadmap and de-escalation measures, including work on safe maritime passage. The sequence suggested a tentative shift from crisis containment toward a more structured negotiating phase.

By June 21, Cairo was hosting a second layer of regional coordination. Africanews said foreign ministers from Egypt, Pakistan, Türkiye, and Saudi Arabia met to discuss regional developments and security, while The National said the group called for a permanent, verifiable U.S.-Iran deal. Egypt Today and Ahram added that the fourth quadrilateral meeting backed the MoU and pushed for the next phase of talks.

The week closed with Arab institutional politics. Sisi received incoming Arab League chief Nabil Fahmy and stressed that the region's challenges require stronger joint Arab action and a more active League. The message fit the broader pattern of the week: Egypt positioning itself as a convening power across Arab, African, European, and transatlantic channels.

#### **4. Eritrea**

In his final report to the United Nations Human Rights Council, Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker stated that there were reasonable grounds to believe crimes against humanity continue in Eritrea, citing ongoing allegations of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, torture, and persecution of political opponents, journalists, and religious groups. These findings represent the assessment of the UN Special Rapporteur and not

judicial determinations, and Eritrea has historically rejected such scrutiny while declining to cooperate with the mandate. The report suggests that, despite signs of Eritrea's growing diplomatic engagement with external partners, international human rights mechanisms continue to identify longstanding structural concerns and little evidence of meaningful reform.

According to an interview published by Eritrean state-affiliated media following his June 2026 visit, WHO Regional Director for Africa Mohamed Yakub Janabi praised Eritrea's emphasis on primary healthcare, community health workers, and domestic pharmaceutical production while identifying financing, infrastructure, and workforce development as key challenges to sustaining universal health coverage. The remarks reflect the WHO official's assessment rather than an independent verification of government claims and indicate continued technical engagement between Eritrea and international health institutions. The visit also suggests a gradual expansion of practical cooperation with multilateral organisations, reinforcing broader signs of Eritrea's diplomatic re-engagement without necessarily implying wider changes in governance or transparency.

According to the media outlet *Africa Intelligence*, Egypt is seeking to deepen its engagement with Eritrea by backing the development of the Port of Assab through state-linked firms including *Arab Contractors* and *Elsewedy Electric*, with the initiative reportedly tied to a maritime cooperation agreement under which Cairo would finance and modernise the port in exchange for naval access. While the details have not been officially confirmed, the reported arrangement reinforces the strategic character of the Egypt–Eritrea partnership, suggesting that infrastructure investment in Assab is intended to advance Cairo's geopolitical position in the Red Sea and strengthen its alignment with Asmara amid tensions with Ethiopia over maritime access and broader regional influence.

According to *Sudan Times*, a representative of the Civil Forces Alliance for Eastern Sudan alleged that tribal militias aligned with General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan's Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) had received military training in Eritrea and were becoming increasingly active in eastern Sudan. The claims remain unverified and should be treated with caution, but they reflect persistent concerns that cross-border security ties, and the proliferation of armed groups could further militarise eastern Sudan's fragile political landscape. If substantiated, such cooperation would underscore Eritrea's continued relevance to regional security dynamics and the tendency of neighbouring states to leverage local proxies amid Sudan's ongoing conflict.

Eritrea marked Martyrs' Day on 20 June with nationwide commemorations, including ceremonies led by President Isaias Afwerki, public processions, a nationwide minute of silence, and the reburial of 14 liberation fighters, according to the Eritrean Ministry of Information. Beyond honoring those killed during the independence struggle, the annual observance continues to serve as a central pillar of the government's nation-building

narrative, reinforcing themes of sacrifice, national unity, and revolutionary legitimacy. The enduring prominence of liberation-era symbolism reflects how the memory of the armed struggle remains a powerful source of political identity and state legitimacy in contemporary Eritrea.

## **5. Djibouti**

Djibouti's diplomatic posture during the week was shaped by intensifying Red Sea and Horn of Africa geopolitics, as the country strengthened its role as both a regional mediator and a defender of state sovereignty. Following high-level consultations with Djiboutian officials, Egypt and Djibouti issued a joint declaration emphasizing their commitment to safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states across the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea corridor. The statement highlighted growing cooperation on maritime security and reflected the convergence of interests between Cairo and Djibouti City regarding stability along one of the world's most strategic waterways. The development attracted significant regional attention because of its implications for ongoing debates surrounding maritime access, regional alignments, and the future security architecture of the Red Sea basin.

The diplomatic repercussions of this emerging Egypt–Djibouti alignment continued throughout the week. Regional analysts assessed its potential impact on Ethiopia's long-term maritime strategy and on the evolving balance of power across the Horn of Africa. Amid increasing discussions surrounding alternative port arrangements and shifting diplomatic partnerships, Djibouti maintained its longstanding position in support of internationally recognized borders and established maritime frameworks. At the same time, Djibouti continued to reinforce its reputation as a constructive diplomatic actor. Through its hosting of IGAD headquarters, the country remained central to regional consultations on security and political stability. IGAD reaffirmed its support for Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity following controversy surrounding Somaliland's diplomatic outreach, while President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh continued carefully balancing regional relationships in a manner designed to preserve Djibouti's credibility as a neutral facilitator in Horn affairs.

Alongside these diplomatic developments, Djibouti recorded a major achievement in regional connectivity and economic cooperation. The World Bank approved an additional \$45 million for the modernization of the Djibouti–Addis Ababa economic corridor, increasing total project financing to \$205 million. The investment will support the expansion and rehabilitation of key sections of National Road 1, improve freight management systems, strengthen climate resilience, and enhance road safety infrastructure. For both Djibouti and Ethiopia, the corridor remains the backbone of regional commerce and one of the most important trade routes in Africa. The project reinforces the strategic partnership between Addis Ababa and Djibouti City while

supporting broader efforts to improve regional integration, facilitate trade flows, and strengthen economic connectivity across the Horn of Africa. Complementing these developments, Djibouti also advanced cooperation with international partners through new engagements with Sweden and continued supporting IGAD-led diplomatic initiatives aimed at managing regional conflicts, border disputes, and security challenges across South Sudan and the wider Horn region.

## **6. South Sudan**

South Sudan this week moved between two registers that are becoming harder to reconcile: an official register of regional engagement, election preparation meetings, and pledges of commitment to the peace agreement, and a factual register of a political opposition leader told he will die in prison, a city of 100,000 returnees with eight functioning water pumps, and a \$300 million presidential palace under construction. The distance between these registers is not incidental. It is the defining structural feature of how this state is governed.

The most politically significant statement of the week came not from a peace process communique but from a cabinet minister speaking to community leaders in rural Upper Nile State on June 14. Minister of Public Service Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth told the audience that detained First Vice President Riek Machar would die in prison. His formulation was explicit: "Riek is in jail, and we are in Juba. If you ever see Riek Machar again, do not believe anything I say. When the opportunity to detain your enemy presents itself and you successfully detain him, what would make you release him. We will not kill him. We will not take his soul, but he will die in jail." He compared Machar to Gatluak Manguel, a figure from Nuer oral tradition remembered for cannibalism who died in a colonial-era prison in Malakal. Gatkuoth is himself a former SPLM-IO senior figure and close Machar ally who defected in 2016 and has since emerged as one of the Kiir government's most vocal voices.

Machar has been under detention since March 26, following escalating tensions in Nasir County and the killing of a senior SSPDF commander. He is currently before a special court established by the government. The SPLM-IO National Youth League condemned the remarks as "reckless, provocative, and dangerous," and formally requested that Kiir take disciplinary action against Gatkuoth. The remarks came amid simultaneous visits to Juba by an AU delegation led by former Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, which is assessing peace agreement implementation and December 2026 election preparations, and by the IGAD Special Envoy Moussa Djama Ali, who met Kiir on June 17 to call for strict adherence to the R-ARCSS. The AU's C5 Plus Summit declaration of February 2026 had explicitly called for the release of political detainees, naming Machar. There is no indication this has been acted upon.

The IGAD visit produced the standard formulation: reaffirmation of commitment to accompanying South Sudan through the R-ARCSS implementation, focus on election preparations, and Kiir's reciprocal pledge to work with regional and international partners. What the communique did not address was the growing concern among civil society groups and opposition parties over reported amendments to R-ARCSS provisions related to electoral preparations, or the fact that South Sudan has never held an election since independence and has postponed every previous scheduled vote. December 2026 is the latest deadline to which the transitional mandate has been extended; the preconditions for a credible election, including a unified command structure, a permanent constitution, and a functioning electoral commission, remain largely unmet.

