



Weekly Geopolitical Report

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

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Horn Review: Weekly Report

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1. Ethiopia

Benin's Minister of Digital Transformation and Innovation, Mahuna Akplogan, arrived in Addis Ababa for a five-day official working visit aimed at deepening bilateral cooperation with Ethiopia. Discussions with senior Ethiopian officials focus on expanding partnerships in digital transformation, public sector modernization, e-government services, and innovation ecosystems. This diplomatic engagement highlights growing continental collaboration to advance technology-driven economic development and institutional capacity building across Africa.

Building on Ethiopia's growing diplomatic prominence, Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos met with African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf in Addis Ababa. The leaders reviewed regional peace and security in the Horn of Africa while prioritizing preparations for hosting the 2027 UN Climate Change Conference (COP32). Their discussions emphasized close AU-Ethiopian coordination to ensure a successful climate summit, reinforcing Addis Ababa's role as a primary diplomatic hub.

Shifting focus to national infrastructure, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed inaugurated a modern terminal at Bahir Dar Dejazmach Belay Zeleke International Airport alongside senior government leaders. Serving as Ethiopia's second-largest airport facility, the project symbolizes regional recovery and economic growth. While celebrating Bahir Dar's heritage and tourism potential, the Prime Minister stressed that sustaining long-term prosperity requires expanding municipal revenues and preserving regional peace across Amhara.

Committed to institutional integrity and transparent leadership, the Ethiopian government launched a comprehensive crackdown against corruption and economic sabotage aimed at destabilizing homegrown economic reforms. Government Communication Service Minister Enatalem Melese detailed that authorities sealed over 7,000 illegal businesses, froze accounts of illicit financial networks, and detained 169 individuals involved in hawala and black-market transactions, along with 36 suspects in bank account fraud. She highlighted further legal actions against 183 individuals in gold smuggling, 38 fuel sector officials, four electric power executives, and 91 revenue authorities, reaffirming the government's resolve to deploy modern procedures and foster accountable leadership.

Addressing national governance in an interview with the Oromia Broadcasting Network, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed detailed how the Oromo struggle targeted unjust administrative systems rather than Ethiopia itself. He outlined three core pillars driving the historical movement: economic justice over land ownership, identity preservation

encompassing moral values like Safuu, and democratic governance rooted in the traditional Gadaa system. Setbacks over the past century, he noted, stemmed from strategic vision gaps, internal geographic or religious divisions, temporary alliances, and leadership deficits.

Expanding on national political dynamics during the OBN interview, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sharply criticized the TPLF for remaining trapped in 1990s political thinking and serving as a proxy for external powers seeking to destabilize Ethiopia. He noted that the group openly violated the Pretoria Peace Agreement, attempted to use other armed groups as tools, and relied on obsolete governance formulas. Pointing to democratic reforms, released political prisoners, and the National Dialogue, the Prime Minister reaffirmed that the government's door to peace remains open for those choosing non-violent engagement.

Further reflecting on democratic growth during his interview, Prime Minister Abiy stressed that true political progress requires moving beyond historical grievances toward constructive, inclusive participation. He explained that post-reform Ethiopia fundamentally shifted public awareness, making authoritarian control strategies obsolete while allowing diverse ideological parties into public institutions. Emphasizing that peace cannot be achieved through armed coercion, he urged all political actors to embrace peaceful dialogue, integrate former fighters into civilian life, and contribute positively toward the ongoing National Dialogue process.

Looking toward future development, Prime Minister Abiy outlined the Prosperity Party's five-year agenda centered on citizens' well-being, food sovereignty, and modern public services. Key initiatives include expanding agricultural irrigation, developing natural gas and nuclear energy, constructing the Bishoftu International Airport, and scaling Addis Ababa's urban corridor modernization nationwide. He highlighted the ongoing National Dialogue as crucial for resolving generational political and social challenges.

2. Sudan

The first week of August produced a strategic inflection that has been building since July: the RSF's response to sustained battlefield losses is tribal mobilization at scale, a recruitment drive that signals both manpower pressure and the deliberate deepening of the conflict's ethnic dimension. Against that backdrop, mass graves were uncovered in Kurmuk, a SAF drone strike killed 37 civilians in North Darfur, the second Addis Ababa political meeting approached without any of the preconditions that might make it consequential, and Sudan's gold economy continued to serve as one of the few functioning state revenue streams in a wartime economy otherwise contracting on every front.

The week's defining military story was the RSF's announcement of a general mobilization following a July 31 speech by Hemetti calling on supporters to assemble fighters for a

renewed offensive toward Khartoum and invoking the term "al-Rasan" for operations in Kordofan, a phrase meaning the untying of a beast's rope and used specifically to signal the unleashing of tribal and community formations into combat.

The mobilization follows a series of significant RSF territorial losses: the fall of Kurmuk in Blue Nile on July 8, the SAF's recapture of the Al-Sadarat highway on July 26 restoring the critical logistical corridor between Khartoum and El Obeid, and advances in North Kordofan including the recapture of Bara, the state's second-largest city. Responses to Hemetti's call were rapid and publicly documented. A prominent Fur tribal leader in South Darfur, Ibrahim Abdullah Mohammed, pledged four combat brigades after a personal visit by Hemetti to his home in Nyala. Arab tribal leaders promised to mobilize tens of thousands of fighters following RSF-affiliated civilian authority meetings with tribal figures in El Daein, El Geneina, and Zalingei. An informed source within RSF networks told Sudan Tribune that the recruitment is no longer driven purely by historical loyalties, but is being accompanied by significant financial injections, weapons offer, and closed-door meetings with tribal notables. The inclusion of the Fur, who are among the primary targets of RSF violence in the Darfur conflict, in a tribal mobilization drive, is analytically significant: it represents an attempt to broaden the RSF's ethnic coalition at the precise moment that international actors have formally concluded it committed genocide against non-Arab communities.

Mass graves containing the remains of 25 civilians, including women, children, and hospital staff, were discovered in Kurmuk this week, more than a month after the SAF retook the town. The commissioner of Kurmuk confirmed the victims were executed near Jebel Fankat, a hill the RSF used as a launchpad for suicide drones during its occupation. The discovery follows the same pattern documented in Khartoum and Gezira after their recapture: mass graves as the most immediate forensic legacy of RSF territorial control. Rights monitors and residents had previously accused the RSF of extrajudicial killings, looting, and forced displacement during the occupation. The forensic record accumulating from recaptured towns now constitutes one of the most extensive bodies of evidence of systematic atrocity in any contemporary conflict.

The SAF's aerial operations produced civilian casualties as well. A drone strike in the Ghurra Zawia area of Kabkabiya locality, North Darfur, on August 2 killed at least 37 people, including four tribal leaders and two RSF commanders according to witnesses, with the strike hitting what was described as a civil court in an RSF-occupied village. Emergency Lawyers documented the incident. OCHA expressed deep concern. The strike is one of the single deadliest aerial incidents attributed to the SAF in recent months and adds to the documented record of both parties conducting drone operations that kill civilians, a pattern that The Reckoning Project detailed comprehensively in its July report.

SPLM-N forces loyal to Abdel Aziz al-Hilu were accused of fresh attacks on the Nuba ethnic community in South Kordofan this week, according to a statement by the Paramount Chief of the Otoro tribe Koko Al-Diqair Damjala. The accusation arrives in a context where the SPLM-N's alliance with the RSF has been one of the most consequential force-multipliers in the Blue Nile and Kordofan campaigns, and where Nuba civilian communities have borne the cost of operations across their territory by both sides.

On the political track, the second Addis Ababa meeting under the Quintet mechanism was scheduled for July 27-29, with the Quintet itself issuing a statement confirming ongoing consultations with Sudanese political stakeholders. The first meeting's outcomes remain contested, with Dabanga reporting that Sudanese parties remain split over the process. Yasir Arman's opinion piece this week, placing the preparatory committee exercise in the register of Yemen and Libya's failed political processes, articulated the substantive critique circulating among civilian anti-war forces: that a committee assembled without a prior binding ceasefire commitment becomes cover for the war's continuation rather than a mechanism to end it. UN Personal Envoy Pekka Haavisto held a call with Foreign Minister Muhieddin Salem on preparations for his upcoming Khartoum visit, and separately held discussions with Hemetti on practical de-escalation steps. Haavisto is travelling to Turkey this week for talks with Turkish authorities and Sudanese political actors including youth and women's representatives. Egypt reiterated its support for a Sudanese-owned political process, a formulation whose practical content remains the central contested question of every diplomatic initiative involving Cairo.

According to reports, Sudan's gold economy provided one of the week's few positive economic signals. Official gold exports in the first six months of 2026 matched the full-year total for 2025, with the Minerals Ministry describing the trend as a result of efforts to channel artisanal production into official export pathways and reduce smuggling. Raw gold prices simultaneously hit record highs in the parallel market as the Sudanese pound continued to weaken. The Defacto government is advancing public finance reforms and re-engaging with the IMF on a HIPC debt relief roadmap, with Prime Minister Kamel Idris briefed on plans to revive Sudan Airways and national sea carriers alongside structural reforms including electronic bidding, automated payroll, and a unified treasury system. Sudan's total external debt stands at \$66.8 billion; the \$50 million Chinese debt cancellation signed in late June represents a symbolic rather than structural contribution to that burden.

Tigray refugees continued to cross into Sudan's Gedaref and Kassala regions following renewed violence on the Ethiopia-Sudan border, adding another displacement flow into a system managing nine million internally displaced and 4.5 million refugees abroad. IOM warned that worsening insecurity in West Darfur displaced over 5,000 people in a single week. The UN warned that Sudan's war is threatening an entire generation's future, with

roughly 8 million children out of school and the education system functionally collapsed across conflict-affected states.

3. Egypt

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty declared Libya's territorial unity a non-negotiable red line during a televised interview, while confirming Cairo's parallel engagement with eastern, western and southern Libyan actors and support for UN and US initiatives. This posture reflects Egypt's enduring strategic priority of preventing state fragmentation on its western border that could generate uncontrolled migration, arms flows or Islamist safe havens, thereby protecting the Sinai buffer and domestic security architecture.

In parallel, Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia convened under the Tripartite Neighboring Countries Mechanism and issued a joint call for immediate de-escalation, rejection of foreign interference and a purely Libyan-owned political process culminating in simultaneous elections. The move underscores Cairo's preference for managed regional coordination that dilutes Turkish and other external influence while advancing institutional unification as the pathway to long-term border stability and economic reconstruction opportunities.

