



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

Ethiopia's Council of Ministers approved several legislative measures on September 28, aimed at restructuring executive authorities, establishing data governance frameworks, and reinforcing national defense statutes. The cabinet also ratified a 145.8 million SDR loan agreement with the International Development Association to fund power sector modernization and revised federal income and value-added tax regulations to support lower-income households.

Following these federal governance reforms, the Addis Ababa City Council reappointed Adanech Abiebie as Mayor on September 30. Council members recognized her past performance in advancing city infrastructure, reforming local administration, and expanding public services. In her inaugural address, Mayor Abiebie pledged to eliminate corruption, expand employment opportunities, stabilize local consumer markets, and accelerate implementation of Digital Ethiopia 2030 across the capital.

Regional governments were formed in parallel, following the seventh general election of June 1. The Oromia Council held its first session on September 28 and re-elected Shimelis Abdisa as President, and 509 council members backed his second term. The Somali Regional State's 7th Council re-elected Mustafe Mohamed Omer as President and elected Mubashir Dubad Rage as Speaker. The Sidama Regional Council appointed Dr. Mesay Hailu as President, succeeding Desta Ledamo, with Dr. Dawit Hayesu as Deputy President. In South Ethiopia, Tesfaye Beljige, the former Government Chief Whip in the House of Peoples' Representatives, was elected to lead the region after Tilahun Kebede. The Harari Council reappointed Ordin Bedri as President and approved 14 senior appointments, including the finance, revenue, agriculture and urban development portfolios. Regional councils more broadly have begun constituting their governments and electing chief administrators, which sets the institutional base for the federal transition.

At the federal level, the newly elected House of Peoples' Representatives was scheduled to convene on October 5 to open the new five-year term and constitute the federal government. The Prosperity Party won 438 of the 501 contested seats, and under Article 56 the majority party organizes and leads the executive.

On October 3, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, House Speaker Tagesse Chafo, and Chief Commissioner Professor Mesfin Araya presided over the official handover of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission's final recommendations to parliament and regional authorities. The consolidated agenda, compiled from over 2,000 public submissions and structured across eight thematic pillars with participation from 4,000 delegates, demonstrated citizens' capacity for peaceful deliberation. The recommendations comprise 400 adopted points from a 38-day conference held between July 15 and August 22. Federal matters go to central government organs, regional and municipal issues are routed to the 11 regional states and two city administrations, and recommendations concerning Tigray go to the federal government.

Concurrently, Ethiopia expanded its regional energy presence through cross-border infrastructure initiatives. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed traveled to Kenya on September 30, for the groundbreaking ceremony of the Dangote Group-backed Lamu Petroleum Refinery along the LAPSET corridor. Prime Minister Abiy stated on October 1 that the refinery will supply refined petroleum products, enhance regional energy security, and expand continental industrial capacity.

Alongside transport initiatives, Ethiopia maintained active regional diplomatic engagements. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud at Bole International Airport on September 29, for bilateral talks on mutual concerns. Additionally, President Taye Atske Selassie met with European Union officials on September 28, to discuss Horn of Africa security, regional economic development, and bilateral cooperation.

In contrast to regional cooperation, relations with Egypt deteriorated over Nile water management disputes. On October 1, Water and Energy Minister Habtamu Itfa announced a national committee to evaluate economic losses from 22 development projects allegedly blocked by Egypt.

On October 1, diplomatic strain across the Horn of Africa escalated significantly as Ethiopia declared an Egyptian diplomatic staff member *persona non grata*, ordering their departure within 48 hours over Nile water management disputes. Simultaneously, military developments precipitated a major regional rupture between Ethiopia and Eritrea: following Addis Ababa's expulsion of ten Eritrean diplomats and the formal closure of its embassy in Asmara, Eritrea announced the complete severance of all diplomatic relations with Ethiopia.

Escalating geopolitical tensions coincided with a sharp resurgence of domestic conflict across northern Ethiopia. On October 5, Ethiopian federal forces and allied fighters

retook control of Tigray's regional capital, Mekelle, following a tactical withdrawal by Tigrayan forces. The renewal of heavy fighting, alongside reported explosions in Addis Ababa, ended key stability provisions of the 2022 Pretoria Peace Agreement and heightened security concerns.

As the violence spread, key international stakeholders and religious leaders issued urgent calls for immediate de-escalation across northern Ethiopia. On October 1, the Europe Peace Foundation, along with the U.S. Representatives Ilhan Omar, John Garamendi, and Jim McGovern, urged all warring parties to cease hostilities, safeguard civilians, and return to peace negotiations within the framework of the 2022 Pretoria Agreement. Echoing this growing alarm, Pope Leo XIV appealed on the same day for an end to the armed conflict, while a bipartisan group of six U.S. senators pressed the State Department to engage federal and regional leadership to prevent a broader Horn of Africa crisis.