The humanitarian situation in Akobo County, Jonglei State, received detailed documentation this week from MSF, which reported that the SSPDF offensive of March 6 and subsequent clashes with the SPLA-IO left all 15 health facilities in the area looted and deserted. Akobo Teaching Hospital was stripped of beds, electricity, fuel, medical equipment, and medicines. When MSF resumed activities on May 11, the team treated over 600 patients in the first five days. By June 14, the hospital had admitted 684 patients to a 30-bed facility, recorded 5,106 outpatient consultations, and delivered 30 births, with daily consultation volumes now equivalent to a full week's caseload before the conflict. Screening data showed 36 percent of children aged six to fifty-nine months presenting with malnutrition, including fifteen percent with severe acute malnutrition. The water infrastructure collapse is equally acute: before the fighting, seventeen water towers and thirty-five boreholes supplied Akobo; today eight hand pumps remain functional, serving around 5,000 of a population now exceeding 100,000. The majority rely on untreated river water with widespread open defecation, creating extreme cholera and waterborne disease risk as the rainy season intensifies. The IPC has classified Akobo as Phase 5. MSF's project coordinator described the humanitarian response as "falling far short of the scale of needs, despite repeated calls to action and high-level commitments."

Against this backdrop, President Kiir was photographed this week inspecting progress on a \$300 million presidential palace in Juba, scheduled for completion in 2027. The juxtaposition requires no elaboration beyond noting that it reflects priority ordering with direct consequences for the population it governs.

## **7. Somalia and Somaliland**

### **Somalia**

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has publicly defended the recent presidential election in the Southwest State which resulted in the victory of former Speaker Aden Mohamed Nur Madobe. During a farewell ceremony held in Mogadishu for the departing Madobe, President Mohamud articulated that the election reflects the sovereign will of the region's populace. He showed that political legitimacy is derived exclusively from the

people's vote and the mandate of their elected representatives. The President emphasized that the Southwest State assembly which elected Madobe, is itself a representative body of the region's residents thereby validating the electoral outcome.

The politics has been further complicated by tensions between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Puntland regional administration. As of June 21, the situation has edged closer to armed confrontation, evidenced by the intensification of rival military deployments. Puntland has reinforced its troop presence in major cities and strengthened security points in locations including Bosaso, Garowe and Galkayo. Puntland leadership has publicly signalled a readiness to counter perceived federal interventions raising concerns about the potential for open conflict and the destabilizing impact on national unity and security.

Opposition Coalition Engages International Partners on Electoral Reform. The Somali Future Council, a coalition of opposition parties critical of the Federal Government has reportedly submitted a formal proposal for direct elections to key international partners. This submission followed a series of consultations with representatives from the European Union, the United Nations, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The meetings were convened to address Somalia's protracted political impasse and to seek a consensus on a viable electoral framework. According to sources the coalition has for the first time accepted a transition toward direct elections wherein citizens would vote for members of Parliament. The proposal outlines a phased electoral process to be conducted in four districts within each federal member state with administration to be managed jointly by a federal level electoral committee and a corresponding committee from the state where voting is occurring.

On another front, Somali opposition politician Abdirahman Abdishakur Warsame leader of the Wadajir Party has articulated the opposition's position regarding Turkey's mediation in Somalia's political dispute. In an interview with Dawan Media's Mizan Podcast on June 21 Abdishakur stated that the opposition expects Turkey's mediation to be inclusive and properly coordinated with other efforts led by Western countries and the United Nations. He confirmed that the Turkish delegation had engaged with the government, opposition figures and former President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo. However, the opposition insisted that the process should engage with established political platforms and structures rather than individuals, conveying to the Turkish delegation that they constitute a strategy and a platform, not just individual actors. Abdishakur acknowledged Turkey's influence over the current administration particularly President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud but noted that Turkey does not hold the same level of influence over the opposition and other political figures. He further observed that some opposition members perceive Turkey as leaning toward the government though he added that such a position would not necessarily be harmful if it generates constructive pressure toward a political settlement.

Following that Human Rights Commission Appointment Faces Legal Challenge. On June 20, the Federal Government appointed a tenth member to the country's Independent Human Rights Commission. The appointment intended to complete the statutory composition of the commission has drawn scrutiny from legal experts and civil society actors who question the procedural validity of the decision. Critics argue that the appointment may have circumvented established legal frameworks governing the commission's formation and may undermine the body's independence and credibility. The legal challenge now pending before the relevant judicial authorities threatens to complicate the commission's operations and raises broader questions about the government's commitment to institutionalizing human rights protections in accordance with domestic and international standards.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Kenyan President William Ruto convened in Narok, Kenya, for a high level bilateral meeting focused on enhancing security and trade cooperation. The discussions centered on strengthening bilateral relations between Somalia and Kenya with a particular emphasis on border security and the facilitation of trade. The two leaders reviewed recent developments affecting the Horn of Africa region and the importance of their shared economic and security interests. President Mohamud upon arrival in Kenya highlighted the value of the existing relationship between the two nations. The meeting occurs in ongoing efforts by both governments to address security challenges along the Kenya-Somalia border which remain a critical issue affecting the movement of people, trade, and the safety of border communities.

On June 19, the United States Africa Command in coordination with the Federal Government of Somalia conducted an airstrike targeting Al-Shabaab militants in the vicinity of Welmaro, approximately 103 kilometers north of Kismayo. This precision strike is part of a sustained pattern of U.S. military operations conducted throughout 2026 in support of Somali-led efforts to degrade Al-Shabaab's operational capabilities. The operation is the continued partnership between the United States and Somalia in combating terrorism and reinforces the Federal Government's commitment to eliminating the threat posed by extremist groups to national and regional security.

In a notable development Al-Shabaab issued a strong statement on June 17 condemning the opening of the embassy by the Somaliland administration in Jerusalem. The militant group denounced Somaliland President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi for what it termed abandoning the Islamic faith by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The statement urged residents of Somaliland to oppose the administration framing the move as an affront to Islamic principles. This reaction from Al-Shabaab adds layer to the on going political and security in the region as the group seeks to exploit the controversy to advance its own narrative and recruit supporters.

Another Fierce fighting between two clan militias continued for a third consecutive day on Saturday in the town of Jalalaqsi located in central Somalia. The clashes have raised serious concerns about civilian safety and the capacity of local authorities to maintain order. The violence scores the persistent challenges of clan based conflict and the security situation in parts of the country. The clashes in Jalalaqsi highlight the need for sustained security sector reform and the importance of addressing causes of inter clan violence as part of stability efforts.

## **Somaliland**

On June 15, 2026 Somaliland President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro officially inaugurated Somaliland's first ever embassy in Jerusalem in a ceremony attended by Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar. This event followed Israel's recognition of Somaliland. President Irro described the visit as the first state visit ever by a Somalilander president in any country in the world and characterized the embassy opening as a milestone in bilateral relations between the two sides. The inauguration represents an escalation in Somaliland's pursuit of international legitimacy and the deepening engagement between the administration and the State of Israel.

On the opening day of his visit, President Irro paid tribute at two of Israel's historical sites including laying a wreath at the tomb of Zionism's founder. This symbolic act has drawn considerable attention and criticism particularly from Somali federal authorities and regional actors who view the gesture as an affront to Islamic principles and Palestinian rights. The visit to these sites has further inflamed regional sentiment and reinforced perceptions that the Somaliland administration is actively aligning itself with Israeli political and historical narratives. On June 18, President Irro met with Somaliland children who are receiving life saving heart treatment in Israel an engagement that spotlighted what the administration describes as a humanitarian partnership.

Throughout the course of his visit, President Irro explored Israeli innovation in agriculture, water management and energy by visiting leading institutions and research centers in Israel. These visits, reported on June 20 built upon previously held business forums and broader economic discussions. The exploration of Israeli technological expertise signals Somaliland's interest in leveraging Israeli innovation to address developmental challenges in water scarce and agriculturally dependent regions beyond immediate political considerations.

Somaliland's Defence Minister Mohamed Yusuf Ali confirmed that Israel is providing police and military training to Somaliland forces. However the Minister firmly denied any talks about establishing an Israeli military base or intelligence center in Somaliland addressing rumors that had circulated during the visit.

The training support is framed as part of Somaliland's efforts to strengthen its forces against threats including Al-Shabaab while maintaining its reputation for relative stability compared to southern Somalia. The visit and associated agreements have emphasized counter terrorism and maritime security cooperation in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region. Alongside the embassy opening, Somaliland and Israel signed a deal encompassing economic and security cooperation. The agreement is expected to cover multiple sectors including trade, investment, and security collaboration.

On Another note, President Irro announced that direct flights between Hargeisa and Tel Aviv would begin soon. In an interview with i24NEWS, he framed this initiative as a means to ease international travel, reduce reliance on routes controlled by Somalia and boost business, investment and partnerships. President Irro also indicated that the direct air link would support partnerships with Israel and other international actors including Taiwan.

In an interview with Israeli broadcaster i24, President Irro stated that several countries are considering recognizing Somaliland following Israel's recognition but declined to identify them citing strategic reasons. He indicated that announcements could come soon raising the possibility of a potential shift in the international stance toward Somaliland. The President also confirmed that Somaliland maintains diplomatic channels with the administration of United States President Donald Trump as well as with Ethiopia, Kenya and the United Arab Emirates. When asked whether those countries were among Somaliland's diplomatic priorities, he affirmed that they are and stated that Somaliland maintains open channels with them.