Abdelatty further reaffirmed support for a Sudanese-owned political process and Sudan's unity, sovereignty and national institutions in a telephone call with his Sudanese counterpart. Egypt's consistent emphasis on institutional continuity in Sudan serves its core interests in Nile water security, prevention of southern refugee surges.

Cairo ramped up naval deployments of frigates and corvettes near Bab al-Mandeb following the late-July drone strike on Damietta port infrastructure, while joining a Saudi-led maritime defence initiative. These steps respond to Houthi threats against energy transit routes that have already inflicted multi-billion-dollar losses on Suez Canal revenues and threaten Egypt's emerging role as an alternative Gulf oil export corridor via SUMED.

Egyptian diplomacy also advanced coordination with Chad on Sahel security and Sudan developments during joint committee meetings, emphasising capacity-building and border management. This outreach expands Cairo's influence network in Central Africa, creating leverage against Ethiopian Red Sea ambitions and reinforcing a broader strategy of buffering multiple unstable frontiers through bilateral security partnerships.

4. Eritrea

On 7 August, the Eritrean Blue Revolution Front (EBRF), also known as Brigade N'Hamedu, held a press conference in Addis Ababa where it denounced the faction known as "Tsimdo" and warned that the alliance could undermine peace and security in

the Horn of Africa. EBRF representatives described the movement as a diaspora-led organization committed to political reform in Eritrea through peaceful activism and democratic mobilization. The statement came amid heightened tensions along the Ethiopia–Sudan border following reports of clashes between Ethiopian federal forces and TPLF-affiliated Army 70 units in disputed areas around Shererina. The timing was notable because discussions surrounding Tsimdo intensified alongside the circulation of videos purportedly showing Eritrean Defence Forces generals inside Tigray, although those reports remain contested.

The press conference suggests that Brigade N’Hamedu is seeking to move beyond its earlier role as a primarily diaspora-based protest movement and position itself as a more active political actor focused on developments inside Eritrea. Its increasingly visible engagement in Ethiopia, including public events in Addis Ababa and apparent interaction with Ethiopian institutions, indicates an effort to build political relevance within a rapidly changing Ethiopia–Eritrea security environment. The group’s denunciation of Tsimdo also reflects competition within the fragmented Eritrean opposition landscape over legitimacy, strategy, and relations with Ethiopian and Tigrayan actors. More broadly, the episode highlights how Eritrean opposition politics is becoming increasingly intertwined with Ethiopia’s internal security dynamics, particularly as concerns grow over renewed Eritrea–Ethiopia tensions and the future of political alignments involving Tigrayan factions.

A leaked intelligence report has drawn renewed attention to Eritrea’s ruling People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), alleging that senior Eritrean officials have maintained political and security contacts with TPLF figures despite the formal end of the Tigray war. The report claims that senior representatives from the PFDJ and TPLF met in the border town of Zalambessa on 3 August, suggesting the existence of continued informal channels of coordination. Although the allegations remain unverified, they have contributed to growing scrutiny of Eritrea’s role in northern Ethiopia’s evolving security environment. The reported contacts have reinforced concerns that Asmara may be seeking to shape political and military developments beyond its borders through opaque regional networks.

The report portrays the PFDJ as pursuing a broader strategy that combines security coordination, information operations, and political influence in an effort to shape the regional balance of power. It alleges that Eritrean actors were linked to discussions involving destabilization scenarios and efforts to manipulate public narratives, although no independent evidence has publicly substantiated these claims. More broadly, the allegations underscore the continued centrality of the Eritrean regime in the security dynamics of the northern Horn, where military positioning, informal political alliances, and information campaigns remain closely intertwined. Whether or not the reported coordination is confirmed, the episode highlights the extent to which Eritrea’s external

posture continues to be viewed through a security-driven lens, with developments involving the PFDJ carrying implications for regional stability and Ethiopia–Eritrea relations.

The Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization (RSADO), an Eritrean opposition movement with an armed wing that seeks to overthrow President Isaias Afwerki's government, accused the PFDJ of using regional alliances and proxy networks to destabilize neighboring states. In a statement issued on 8 August, RSADO argued that Eritrea's reported alignment with Egypt and the Tsimdo alliance reflects a broader strategy of regional confrontation rather than conventional diplomacy. The statement is significant because it comes from one of the most prominent armed opposition movements representing Eritrea's Afar population, a community that has long accused the Eritrean state of political marginalization and harsh repression.

RSADO's intervention highlights the extent to which Eritrea's domestic ethnic and opposition politics are increasingly intersecting with wider Horn of Africa geopolitics. The Afar have historically been among the communities most resistant to the PFDJ's highly centralized nationalist project, and successive Eritrean governments have viewed organized Afar dissent as a security threat. By linking Egypt's regional strategy to the survival of the Eritrean regime, RSADO is attempting to frame Asmara not merely as an authoritarian state but as a source of regional instability whose external security partnerships are tied to internal regime preservation. The statement therefore reflects both the militarization of Eritrean opposition politics and the growing tendency of anti-PFDJ groups to situate their struggle within the broader strategic competition between Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Egypt.

On August 5, Massad Boulos stated on X that the Trump administration is pursuing diplomatic engagement with Egypt, Eritrea, and Ethiopia with the objective of advancing peace and stability in the Horn of Africa, while categorically denying claims that Washington is negotiating or considering any secret arrangement involving Eritrea against another regional partner. His statement is significant because it publicly confirms active US engagement with all three states amid heightened regional tensions over Red Sea security, Ethiopia's maritime ambitions, and the broader strategic competition involving Egypt and Eritrea. Boulos also argued that speculation about alleged secret agreements is false and risks undermining ongoing diplomatic efforts, indicating that Washington is increasingly sensitive to perceptions surrounding its Eritrea outreach.

The statement should be read less as a denial of US-Eritrea engagement than as a rejection of the claim that such engagement is directed against Ethiopia. The more consequential question is whether Washington's rapprochement with Asmara is being shaped by Egypt's broader strategy of using Eritrea as a geopolitical pressure point against Ethiopia over the Nile and Red Sea. Egypt has deepened its strategic alignment with Eritrea in

recent years, and Cairo has reportedly played a role in facilitating contacts between Washington and Asmara, which means US diplomacy is unfolding within a regional environment heavily influenced by Egyptian interests. Boulos's clarification therefore narrows the scope of speculation, but it does not diminish the strategic significance of the emerging US-Eritrea relationship or the competing regional agendas surrounding it.

The President of the UN Human Rights Council appointed Habtom Zerai Ghirmai, Chargé d'Affaires of Eritrea's Permanent Mission in Geneva, as Chair-Rapporteur of the Council's 2026 Social Forum following a nomination by the African Group under the Council's regional rotation practice. The forum, scheduled for 29–30 October, will focus on international cooperation and solidarity in advancing the right to physical and mental health. The appointment has drawn strong criticism from organizations including UN Watch, which argued that Eritrea's documented human rights record makes the appointment inconsistent with the Council's credibility. Eritrean officials and supporters, by contrast, presented it as recognition of the country's engagement in multilateral diplomacy and rejected the criticism as politically motivated.

The appointment illustrates the tension between the UN's regional rotation procedures and the political legitimacy of its human rights institutions. Eritrea's elevation to a procedural leadership role does not indicate that the Human Rights Council has altered its assessment of the country's human rights situation, particularly given that the Council renewed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea only weeks earlier. The episode is better understood as evidence of Eritrea's continued diplomatic engagement within multilateral institutions and the support it retains among some member states, rather than as a substantive shift in international scrutiny. It also demonstrates that Eritrea is simultaneously experiencing greater diplomatic normalization in certain forums while remaining the subject of ongoing UN human rights oversight.

5. Djibouti

On August 4, Egypt's Gypto Pharma City and Djibouti's Bacha Group signed a memorandum of understanding to expand Egyptian pharmaceutical exports to Djibouti and wider East African markets, with discussions also covering the gradual localization of some manufacturing activities in Djibouti. The agreement positions Djibouti as a logistics and distribution hub for Egyptian pharmaceuticals across the Horn of Africa and IGAD markets, reflecting Cairo's effort to deepen commercial and industrial links with strategically located African states. Egyptian business and local media outlets gave the agreement significant attention, suggesting that it is being presented not merely as a commercial initiative but as part of Egypt's broader African engagement strategy.

The strategic significance of the agreement extends beyond the pharmaceutical sector. Egypt has increasingly sought to expand its economic and diplomatic footprint across the Horn of Africa through investments, trade partnerships, and infrastructure cooperation,

particularly with states occupying key positions along the Red Sea and regional trade corridors. Djibouti's importance lies in its role as a maritime and logistics gateway, making it a valuable partner in Cairo's wider regional strategy. Within the broader context of the Nile dispute and competition with Ethiopia, the agreement is best understood as another element of Egypt's effort to build political and economic influence across the Horn rather than simply a health-sector partnership.

On August 4, Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh expressed condolences to Ethiopia following the landslide at Tsadqane Debre Mitmaq St. Mary Monastery in North Shewa, Amhara Region, which killed at least 14 worshippers and injured several others. In a statement posted on X, Guelleh conveyed solidarity with the Ethiopian government and people after the disaster, which local authorities said was triggered by a sudden earth tremor. The message was a standard diplomatic expression of sympathy following a humanitarian tragedy.

According to Militaryni, a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aircraft crashed near Chabelley Airfield in Djibouti on August 9, citing a statement from the U.S. Embassy in Djibouti confirming the incident. The cause of the crash has not been disclosed, and publicly available information remains limited. Chabelley Airfield has served as a key U.S. drone operating base since 2013, supporting surveillance and counterterrorism missions linked to operations in Yemen and Somalia. The report also noted that online footage appeared to show the aircraft destroyed, although the broader operational implications remain unclear.

If confirmed, the incident would highlight the continuing importance of Djibouti as a central node in the United States' military posture across the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. Chabelley's role in supporting drone and maritime surveillance operations reflects Washington's enduring focus on monitoring Houthi activity, protecting Red Sea shipping routes, and conducting regional counterterrorism operations. Without evidence of hostile action, however, the crash should not be interpreted as a shift in the regional military balance. The more significant point is that the incident underscores the operational intensity and strategic value of U.S. air assets based in Djibouti, particularly amid sustained instability in Yemen and the wider Red Sea security environment.