On September 30, 2026, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Ozonnia Ojielo reported that armed groups had seized at least ten aid vehicles while personnel faced harassment and extortion, severely impeding relief delivery and exacerbating dangers for displaced populations. In response to the expanding crisis, international human rights organizations called for immediate institutional action, with Amnesty International urging the African Union Peace and Security Council on October 2, to convene an emergency session focused on safeguarding civilians, restoring unhindered humanitarian access, and halting further escalation.

2. Sudan

Sudan's war entered a more strategically consequential phase this week as fighting continued across the Kordofan and Blue Nile theatres, while regional diplomacy increasingly became intertwined with the conflict. The Sudanese army announced the capture of an RSF stronghold in North Kordofan, reinforcing indications that the SAF has been seeking to consolidate its position along the corridor linking Sudan's eastern and western regions. The Kordofan theatre has become particularly important because control of the area could shape the RSF's ability to connect its positions in Darfur with areas farther east. At the same time, fighting and drone attacks continued in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, demonstrating that recent SAF gains have not translated into a broader reduction in hostilities.

The situation along the Ethiopian border also deteriorated. Fighting was reported around Ed Damazin in Blue Nile State, accompanied by drone attacks, while the UN migration agency reported that approximately 2,800 people were displaced in a single day because of insecurity in the area. The developments highlight the growing

strategic importance of Sudan's southeastern theatre, where the conflict is increasingly connected to wider regional security dynamics.

The humanitarian situation meanwhile continued to deteriorate. Fuel shortages have driven prices sharply upward, placing additional pressure on transportation and household livelihoods. In another serious incident, an air strike on a humanitarian convoy in Sudan killed a driver working with the UN World Food Programme. Continued attacks affecting humanitarian operations are further constraining the ability of aid agencies to reach populations affected by the conflict, particularly as displacement continues across the country.

Diplomatically, the most significant development was the four-way summit involving Egypt, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan in Alamein, Egypt. The leaders issued a joint declaration emphasizing state sovereignty, territorial integrity, Red Sea security and cooperation over Nile-related issues. The summit brought together four governments with increasingly overlapping concerns regarding regional security and Ethiopia's growing strategic position. For Sudan, the meeting offered an opportunity to reinforce diplomatic backing from key regional actors while placing its war within a wider discussion about sovereignty, Red Sea security and regional stability.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi also held separate discussions with Sudanese Sovereignty Council Chairman Abdel Fattah al-Burhan on efforts to end the war. Cairo continues to frame Sudan's unity and territorial integrity as core regional interests. The Alamein summit therefore represented more than a diplomatic gathering: it signaled the emergence of a more coordinated regional position among Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia at a time of heightened tensions across the Horn and Red Sea.

The regional dimension was further underscored by Ethiopia's increasingly confrontational rhetoric toward neighboring states. Ethiopian military leadership accused Egypt and Sudan of supporting an armed alliance allegedly seeking to undermine the Ethiopian government, while Sudan rejected accusations that it was backing Ethiopian opposition forces and reiterated its commitment to protecting its sovereignty. These exchanges point to a widening overlap between Sudan's internal conflict and the broader strategic competition in the Horn of Africa. While there is no indication that the regional alignments have translated into a formal military bloc, the convergence of interests around the Red Sea, Nile and border security is becoming increasingly difficult to separate from Sudan's war.

On the battlefield, the SAF appears to have gained some momentum, particularly in North Kordofan. Yet the RSF continues to demonstrate its capacity to conduct long-

range drone strikes against strategic and civilian targets. Attacks in South Kordofan and other areas, alongside continued fighting in Blue Nile, indicate that neither side has achieved a decisive advantage. The battle for Kordofan remains particularly consequential because of its geographic position between the SAF-controlled east and RSF-held areas in the west.

Taken together, this week's developments point toward a conflict that is becoming simultaneously more militarily fragmented and more regionally interconnected. SAF advances in parts of Kordofan may improve its strategic position, but persistent RSF attacks and the continued instability along the Ethiopian border demonstrate the limits of battlefield gains. At the diplomatic level, the Alamein summit suggests that Sudan's war is increasingly being viewed through the lens of wider regional competition over the Nile, Red Sea and political influence. The danger is that these overlapping dynamics could make the conflict harder to resolve even as the military balance begins to shift.