On June 16, the Somaliland government categorically rejected statements issued by the Federal Government of Somalia as hostile and misleading. The administration affirmed its sovereign right to independent diplomacy and rejected federal government claims regarding Somaliland's constitutional and legal status.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development expressed concern over reports of Somaliland opening an embassy in Jerusalem warning against actions it said could undermine Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. IGAD reiterated its support for the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and political independence of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The regional body's statement reflects the prevailing view among East African states that Somaliland's international engagement should not come at the expense of Somali territorial integrity and signals potential regional diplomatic pressure on Somaliland over its actions.

The Federal Government of Somalia has consistently condemned the Somaliland administration's engagement with Israel viewing it as a violation of Somali sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press statement on June 16 expressing concern over Israeli engagement with what it terms the secessionist

administration of Somaliland and reserved the right to take all necessary measures against Israel. The Council of Ministers reinforced this position on June 18 describing the moves as a violation of Somalia's Constitution international law and territorial integrity. These statements have been accompanied by diplomatic engagement with regional and international partners to garner support for Somalia's position.

## **8. Yemen**

UN officials warned the Security Council that Yemen's humanitarian crisis is deepening despite the continued holding of the 2022 truce, with Special Envoy Hans Grundberg urging renewed efforts toward a political settlement and humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher highlighting rising food insecurity and severe funding shortfalls. The briefing suggests that while large-scale hostilities remain contained, prolonged political deadlock and economic deterioration continue to drive instability and militarisation, increasing the risk that local tensions could again intersect with wider regional dynamics. The UN also reiterated calls for the release of personnel detained by the Houthis, underscoring the operational constraints facing humanitarian agencies and the persistent challenges to aid delivery.

Supporters of the Southern Transitional Council staged large demonstrations in Aden, Mukalla, and Seiyun calling for southern self-determination and condemning what organizers described as efforts by domestic and international actors to marginalize the movement and weaken its political and military position. The rallies illustrate the STC's continued ability to mobilize public support in parts of southern Yemen while reinforcing its long-standing objective of restoring an independent southern state. The persistence of these demands highlights the fragmented nature of Yemen's political landscape and suggests that any future national settlement will continue to face significant challenges in reconciling competing visions for the country's territorial and constitutional future.

In an analysis published by The National Interest, on June 15 Emily Milliken argues that reports of expanding ties between the Houthis and Somalia's al-Shabaab could signal an evolution in regional militant networks as the Houthis diversify their external partnerships amid pressure on Iran and its traditional proxy architecture. The assessment, which draws in part on reported findings from the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen, contends that cooperation in areas such as smuggling, maritime logistics, and drone capabilities could deepen security challenges across the Gulf of Aden and Bab el-Mandeb while further complicating Red Sea trade routes. As an analytical interpretation rather than an established finding, the article nonetheless highlights growing concern that cross-Red Sea linkages between armed groups could reinforce instability spanning both the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

## 9. Kenya

Between June 15 and June 21, Kenya's political scene was shaped by a clear contrast: the government was trying to project diplomatic strength abroad while managing pressure and tension at home. President William Ruto used the week to push Kenya's position on global finance, mineral processing, maritime governance, and security cooperation, but domestically the same week exposed unresolved anger over taxation, protest deaths, public spending, and the memory of the Gen Z demonstrations.

The first major political moment came on June 15, when Ruto announced a KSh2 billion compensation framework for victims of protest related abuses. This was politically significant because it acknowledged the scale of harm caused during past demonstrations, especially around the anti-tax protest period. It also placed the government in a delicate position: it wanted to present the move as healing and recognition, while critics continued to demand accountability for the officers and officials behind the abuses.

The Finance Bill 2026 then became the central domestic battle of the week. After public pressure and committee review, some disputed proposals were softened, but the Bill still passed in the National Assembly on June 18 by 122 votes to 40. This gave the Ruto administration a major fiscal win, but it also showed that taxation remains one of the most sensitive political issues in Kenya. The low participation by many MPs and continued opposition criticism kept the Bill politically toxic even after its passage.

At the same time, the supplementary budget controversy added another layer of tension. Parliament moved on an additional spending plan worth about KSh18 billion near the end of the financial year, drawing criticism over transparency, security allocations, and State House related spending. The issue mattered because it reinforced a wider public concern that the government is asking citizens to carry heavier tax burdens while spending decisions remain difficult to justify.

On the geopolitical front, Ruto's appearance at the G7 summit in France was the biggest external event. He pushed Kenya's case as a serious African partner in global finance reform, trade, investment, and strategic minerals. The most important takeaway was his statement that Kenya was close to critical minerals deal with the United States, with an emphasis on local processing rather than exporting raw materials. Politically, this positioned Kenya as a country trying to capture more value from global supply chains instead of remaining a low value exporter.

Kenya also joined a G7 declaration on tackling migrant smuggling. That move showed Nairobi's continued alignment with Western security priorities and strengthened its image as a reliable partner on cross border crime, migration, and regional stability. It was not just a security statement; it was part of Kenya's broader effort to remain visible and useful to major powers.

Back home, Kenya hosted the Our Ocean Conference in Mombasa, where several countries adopted the Mombasa Declaration against illegal fishing. This gave Kenya a diplomatic win in maritime governance and the blue economy. It also helped Nairobi present itself as a regional leader on ocean protection, fisheries transparency, and coastal economic security.

By the end of the week, attention shifted sharply toward the planned June 25 protest anniversary. Ruto and Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen both warned against violence while saying peaceful protest remained a constitutional right. That dual message showed the government's strategy clearly: allow the language of rights but signal strong state control before the protests could gain momentum.

Overall, the week showed a government trying to strengthen Kenya's international profile while containing domestic pressure. Abroad, Kenya gained visibility through the G7, a possible minerals deal, anti-smuggling cooperation, and the Mombasa ocean declaration. At home, however, the Finance Bill, supplementary spending, protest compensation, and June 25 security messaging showed that the country's internal politics remain tense, emotional, and closely tied to questions of cost of living, accountability, and public trust.

## **10. The Gulf Countries**

### **Saudi Arabia**

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan participated in the G7 Leaders' Summit in Évian-les-Bains, France, from 15–17 June. During the summit, he took part in discussions on Middle East stability following the US-Iran ceasefire and held bilateral meetings with several leaders, including US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while also engaging European counterparts on regional security, energy markets, and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

On 15 June, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed diplomatic efforts surrounding the US-Iran agreement, emphasizing dialogue, adherence to international law, full implementation of the preliminary understanding, respect for state sovereignty, an immediate cessation of hostilities, and the protection of freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

### **UAE**

Ethiopia's Saudi Arabia welcomed the agreement between the United States and Iran to halt military operations and launch negotiations, while emphasizing that any durable settlement should safeguard the security interests of regional states, uphold non-interference principles, and prevent nuclear proliferation.

On 18 June, Saudi Arabia joined the foreign ministers of Türkiye, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates in issuing a joint statement condemning settler violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

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

### **Mali**

Between June 15 and June 20, Mali confronted a rapidly evolving security landscape marked by militant activity, economic pressures, and institutional responses from the transitional authorities. Security assessments throughout the week highlighted growing concern regarding the ability of armed groups to coordinate operations across multiple regions. Analysts pointed to continued pressure on state authority, particularly in areas affected by militant offensives and attacks targeting strategic economic assets.

A major development involved the increasing focus of armed groups on Mali's mining sector. Security analyses indicated that gold-producing regions were becoming important targets within a broader strategy aimed at disrupting economic activity and generating alternative revenue streams. This trend reinforced concerns regarding the vulnerability of strategic industries and the importance of protecting critical economic infrastructure. In response, authorities adopted financial measures targeting individuals suspected of supporting militant networks, including asset freezes and expanded monitoring of financial activities.

Military dynamics also continued evolving. Reports indicated a growing emphasis on airpower, intelligence support, and drone operations, reflecting broader efforts to improve security capabilities against increasingly adaptive insurgent threats. At the same time, humanitarian organizations warned that insecurity along major transport routes was contributing to rising food prices, economic hardship, and increasing levels of food insecurity. Educational organizations further highlighted the consequences of displacement and insecurity on school attendance and access to education. Together, these developments illustrated the complex interaction between security challenges, economic stability, and humanitarian conditions across Mali.

### **Burkina Faso**

Between June 15 and June 21, Burkina Faso continued advancing its agenda of economic self-reliance, state-led development, and national modernization while simultaneously strengthening security measures against persistent militant threats. One of the most notable developments was the approval of the country's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy for 2026–2030. The initiative aims to promote digital sovereignty by integrating locally adapted technological solutions into public administration, agriculture, healthcare, water management, and other strategic sectors. The move reflects the government's broader ambition to reduce technological dependence while modernizing state institutions.

Economic and infrastructure development remained central priorities during the week. Authorities inaugurated new highway toll stations financed through domestic resources and local contractors, reinforcing the government's emphasis on self-financed infrastructure projects. Additional efforts focused on improving transport governance and logistics management through regulatory training programs targeting operators along major commercial corridors. These initiatives were designed to improve trade efficiency, strengthen supply chains, and support domestic economic resilience amid a challenging regional environment.