On August 5, Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud met with the Commander of Djibouti's Armed Forces, General Zakaria Sheikh Ibrahim, during his visit to Mogadishu for the command conference of troop-contributing countries to the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM). According to Somali state media, the discussions focused on security coordination, operational interoperability, and Djibouti's role in supporting Somalia's security sector and counterterrorism operations. Djibouti remains one of the principal troop contributors to AUSSOM, with forces deployed primarily in southern Somalia.

The meeting reflects the growing operational challenges facing AUSSOM rather than a major shift in regional security alignments. The mission continues to face funding constraints, uncertainty over force generation, and pressure to support Somali security forces amid persistent Al-Shabaab activity. Djibouti's engagement is therefore significant because it remains one of the few neighbouring states with an established military presence in Somalia and a direct stake in the mission's effectiveness. The timing of the meeting suggests that troop-contributing countries are increasingly focused on sustaining AUSSOM's operational capacity as the transition of security responsibilities remains incomplete.

6. South Sudan

The week's dominant frame was the UN Security Council session on South Sudan, at which UNMISS chief Anita Kiki Gbeho delivered a briefing that was measured in tone and categorical in its conclusions. The session produced the sharpest public exchange yet on election readiness, with Juba rejecting the UN's assessment as inaccurate and one-sided, RJMEC telling the Council the country is far behind, and the government's own envoy deploying procedural arguments to narrow the gap between what is required and what can be delivered by December 22.

Gbeho's briefing covered every track simultaneously, and each was in poor condition. Machar's trial has now exceeded 100 court days and is approaching a full year of detention, with the SPLM-IO's continued exclusion from key transition processes generating what she described as serious concerns about inclusivity and confidence in the remaining transition. Violence displaced over 420,000 people between January and June, primarily in Jonglei. Thirty-six humanitarian workers have been killed since January, and 391 access incidents recorded, both representing significant increases over the same period in 2025. South Sudan hosts approximately 1.4 million people fleeing Sudan's conflict, placing compounding pressure on systems already at their limits. Cholera remains a serious concern, and Ebola's presence across the border in the DRC demands sustained preparedness. On elections, Gbeho did not declare December impossible, but she set out what credible elections require: political trust, civic and political space, security arrangements, financing, constituency boundaries, and broader institutional preparedness. None of these are in place. She called for an AU needs assessment mission to conduct an objective evaluation of minimum conditions, and she structured her closing remarks around four messages: stop the fighting, protect civilians and humanitarian personnel, return to inclusive dialogue, and conduct a realistic assessment of election conditions.

The government's response at the Security Council was to dispute the framework rather than the facts. South Sudan's envoy argued that a census is not a prerequisite for elections, a position aimed at removing one of the most frequently cited unmet conditions from the

list of blocking factors. Juba separately issued a statement rejecting the UN report as inaccurate and one-sided, without specifying which findings it contested. China, at the Council, urged members to lift sanctions and respect South Sudan's sovereignty, a position that aligned with Juba's preference for reduced international conditionality. The UK, in its statement, called on the transitional government to cooperate fully with UNMISS, a formulation that signals ongoing concern about access and transparency. The Council's overall posture reflected the same tension that has shaped every South Sudan session for the past two years: the international community has concluded the preconditions for credible elections are not met, and the government has concluded that the international community's assessment is not binding on its electoral calendar.

Outside the Council chamber, two decisions this week reduced the diplomatic footprint around South Sudan in ways that carry practical consequences. Canada announced the closure of its embassy in Juba, with the Hill Times noting it further reduces an already contracted diplomatic presence in East Africa. A US federal judge cleared the way for deportation protections to end for South Sudanese nationals, with USCIS posting updated guidance on TPS designations for both Ethiopia and South Sudan. The deportation development is significant in context: South Sudanese communities in the US have been a meaningful source of remittances and diaspora political pressure, and the removal of TPS protection places tens of thousands of individuals in legal jeopardy at the same moment their country of origin is asking them to trust a political transition. The US commended South Sudan on independence day last month; this week a US judge removed the protective status that had allowed its citizens to remain.

Sudan's defense minister travelled to Juba during the week for bilateral consultations, continuing the security coordination track between the two governments that has been maintained through the border security dialogue and the intelligence-level engagements documented over recent months. South Sudan and Kenya separately discussed steps toward opening the Naivasha dry port, a logistics infrastructure project that would reduce dependence on the Mombasa-Juba road corridor and increase commercial integration between the two economies.

7. Somalia and Somaliland

Somalia

Puntland security forces seized three military bases aligned with the federal government in a coordinated campaign across the region. The operation began on August 5 when Puntland forces overran a federal aligned base near Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed Airport in northern Galkayo following heavy fighting involving mortars, heavy weapons and machine gun fire that continued for over an hour. Puntland authorities announced they had taken full control of the facility, arrested more than one hundred individuals including the local Puntland Security Force commander and taken custody of approximately sixty

wounded fighters. The operation resulted in the seizure of weapons, vehicles, ammunition, police uniforms, and other equipment. Puntland officials alleged that some recovered materiel included arms recently donated by China to the Somali Police Force, as well as items marked with Somalia's Ministry of Defence insignia asserting that such equipment had been diverted to forces operating against regional interests rather than employed in counterterrorism efforts.

The following day August 6 Puntland security forces took control of the former Puntland Security Force headquarters and associated facilities in Bosaso without resistance as troops inside reportedly surrendered or joined Puntland forces following dialogue facilitated by local elders. This operation formed part of a broader assertion of exclusive regional authority over armed groups operating within Puntland territory.

On August 8, Puntland forces seized a third federal aligned military base in Carmo, Bari region, approximately one hundred kilometres from Bosaso after federal aligned troops withdrew overnight following the expiration of a deadline and unsuccessful negotiations. Puntland police characterised the seizure as an effort to strengthen regional authority, dismantle parallel structures or militias perceived as threatening stability and ensure all armed groups operate under Puntland institutions. Federal-aligned troops were reported relocating toward other areas of Bari and Karkaar with subsequent deployments and local elder mediation efforts underway. The federal government had not issued a detailed public response to the seizures by the conclusion of the period.

The escalating confrontation between Puntland and the federal government was preceded by heightened tensions in Galkayo and Mudug region earlier in the week. On August 4, Puntland issued statements condemning alleged federal interference and troop and weapon movements into border areas characterising them as attempts to undermine regional security and stability.

Political tensions regarding Somalia's electoral framework continued to occupy federal level political discourse during this period. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud convened a meeting with international partners on August 4 in Mogadishu as part of diplomatic efforts to ease political tensions over the electoral process and encourage dialogue between the federal government and opposition. The president presented the government's agenda focused on nationwide direct elections on a one person, one vote basis for future parliament members replacing the indirect model. This followed a meeting the previous day between international partners and opposition leaders. Opposition figures continued pressing for broader consensus on the electoral framework amid warnings of potential crisis risks should inclusive agreement not be achieved.

The National Intelligence and Security Agency announced on August 8 that it had arrested nine individuals accused of Al-Shabaab membership and involvement in attack plots targeting Mogadishu and surrounding areas. According to NISA the operation

leading to the arrests was conducted in Garasbaaley, Kaxda and parts of Ceelasha Biyaha following extended monitoring of the suspects' activities. The agency stated that the group was planning attacks that could have caused harm to Somali civilians and confirmed that security forces had succeeded in preventing the alleged plot before it could be executed.

Al-Shabaab demonstrated continued offensive capability during the period, recapturing the town of Teedaan in eastern Hiiraan region after approximately twenty four hours of fighting with Somali National Army forces and allied Macawisley clan militias. The operation involved a vehicle borne improvised explosive device and coordinated assaults on positions held by government forces and Hawadle clan militias, resulting in the withdrawal of government forces and the seizure of weapons, vehicles and equipment. Al-Shabaab claimed dozens of casualties among government forces, though these figures remain unconfirmed. Teedaan, located approximately sixty kilometres from Beledweyne, sits on a key supply and movement route linking Hiiraan, Middle Shabelle, and Galgaduud regions, and its recapture aids militant mobility and potential revenue generation through taxation. The federal government had not issued an immediate detailed response to the setback by the conclusion of initial reporting.

Counterterrorism operations continued with airstrikes targeting Al-Shabaab positions in southern and central Somalia. The United States Africa Command conducted an airstrike on August 7 in coordination with the Federal Government of Somalia targeting Al-Shabaab near Jilib in southern Somalia approximately three hundred twenty two kilometres southwest of Mogadishu. AFRICOM released no further details regarding units, assets, casualties, or civilian harm assessments. The strike marked at least the seventy eighth United States airstrike in Somalia during 2026.

Separately the Somali National Army in coordination with international partners conducted an airstrike in Middle Shabelle that killed fifteen Al-Shabaab militants who were planting improvised explosive devices along the road linking Masajid Ali Gaduud and Daar Salaam. The operation destroyed a vehicle used to plant explosives along with weapons on board with the Ministry of Defence and SNA framing the strike as part of ongoing efforts to protect civilians and degrade the militant group's capabilities.

Somalia welcomed the joint defence agreement signed by Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan on August 7, describing the pact as an important step toward strengthening collective security and defence cooperation. The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement signed by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, stipulates that an armed attack against any one of the three countries will be considered an attack against all three. In a statement, Somalia's Defence Ministry congratulated the three countries on the agreement and expressed confidence that it would contribute to developing defence cooperation and establishing a partnership to address shared security challenges.

Somalia and Pakistan deepened bilateral defence cooperation during the period through a series of high level engagements in Islamabad. Defence Minister Ahmed Moallim Fiqi, leading a high level delegation, signed a memorandum of understanding with Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on August 4 covering cooperation on counterterrorism operations, military training programmes, exchange of military expertise and knowledge, defence capacity building and broader security collaboration. Somalia's Ministry of Defence described the agreement as strengthening ties and supporting efforts against groups such as Al-Shabaab while rebuilding Somali institutions.

The United States military signed a new security agreement with Puntland expanding the United States military facility in Bosaso to support counterterrorism operations and maritime security in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Puntland President Said Abdullahi Deni met with a United States AFRICOM and Special Operations delegation led by Major General Claude Tudor in Bosaso, where they agreed to expand the base to support operations against both Islamic State Somalia and Al-Shabaab. The agreement was described in regional reporting as bypassing the federal government in Mogadishu and reflecting a dual-track United States approach favouring cooperation with more stable federal member states amid frustration with Mogadishu's political dysfunction.

Jubaland regional President Ahmed Mohamed Islam known as Ahmed Madobe held high level discussions with Major General Claude Tudor and other AFRICOM senior officials during the period. The in depth discussions centred on ways to further strengthen the security partnership and accelerate ongoing operations against Al-Shabaab. The two sides held further talks focusing on efforts to liberate areas still under militant group control showing the continued importance of federal member state-level engagement with international security partners.