3. Egypt

Renewed fighting in Tigray has intensified Egypt's strategic exposure to Ethiopia's internal conflict. Government-aligned forces recaptured Alamata as Ethiopian authorities accused Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea of supporting an opposition alliance. Cairo rejects the allegation. The episode matters because Ethiopia's domestic conflict now overlaps with the Nile dispute and Egypt's expanding security partnerships across the Horn.

Egypt's rejection of involvement in Ethiopia's internal affairs is a tactical maneuver designed to limit diplomatic blowback while active efforts to encircle Ethiopia continue. By deepening ties with Somalia, Sudan, and Eritrea, Cairo is actively constructing a hostile regional environment, validating Ethiopia's security concerns regarding Egyptian interference.

Cairo continues to maintain an inflexible and coercive stance regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), attempting to restrict Ethiopia's legitimate and sovereign right to utilize its own water resources for national development. Egypt's insistence on dictating Nile governance ignores Ethiopia's equitable resource rights and aims to leverage water security to project power in the region.

On October 1, the African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf issued an official declaration calling upon Egypt, Eritrea, and Ethiopia to exercise restraint amid mounting geopolitical tensions across the Horn of Africa. Three days later, following formal objections from Cairo, the Commission published a

clarification fundamentally altering the character of continental engagement. The clarification explicitly stated that the October 1 statement was “in no way” intended to attribute responsibility for ongoing events to any neighbouring country and described it as a call for de-escalation following diplomatic expulsions.

It further offered individualized reassurance to Egypt, emphasizing Cairo’s status as a founding AU member and an important continental partner. The reversal raises serious questions about the AU’s impartiality, the Commission not only retreated from the ambiguity of its initial statement after pressure from one party, but also singled out Egypt for diplomatic reassurance. By adjusting its language to accommodate Cairo while leaving the broader regional allegations unresolved, the AU risked appearing less like a neutral continental arbiter and more responsive to the diplomatic weight of a powerful member state.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi reaffirmed Egypt’s support for Somalia’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and state institutions during talks with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Cairo’s position strengthens a bilateral relationship increasingly shaped by security interests. Its high-level engagement with Somalia reflects an opportunistic strategy to build anti-Ethiopian leverage in the Horn of Africa. By exploiting tensions between Addis Ababa and Mogadishu, Egypt seeks strategic footholds to pressure Ethiopia on both Nile water rights and Red Sea access.

Egypt hosted leaders from Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea for a four-country summit amid escalating tensions surrounding Ethiopia. represents an explicit effort to institutionalize an anti-Ethiopian coalition along Ethiopia's borders. This gathering confirms Cairo’s active role as a regional disruptor attempting to encircle Ethiopia while it manages internal security and economic development.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi held talks with Sudanese leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan focused on Sudan’s war and possible pathways toward a settlement. Cairo reiterated support for Sudan’s territorial integrity and state institutions. Egypt’s posture keeps it aligned with Khartoum while preserving a central role in mediation, refugee management, border security and the wider Nile strategic balance.

The United Nations Yemen envoy used Cairo for renewed diplomacy over Yemen’s escalation and its regional repercussions. Egyptian officials emphasized maritime navigation through the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb, linking Yemen’s stability directly to international trade and energy flows.

Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd announced plans to resume Suez Canal routing on their AE12 Asia-Mediterranean service. The move offers Egypt a potential recovery in

canal traffic and associated revenues, although routing remains sensitive to Red Sea security.

Egypt and the United Arab Emirates renewed a five-year currency-swap arrangement worth 5 billion dirhams. The mechanism supports bilateral trade and local-currency settlement while reducing some foreign-exchange pressure. For Cairo, the agreement deepens a Gulf economic relationship with strategic dimensions, giving Egypt additional financial support as it manages fiscal pressures alongside expanding regional security commitments.

The United States waived human-rights conditions attached to 320 million dollars in military financing for Egypt, citing national-security interests and Cairo's regional role. The decision reinforces the security foundation of the bilateral relationship. For Egypt, continued access to American military financing supports force modernization and strengthens its capacity to operate amid instability across North Africa, Sudan and the Red Sea.

Egypt condemned Israeli settlers' entry into the Al-Aqsa compound and warned against changes to Jerusalem's established status quo. Cairo's intervention preserves its longstanding diplomatic role on Palestinian affairs and reflects the importance of Jerusalem in Egypt's regional diplomacy. The issue also affects Egypt's relationship with Israel, Arab partners and broader efforts to contain renewed Middle Eastern escalation.

4. Eritrea

An Eritrean delegation led by Hagos Gebrehiwet, head of economic affairs, and Trade and Industry Minister Nesredin Mohammed Saleh met Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty in Cairo on 30 September. According to the Eritrean announcement, discussions covered Egyptian private-sector participation in Eritrea's energy, industry, infrastructure, trade and fisheries sectors, alongside technical and training support from Egypt. The sides agreed to continue consultations on regional issues, but announced no specific projects, funding or implementation timetable.