At the diplomatic level, Burkina Faso secured a notable international achievement through its selection to assume the chairmanship of the Board of Governors of the Islamic Development Bank. This elevated role provides Ouagadougou with a stronger platform within regional development financing discussions. On the security front, authorities expanded troop deployments along key transportation corridors to protect commercial activity and strengthen internal stability. These measures reflected the government's continued effort to balance development ambitions with the security requirements necessary to sustain economic activity across the country.

## **Niger**

Between June 16 and June 21, Niger experienced major diplomatic, security, and humanitarian developments that highlighted both opportunities for regional normalization and continuing threats to national stability. The most significant diplomatic breakthrough came through the gradual restoration of relations with Benin. Following technical negotiations, both governments advanced agreements designed to reopen their shared border and restore the flow of commercial goods that had been disrupted since the events of July 2023. The signing of a joint communiqué by Nigerien authorities marked an important step toward economic normalization, particularly for a landlocked country heavily dependent on regional trade corridors.

Despite this diplomatic progress, security concerns dominated the national agenda after a major militant assault targeted Diori Hamani International Airport in Niamey. The attack struck strategic infrastructure and represented one of the most significant security incidents in the capital in recent years. Nigerien security forces responded rapidly, neutralizing numerous attackers and conducting extensive arrests. The operation drew strong support from the African Union, while subsequent claims of responsibility by JNIM reinforced concerns that militant organizations are increasingly capable of projecting operations beyond traditional rural strongholds and toward critical urban infrastructure.

Alongside these developments, Niger continued confronting severe humanitarian and economic pressures. Updated assessments indicated that millions of citizens remain affected by acute food insecurity, while aid shortfalls continue to limit humanitarian

assistance. High-level discussions with Benin also expanded beyond border reopening to include broader security and economic cooperation. Internationally, Niger pursued diplomatic outreach through participation in parliamentary and Islamic cooperation forums, reflecting efforts by the country's leadership to strengthen external partnerships while managing domestic security and economic challenges.

## **DRC**

Between June 15 and June 21, the Democratic Republic of the Congo faced simultaneous security, humanitarian, and governance challenges that continued to shape the country's strategic environment. The most pressing development was the continued spread of the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola across Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu provinces. Updated reports from health authorities indicated sustained transmission across dozens of health zones, reinforcing concerns about the state's ability to manage a major public health emergency while confronting ongoing insecurity in the east. The outbreak also generated broader economic consequences, particularly in aviation and international trade, as several international partners introduced health-related travel restrictions that complicated commercial connectivity and affected expansion plans for Air Congo and other transport operators.

On the security front, government forces intensified military operations in South Kivu, launching offensives aimed at improving control over strategic areas around Minembwe. At the same time, security assessments indicated that the M23/AFC movement continued strengthening administrative structures in territories under its influence despite diplomatic pressure and battlefield adjustments elsewhere. Rather than functioning solely as an armed movement, the group increasingly expanded parallel taxation, judicial, and governance mechanisms, highlighting the persistence of competing centers of authority in eastern Congo. These developments coincided with a worsening humanitarian situation, as Ebola cases and fatalities continued rising, including significant losses within displacement camps, further exposing the vulnerability of communities already affected by conflict and displacement.

Diplomatically, attention increasingly shifted toward international stabilization efforts and regional conflict management. Preparations intensified ahead of the renewal of the United Nations sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts overseeing developments in the DRC. Simultaneously, regional mediators and international envoys remained engaged in efforts to reduce tensions generated by instability along the eastern borderlands. Together, these developments demonstrated that the Congolese crisis remains multidimensional, where security challenges, public health emergencies, humanitarian pressures, and regional diplomacy are becoming increasingly interconnected.

## **Central African Republic (CAR)**

Between June 15 and June 21, the Central African Republic continued advancing stabilization and peacebuilding efforts while confronting ongoing governance and economic challenges. Following recent electoral processes, attention shifted toward the gradual reconfiguration of international stabilization efforts, with MINUSCA increasingly emphasizing advisory and institutional support designed to strengthen state authority and national governance structures.

Progress in disarmament and reintegration remained one of the week's most notable achievements. Authorities reported continued implementation of demobilization programs involving former combatants from major armed groups. These efforts contributed to broader peacebuilding objectives and supported attempts to reduce insecurity across previously volatile regions. At the same time, the opening of the landmark trial of former President François Bozizé represented a significant moment for accountability and transitional justice, reflecting ongoing efforts to address past human rights violations through judicial mechanisms.

Economic and governance concerns nevertheless remained prominent. International assessments continued highlighting structural poverty, food insecurity, and dependence on external assistance despite the country's significant natural resource potential. Additional scrutiny focused on the role of foreign security and economic actors within strategic mining sectors, generating debate regarding sovereignty, resource management, and long-term development. Against this backdrop, renewed international peacebuilding funding sought to strengthen community reconciliation programs, support the reintegration of former combatants, and expand local mediation initiatives. These developments collectively reflected the country's ongoing transition from conflict management toward longer-term state consolidation and peacebuilding.

## **Chad**

Between June 14 and June 21, Chad's political and security environment remained heavily influenced by the continuing conflict in neighboring Sudan and its wider regional consequences. The most significant challenge was the accelerating influx of Sudanese refugees into eastern Chad. Updated assessments showed that refugee numbers continued rising, placing additional pressure on local communities, labor markets, humanitarian infrastructure, and security systems along the border regions. The scale of displacement further reinforced Chad's role as one of the principal humanitarian frontlines of the Sudan conflict.

Humanitarian agencies simultaneously highlighted major funding shortages affecting operations in eastern Chad. These resource constraints complicated efforts to maintain essential services, support refugee populations, and strengthen border infrastructure in

areas already facing significant pressure. The situation underscored the growing gap between humanitarian needs and available international assistance, creating additional challenges for local authorities and aid organizations operating along the Sudanese frontier.

Security concerns also intensified in other parts of the country. In the Lake Chad Basin, authorities expanded military deployments and reinforced emergency measures aimed at containing threats posed by Boko Haram and ISWAP elements. Meanwhile, renewed violence in Sudan, including reports of drone activity and fighting around strategic locations, prompted Chad to raise alert levels along its eastern frontier. Alongside these security measures, the government continued advancing infrastructure and resilience projects focused on energy access, agricultural storage, and regional connectivity. Collectively, these developments reflected Chad's dual priority of managing immediate security threats while strengthening long-term economic and social resilience.

## **12. North Africa**

### **Libya**

The week opened with a U.S.-backed power-sharing idea that would keep Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh in place while elevating Saddam Haftar in a new executive arrangement. The proposal aims to unify Libya's split institutions and pull in foreign investment, but it also risks hardening the very power centers that have blocked elections for years.

Libya also posted a small but meaningful energy gain when the National Oil Corporation said it drilled a well in the Al-Khair field that produced 3,209 barrels of oil per day and 1.948 million cubic feet of gas. In a country where oil revenues are tied directly to political bargaining, even a technical production update has strategic weight.

The political center of gravity shifted on June 18, when Libya's main power brokers agreed on a roadmap for simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections by February 2027. The agreement is important not because it solves everything, but because it finally puts a date on the end of the transition and gives institutions a shared process to claim.

At the United Nations, the Security Council pressed for concrete progress on elections, security and economic reform in Libya. That matters because it shows the international file is no longer just about one vote date; it is about whether the country can produce a credible state structure before the next deadline slips away.

UN envoy Hanna Tetteh sharpened the same point by saying Libya's political process has regained some momentum, but the window for action is narrowing. That warning captures the week's central tension: leaders are talking again, yet the risk of another stalled transition remains very much alive.

The African Union welcomed the signing of Libya's "Document of Principles: Roadmap for Ending the Transitional Period," calling it a major breakthrough and stressing national security, financial stability and territorial integrity. Regional approval like this matter because Libya's political settlement depends on more than domestic compromise; it also needs neighboring states to keep backing the process.

Libya's migration crisis stayed brutal. At least 15 migrant bodies washed ashore on the eastern coast after a boat believed to have capsized, with survivors saying the vessel had carried about 61 people. The story is grimly familiar, but it also shows how eastern Libya remains a departure corridor for desperate journeys toward Europe.

That tragedy deepened a day later when a separate migrant boat capsized north off Libya, leaving 51 dead or missing. Eleven bodies were recovered and 40 people remained missing, while the Libyan coast continued to recover the human cost of a route that remains one of the deadliest in the Mediterranean.

The broader migration picture is even darker. AP's wider coverage noted that Libya remains a key departure point for smugglers, while the International Organization for Migration said hundreds have died or gone missing on the central Mediterranean route this year. That context explains why every new shipwreck quickly becomes a geopolitical and humanitarian crisis.

Libya's diplomacy also widened in Cairo, where Fidan joined Egyptian, Saudi and U.S. officials to discuss the Libyan file alongside other regional questions. That is a reminder that Libya's future is being shaped not only in Tripoli and Benghazi, but in a broader Arab-Turkish-American channel now trying to stabilize the country's transition.