AUSSOM transferred technical management of the Buurhakaba Forward Operating Base to Somali National Army forces on August 8, with United Nations Support Office in Somalia support. The base, located in Bay region of South West State had been manned since 2014 by the Ethiopian National Defence Force contingent in AUSSOM Sector Three. Officials framed the transfer as a step toward Somali-led security and the progressive transfer of responsibilities. However, some local reporting noted resident concerns about potential vulnerability to Al-Shabaab given the surrounding presence of militants and questions over the readiness of Somali forces to fully secure the area.

An emergency summit convened in Kampala specifically to address the future of Somalia's African Union peacekeeping mission concluded without securing a clear path forward for the AUSSOM mission. Reporting on August 9 highlighted that the summit instead confirmed how unresolved the mission's future remains, with troop contributing countries urging inclusive political dialogue between the federal government and other actors to create conditions for transferring security responsibilities from AUSSOM to

Somali forces. Contributing countries linked political stability to the mission's future success amid uncertainty over funding and logistics, as United Nations Support Office in Somalia support is scheduled to end by late 2026. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has opposed folding internal political disputes into AUSSOM security discussions, asserting they are domestic matters not subject to international mediation.

The United Nations Support Office in Somalia opened a public tender for licensed auctioneers to liquidate a sprawling inventory of mission assets, reflecting the planned drawdown of support operations. The announcement followed indications that Washington has pulled support for sustaining AUSSOM operations, raising questions about the continuity and effectiveness of international security support to Somalia during a critical transition period.

Somaliland

A campaign occurred on August 8, 2026 when President Irro convened with ambassadors, heads of international organizations and development partners in Nairobi, Kenya. During this high level meeting, President Irro delivered an appeal to Western and international diplomats urging them to fundamentally reconsider the basis of their engagement with his administration. He explicitly called for the international community to treat Somaliland as a sovereign, capable partner rather than as an extension or subordinate entity of Somalia. Central to this diplomatic offensive was the President's reference to the recent recognition of Somaliland by Israel which he characterized as a diplomatic "breakthrough." He used this development to argue for broader international recognition, emphasizing that Somaliland is ready to transition from receiving humanitarian and development aid to attracting direct foreign investment.

Crucially, President Irro also used the Nairobi forum to address the stalled dialogue process with the Federal Government of Somalia. While reiterating Somaliland's willingness to engage in talks, he laid down a firm precondition that Somalia must first honor and implement previously agreed upon commitments before any new round of negotiations can commence. He explicitly accused the Mogadishu administration of failing to adhere to past agreements, pointing to the management of civil aviation and shared airspace as a prime example of this alleged non compliance. He appealed directly to the international partners present asking them not just to encourage dialogue but to actively pressure Somalia to uphold its side of existing accords, asserting that "dialogue requires mutual respect, implementation of commitments, and confidence that agreements will be honored." He further accused the federal government of interference in Somaliland's regional peace processes.

Somaliland's Defense Minister, Mr. Mohamed Yusuf Ali led a high powered delegation on an official working visit to the United States Africa Command center in Stuttgart, Germany. The talks held on or August 6, 2026 focused on bilateral defense and maritime

security cooperation. This engagement at the AFRICOM headquarters signifies a deepening of the security partnership between Somaliland and the United States. Given the location of Somaliland along the Gulf of Aden and its proximity to the Red Sea, the discussions are likely to have centered on maritime security, counter piracy and broader regional stability.

8. Yemen

The period from 3–10 August marked a significant escalation in the Yemen conflict, with the Houthis expanding the geographic scope and operational intensity of their missile and drone campaign against both Saudi Arabia and Yemen's internationally recognized government. The sequence began with claimed strikes on the Saudi oil tanker Wafa near Yanbu and Najran Airport, before escalating sharply on 6 August with large-scale attacks on government military positions in Marib and Hadramawt that reportedly caused heavy casualties among PLC forces. The subsequent attacks on Mocha (al-Makha) on 9–10 August, which damaged port infrastructure and caused military and civilian casualties, indicate that the Houthis are increasingly targeting strategic logistics nodes rather than only frontline positions. This pattern suggests an effort to disrupt government force mobilization, undermine Saudi-backed military infrastructure, and demonstrate the Houthis' ability to threaten critical economic and transport assets.

The escalation is particularly significant because it coincides with growing international concern that the relative military restraint that followed the 2022 truce is eroding. UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg's warning that Yemen faces its highest risk of renewed large-scale conflict since the truce reflects the shift from localized battlefield pressure to coordinated strikes with broader strategic objectives. The Houthis' simultaneous targeting of Saudi territory, government-held ports, and military concentrations suggests a campaign designed to impose costs on both Riyadh and the PLC while strengthening their bargaining position. Although Yemeni forces reported retaliatory operations and air defence interceptions, the scale and persistence of the attacks point to increasing operational confidence by the Houthis.

The signing of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement between Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan on 7 August adds a wider regional dimension to the escalation. While the agreement was presented as a defensive arrangement, its timing signals Saudi Arabia's concern about the deteriorating security environment and the vulnerability of its energy infrastructure and southern border. The Houthi campaign is therefore becoming increasingly intertwined with broader regional security dynamics, linking Yemen's battlefield developments to Red Sea security, Gulf energy infrastructure, and evolving defence alignments. The attacks on Mocha are especially important because they threaten a key government-controlled Red Sea port, reinforcing the possibility that the conflict is

entering a phase in which control of maritime infrastructure and coastal logistics becomes a central strategic objective.

9. Kenya

Kenya's geopolitical activity during the week of August 3 to August 9, 2026 was shaped by its expanding economic engagement with China, continuing tensions in its relationship with Somalia, persistent security concerns linked to Al Shabaab, and growing domestic political uncertainty surrounding the country's electoral timetable.

The most significant diplomatic development was Kenya's effort to deepen its relationship with China. Kenyan officials held discussions with senior Chinese counterparts in Beijing, focusing on trade, infrastructure, finance, public health, technology and broader cooperation between countries of the Global South. Kenya also opened a Consulate General in Guangzhou, strengthening its diplomatic presence in one of China's most important manufacturing and commercial regions. The mission is expected to support trade, investment and services for Kenyans operating in southern China. Kenya also pursued closer engagement with Hong Kong, particularly around investment and financial cooperation. These developments show Nairobi attempting to move its relationship with China beyond infrastructure financing toward broader trade, technology and investment partnerships.

At the regional level, Kenya Somalia relations experienced another sensitive episode after Somalia's Deputy Prime Minister Jibril Abdirashid Haji returned his Kenyan passport and related documents. The issue added to earlier concerns surrounding citizenship, immigration and the possession of Kenyan documents by Somali officials. Although the incident does not amount to a major diplomatic rupture, it highlights continuing questions of sovereignty and trust between Nairobi and Mogadishu at a time when both countries depend on close cooperation over border security, migration and counterterrorism.

Security remained another major concern. Al Shabaab activity in Mandera, Garissa, Wajir and Lamu continues to place pressure on Kenya's northeastern frontier. Recent assessments have linked increased militant activity in Kenya partly to stronger military pressure on Al Shabaab inside Somalia, particularly in areas close to the Kenyan border. This reinforces the extent to which Kenya's domestic security remains connected to developments inside Somalia and to the wider stability of the Horn of Africa.

Domestic political developments also became relevant to Kenya's broader geopolitical position during the week. A High Court ruling in Malindi raised questions over whether the next presidential election should constitutionally be held in August 2026 rather than August 2027. Although the effect of the ruling was suspended and the existing electoral timetable remains in place for now, the decision introduced additional uncertainty into Kenya's political environment. This matters beyond domestic politics because Kenya

continues to present itself as one of the region's more stable political, diplomatic and investment centres. Any sustained dispute over the electoral calendar could therefore affect perceptions of political predictability and institutional stability.

Kenya also continued reviewing how its diplomatic network should support its changing strategic priorities. Discussions involving the Foreign Service Academy, academics and diplomatic officials focused on whether Kenya's overseas missions are located in the regions that best serve the country's current interests. Trade, investment, diaspora engagement and stronger representation in emerging markets were emphasized, suggesting a broader effort to make Kenyan diplomacy more economically focused and responsive to changes in the international system.

Overall, Kenya balanced deeper economic engagement with China against regional security concerns, tensions with Somalia and domestic political uncertainty. Its foreign policy continues to diversify toward emerging markets while maintaining traditional Western security ties.

10. The Gulf Countries

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's political, diplomatic, and security landscape during the week was defined by a major restructuring of its external security partnerships, continued efforts to contain regional escalation, and expanding bilateral engagement with key regional and international actors. The most significant development was the signing of a trilateral defense agreement with Turkey and Pakistan in Makkah, establishing a collective-security framework under which an armed attack against one member would be treated as an attack against all three. Saudi Defense Ministry spokesman Brigadier General Turki Al-Malki described the emerging maritime alliance as a response to the need to unify regional defense efforts, reinforcing Riyadh's broader attempt to develop security arrangements beyond its traditional dependence on Washington. Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan further signaled this strategic shift by arguing that the period of unconditional reliance on the United States for Saudi security protection was coming to an end amid growing strategic disagreements.

The new security orientation was accompanied by intensified diplomatic engagement. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan travelled to Saudi Arabia for high-level consultations, while Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman held a telephone conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron to discuss regional developments and ongoing efforts to contain escalation. Saudi Arabia also maintained defense cooperation with Western partners, with Assistant Defense Minister Khalid Al-Biyari holding military discussions with Canadian counterparts aimed at expanding bilateral defense relations. Riyadh simultaneously continued regional coordination through meetings between Prince

Faisal bin Farhan and his Egyptian counterpart, focusing on bilateral cooperation, regional developments, and support for Jerusalem and its holy sites.

On Yemen, Saudi Arabia continued combining military deterrence with diplomatic de-escalation. Riyadh and Doha welcomed the UN Security Council's position condemning continuing Houthi threats, while maintaining a localized halt in cross-border attacks. This approach reflected Saudi efforts to prevent renewed escalation with the Houthis from undermining broader regional stabilization efforts. At the same time, the Kingdom continued to emphasize political solutions, respect for international law, and diplomatic mechanisms for containing regional conflicts.