The meeting's economic agenda also serves a strategic purpose. Cairo is deepening ties with Asmara as part of its effort to build pressure on Ethiopia amid the Nile dispute and tensions over Ethiopia's pursuit of Red Sea access, including at Assab. Eritrea's tightly controlled economy leaves limited scope for substantial foreign investment, so the announcement does not by itself signal a significant commercial opening. For now, the visible alignment with Cairo may carry greater immediate value than the proposed economic cooperation, while the scale of any Egyptian investment remains unclear.

A further sign of Eritrea's expanding diplomatic engagement came in Washington, where Foreign Minister Osman Saleh met U.S. Under Secretary of State Allison Hooker on 1 October and Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Frank Garcia on 2 October. Saleh welcomed the recent lifting of U.S. sanctions and called for renewed cooperation on trade, investment and regional security. The Eritrean account described the discussions as preliminary, with more substantive consultations to follow, but announced no concrete agreements. The meetings came as Washington was rebuilding ties with both Eritrea and Ethiopia after restrictions linked to the Tigray conflict were lifted or allowed to lapse.

Washington appears to be balancing two aims: reducing the risk of renewed Ethiopia–Eritrea conflict while securing its interests around the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb. Yet Eritrea's reported alignment with armed groups opposing Addis Ababa, alongside its support for Sudan's Armed Forces, raises doubts that closer diplomatic ties will bring Asmara's regional conduct into line with U.S. priorities. Egypt's efforts to draw Washington closer to Eritrea also risk making U.S. engagement part of Cairo's wider pressure on Ethiopia over the Nile and Red Sea access. The meetings establish a diplomatic opening, but offer little evidence so far that it has restrained escalation or produced a workable basis for cooperation.

The diplomatic situation deteriorated sharply on 1 October, when Ethiopia ordered ten Eritrean diplomats and one Egyptian diplomat to leave within 48 hours and announced the closure of its embassy in Asmara, citing security concerns and Eritrean hostility. The measures followed explosions heard in Addis Ababa overnight on 30 September–1 October. Ethiopian officials confirmed three blasts, but their cause remains unclear. Eritrea responded on 1 October by severing diplomatic ties with Ethiopia. The sequence links the explosions and the diplomatic escalation in time, but does not establish who caused the blasts or whether they prompted the expulsions.

On 4 October, Ethiopian official Dr. Abraham Belay said Eritrean forces had fought alongside the TPLF in the recent clashes. Eritrean forces have reportedly participated in the fighting, although the scale and operational form of their involvement remain unclear. The expulsions likely reflected Addis Ababa's assessment that Eritrea was directly supporting the armed groups; the blasts may have sharpened those suspicions, but no public evidence links Eritrea to them. Ethiopia's expulsion of an Egyptian diplomat also suggests that Addis Ababa views the crisis in a wider regional context, though it has not publicly explained the grounds for that decision. With diplomatic ties severed, both governments have fewer channels available to manage the escalation.

Against this backdrop, Eritrea joined Egypt, Sudan and Somalia at a quadrilateral summit in New Alamein on 4 October. The leaders agreed to establish a mechanism for continued political consultation and coordination. For Asmara, the meeting was a visible show of alignment at a time of escalating tensions with Ethiopia: following the diplomatic rupture and renewed fighting, it offered a platform to shore up Egyptian support and seek wider diplomatic backing for Eritrea's regional posture. The summit itself, however, announced no specific assistance or endorsement of Eritrean actions on the ground.

For Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea, the alignment reflects mutual but distinct grievances with Ethiopia, giving Asmara diplomatic support as it confronts Addis Ababa. Somalia's participation should be read separately: Mogadishu has its own reasons to coordinate with these states, and its presence does not establish a shared anti-Ethiopian agenda. With Eritrean involvement in the fighting reported but its precise extent unclear, the summit may strengthen Asmara's political cover without confirming material support. Against the backdrop of severed diplomatic ties and rising battlefield tensions, the risk of direct Ethiopia–Eritrea confrontation continues to grow.

5. Djibouti

A representative of Yemen's Refugees Affairs Commission told Al Arabiya that more than 3,793 Yemeni refugees are registered in Djibouti; aid organizations are calling for urgent support amid shortages of food and medicine. The report comes amid a sharp new influx: UNHCR said nearly 3,000 people had arrived from Yemen in less than a week in September, crossing the Bab el-Mandeb. Djibouti's government has identified shelter, sanitation, food distribution and health care as pressing needs around the Obock reception sites.