The week's Libya story, taken as a whole, was about convergence rather than closure: a power-sharing proposal from Washington, a domestic election roadmap, support from the African Union, and a migration crisis that keeps exposing the weakness of state authority. None of those pieces are final on their own, but together they show a political opening that is still fragile.

## **13. Middle East**

### **Iran-Israel Conflict**

European foreign ministers failed to agree on sanctions against Itamar Ben-Gvir, despite pressure from several capitals. The impasse showed how difficult it remains for the bloc to move from moral criticism to collective punishment, even after Ben-Gvir's conduct toward Gaza-bound activists triggered anger in Western governments. France had already banned him, and Italy had opened an inquiry.

That diplomatic split fed directly into the wider rupture between Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump. Their disagreement was no longer only about rhetoric; it was about strategy, with the U.S.-Iran understanding falling short of Israel's war aims and potentially narrowing Israeli freedom of action in Lebanon. The result was a clearer gap between Washington's de-escalation push and Israel's preferred military latitude.

Netanyahu then confirmed that he would seek another term in the election due by October. The announcement mattered less as a campaign launch than as a signal of defiance: despite war fatigue, corruption allegations, and polling pressure, he was not preparing to exit. His decision also raised the stakes of every diplomatic and military move made during the week.

The interim U.S.-Iran deals compounded Netanyahu's political vulnerability. It gave him another front on which to defend himself, just as his coalition was already under strain and public confidence was weak. The arrangement undercuts the image of total strategic control that he had tried to project and left him exposed to criticism from both allies and opponents.

That criticism was not confined to political elites. Israelis across the spectrum reacted angrily to the U.S.-Iran deal and directed their frustration at Netanyahu, seeing the agreement as a setback for Israel's security posture. The reaction revealed a rare convergence left, right, and center all treated the deal as a failure of Israeli leadership rather than a diplomatic win.

Netanyahu, however, refused to accept any diplomatic ceiling on Israel's campaign against Iran. He said Israel would continue fighting to prevent Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, "with an agreement, without an agreement." That stance made clear that, in his view, the U.S. pact could not override Israel's own security doctrine or strategic red lines.

The backlash around him widened over the week into a broader judgment on his wartime leadership and his relationship with the United States. Critics linked his political weakness to the failures surrounding the October 7 attack, the heavy costs of war, and the strain placed on Israel's most important alliance. The deal with Iran simply sharpened a preexisting crisis of confidence.

Israel then pushed back on the U.S.-Iran understanding in a more concrete way by publishing a map that expanded its military control zone in southern Lebanon. The move signaled that Israel intended to define security on its own terms, even if that meant challenging the language and spirit of the pact. It also showed how Lebanon had become the operational test of the new arrangement.

Behind the map was a tense round of talks with Washington over how long Israeli troops could remain in southern Lebanon. Israeli officials were effectively seeking a security

strip about 10 kilometers deep, arguing that the northern towns of Israel still faced Hezbollah threats. The discussions showed that withdrawal was not being treated as an automatic outcome of diplomacy.

Israel also signaled that it would not confine itself neatly to the mapped security line. Officials said they would not rule out attacks beyond it if threats emerged, preserving operational ambiguity even as ceasefire language hardened on paper. That ambiguity mattered because it made the peace framework look provisional rather than settled.

A ceasefire with Hezbollah was then announced to begin at 4 p.m. local time, giving the week a fleeting sense of diplomatic progress. The deal was framed as part of the larger U.S.-Iran effort to stop the wider regional war. Yet its implementation immediately raised doubts because both sides still had troops, weapons, and incentives to test the line.

Those doubts proved justified almost immediately. Israeli strikes in Lebanon killed at least 20 people just hours after the ceasefire took effect, showing how fragile the arrangement was from the start. The violence demonstrated that a signed pause did not yet amount to operational restraint, especially in a theater where both sides claimed to be acting defensively.

Israel said those strikes were retaliation for more than 50 Hezbollah projectiles fired at its forces in southern Lebanon. That explanation placed the ceasefire inside a cycle of action and counteraction rather than above it. Even as both sides talked about calm, each remained ready to justify renewed force as self-defense.

Hezbollah, in turn, accused Israel of hundreds of ceasefire violations and warned that the attacks would not go unanswered. The accusation mattered because it framed Israel not as a guarantor of stability but as the side still shaping the battlefield through persistent pressure. It also kept the prospect of escalation alive even after the truce formally began.

Defense Minister Israel Katz then hardened the Israeli line further by saying soldiers in southern Lebanon were free to act against any threat. That message effectively normalized a broad use-of-force posture inside the ceasefire framework, suggesting Israel would treat the truce as conditional rather than binding. It was a warning that military discretion still outweighed diplomatic reassurance.

Katz also said Israel would keep its positions in the Lebanon security zone and preserve the gains it had made. The statement was important because it turned a temporary deployment into something closer to a territorial claim, even if officials avoided that wording. It confirmed that Israel saw the truce as a ceiling on Hezbollah, not a trigger for withdrawal.

Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem responded by saying the group would answer any Israeli violation. That reply kept deterrence central to the post-ceasefire period and signaled that

Hezbollah had no intention of accepting Israeli freedom of movement as a permanent fact. The ceasefire, then, became a live contest over interpretation rather than a settled peace.

Israel also made clear that it did not consider itself legally trapped by the U.S.-Iran deal, nor did it accept the idea that withdrawal from Lebanon was a condition of the broader understanding. That position preserved Israeli autonomy, but it also exposed the limits of any deal negotiated without full Israeli consent. The pact could shape the battlefield yet not fully govern it.

The security environment then spilled beyond the battlefield into the defense market. Israel expected fresh European orders for air-defense systems, with rising concern over Russia and the wider threat landscape, including Iran, pushing states to reinforce their shields. The interest suggested that the war was reshaping procurement priorities far beyond the Middle East itself.

Trump's own criticism of Israel added another layer of pressure. He said Israel needed a softer touch in Lebanon and complained that bombing apartment buildings to reach militants was excessive. Even while stressing his support for Israel, he made clear that the civilian cost of the campaign was becoming a diplomatic problem in Washington as well as a military one.

On Iran's side, the core development was the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the United States to end the war. The agreement extended a fragile ceasefire and set a process in motion for a permanent truce. It also gave Tehran a path to claim it had survived the confrontation without surrendering its central leverage.

A major practical outcome of the deal was the planned reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. That mattered because the waterway is a critical artery for global energy flows, and the agreement promised to restore maritime traffic after months of disruption. The move was designed not just to calm the war, but also to steady the wider economy.

The same deal also carried an explicit sanctions waiver that would let Iran sell oil more freely. For Tehran, that was the immediate prize: money, exports, and a route back into markets. For the United States and its partners, it was the price of avoiding a deeper shock to energy supplies and prices.

That economic logic was central to the agreement's design. The arrangement was meant to prevent a sudden oil-price spike and calm global markets, which had already been rattled by the conflict. In that sense, the deal was not just a ceasefire document; it was also an emergency stabilization plan for trade and energy.

Still, the war had left Iran's rulers facing deeper domestic strains. Reuters described an angry population, economic damage, and rising expectations after the conflict, which meant the end of fighting did not automatically translate into political relief. The

leadership now had to manage a postwar environment in which survival could quickly become a test of legitimacy.

That pressure created space for hardliners to argue for a tougher posture and a rearmament drive. Their logic was straightforward: if diplomacy only paused the war, then Iran should rebuild strength quickly and avoid looking vulnerable. The deal therefore opened a political struggle over whether Tehran would prioritize reconstruction or prepare for the next confrontation.

A separate Reuters account said any sanctions relief or restored assets would likely be directed first into reconstruction, bank liquidity, and broader economic support. That detail matters because it suggests the immediate benefits of the deal are not abstract. They are likely to be felt in public finances, credit conditions, and the government's ability to stabilize the economy.

Trump tried to give the deal institutional cover by saying he was willing to send it to Congress, but lawmakers said they were still largely in the dark. That gap between executive action and legislative awareness highlighted how improvised the agreement remained, even after signing. It also exposed how fragile support could be inside Washington itself.

The text of the pact was also still unclear, even though the U.S. said it had been signed. That uncertainty mattered because the lack of public detail left room for competing interpretations of what Iran had actually won and what it still owed. In practice, the deal was moving faster than the paperwork explaining it.

One of the more consequential side effects was the prospect of stronger Hezbollah finances. Tehran reportedly promised more funding to its ally once cash began to flow again, which meant sanctions relief could ripple quickly into Lebanon's armed politics. For Israel, that raised the possibility that a diplomatic breakthrough with Iran might still strengthen the very actor it is fighting in Lebanon.

That is why the same Reuters reporting warned that Hezbollah could recover from wartime losses and complicate Israel's position in Lebanon. The deal was therefore not only about Iran's economy; it was also about the regional balance of power. A financial rebound in Tehran could indirectly harden Hezbollah's resilience on the border.

Even so, the sanctions relief remained partial. Reuters said the deal would include a waiver on sanctioned oil sales, but Iran still faced a dense web of international restrictions. The European Union had also not yet decided to lift sanctions, so the reopening of money flows was real, but far from complete.