Saudi Arabia also moved to institutionalize its relationship with Sudan. Riyadh and Khartoum are preparing to establish a Strategic Cooperation and Coordination Council, with the proposed framework expected to provide a more comprehensive institutional mechanism for managing bilateral relations. Its agenda reportedly includes ten economic files, indicating that Saudi-Sudanese relations are increasingly being structured around economic coordination alongside political and security cooperation. Overall, Riyadh's actions during the week demonstrated a broader strategy of diversifying security partnerships, strengthening regional coalitions, and maintaining diplomatic channels with both Western and regional powers while seeking greater strategic autonomy.

United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates' political and diplomatic activity during the week centered on de-escalation diplomacy, strategic coordination with regional and international partners, and the protection of maritime and commercial interests amid continuing instability around the Strait of Hormuz. Abu Dhabi maintained an active diplomatic posture through a series of high-level consultations. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan held discussions with Arab League Secretary-General Nabil Fahmy on the conflicts affecting the Middle East and the need for coordinated de-escalation efforts. President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan also spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin, with discussions focusing on regional stability and bilateral cooperation. Further Gulf coordination continued through a telephone conversation between Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed and Kuwait's Foreign Minister regarding regional developments and joint responses to the prevailing security environment.

Maritime security remained a major concern for Abu Dhabi as risks to commercial shipping persisted around the Strait of Hormuz. The UAE strongly condemned the targeting of an ADNOC carrier while it was transiting the waterway, highlighting the continuing vulnerability of energy and commercial shipping to regional military tensions. The incident reinforced the UAE's emphasis on safeguarding maritime trade and critical economic infrastructure. Continuing disruptions and uncertainty surrounding transit

through the Gulf also required UAE aviation authorities to maintain heightened vigilance over potential impacts on regional flight operations and air connectivity.

Despite the security pressures, the UAE continued to project itself as an active diplomatic actor committed to regional stabilization. Its consultations with Russia, the Arab League, and Kuwait demonstrated Abu Dhabi's effort to maintain multiple diplomatic channels rather than rely on a single external security or political partner. The UAE also continued its broader diplomatic engagement through expressions of solidarity with international partners, including condolences to Angola following a major road accident. Taken together, the week reflected Abu Dhabi's effort to balance diplomatic de-escalation with the protection of its maritime, aviation, and commercial interests as regional tensions continued to threaten Gulf stability.

Qatar

Qatar's political and diplomatic activity during the week was dominated by its continued role as a regional mediator, particularly in efforts to de-escalate the confrontation between the United States and Iran and restore freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. Doha maintained close coordination with Oman and Pakistan as part of wider regional mediation efforts, seeking to create diplomatic channels capable of preventing further military escalation. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari confirmed that indirect consultations involving regional mediators, the United States, and Iran remained active, although no direct US-Iran talks had formally been scheduled at that stage. Qatar's approach focused on maintaining diplomatic momentum and creating conditions for a short-term arrangement that could reopen a broader negotiating process.

The Strait of Hormuz remained central to Qatar's security and diplomatic priorities. Disruptions to commercial shipping continued to raise concerns over energy flows and regional economic stability, prompting Doha to prioritize the restoration of freedom of navigation. Qatari officials emphasized that any framework governing the waterway should be based on regional consensus and international law rather than coercive political demands. This position reflected Qatar's broader effort to address the immediate economic and security consequences of the regional confrontation while avoiding further militarization of the maritime crisis.

Qatar consequently continued to balance its traditional mediation role with a more active security-oriented posture. Rather than becoming directly involved in the military confrontation, Doha concentrated on creating diplomatic off-ramps, containing the conflict, and maintaining communication among the parties involved. Its coordination with Oman and Pakistan strengthened the regional mediation effort, while its emphasis on international law and freedom of navigation positioned Qatar as an intermediary seeking to prevent the Gulf confrontation from developing into a wider regional war.

11. Africa and The Sahel Region

Mali

Mali's political and economic trajectory during the week entered a new phase as the transitional government concluded its nationwide review of the first five years of military-led rule. The consultation process, which involved local authorities and civil society actors, was presented by the government as the completion of the transition's initial foundational phase. Prime Minister Abdoulaye Maïga subsequently outlined a new set of priorities centered on accelerating economic growth, increasing domestic processing of raw materials, expanding energy investment, and creating employment opportunities for young people.

The government's next phase is therefore increasingly framed around strengthening state capacity and reducing economic dependence on externally controlled value chains. Authorities emphasized the formalization of mining revenues, greater state control over economic resources, and the preservation of social cohesion as central objectives. This economic agenda reflects the transitional government's broader effort to link political sovereignty with control over strategic national resources and industrial development.

Despite the political emphasis on economic transformation, Mali continued to face serious security pressures. Al-Qaeda-affiliated Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and allied armed elements maintained pressure through transport blockades and attacks targeting government-controlled areas and critical infrastructure. Malian armed forces, supported by Russian-linked partners, continued counter-operations aimed at securing major transportation corridors and disrupting insurgent activity. The persistence of these operations demonstrates that the government's attempt to shift toward economic consolidation remains heavily dependent on its ability to maintain territorial security and protect strategic transport and infrastructure networks.

Central African Republic

The Central African Republic experienced a comparatively stable week, with national authorities concentrating on consolidating state authority and maintaining security following localized displacement fears in the southeast. The situation in Bangassou normalized after late-July rumors of armed attacks had triggered temporary population movements and crossings toward the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In response, the Central African Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces maintained heightened patrols and security measures to prevent renewed instability and reassure communities in the affected areas.

The country's broader security architecture also continued to evolve as MINUSCA implemented its 2026 strategic reconfiguration and rationalization of its field presence.

Coordination between national authorities and international stabilization partners focused on transferring static security responsibilities increasingly toward national forces in areas where conditions have improved. This process reflects the gradual expansion of state responsibility for local security while the UN mission adjusts its footprint.

Politically, the government of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra remained focused on administrative consolidation and the restoration of state authority following the delayed post-election cycle. Cooperation with international and regional partners continued around governance, humanitarian conditions, and cross-border security. Although no major national crisis emerged during the week, the continued monitoring of southeastern security conditions and humanitarian movements demonstrates that the country's stabilization remains closely linked to developments across its borders, particularly in neighboring conflict-affected areas.

Niger

Niger's political and diplomatic environment during the week was dominated by friction with Nigeria, continued integration within the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), and growing domestic tensions surrounding the justice sector. The AES formally criticized remarks by Nigerian President Bola Tinubu concerning deteriorating security conditions in the Sahel, highlighting the continuing political distance between Niger and its West African neighbor. Despite this friction, Nigeria simultaneously sought to rebuild engagement with the AES countries through a high-level retreat in Maiduguri, where officials promoted a new development compact and renewed security cooperation with Sahel states. The parallel diplomatic moves indicate that, despite political disagreements, cross-border security and economic interdependence continue to require engagement between Niger and Nigeria.

The African Union continued to monitor Niger's political transition and broader regional stability through its Peace and Security Council mechanisms. The discussions placed Niger alongside Mali within the wider assessment of political transitions in the Sahel, reflecting continued continental attention to the durability of military-led political arrangements and their implications for regional stability.

Domestically, the government faced significant criticism following the dissolution of four justice-sector unions. Justice Minister Alio Daouda defended the government decrees, arguing that the organizations had departed from their professional mandates and pursued private interests. The decision was strongly criticized by the public-sector umbrella union and the Niger Bar Association, which viewed the measure as a serious threat to workers' rights and judicial independence. Meanwhile, security pressures persisted across Niger's border regions, particularly the Tillabéri and wider Lake Chad areas, where national and regional forces remained on heightened alert against insurgent movements.

DRC

The Democratic Republic of the Congo remained under significant political and security pressure as the government attempted to sustain fragile peace mechanisms while managing persistent conflict in the east. Domestic debate continued over President Félix Tshisekedi's potential pursuit of a third term following earlier moves that could facilitate a reinterpretation of constitutional term limits. Concerns also intensified over the proposed national dialogue, with opposition actors, researchers, and civil society figures questioning whether the process could genuinely address governance and conflict-related grievances or instead become an instrument for political consolidation.

Diplomatically, the implementation of eastern Congo's emerging peace architecture encountered additional obstacles. M23 expelled a representative of the Congolese government from the joint ceasefire verification mechanism, undermining confidence in the monitoring process. Rwanda, meanwhile, reported the repatriation of approximately 300 refugees from Congolese territory. These developments added pressure to the Washington Accords and Doha framework, both of which continued to face questions regarding verification, enforcement, and the willingness of the parties to comply with agreed mechanisms.

Security conditions remained volatile, particularly in South Kivu. The Congolese government released a group of M23 prisoners as part of an ongoing prisoner-exchange framework, while Wazalendo forces engaged M23 fighters in clashes north of Bukavu near Kavumu airport. In eastern urban centers, including Goma and Bukavu, M23 continued to exercise de facto control, while populations in conflict-affected areas remained exposed to severe humanitarian pressures and food insecurity classified at Crisis levels under IPC Phase 3. The combination of territorial contestation, weak ceasefire verification, and unresolved political tensions continues to complicate Kinshasa's efforts to translate diplomatic agreements into durable security on the ground.

Chad

Chad's political, diplomatic, and security landscape during the week was shaped by intensified bilateral engagement with Egypt, efforts to strengthen regional counterterrorism coordination, and continued pressure from the Sudan conflict. The fourth session of the Egypt–Chad Joint Commission in Cairo produced five cooperation agreements, including a new visa-free arrangement for holders of diplomatic and official passports, aimed at facilitating official travel and strengthening institutional ties. Discussions also advanced joint economic initiatives, particularly the El Gran Corridor Company's logistics and agricultural projects and the development of the Egypt–Libya–Chad road corridor, reflecting N'Djamena's broader effort to improve trade connectivity and regional infrastructure.

Security cooperation remained a major priority as Chad sought stronger coordination with neighboring states confronting cross-border militant threats. During a high-level regional retreat in Maiduguri, Chadian representatives joined Nigerian and other regional officials in advocating a more integrated security approach to the Lake Chad Basin and the wider Sahel. The discussions emphasized that terrorist organizations exploit institutional divisions between regional frameworks, including CEMAC, ECOWAS, and the Sahel states, reinforcing the need for greater coordination across these mechanisms. At the same time, eastern Chad continued to face substantial humanitarian and security pressure from the Sudanese conflict, with more than 1.2 million refugees and returnees placing significant demands on local resources and border management.