The influx reflects renewed violence and worsening conditions in Yemen, while fuel shortages there have also constrained people's ability to make the crossing. Djibouti's proximity makes it an immediate refuge, but the rapid arrivals are stretching a response that already faces limits in food, shelter and medical capacity. The situation highlights how instability in Yemen translates into sustained humanitarian pressure on Red Sea neighbours, making timely international support important to the needs of refugees and host communities alike.

On 30 September, Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud made a working visit to Djibouti, where President Ismail Omar Guelleh received him at the presidential palace. The two governments said they discussed bilateral ties, existing cooperation and regional developments, including peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

The meeting was part of Mohamud's wider regional outreach, which also included talks in Addis Ababa and a subsequent visit to Egypt. It reaffirmed Djibouti's role as a regular diplomatic and security partner for Mogadishu amid regional tensions and Somalia's internal political challenges. The public readouts, however, announced no new agreements or specific initiatives.

6. South Sudan

South Sudan's political transition continued to dominate developments this week as preparations intensified for the December national elections. Inter-party dialogue remained underway, with political actors attempting to build consensus around the electoral process. At the same time, opposition groups continued to organize, with four opposition parties reportedly forming a new alliance to coordinate their political activities ahead of the vote. The emergence of a more coordinated opposition could make the electoral contest more competitive, although the broader political environment remains shaped by concerns over civic space, security and the limited time available to prepare for the elections.

President Salva Kiir also travelled to Nairobi for discussions with President William Ruto, with elections and regional stability among the issues on the agenda. The visit additionally highlighted the growing economic dimension of South Sudan–Kenya relations, particularly plans involving the Lamu corridor and oil infrastructure. For Juba, Kenya's infrastructure offers a potential alternative route for exporting and processing South Sudanese crude, reducing the country's heavy dependence on the existing pipeline through Sudan, which has repeatedly been disrupted by the war in Sudan.

Oil remains central to South Sudan's economic and political calculations. Efforts to revive production are gaining momentum as the government seeks to restore one of its most important sources of revenue after disruptions caused by the war in neighboring Sudan. However, analysts have increasingly characterized oil as a political instrument as well as an economic resource. The concentration of oil revenues within the state, combined with weak institutions and political competition, has made control over the sector closely connected to the broader struggle over political power. At the same time, the revival of production could provide much-needed fiscal space for the government if revenues are managed transparently and directed toward public services and economic recovery.

The potential for a more diversified oil export infrastructure through Kenya is therefore strategically important. South Sudan's existing export system remains vulnerable to instability in Sudan, through which much of its crude must pass before reaching international markets. Discussions around Kenya's Lamu port and refinery

infrastructure could eventually provide Juba with greater economic flexibility and reduce the strategic vulnerability created by reliance on a single export corridor. However, such an alternative would require substantial infrastructure investment and sustained political cooperation between South Sudan and Kenya.

Economic pressures remain severe. A recent humanitarian assessment warned that conflict, drought and the country's weak economic conditions are driving increasing humanitarian needs, with parts of the population facing emergency levels of food insecurity and continued risks of famine. Climate shocks are adding another layer of vulnerability, particularly as flooding and drought affect already fragile livelihoods. UNMISS-facilitated discussions have consequently emphasized the relationship between climate shocks, local conflict and peacebuilding, highlighting how environmental pressures can intensify competition over land, water and other resources.

Governance concerns were also highlighted by the outgoing UK envoy, who criticized the continued prioritization of political and security expenditures over investment in basic services and children. His remarks point to a broader challenge facing Juba: the government is entering an electoral period while significant portions of the population continue to face severe humanitarian and economic hardship. The contrast between preparations for a national political transition and persistent deficiencies in public services could become an important issue in the emerging electoral debate.

Meanwhile, the ruling SPLM has begun mobilizing its political structures ahead of the December vote, reportedly instructing party cadres to return to their constituencies. This suggests that the governing party is moving from institutional preparations toward active electoral mobilization. With opposition groups now attempting to coordinate through a new alliance, the political landscape could become more competitive than previous transitional arrangements suggested.

Overall, South Sudan is approaching the December elections amid three interconnected pressures: political competition, economic fragility and continuing humanitarian vulnerability. The government's efforts to revive oil production and strengthen alternative economic links with Kenya could improve its fiscal position, but the benefits will depend on whether additional revenues translate into broader economic recovery and public services. At the political level, the emergence of an opposition alliance and intensified inter-party dialogue suggest that the electoral contest is beginning to take shape. Yet the credibility of the transition will ultimately depend on whether the elections provide meaningful political competition while addressing the deeper governance and security problems that have prolonged South Sudan's transition.