President Masoud Pezeshkian framed the immediate goal as restoring access to frozen assets, which would give Tehran breathing room before larger nuclear questions were

settled. He also presented the talks as a basis for economic growth. That combination of urgency and optimism suggested that the Iranian leadership was trying to sell the deal domestically as practical relief rather than ideological retreat.

Iran's top negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf was set to attend the signing, underscoring that the agreement had become a top-state priority rather than a narrow diplomatic exercise. His presence showed how deeply the process had penetrated Iran's political system, where security, economics, and legitimacy were all being negotiated at once.

Early reports then suggested that Tehran expected immediate gains such as oil-export waivers and the release of some frozen assets before wider nuclear issues were resolved. That sequencing is important: Iran appeared to be locking in economic relief first and leaving the hardest strategic questions for later. The deal thus functioned as a phased bargain, not a final settlement.

Iran then abruptly raised the pressure again by closing the Strait of Hormuz after Israeli attacks in Lebanon. The move showed that Tehran still viewed the maritime chokepoint as a strategic lever, even while negotiating. It also reminded markets that diplomacy could be reversed quickly if leaders believed the ceasefire bargain was being violated.

The shipping consequences were immediate. Traffic dropped sharply, with only a small number of vessels crossing and no new permits being issued as uncertainty spread. That disruption mattered because it translated political risk into measurable commercial strain, showing how quickly the war and the diplomacy around it could affect global energy routes.

The week ended with a tentative but incomplete diplomatic framework in Switzerland. Mediators said the U.S. and Iran had agreed to a 60-day roadmap, a mechanism to address fighting in Lebanon, and a communications line for safe passage through Hormuz. It was progress, but not peace: the broader settlement still remained to be written.

## **Turkey**

Turkey's week began with a sharp Black Sea warning. Hakan Fidan told Sergei Lavrov that Russia should avoid steps that could threaten regional security or Turkish interests, while Ankara again offered to mediate between Moscow and Kyiv. The message was classic Turkish balancing: protect maritime safety, avoid escalation, and keep Turkey positioned as a usable interlocutor.

That security concern became more concrete two days later when a drone attack hit a Panama-flagged ship in the Black Sea, killing one crew member and injuring two others. The incident gave real-world weight to Ankara's warnings and showed how quickly the

conflict-driven risk around Turkey's northern coast can spill into commercial shipping lanes.

Energy politics stayed just as tense. Turkey said it opposed extending the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline deal with Iraq under current conditions, keeping pressure on Baghdad as the current agreement nears expiry. With Hormuz-linked supply risks and arbitration disputes in the background, Ankara is treating the pipeline as a strategic bargaining chip, not just a commercial route.

Turkey's defense industry also moved further into the European security orbit when Italy gave conditional approval to the Leonardo-Baykar drone joint venture. The decision matters beyond business: it links Turkish drone production to a major EU defense firm, while also embedding the project in NATO-aligned export rules and Europe's push to deepen its own unmanned-aircraft capacity.

Relations with Washington improved on the legal front when a U.S. judge formally dismissed the Halkbank prosecution after a deal with the Trump administration. The case had long symbolized friction over Iran sanctions, so the dismissal was more than a courtroom ending; it removed a major irritant from U.S.-Turkey ties and did so without any admission of wrongdoing or financial penalty.

The broader alliance picture was equally important. NATO defense ministers met in Brussels for their last session before the Ankara summit and, by NATO's account, made good progress on spending and capability targets. For Turkey, hosting the summit turns July's meeting into a direct test of how much unity the alliance can still project under pressure.

Donald Trump's comment that he will travel to Turkey later in 2026 added another diplomatic opening. Even as the details remain unspecified, the remark signals that Ankara is staying central to U.S. regional courtship and will likely be a stop on a crowded calendar shaped by Iran, NATO burden-sharing, and wider Middle East bargaining.

Erdogan then added a sensitive religious and diplomatic file by ordering talks on reopening the Halki Seminary near Istanbul. The school has been closed since 1971, so even the start of formal discussions carries symbolic weight for Greece, the U.S. and the EU, broadening Turkey's agenda beyond hard security and into religious-freedom politics.

In Cairo, Hakan Fidan joined Egyptian and Saudi counterparts plus U.S. adviser Massad Boulos to discuss Libya and wider regional issues. That meeting showed Ankara trying to keep its Arab channels open while also showing it can influence North African security, not just the eastern Mediterranean.

The same Cairo track produced a four-way statement by Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia backing continued consultation on peace, security and stability and welcoming the U.S.-Iran memorandum. For Ankara, that is an important signal: it is not only reacting to crises, but also helping build the diplomatic architecture around them.

Turkey's role in the wider regional settlement also mattered because the U.S.-Iran deal was the week's defining Middle East development, even if Ankara was not the formal mediator at the signing table. The R4 statement shows Turkey aligning itself with a framework meant to freeze escalation and preserve room for negotiation.

The Cairo discussions on Libya also widened Ankara's regional footprint. Turkish and Egyptian officials said they covered Libya, Syria and the Horn of Africa, which underlines how Turkey is linking Mediterranean security to the instability arcs running through North Africa and the Red Sea region.

Seen together, the Black Sea warning, the tanker attack and Turkey's mediation language point to a single strategic priority: keep the sea lanes safe while avoiding a direct rupture with either Moscow or Kyiv. That balance matters because shipping security and diplomatic flexibility are now closely connected for Ankara.

The Kirkuk-Ceyhan dispute adds a second layer to that same logic. Turkey is refusing to auto-renew an old arrangement while regional export routes are under stress, which suggests Ankara wants a new bargaining position before Iraqi oil politics and wider energy shocks settle into a longer pattern.

The Halkbank dismissal and Trump's planned Turkey trip together suggest a softer U.S.-Turkey atmosphere than in recent years. Even so, the strategic files have not disappeared; the relationship now seems to be moving from legal friction toward transactional diplomacy, with Iran, NATO and regional security still driving the agenda.

Turkey's week therefore ended with a clear pattern rather than a single breakthrough: Black Sea security, defense-industrial links, Washington ties and Arab diplomacy all moved at once. Ankara looked less like a bystander than a connector between rival camps, which is exactly where it has been trying to position itself.

## **Syria**

Syria's week began with a security reminder that the Islamic State threat is still alive. On June 15, one Syrian security member was killed when two militants attacked an internal security headquarters in Raqqa. The incident showed that even after the collapse of the old order, the new state still faces insurgent violence in the east.

That picture became clearer the next day when Islamic State claimed responsibility for the Raqqa attack. The claim turned a single local incident into a broader warning: militant

networks remain capable of probing the state's security apparatus. For Damascus, the challenge is no longer only territory, but routine internal security in cities that were once central to the jihadist campaign.

The legal reckoning with Syria's war also continued abroad. A Dutch court sentenced a Syrian former pro-Assad militia member to 26 years in prison for torture, rape, and crimes against humanity. The case kept the Assad-era abuses in international view and underlined that Syria's transition is still shadowed by accountability battles far beyond its borders.

On June 16, Syria's energy story shifted from destruction to reconstruction. The Syrian Petroleum Company signed a deal with ConocoPhillips and Novaterra to develop new gas fields and expand existing production. The agreement marked a major signal that foreign energy firms are testing the new government's openness and that Damascus is trying to rebuild the power base of the state.

A separate report had already signaled the deal was coming. ConocoPhillips was said to be preparing to sign with Syria's new government to revive gas production, which shows how quickly the market moved from speculation to formalization. The speed matters because Syria's leadership is using energy contracts as proof that it can turn political normalization into concrete economic outcomes.

The gas deal is more than a commercial headline. Domestic gas output had fallen from 8.7 billion cubic meters in 2011 to around 3 billion in 2023, and officials expect the new partnership to raise daily output by 4 to 5 million cubic meters within a year. That makes electricity recovery, not just revenue, the real political prize for the new authorities.

Iraq's decision to reroute crude and naphtha through Syria after the Hormuz shock added another economic layer. The route gives Syrian ports new transit value, especially Baniyas, while Baghdad looks for ways to reduce dependence on Gulf shipping lanes. For Damascus, this is a quiet but important return of Syria as a regional transit corridor rather than just a conflict zone.

That transit shift also carries structural implications. Syria is preparing additional infrastructure in Baniyas and wants to revive a damaged pipeline capable of moving 300,000 barrels per day. The result is a potential new source of fees, strategic relevance, and trade leverage, all of which matter to a government trying to finance recovery without fully normalizing its economy yet.

Geopolitics brought Syria back into the Lebanon file on June 17. Trump said he had spoken to Syria's leader about taking on Hezbollah, while also criticizing Israel's conduct in Lebanon. The exchange showed Syria being drawn into the regional re-ordering around Iran, Lebanon, and U.S. pressure, even though Damascus remains wary of direct military entanglement.

Damascus, however, did not signal readiness to fight in Lebanon. Sharaa denied any intention of military involvement there, a caution that reflects Syria's desire to avoid being dragged into a sectarian or cross-border escalation. That restraint is important: the new Syria is trying to re-enter diplomacy and commerce without becoming the proxy battlefield for someone else's war.