Chad also faced growing international scrutiny over its justice and human-rights commitments. International Criminal Court governing bodies and human-rights advocates pressed N'Djamena to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the court system, creating an additional diplomatic challenge for the government as it seeks to consolidate regional partnerships while managing international expectations concerning accountability and the rule of law.

12. North Africa

Libya

Libyan and Turkish interior ministry officials convened the Security Cooperation Committee in Tripoli to activate a recently signed memorandum on law enforcement, training and expertise exchange. Deepening Ankara's security footprint in western Libya consolidates Turkish leverage over migration control, intelligence sharing and potential future energy and reconstruction contracts, while Tripoli gains capacity against internal rivals and irregular migration pressures.

An unattributed drone struck a naphtha tank at the Zawia oil refinery, causing a controllable leak amid the wider Iran-related energy conflict spillover. The incident, occurring against Libya's fractured security landscape, highlights the vulnerability of critical hydrocarbon infrastructure to external kinetic effects or local proxy dynamics, reinforcing the strategic premium on unified control of energy assets for any future government.

Egyptian, Algerian and Tunisian foreign ministers jointly demanded immediate de-escalation, an end to political division and withdrawal of foreign forces under the neighboring countries mechanism. Neighboring states' coordinated pressure aims to limit external military footprints—particularly Turkish—and accelerate institutional unification that would stabilize borders and open reconstruction markets under regional rather than purely external terms.

Algeria

Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf joined Egyptian and Tunisian counterparts in Cairo to reaffirm commitment to a Libyan-owned political process, institutional unification and rejection of foreign interference. Algeria's participation advances its longstanding preference for excluding extra-regional military actors from the Maghreb, protecting its own eastern border stability and positioning Algiers as a necessary consensus broker in North African security architectures.

Morocco

The US-led Board of Peace awarded its first Gaza construction contract for a rudimentary military outpost intended to house a contingent of Moroccan troops as part of an international stabilization force. Rabat's willingness to contribute forces advances its broader strategy of deepening security alignment with Washington and Gulf partners, enhancing diplomatic capital on Western Sahara recognition while cautiously expanding operational experience in high-risk stabilization environments.

13. Middle East

Iran-Israel Conflict

Iranian officials advanced negotiations with Oman throughout the week toward a temporary arrangement establishing separate inbound and outbound shipping lanes through the Strait of Hormuz, with inbound traffic routed closer to Iranian waters. This framework, described by Tehran as nearing finalization, reflects a calculated effort to formalize a measure of control over a waterway critical to global energy flows while extracting reciprocal concessions on the broader conflict.

The Supreme National Security Council issued an expanded list of conditions for any reopening, requiring the United States to end all threats, terminate hostilities against Iran and its regional partners, lift the naval blockade of Iranian ports, remove sanctions, release frozen assets, and provide full compensation for wartime damage. These demands elevate the Hormuz issue from a technical navigation matter into a vehicle for securing regime economic and security objectives.

Iranian Foreign Ministry statements emphasized that any Oman agreement on routes would not itself reopen the strait, which remains contingent on Washington "correcting its behavior." This sequencing underscores Tehran's strategy of using the strait's closure as sustained leverage to offset military and economic attrition sustained since the February escalation.

President Masoud Pezeshkian publicly noted that interaction with Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei remains very difficult, highlighting internal coordination challenges at

the highest levels as external pressures intensify. Leadership opacity complicates coherent signaling to external actors and may slow final decision-making on any deal.

IRGC statements reinforced that the strait constitutes a theater of war and doubled down on the new conditions, rejecting any portrayal of active direct negotiations with the United States. The messaging prioritizes domestic hardline constituencies and maintains maximum pressure on Gulf states and Washington simultaneously.

Parliamentary review of draft legislation to impose fees on transit and ban vessels from hostile states proceeded in parallel, signaling long-term intent to monetize and securitize the waterway beyond any interim arrangement. Such measures align with broader economic motivations to generate revenue amid sanctions and wartime disruption.

Prime Minister Netanyahu publicly rejected any Board of Peace plan requiring the disarmament of Hamas as a condition for further Israeli withdrawals, affirming that Israel had not agreed to such terms. This stance prioritizes the permanent neutralization of residual militant capacity in Gaza over external diplomatic frameworks that might constrain operational freedom.

Defense Minister Katz directed that reservist civil defense squads near Gaza not be reduced, reflecting continued assessment of persistent threats from the southern front even as attention remains fixed on the Iranian theater. The instruction sustains force posture to deter residual rocket or infiltration risks while broader regional dynamics evolve.

Netanyahu had earlier authorized limited IDF pullouts from three Gaza areas before reversing course, illustrating tactical flexibility driven by security assessments rather than political commitments. The adjustment underscores prioritization of operational control over premature force reductions that could embolden remaining networks.

US-mediated Israel-Lebanon talks registered technical progress according to American statements, despite intermittent ground violence. Israeli interests center on consolidating northern quiet to free resources for the Iranian file and residual Gaza operations, while avoiding concessions that would legitimize Hezbollah reconstitution.

Treasury Secretary Bessent indicated that a deal reopening the Strait of Hormuz could potentially be sealed within days, reflecting administration prioritization of energy market stabilization and domestic price relief. The optimism aligns with broader strategic interest in restoring commercial flows without conceding formal Iranian sovereignty over an international waterway.

President Trump publicly accused Iranian leadership of being “unbelievably duplicitous” for denying talks after allegedly requesting them, while claiming all-day negotiations had occurred. The rhetoric seeks to maintain pressure and shape domestic and allied perceptions of Iranian bad faith while keeping diplomatic channels open.

Secretary Rubio and other officials reported progress on Hormuz talks yet acknowledged remaining work, with expectations of an imminent Iran-Oman understanding that would enable lifting of the US naval blockade of Iranian ports on a performance basis. This sequencing aims to restore navigation while preserving leverage for subsequent nuclear and proxy-related discussions.

Vice President Vance stated that Iran had conveyed it had no plans to impose tolls, framing the interim arrangement around safe transit rather than revenue extraction. The assurance supports US efforts to prevent formalization of Iranian economic control that could set precedents for other chokepoints.

Trump signaled a preference for “low-keying” the conflict to allow mounting economic pressure additional time to operate, while retaining the option of renewed military action if diplomacy stalls. This calibrated approach reflects recognition of munitions stockpile constraints and the high political cost of sustained high-intensity operations.

Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan signed the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, stipulating that an armed attack on any one party would be regarded as an attack on all. The pact strengthens collective deterrence amid Iranian proxy threats and Hormuz disruptions, while advancing Turkish ambitions for expanded regional security architecture and Pakistani interest in formalizing strategic depth with Gulf partners.

The agreement builds on existing bilateral ties and is framed by all three as purely defensive and open to additional members. It serves Saudi interests in diversifying security partnerships beyond traditional US reliance, Turkish goals of positioning as a pivotal Islamic power, and Pakistani aims of elevating its role in Middle Eastern security equations without direct entanglement in the Iran conflict.

Houthi forces declared a Red Sea blockade targeting Saudi shipping and claimed ballistic missile attacks on two Saudi oil tankers. These actions extend Iranian-aligned pressure into a second critical energy corridor, amplifying economic costs on Riyadh and global markets while demonstrating residual proxy capacity despite broader Axis setbacks.

A separate Houthi ballistic missile strike on a Marib camp killed ten personnel as United Nations warnings of potential return to full-scale civil war intensified. The attack advances local territorial and political objectives while contributing to regional instability that complicates any broader de-escalation centered on Hormuz.

Iran’s threats to strike Gulf states in response to any renewed US attacks further illustrate the interconnected nature of proxy and direct theaters, where Tehran seeks to deter escalation by raising the prospective costs to regional energy infrastructure and US basing.

Turkey

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan announced that Egypt is expected to join the newly signed Makkah Joint Defense Agreement once technical procedures are completed, describing the pact—originally concluded by Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan—as modelled on NATO’s collective defense clause and open to expansion. Ankara’s public invitation signals a calculated effort to institutionalize a Sunni security architecture that enhances Turkish defense-industrial exports, dilutes exclusive Gulf reliance on Washington and positions Turkey as a pivotal broker amid Iran-related escalation.

Defense Minister Yaşar Güler confirmed that Turkey is meticulously updating its military readiness and planning for Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in response to regional developments, including Israeli activities. This recalibration protects Ankara’s Blue Homeland maritime claims, sustains the Northern Cyprus presence and counters emerging Greece-Cyprus-France-Israel defense alignments that could constrain Turkish naval and energy exploration freedom.

Justice Minister Akın Gürlek clarified that the proposed anti-terror bill on national solidarity excludes ringleaders and those responsible for killing security personnel, conditioning any measures on the complete cessation of the organization’s existence. The legislation advances the government’s domestic consolidation agenda by offering limited pathways for lower-level reintegration while preserving hard lines against PKK leadership, thereby managing Kurdish political space without conceding strategic leverage.

Fidan, meeting his Syrian counterpart, identified Israeli attacks on Syrian territory as among the greatest threats to Damascus’s stability and sovereignty. Turkey’s rhetorical and diplomatic defense of Syrian territorial integrity advances its post-Assad influence projection, secures border management against Kurdish entities and positions Ankara as a necessary interlocutor for any regional security arrangement involving Syria.

Syria

Libyan and Syrian officials held talks in Cairo focused on strengthening bilateral ties and coordination within joint Arab frameworks. These discussions reflect Damascus’s broader effort to rehabilitate diplomatic and economic linkages after years of isolation, while Tripoli’s engagement serves mutual interests in maritime connectivity and countering shared perceptions of external interference in national sovereignty.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan publicly framed Israeli military actions in southern Syria as a primary destabilizing factor, urging stronger international pressure for compliance with the 1974 Disengagement Agreement. Syria benefits from this alignment as it seeks to consolidate central authority and limit Israeli operational freedom, while

Turkey extracts influence dividends by presenting itself as a guarantor of Syrian sovereignty against both Israeli and residual Kurdish challenges.

14. Global Powers

Over the past week, the Iran crisis continued to dominate the U.S. foreign-policy agenda, particularly the standoff over the Strait of Hormuz and efforts to reach a negotiated settlement. President Donald Trump said an agreement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz could be reached soon, while Iranian officials indicated that negotiations were nearing a possible final arrangement. The talks have been complicated by Iran's demands for U.S. concessions and Washington's continued military pressure. Trump has faced growing pressure to find an exit from a conflict that has disrupted global energy and shipping markets.

Iran intensified diplomatic outreach to Gulf states, warning that their continued support for Washington could make their oil, electricity and water infrastructure targets. The pressure has placed Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE in an increasingly delicate position as they simultaneously try to mediate between Washington and Tehran and protect their own territory and critical infrastructure.