7. Somalia and Somaliland

Somalia

Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre denied that his government pays Al Shabaab to stop attacks on Mogadishu stating in an interview with Dawan TV that the government has never held talks with the group and does not pay it large sums of money so that the capital remains relatively secure and authorities can boast about it. He said the allegations were spread by members of the government of former President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo but did not name them.

Heavy fighting erupted in Baidoa, South West State, early Monday when fighters loyal to ousted Southwest president Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen moved into the city. Federal and regional forces under Speaker turned acting leader Adan Mohamed Nur Madobe fought them with heavy weapons. AFP and Al Jazeera reported fighter jets and drones. A senior army commander, Mohamed Ali, said the army drove the attackers out and inflicted heavy casualties. Roads to hospitals were blocked. dpa, citing MP Hassan Abdinor, put the death toll at at least 23 after more than five hours of fighting and said there were no immediate confirmed civilian deaths. Al Jazeera and dpa framed this as a political power struggle that began when federal forces took Baidoa in March and Laftagareen resigned.

Southwest authorities recast Monday's Baidoa battle as an al-Shabaab attack. On Tuesday, the administration of Speaker Sheikh Adan Mohamed Nur Madobe said government and regional forces had repelled an assault that began with explosive laden vehicles and suicide attackers. It alleged al-Shabaab used explosive drones operated with foreign fighters claimed more than 70 fighters killed including foreigners and said vehicles and weapons were seized. Independent outlets still described the attackers as forces loyal to ousted President Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen. dpa had already reported that a claim of al-Shabaab involvement was rejected by a lawmaker and was not independently verified.

Laftagareen accused Türkiye of airstrikes. His office said the Monday operation was meant to restore order and remove federal aligned forces and accused the federal government and Türkiye of six missile strikes, including Turkish F-16s, killing civilians including four children. An AFP report carried early on 29 September quoted a spokesperson for his forces denying any link to al-Shabaab and naming Türkiye as supporting federal troops with F-16s. Neither the aircraft identity nor responsibility for individual strikes was independently established. MSF's count from the fighting remained three dead, including a healthcare worker, and 69 injured.

Direct polls were held in Galmudug and Hirshabelle. Voters cast ballots for regional assemblies and local councils in 21 districts: 11 in Galmudug and 10 in Hirshabelle. The National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission opened the vote from Dhusamareb. Hirshabelle's poll was its first direct regional election. Galmudug's was a rerun of the 30 July vote, annulled by the Supreme Court on 24 August for irregularities that the court said affected the result. In the annulled count, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's Justice and Solidarity Party had taken 63 of 89 regional seats; Towfiiq finished second with 12. Mohamud called the day a positive milestone and said voting in Mudug, Galgaduud, Hiiraan, and Middle Shabelle was peaceful. Results were not out the same day.

Hundreds demonstrated in Beledweyne against the Hirshabelle vote calling the election one sided and demanding a process agreed by all stakeholders. APA linked the protest to opposition to the candidacy of Hirshabelle President Ali Gudlawe Hussein who had received a Justice and Unity Party candidate card, and to a Hawadle claim on the state presidency. APA also reported that the Tawfiq Party rejected voting in Balanballe, Galmudug.

From 1 October the federal government needed the national identity card for domestic travel. Passengers in Garowe were refused boarding to Mogadishu and Nairobi. Puntland has no NIRA registration offices, so residents cannot obtain the card. NIRA had said in September the rule would start on this date. The agency said it had registered more than 1.5 million people since 2023, toward a target of 15 million by 2029.

Ethiopia plans to withdraw more than 3,000 troops from Somalia as fighting escalates in its north, Bloomberg News reported on Wednesday, citing people familiar with the matter. The pullout could begin in the coming days or weeks, Bloomberg said. The troops would be redeployed to areas affected by fighting between government forces, Tigray forces and allied Fano insurgents, it said. A Somali defence ministry official said Mogadishu had not been informed of any such plan. Neither Ethiopia, Somalia nor the African Union has officially announced any change to Ethiopia's deployment.

Puntland Maritime Police Force troops have freed the Palau flagged tanker MT Honour from Somali pirates in the Bandarbayla district days after releasing the SIBU 1 tanker, in a fast moving push against piracy off the regional coast, Daily Somalia reported on Tuesday. The MT Honour was chartered by Puntland businesspeople and hijacked on April 21 while en route to the capital, Mogadishu. The rescue was a planned operation. At least two pirates holding the vessel were injured, and all the others were arrested. The operation came just days after Puntland forces freed the SIBU 1 tanker.