Taken together, the week showed Syria moving on two tracks at once: still vulnerable to insurgent violence, yet increasingly active in energy, trade, and regional diplomacy. The IS attacks exposed how incomplete the security transition remains, while the gas contract and Iraq route showed Damascus trying to turn strategic geography into recovery capital.

## **14. Global Powers**

The United States spent the week managing the aftermath of the landmark U.S.–Iran agreement while simultaneously trying to prevent the deal from unraveling amid tensions involving Israel, Lebanon, and the Strait of Hormuz. On 15 June, President Donald Trump arrived at the G7 Summit in France declaring that the U.S.–Iran agreement was effectively complete. The framework included reopening the Strait of Hormuz, ending the U.S. naval blockade on Iranian ports, extending the ceasefire, and launching a 60-day negotiation process on Iran's nuclear program. However, disagreements quickly emerged regarding implementation and Israeli military operations in Lebanon.

On 15–16 June, one of the most important diplomatic developments was the growing friction between Washington and the government of Benjamin Netanyahu. While Trump focused on ending the war and stabilizing the region, Netanyahu publicly stated that Israel would retain freedom of action against Iran and continue military operations if it deemed them necessary. Analysts increasingly described the two leaders as moving onto different strategic tracks. Vice President JD Vance participated actively in early technical preparations, emphasizing the need for strong verification mechanisms on Iran's nuclear program.

On 16 June, Trump defended the Iran agreement at the G7 Summit in Évian-les-Bains, insisting that the deal made clear that Iran would never be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon. Washington announced that technical negotiations would begin in Switzerland, opening a 60-day window to address the nuclear issue, sanctions relief, and verification mechanisms. Trump held bilateral meetings and advanced elements of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding during the summit, highlighting limits on broader G7 coordination as he prioritized the Iran file.

On 17 June 2026, U.S. President Donald Trump met Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Évian-les-Bains. The meeting was framed around regional security, energy flows, and the wider implications of the emerging U.S.–Iran diplomatic deal. The clearest publicly reported statement from the meeting came

from Trump's own remarks during the engagement, where he directly characterized Egypt's position on the Nile dispute in explicit terms. He said Egypt had been "very unfairly treated" in its dispute with Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and indicated he intended to address the issue further with Sisi. Sisi, in response during the same interaction, publicly welcomed Trump's stance and expressed appreciation for his attention to the issue, stating: "I cannot overemphasise how much respect I have for you for your understanding of the challenging issue of the dam." The discussion also extended beyond the Nile issue. Trump indicated that he would raise broader regional trade and security matters with Egypt, including energy stability and maritime security concerns linked to Gulf and Red Sea shipping routes.

On 17 June, the United States formally signed the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding with Iran ahead of schedule. Pakistan and Qatar emerged as key mediators in the process. The agreement represented the most significant diplomatic breakthrough between Washington and Tehran in years and shifted attention from military confrontation to implementation. Trump signed the document at the Palace of Versailles alongside French President Emmanuel Macron. The 14-point pact outlined cessation of hostilities, reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, sanctions relief tied to nuclear steps, and a reconstruction fund for Iran, while deferring tougher issues like missile capabilities and proxy groups to the 60-day talks.

On 18 June, the United States announced targeted visa restrictions against hardline members of the TPLF and their immediate family members. Washington stated that rising tensions between TPLF hardliners and the Ethiopian federal government risk undermining the Pretoria peace process and could reignite conflict in northern Ethiopia. The State Department specifically referenced earlier clashes between elements of the Tigray Defense Forces and the Ethiopian National Defense Force and described the measure as an effort to protect peace and stability. This represents one of the strongest U.S. policy actions on Ethiopia since the Pretoria Agreement and signals renewed American concern over developments in Tigray.

The United States continued its counterterrorism campaign in Somalia. However, during the week, international attention focused on investigations into civilian casualties from previous U.S. airstrikes. Reports highlighted concerns regarding the growing scale of U.S. drone operations and their humanitarian consequences.

On 18 June, the White House transmitted the full text of the interim agreement to Congress. The document confirmed that both sides had agreed to cease military operations, maintain freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, and pursue a final settlement within 60 days. Pakistan was formally identified as a mediator and witness to the agreement. Some Republican lawmakers raised concerns about the scope of sanctions relief and verification, triggering standard congressional review processes.

On 20–21 June, tensions escalated as Iran announced temporary restrictions and a claimed closure of the Strait of Hormuz in response to Israeli strikes in Lebanon, which it cited as violations of the ceasefire. The U.S. Central Command denied Iran's full closure claims, affirmed safe passage for vessels (with reports of continued merchant traffic), and pushed back firmly. Trump threatened consequences if the 60-day window faltered and warned of potential U.S. tolls on shipping if no final deal materialized. Technical talks in Switzerland, led in part by Vance, produced a joint deconfliction mechanism for Lebanon to prevent renewed fighting between Iran-backed actors and Israel from collapsing the broader peace process. Negotiators also established a communication channel to reduce incidents in the Strait of Hormuz.

On 22 June, high-level U.S.–Iran talks concluded in Switzerland after several days of negotiations. Despite disputes over Trump's public statements and Iran's temporary restrictions on maritime traffic through Hormuz, mediators announced progress toward a final agreement. The talks produced a roadmap intended to deliver a comprehensive settlement within the next 60 days. Domestic U.S. coverage highlighted partisan reactions, with the administration framing the deal as a win following prior military actions such as Operation Epic Fury. The situation remained fluid, with ongoing monitoring of oil markets, shipping data, and proxy activities in Lebanon.

Between 15 and 17 June, Russia became a central target of discussions at the G7 Summit in France. Despite differences among Western leaders on various issues, the G7 issued a joint statement reaffirming support for Ukraine and committing to increase pressure on the Russian war economy. The statement specifically mentioned strengthening sanctions on Russia's oil and gas sectors. This was one of the most significant collective Western policy signals directed at Moscow during the week.

On 16 June, Trump publicly stated after meeting Zelenskyy that Russia "should make a deal" to end the war. While Washington did not announce new measures against Moscow, the statement indicated that Ukraine remained on the U.S. diplomatic agenda despite the focus on Iran. Moscow closely monitored these discussions because any shift in U.S. policy remains critical to the war's trajectory.

The most consequential development occurred at the G7 Summit (15–17 June), where the United States and its allies agreed to establish a new critical minerals alliance aimed at reducing dependence on Chinese supply chains for rare earths, lithium, nickel, and other strategic minerals. Beijing reacted quickly. On 18 June, the Chinese Foreign Ministry defended its export-control policies and accused the G7 of creating exclusive economic blocs designed to contain China. Chinese officials argued that their export controls were legitimate and warned against efforts to politicize global supply chains.

On 17 June, China announced it would take countermeasures after Taiwan launched a new intelligence-reporting platform aimed at collecting information about Chinese

espionage activities. Beijing described the initiative as evidence of a confrontational mindset in Taipei and warned that it would respond.

Tensions escalated further on 21 June when Taiwan announced a five-day combat-readiness exercise involving active military units and equipment. The announcement came shortly after reports that Chinese aircraft, including J-16 fighters and Y-20 refueling aircraft, had conducted long-range operations around Taiwan and into the Western Pacific. Taiwan characterized the drills as preparation for realistic conflict scenarios.

Another important development was China's reaction to the U.S.–Iran agreement. Beijing publicly welcomed the de-escalation and highlighted its own diplomatic efforts to promote regional stability. Chinese officials framed the agreement as evidence that dialogue rather than military pressure should guide international crisis management. This positioning allowed Beijing to present itself as a supporter of diplomatic solutions while avoiding direct involvement in the negotiations.

China also continued strengthening its position in Southeast Asia. While international attention focused on the Middle East and Ukraine, Beijing maintained active engagement with ASEAN countries and continued efforts to consolidate its regional influence through trade, infrastructure, and diplomatic outreach. Analysts noted that Southeast Asia remains firmly within China's primary diplomatic focus despite increasing geopolitical competition.

On 15–17 June, Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the G7 outreach sessions in Évian-les-Bains, where he emphasized that global cooperation must move beyond donor–recipient hierarchies and be based on “trust-driven partnerships.” This positioning reinforced India’s long-standing strategy of presenting itself as a bridge between the Global North and Global South in an increasingly fragmented international system.

On 16–17 June, Modi held a bilateral meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on the sidelines of the summit. Both sides discussed trade normalization and post-war reconstruction cooperation, with Ukraine explicitly seeking deeper engagement with India. The meeting reflected India’s cautious but incremental move toward more structured ties with Kyiv while maintaining strategic autonomy vis-à-vis Russia.

On 17 June, Modi met U.S. President Donald Trump in Évian, where discussions focused on trade, AI cooperation, energy security, and broader geopolitical coordination. However, the meeting was overshadowed by tensions linked to U.S. military strikes in the Strait of Hormuz that resulted in the deaths of Indian sailors aboard commercial vessels. India formally raised concerns over maritime safety and demanded stronger protection for seafarers operating in conflict zones.