U.S.-facilitated negotiations between Israel and Lebanon continued in Rome. Washington is attempting to establish a mechanism for verifying Hezbollah's disarmament as part of a broader framework linking Hezbollah's weapons to an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The two sides have agreed to develop a shortlist of countries that could provide verification forces, although Hezbollah itself has rejected the disarmament framework.

A new disagreement emerged between Washington and Israel over the Gaza settlement framework. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected a 15-point proposal associated with Trump's Board of Peace that calls for Hamas disarmament alongside an Israeli withdrawal. Hamas has indicated support for the framework. The dispute has exposed a more visible gap between Trump's push for a negotiated Gaza settlement and Netanyahu's insistence that Israel retain military leverage until Hamas is completely disarmed.

The Senate's passage of the bipartisan Russia and Iran sanctions legislation marked another escalation in congressional pressure on Moscow. The bill would authorize tariffs of up to 100% on countries purchasing Russian oil and gas and impose additional sanctions on Russian officials, financial institutions and the shadow fleet. The measure now moves to the House, with Trump having indicated support. The legislation could significantly affect countries that continue importing Russian energy if it becomes law.

Washington's Russia-Ukraine diplomacy remained secondary to the Iran conflict. Earlier U.S.-brokered efforts involving Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner have struggled to generate a breakthrough, while Kyiv continues seeking American military support. The wider strategic concern for Washington is that the Iran war is consuming diplomatic

attention and military resources that could otherwise be devoted to the European theatre. Reuters reported that U.S.-brokered diplomacy had stalled as Washington concentrated on Iran.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said up to 50,000 North Korean troops could be deployed in Russia to support Moscow's war effort. The development highlights the expanding military relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang and presents Washington with a broader security challenge linking the European and Indo-Pacific theatres.

Washington continued its confrontation with Beijing over the South China Sea. The State Department rejected China's designation of Scarborough Shoal as a national nature reserve, arguing that Beijing was using administrative and environmental measures to reinforce its maritime claims and restrict Filipino fishermen. Washington reaffirmed its support for Manila and the 2016 arbitral ruling rejecting China's expansive South China Sea claims.

The Trump administration notified Congress of plans to close five U.S. diplomatic missions, including consulates in Canada, Japan and Indonesia. The proposed closures are part of a broader restructuring of the State Department and could reduce the U.S. diplomatic footprint even in strategically important partner countries. The development is particularly significant because it comes while Washington is simultaneously trying to expand diplomatic leverage across multiple theatres.

The Senate confirmed dozens of Trump administration nominees on August 7, including diplomats and other senior officials, helping fill significant gaps in the U.S. foreign-policy establishment. The move comes after months of concern over vacancies in the diplomatic corps and gives the administration greater capacity to implement its foreign-policy agenda.

Washington announced plans for approximately \$1 billion in security assistance to Colombia, strengthening cooperation with President Abelardo de la Espriella's government. The package is expected to focus on counter-narcotics operations, coca eradication, military interoperability and combating organized crime. Colombia is also being incorporated into Trump's emerging "Shield of the Americas" security framework.

China and India held the 36th Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs in New Delhi on August 6. The two sides discussed boundary delineation, border management, mechanisms for maintaining stability and cross-border cooperation. Both emphasized the importance of maintaining peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control. The talks indicate that Beijing and New Delhi continue to manage their border rivalry through diplomatic mechanisms despite unresolved strategic competition.

China escalated its economic response to Washington this week by sanctioning six U.S. companies and tightening export controls on drones, key components and related technologies. Beijing said the measures responded to recent U.S. restrictions involving Chinese technology and alleged forced-labour products from Xinjiang. Drone exports to the United States will now face case-by-case review. The measures come ahead of President Xi Jinping's expected September visit to the United States and show that the recent stabilization in bilateral relations has not resolved the underlying technology and trade disputes.

Beijing tightened controls on exports of drones and drone-related components, with some exports now subject to case-by-case approval. The move is significant because China dominates major segments of the global commercial-drone supply chain. It also extends the U.S.-China technology confrontation beyond semiconductors into autonomous systems and dual-use technologies.

Washington's diplomatic effort to end the war remains active but without a breakthrough. U.S. envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner are reportedly considering another round of travel involving Kyiv and Moscow. The Kremlin has previously indicated that contacts with Washington could resume, while Moscow and Kyiv remain far apart on territorial and security questions.

The U.S. Senate's overwhelming 86–11 approval of the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act represents the week's most consequential development for Russia's economic diplomacy. The bill targets Russian officials, financial institutions, energy projects and the country's "shadow fleet" while authorizing tariffs against countries that continue purchasing Russian energy. It now moves to the House.

North Korea's military relationship with Russia continued to expand. The Council on Foreign Relations reported that Pyongyang was deploying a missile unit to Russia, adding another dimension to the two countries' increasingly close military relationship. North Korea has already supplied Russia with ammunition and troops for the Ukraine war.

The strengthening Moscow-Pyongyang relationship is taking place alongside renewed China-North Korea engagement. Xi Jinping's June visit to Pyongyang and Russia's deepening military cooperation with North Korea are gradually producing a more interconnected security environment in Northeast Asia. Analysts increasingly see Russia's relationship with North Korea as one of the mechanisms through which Moscow is expanding its strategic options beyond Europe.

15. Europe

The new government of Prime Minister Andy Burnham signalled that it wants to accelerate the UK's relationship with the European Union. New European Relations Minister Hamish Falconer said London is seeking a "deeper relationship" with the EU,

including progress on services, mobility, mutual recognition of qualifications, energy, technology and security cooperation. The government is maintaining its red lines against rejoining the single market or customs union but wants substantially closer practical cooperation with Brussels.

Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband met U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington on August 5. The discussions centred on the Ukraine war, European defence, NATO, the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's nuclear programme. Miliband stressed that European countries need to play a greater role in their own security while reaffirming the importance of the transatlantic alliance. Gaza and the humanitarian situation were also discussed.

Germany's security debate intensified after an explosive-laden drone was discovered at Leipzig/Halle Airport near a Ukrainian Antonov cargo aircraft. Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt warned that Germany is facing daily threats of foreign-linked hybrid warfare, including espionage, sabotage and cyberattacks. German officials have not publicly attributed the airport incident to Russia, although some lawmakers have raised that possibility and Moscow rejected the allegations. Berlin is reportedly preparing to expand its counter-drone capacity, including additional personnel and operational bases.

France strongly criticised Reform UK's proposed "Operation Fortress." Nigel Farage's party said that if it won power it would use the Royal Navy to intercept small migrant boats in the English Channel and return the occupants to France (or Belgium), even without French permission. The plan involves Navy patrol vessels, military inflatable boats, Border Force officers, and Royal Marines, framed by Reform as a legal humanitarian "rescue and return" operation. France's Interior Ministry rejected the idea, stating it would violate French sovereignty as well as maritime and international law. It also noted that existing UK–France cooperation has already reduced crossings in 2026. Reform responded that it would prioritise British interests "whether Emmanuel Macron likes it or not." UK opposition parties and legal experts described the plan as unworkable and likely to cause a major diplomatic row.

16. International and Regional Organizations

United Nation

During a UN Security Council briefing on South Sudan on August 6, Pakistan's Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad called for recommitment to the Revitalized Peace Agreement, stressing that fair elections are essential to completing the country's democratic transition while voicing concern over political tensions, intercommunal violence, and UNMISS operating with only 9,176 troops against an authorized ceiling of 12,500. China's Chargé d'Affaires Sun Lei welcomed the National Elections Commission's announcement that elections will be held by year end and commended the

SSPDF's unilateral cessation of hostilities, while expressing regret over the Security Council's decision to reduce UNMISS's mandate and force levels, noting this has seriously affected humanitarian operations. UNMISS Head Anita Kiki Gbeho warned that concerns are growing about whether conditions for credible elections can be established, with violence displacing over 420,000 people since January and 36 humanitarian workers killed this year.

The United Nations continued its consultations with Sudanese political parties in support of a comprehensive political process led and owned by the Sudanese, working closely with its partners in the Quintet Group comprising the African Union, IGAD, the League of Arab States, the European Union, and the United Nations. UN Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq reported that the Quintet recently held talks with Sudanese civilian political leaders, continuing discussions on proposals and perspectives to advance the political process, including through confidence building measures. Secretary General's Personal Envoy Pekka Haavisto continues to engage all parties, urging them to make concrete commitments to de-escalation and genuine dialogue toward a cessation of hostilities, having spoken with Sudanese Foreign Minister Muhieddine Salem on preparations for his upcoming visit to Khartoum, while also maintaining communication with RSF leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo to discuss practical measures to reduce escalation. Haavisto is also traveling to Türkiye this week to meet with Turkish authorities and Sudanese stakeholders, including youth and women representatives.

On the ground, the United Nations expressed grave concern over the risks posed by drone attacks on civilians, noting that a strike on a traditional court in North Darfur's Garra al-Zawaya village resulted in dozens of casualties, while other attacks in El Obeid endangered civilians, vital infrastructure, and humanitarian operations. Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher stressed the need to intensify efforts to reach affected families in North Kordofan, calling on parties to the conflict to de-escalate, protect civilians, and ensure humanitarian access, while the UN urged donors to increase their support for the humanitarian response in Sudan .

The United Nations expressed deep concern over a drone strike in North Darfur's Ghurra Zawia area that killed at least 37 people, with reports indicating the attack targeted a traditional court where civilians had gathered to hear local cases. Human rights groups condemned the strike as a violation of international humanitarian law. Meanwhile, UN Envoy Pekka Haavisto discussed arrangements for Sudanese students in Chad to sit national examinations, alongside ongoing de-escalation efforts with Sudanese leaders. The UN appeal for Sudan remains significantly underfunded, with only \$1.2 billion received out of \$2.9 billion required.