Pirates killed five crew members aboard the hijacked oil tanker MT Honour 25 before Puntland security forces rescued the vessel off Somalia's coast, the semi autonomous state's information ministry said on Tuesday. Three Pakistanis, one Myanmar national and one Indian were killed before the rescue operation began, the ministry said. Four other crew members, three Pakistanis and one Indian, were wounded. Security forces freed the Palau-flagged tanker, which was carrying 18,500 barrels of oil and captured 16 suspected pirates, the ministry said.

Mohamud met Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Addis Ababa on Tuesday for talks on bilateral relations and the political and security situation in the region. The president made a one day working visit, was received at Bole by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and held talks at the prime minister's office on bilateral relations, Horn of Africa security and trade and diplomacy. He returned to Mogadishu the same day. Villa Somalia and the Somali National News Agency gave no agreements.

A day later he met Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh in Djibouti City where discussions centred on bilateral ties, security, economic and political cooperation, and Horn of Africa stability. Both governments confirmed the meeting. No agreements were announced. It followed the 29 September meeting with Ethiopia's Abiy Ahmed.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud reached Egypt on Friday for the Alamein Africa Forum, running 2–4 October after stops in Addis Ababa on 29 September and Djibouti on 30 September. His office said he would pitch Somali investment and hold bilateral meetings. The meeting with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi was reported for Saturday, 3 October not Friday.

On the sidelines of the Alamein Africa Forum, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi received Mohamud and restated Egypt's support for Somalia's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity. The Egyptian presidency said the two agreed to step up coordination on the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Aden, Bab al-Mandab, and the Red Sea, and discussed developments inside Somalia. Sisi urged a national consensus to protect state stability. Egypt said the relationship had been a comprehensive strategic partnership since January 2025. No new troop or basing agreement was announced that day.

In an Al Jazeera interview, Mohamud said Somalia would not accept an Israeli presence under any circumstances and that Israel was planning a naval base in Berbera and use of the airport in order to sit closer to the Gulf states and Iran.

On Ethiopia he said relations were good and that Somalia was ready to let Ethiopia use two or three Somali ports for trade, under Somali sovereignty and by direct agreement. He said Addis Ababa had asked for access but had not filed a formal request. No such

deal was announced after the 29 September Addis meeting.

In the same interview Mohamud called the United States Somalia's strongest partner against "terrorism," said al-Shabaab had no presence in the major cities, and said the group could not take control of the country. Al-Shabaab still holds rural territory in southern and central Somalia.

In a clip published Sunday he accused Yemen's Houthis of destabilising the region and disrupting Bab al-Mandeb, and said they were "not in a position" to bring Yemen peace.

Algeria, at the UN, accused Israel of trying to divide Somalia. Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf told the General Assembly that Israel was seeking to divide Somalia alongside criticism of Israeli actions in Gaza, Syria, and Lebanon.

The British Embassy in Mogadishu said on 30 September it was concerned by the Baidoa fighting urged all parties to de escalate and talk and warned that further violence would worsen a humanitarian situation already facing possible El Niño floods. Somali outlets carried that appeal into 1 October coverage alongside the troop story.

Somalia condemned a strike on a Medina power station. The Foreign Ministry, in a statement called an attack on the Taibah distribution station that feeds the Prophet's Mosque a violation of Saudi sovereignty. The Saudi-led coalition blamed the Houthis; the Houthis denied it. One transformer was knocked out and the wider grid was not, the coalition said.

U.S. Africa Command published a strike notice. On 28 September, AFRICOM said that in coordination with the Federal Government of Somalia, it had struck al-Shabaab on 24 September near Quumbi also spelled Qumbi about 90 km north northwest of Kismayo. No units, battle-damage assessment, or casualty figures were released.

At least 216 civilians in Somalia were recorded as killed or injured by U.S. air operations between 2007 and May 2025, according to an investigation supported by Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ). The investigation described the figure as the minimum number of civilian casualties its researchers were able to document in the incidents reviewed. It does not mean the United States has confirmed each casualty.

Somaliland

Public debate continued over proposed amendments to Citizenship Law No. 22/2002. Somaliland Post reported a growing argument concerning changes to the law which the House of Representatives passed in March 2002 and which was signed in June 2002. The current rule ties citizenship by descent to persons resident in British Somaliland on 26 June 1960 or earlier, through the father. A draft sent to the House in May 2025, still under review after more than sixteen months, would open a path for people who settled in the 1990s and for investors. The existing law already permits aliens and refugees to apply after ten years of lawful residence if they meet character, tax, and renunciation tests. The House had not voted on 29 September. It later rejected the amendments on 4 October.