## 15. Europe

The United Kingdom's most important international development during the week was its active support for the emerging U.S.–Iran diplomatic framework. On 14–15 June, Prime Minister Keir Starmer joined France, Germany, and Italy in issuing a joint statement welcoming the U.S.–Iran agreement and signaling readiness to lift sanctions if Iran takes verifiable steps regarding its nuclear program. London emphasized that Iran must never obtain a nuclear weapon and pledged to work with the United States and the IAEA to implement a durable settlement. This marked one of the clearest European endorsements of the Trump administration's diplomatic initiative.

On 15 June, Starmer used the G7 Summit to announce a new package of sanctions against Russia targeting more than 600 vessels linked to Russia's shadow fleet as well as financial and procurement networks supporting Moscow's war effort. Britain also pledged £210 million in energy support for Ukraine, including support for Ukraine's nuclear-energy sector through uranium supplies. This was one of the UK's most significant foreign-policy announcements of the week.

On 19 June, Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham won the parliamentary by-election for the seat of Manchester Central by a landslide. The result immediately transformed British politics because Burnham is widely viewed as a potential successor to Prime Minister Keir Starmer. The scale of Labour's internal divisions became the dominant political story in Britain over the following days.

On 21 June, President Donald Trump posted on Truth Social claiming that Prime Minister Keir Starmer would resign. Trump wrote that Starmer had "failed badly" on immigration and energy policy and suggested his departure was imminent. The statement came before any official announcement from Downing Street and immediately generated political and market reactions.

On the diplomatic and regional security front, British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper conducted an official state visit to Egypt to implement a vital pillar of the administration's revised international strategy. On 19 June 2026, the Foreign Secretary announced a 9-million-pound expansion of the flagship North Africa Migration and Development programme. In a significant policy shift, the initiative has been extended to Libya for the first time, while bolstering existing operations in Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia. This diplomatic maneuver aims to address the humanitarian pressures arising from the conflict in Sudan, which has displaced millions of civilians across North African borders.

The political crisis gripping the United Kingdom reached a critical inflection point over the past week, driven by a catastrophic national polling collapse and decisive by-election results on Thursday, 18 June 2026. A definitive YouGov poll released ahead of the votes revealed that the governing Labour Party had fallen into a tie with the Conservatives at

19%, trailing five percentage points behind a surging Reform UK at 24%. This collapse in public support set the stage for three simultaneous parliamentary contests, where the Scottish Conservatives captured Aberdeen South from the SNP, and the SNP narrowly retained Arbroath and Broughty Ferry.

The defining event, however, occurred in the constituency of Makerfield, where Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham comfortably secured a return to Westminster by winning 24,927 votes (54.8%) over Reform UK's 15,696 votes. Fueled by Burnham's decisive victory and his imminent swearing-in as an MP, a massive internal rebellion erupted within the Parliamentary Labour Party, with overwhelming pressure mounting from lawmakers demanding that Prime Minister Keir Starmer step aside to avert total governance paralysis. As Starmer remains under intense scrutiny—further complicated by external commentary from figures like Donald Trump predicting his departure—senior cabinet officials have acknowledged the shift in "political realities," with widespread expectations growing that the Prime Minister will officially announce a timetable for his resignation to facilitate an orderly leadership transition.

The political and diplomatic focus shifted squarely to France this week, as President Emmanuel Macron used the 52nd G7 Summit in Évian-les-Bains (15–17 June 2026) as a high-stakes diplomatic capstone for his final term in office. The central political tension focused on an increasingly volatile transatlantic relationship, highlighted by a direct conflict between Macron and US President Donald Trump over trade policy. Right before arriving at the lakeside resort, Trump publicly threatened to impose 100% tariffs on French wine imports unless Paris abolished its digital services tax targeting American tech giants—a move that triggered intense behind-the-scenes negotiations among French diplomats attempting to shield their domestic industries from a sudden trade war.

French President Emmanuel Macron stated that France does not support the creation of migrant "return hubs" outside the European Union, arguing that such arrangements are not effective and raise serious questions about European values. He emphasized that while France supports improving deportation and return policies for irregular migrants, outsourcing detention or return processing to third countries has not proven successful in practice. Macron also signaled discomfort with the broader direction of some EU migration reforms, even as the bloc moves toward stricter return mechanisms.

French Foreign Minister stated that any decision to lift UN sanctions on Iran requires France's approval, reinforcing Paris's insistence that sanctions relief must remain tightly controlled and conditional. The statement reflects France's position that easing pressure on Iran must be tied to strict verification of nuclear compliance and broader regional security guarantees. It also signals that Paris is seeking to retain a decisive role in any multilateral settlement involving Iran, particularly through the UN Security Council framework.

Germany announced the deployment of naval assets, including a minesweeper (Fulda) and a supply ship (Mosel), into the Red Sea via the Suez Canal, as part of preparations for a possible future mission to secure the Strait of Hormuz. The move is linked to post-U.S.–Iran de-escalation planning, where Western states are considering whether to support mine-clearing and maritime security operations to ensure safe commercial shipping after disruption in the region. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius stressed that any operational deployment would depend on diplomatic conditions and approval from relevant regional actors. Berlin also indicated readiness to contribute additional capabilities such as underwater drones, mine clearance teams, and vessel protection units, but emphasized that no final operational decision has been taken.

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

### **United Nation**

The Security Council held a closed-door meeting on AUSSOM, with briefings from Raisedon Zenenga (UNTMIS) and Amb. El-Hadji Ibrahima Diene (AUSSOM), but the session was marked by behind-the-scenes tensions over who should even be allowed to speak. Somalia questioned including a UNTMIS briefer, preferring the meeting focus solely on AUSSOM and its funding struggles, a position supported by fellow A3 members DRC and Liberia. However, Colombia, as Council president, kept Zenenga as a briefer, citing precedents. The discussions painted a grim picture of a mission under severe financial strain, with UNSOS facing a massive \$130 million shortfall that has forced painful cuts scaling back aviation assets, delaying helicopter deployments, and limiting infrastructure repairs to essential needs.

AUSSOM itself faces a \$38.5 million gap out of a \$154.7 million budget for 2025, and Council members remain deeply divided on how to address it with the US strongly opposing UN-assessed contributions under resolution 2719 while Somalia and others support it, the EU calling for burden-sharing and China urging traditional donors to step up. Several members warned that without sustainable financing, AUSSOM's effectiveness could collapse, risking a security vacuum and reversing hard-won gains against Al-Shabaab, which still retains the capacity to carry out asymmetric attacks despite AUSSOM maintaining deployments across 49 locations. Beyond the money troubles, the meeting also touched on Somalia's growing political divisions over constitutional amendments and extended mandates, which have fueled recent clashes in Mogadishu, with Council members likely to urge all sides to return to dialogue and agree on an election roadmap. In short, AUSSOM is stretched thin, cash-strapped and operating in a volatile political environment and without a clear, sustainable financing plan, the fragile stability Somalia has fought so hard to build could begin to unravel.

## **Africa Union**

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, received Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Gedion Timothewos, that was a bilateral diplomatic engagement between the AU Commission leadership and the Ethiopian Foreign Minister on June 9, 2026. The discussions focused on ongoing AU institutional reforms, with particular attention to securing sustainable financing for the Union.

The Chairperson thanked Kenyan President H.E. William Ruto for his leadership as AU Reform Champion and briefed Minister Timothewos on progress achieved so far. Both leaders emphasized that predictable and sustainable financing is essential for an independent, effective, and sovereign African Union. They reaffirmed their commitment to working closely with all Member States to advance this critical agenda.

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

On June 18, IGAD issued a statement responding to reports of a Somaliland embassy opening in Jerusalem. The Secretariat reaffirmed its commitment to Somalia's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity under the IGAD Treaty, AU Constitutive Act and UN Charter. IGAD expressed concern that such actions risk heightening tensions and undermining regional peace and stability calling for restraint and full respect for Somalia's territorial integrity.

## **Horn of Africa Initiative (HoAI)**

High-level consultations were held in Addis Ababa on 17 June 2026, where a delegation from the HoAI Secretariat, GIZ and national advisors from Somalia and Djibouti met with Ethiopia's Minister of Finance Ahmed Shide and State Minister Tazer Gebregziabher. The meetings focused on revising the HoAI Regional Trade Facilitation Roadmap and preparing for the Trade Ministers' Meeting scheduled for September 2026. Under Somalia's chairmanship and with strong technical leadership from Germany, national trade consultations have now been successfully concluded in Somalia, Djibouti and Ethiopia.

These consultations brought together government institutions, border authorities and private sector representatives to validate priorities, identify practical solutions for trade flows and propose the establishment of a Regional Trade Facilitation Committee. Stakeholders emphasized moving from policy dialogue to concrete implementation in areas such as border management, customs cooperation and digitalization of trade processes. The European Union, World Bank and Germany's BMZ (GIZ) continue to provide key support. Upcoming consultations in South Sudan and Kenya, followed by a regional workshop, will finalize the updated roadmap for endorsement at the HoAI Trade Ministers' Meeting in Addis Ababa.



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