Africa Union

In a significant diplomatic engagement on August 4, AU Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf received Sudan's Permanent Representative to the AU, Ambassador Elzein Ibrahim Hussein, at the organization's headquarters in Addis Ababa. During the talks, Ambassador Hussein delivered an oral message from Sudan's Foreign Minister Mohi El-Din Salem, providing a detailed briefing on the latest political and security developments in Sudan including the ongoing confrontation between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces . The discussions also addressed the humanitarian situation, the country's recovery and reconstruction needs, and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Chairperson Youssouf reaffirmed his intention to visit Khartoum at the earliest opportunity emphasizing the African Union's unwavering solidarity with the Sudanese people and its firm commitment to Sudan's peace, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity . The two sides also reviewed preparations for an upcoming AU Peace and Security Council visit to Khartoum, expected in mid-August under Algeria's chairmanship. Ambassador Hussein confirmed Sudan's readiness to welcome the African delegation and facilitate its meetings with state leadership, political forces and civil society representatives

On August 5, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos held high-level talks in Addis Ababa with African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, focusing on regional peace and security and preparations for the 2027 UN Climate Change Conference. The meeting, hosted at Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, underscored the importance of strengthened cooperation between the African Union and Ethiopia on key continental and global priorities with both sides emphasizing the need for close coordination to ensure the successful organization of the landmark climate summit.

A central focus of the discussions was Ethiopia's intensifying preparations to host COP32, expected to draw world leaders, policymakers, climate experts and international partners from across the globe. The talks come as Ethiopia continues its national preparations for the climate conference, with the AU having previously requested its development agency AUDA-NEPAD to provide technical and financial support for the hosting effort. The Chairperson reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to working closely with Ethiopia to ensure COP32 becomes a truly continental event.

The meeting also addressed the evolving peace and security situation across the Horn of Africa, underscoring the growing partnership between Ethiopia and the African Union in advancing regional stability while strengthening Africa's collective climate agenda. The dialogue further reaffirmed Addis Ababa's position as a leading hub for continental diplomacy and international engagement as Ethiopia intensifies preparations for hosting COP32 in November 2027.

On August 5, the African Union Peace and Security Council convened its 1358th meeting to receive the quarterly briefing from the African members of the UN Security Council on their activities since April under Ethiopia's chairship. The session assessed progress in implementing the Oran Process recommendations and explored measures to strengthen the A3's effectiveness in advancing Africa's peace and security priorities globally. Algeria's Ambassador Mohamed Khaled, AUPSC Chairperson for August, underscored the strategic importance of A3 unity and cohesion while congratulating Zimbabwe on its election as a non-permanent UNSC member for 2027–2028. AU Commissioner Bankole Adeoye highlighted progress in operationalizing the A3 mechanism, emphasized the need to preserve institutional memory, and reaffirmed the AU's role through the Committee of Ten in advancing UNSC reform based on the Ezulwini Consensus, while stressing coordinated African engagement in implementing UNSC Resolution 2719 on financing AU-led peace operations.

In a high-level meeting in Cairo on August 4, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi and Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio reaffirmed their shared commitment to Africa's long-standing demand for permanent representation on the United Nations Security Council. Sierra Leone currently chairs the African Union's Committee of Ten, which coordinates the continent's position in UN intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. The leaders underscored their adherence to the common African position grounded in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, which call for no fewer than two permanent seats with full prerogatives, including veto power, and five non-permanent seats for Africa in an expanded Council. President El-Sisi emphasized the necessity of rectifying Africa's historical exclusion from the UN's most powerful decision-making body, noting that eight decades since the UN's founding, the continent remains without permanent membership despite comprising more than a quarter of UN member states. The meeting also addressed broader regional concerns, with both leaders reaffirming their support for a two-state solution to the Palestinian issue and stressing the urgent need for a sustainable ceasefire in Gaza.

On August 5, AU Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf held talks in Addis Ababa with Mr. Harold Tavares, Executive Director representing the Africa Group II Constituency on the World Bank Group's Board of Directors. The discussions focused on the continent's strategic priorities, including consolidating peace and security, creating an enabling environment for investment, accelerating economic development and trade integration, and strengthening Africa's representation within the World Bank's governance structures. The meeting also addressed challenges related to debt sustainability and financing strategic infrastructure, particularly regional corridor development, alongside the implementation of transformative initiatives such as AgriConnect, WaterForward, and Mission 300, which aim to advance agriculture, water resources management, and energy access in support of the continent's economic transformation

Political disputes between Somalia's federal government and opposition groups could complicate the country's security transition as uncertainty continues to cloud the future of the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia, troop and police-contributing countries warned following the extraordinary summit in Kampala last week. The countries urged Somalia's government to promote inclusive political dialogue aimed at reducing tensions between federal authorities and other political actors, arguing that political stability is closely linked to the success of the security transition and the gradual transfer of responsibilities from AUSSOM to Somali security forces.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, however opposed incorporating Somalia's internal political disputes into discussions about AUSSOM's security mandate, insisting such disagreements are matters for Somalis to resolve themselves and that the summit should focus primarily on security matters. His remarks drew swift criticism from Jubaland's Minister of Information, Abdifatah Mohamed Mukhtar who argued that countries contributing troops and financial support have a legitimate interest in discussing both security challenges and political disputes that could undermine hard won gains against al-Shabaab. The minister accused President Hassan Sheikh of presenting Somalis with a false choice between accepting his continued rule or facing national collapse.

The political tensions come at a critical juncture for AUSSOM. The United Nations Support Office in Somalia has issued a public tender seeking auctioneers to liquidate a vast inventory of equipment ranging from vehicles and heavy machinery to medical laboratories and modular housing units signaling preparations for a potential wind down of operations. The move follows the United States' formal notification on July 1 that it would cease funding for UNSOS when AUSSOM's current mandate expires on December 31, 2026. Washington, which provides approximately 26% of the UNSOS budget, has signaled it will block any UN Security Council proposal to maintain the existing logistical funding mechanism for AUSSOM. Officials familiar with internal planning say staff has been warned to prepare for every eventuality, including total office closure.

Troop contributing countries have called for continued international support for the mission for 18 to 24 months to prevent a security vacuum and give Somali forces additional time to build their capacity. Military planners warn that without the integrated logistical backbone provided by UNSOS, the African Union mission may become operationally unsustainable, potentially forcing a premature withdrawal of peacekeepers from the country. Defense ministers from troop-contributing countries have similarly warned that Somalia's unresolved political tensions have become a major obstacle to achieving lasting peace, arguing that military operations and increased funding alone cannot solve the country's security challenges.

President Hassan Sheikh separately met with Uganda's Deputy Chief of Defense Forces, Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding, in Mogadishu to strengthen security cooperation and accelerate

operations against al-Shabaab, thanking Uganda for its longstanding role in supporting Somalia's security institutions. Okiding was in Mogadishu to attend the AUSSOM Military Chiefs Conference, which brought together defense leaders from troop-contributing countries to review operational progress and coordinate joint action plans amid the mission's funding uncertainty

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

On August 6, the Quintet comprising the African Union, IGAD, the League of Arab States, the European Union, and the United Nations issued a joint statement confirming its continued engagement with Sudanese stakeholders to advance a credible and inclusive political process. Building on the first round of exploratory consultations held in Addis Ababa in June, the group launched leadership discussions with Sudanese political blocs and parties on July 29, while technical exchanges continue with participants from earlier consultations to further examine proposals and exchange views on key issues relating to the political process. UN Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq confirmed the Quintet engaged Sudanese civilian political leaders in recent days, continuing discussions on proposals for advancing the political process, including confidence-building measures. UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Sudan Pekka Haavisto continues to engage all parties, having spoken with Sudanese Foreign Minister Muhieddine Salem on preparations for his upcoming visit to Khartoum, while also maintaining communication with RSF leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo to discuss practical de-escalation measures. The Quintet reaffirmed its respect for Sudan's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, rejected parallel governing structures, and called for de-escalation to advance a negotiated and durable peace.

On August 6, IGAD Executive Secretary Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu formally received Major General Dr. Hailu Endashaw Atomsa as the incoming Chairperson of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism in South Sudan, while also extending appreciation to outgoing Chairperson Major General Teshome Ayana for his dedicated service. CTSAMVM, established under Chapter 2 of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, serves as an IGAD-led multinational mechanism responsible for monitoring, verifying, and reporting on compliance by signatory parties to the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements. The outgoing Chairperson had previously noted that while South Sudan stands at a pivotal moment in its peace journey and risks of renewed conflict remain significant, there is still a genuine opportunity to consolidate progress and guide the country toward lasting peace, stability, and national reconciliation. The incoming Chairperson has already begun introductory engagements with key peace process stakeholders, including the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, as part of efforts to strengthen collaboration and advance the implementation of the peace

agreement. IGAD reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with CTSAMVM to support the people of South Sudan in their pursuit of lasting peace and stability as the country navigates its fragile transitional period toward national elections.

IGAD Deputy Executive Secretary Mohamed Abdi Ware has called for an orderly security transition in Somalia, emphasizing that lasting peace requires national reconciliation, strong institutions, and local ownership beyond military operations. Speaking during the Extraordinary Summit of the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia Troop Contributing Countries in Kampala, Ware said the fight against Al-Shabaab is not a military only mission, stressing that communities must be won over by addressing the social, economic, and political conditions that allow extremist groups to gain influence . In clarifying remarks that had sparked debate online, Ware said his message was rooted in honoring African peacekeepers who have sacrificed their lives during nearly two decades of operations, strengthening regional partnerships, and supporting Somalia's path toward complete security self-reliance . He dismissed accusations that his comments undermined Somalia's government, explaining that his intervention aimed to protect the mission's future while encouraging proactive coordination among troop-contributing nations, international partners, and Somali leaders for a sustainable, phased transition plan that safeguards hard-won security gains as full operational responsibilities are transferred to Somali forces. "Our objective is to transition Somalia's security to its indigenous forces in the shortest possible time and send the men and women of the AUSSOM mission back to their home countries as the heroes they are," Ware stated.

On August 3, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development officially reopened its mission office in Khartoum and resumed full operations in a ceremony attended by IGAD Executive Secretary Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu and Undersecretary of Sudan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Muawiya Othman Khalid, alongside officials and media representatives. Ambassador Khalid welcomed the reopening as an important milestone in Sudan's relationship with the regional organization, noting that Sudan has experienced a devastating war unprecedented in the region and that the return of regional and international organizations reflects the beginning of a new phase as the country approaches recovery, reconstruction, and development. Dr. Workneh described IGAD as a regional family bound by historical ties and a shared destiny, emphasizing that Sudan's instability affects the stability of the rest of the region and that the Sudanese people are the rightful owners of decisions concerning their country. Welcoming Sudan's return as a "historic event," he stressed that IGAD cannot be a complete organization in the absence of Sudan, given its status as a founding member. The office, under the leadership of a Head of Mission, will serve as a bridge between Sudan, the IGAD Secretariat, and member states, enhancing joint cooperation and coordination while strengthening communication with regional and international partners supporting peace.



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