Most leaders and senior officials of the HORSEED political association signed an agreement on Saturday and joined the ruling WADDANI party after long talks. They were received at WADDANI headquarters by chairman Hirsi Ali Haji Hassan and deputy chairmen Mohamed Haji Yusuf Waabeye, Abubakar Abdirahman Good and Abdirashid Mohamed Haji Yusuf. Former information minister Osman Abdullahi Sahardiid was among the hosts.

In an interview published on 3 October, President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro said China opposes Somaliland's Taiwan ties and that Hargeisa would keep them as a government choosing its own partners. Representative offices have existed since 2020. On Israel he said there is currently no Israeli military presence, and he did not rule out future talks.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected claims by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud concerning Berbera and Israel. The ministry called his Al Jazeera interview misleading and said Mogadishu has no authority over Somaliland's foreign relations or to speak for its people and no authority to dictate its partnerships. It said ties with Israel are sovereign decisions of two states, aimed at cooperation and stability, and that claims Berbera would be used to attack other countries are unfounded. It restated independence on 26 June 1960, restoration of sovereignty on 18 May 1991, and support for negotiated Ethiopian sea access. It said Mogadishu's campaign against the January 2024 Ethiopia–Somaliland memorandum contradicts that offer. The ministry condemned threats of force..

Somaliland had asked the United States and Israel for help acquiring air defence pointing to Turkish drones and aircraft operating from Somalia and to threats from Yemen. No agreement was announced. Defence Minister Mohamed Yusuf Ali said in June that Israel was training police and soldiers and denied a base or base talks. This account is treated as an unconfirmed claim.

8. Yemen

Military activity remained focused on Taiz province and the surrounding high ground and supply routes linking it to Aden and the Red Sea coast near Bab el-Mandeb and Mokha. Secondary fighting and airstrikes continued in Saada, al-Jawf, Marib and other areas. Cross-border exchanges between Houthis and Saudi targets persisted. Government forces conducted airstrikes and ground operations against Houthi positions, weapons sites and gatherings in Taiz districts including al-Wazi'iyah and Hayfan. Houthis pressed advances on hilltops and roads. Saudi airstrikes hit targets in Taiz, Saada, al-Jawf and elsewhere; airstrikes also struck Sanaa. UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg noted a significant intensification of fighting in Taiz, reported casualties and infrastructure damage, and called on the Houthis to halt their offensive. Earlier late-September talks involving Saudi and Omani delegates in Sanaa on a draft peace text had not produced a cessation of hostilities.

Clashes intensified around Taiz across multiple fronts. Government sources reported airstrikes, artillery exchanges and operations targeting Houthi positions southeast and west of the city. Houthis launched coordinated attacks that government officers described as among their most aggressive in years. Strikes continued on Sanaa and other Houthi-held areas. Displacement and casualties rose.

Houthi forces then captured sections of the main Taiz–Aden supply route, including areas around al-Safiya and al-Turbah, effectively encircling government-held Taiz. Sources on both sides reported more than 70 killed in the preceding day's fighting in Taiz and Lahj.

Presidential Leadership Council head Rashad al-Alimi announced the start of military operations to retake all remaining Houthi-held territory and extend state authority across the country. Government forces reported large numbers of targeting operations against Houthi sites, movements and capabilities. The Saudi-led coalition pledged full operational support to the Yemeni military.

Houthis claimed missile and drone attacks on Saudi Aramco facilities in the Riyadh area and other sites, describing them as responses to Saudi strikes. Saudi statements affirmed the right to self-defence and continued support for government forces. Fighting and airstrikes continued on the Taiz fronts and other areas. Saudi Arabia hosted talks with Pakistan and Turkey under existing defence arrangements (linked to the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement) to address Houthi attacks on the kingdom and broader regional developments. Foreign ministers and defence officials from the three countries coordinated responses.

Houthis retained coastal gains near Bab el-Mandeb and Mokha while tightening pressure on Taiz by severing its primary southern supply link. Government forces, supported by Saudi airstrikes, shifted from local containment operations to a declared nationwide recovery campaign. Cross-border strikes continued.

Diplomatic channels (Oman mediation, UN calls for de-escalation, and earlier Sanaa contacts) remained active but secondary to the military escalation. Geopolitically, Saudi coordination with Pakistan and Turkey intensified, reflecting efforts to broaden regional support amid limited direct external military intervention. Displacement and humanitarian pressure continued to increase as civilians left the main fighting zones.

9. Kenya

Kenya is moving toward the 2027 election with major economic projects increasingly becoming part of the domestic political debate. President William Ruto is likely to present projects such as the proposed Dangote refinery in Lamu as evidence of industrialisation, job creation and stronger regional influence. The opposition, however, is expected to focus more heavily on transparency, land ownership, public obligations and whether the benefits of these projects will actually reach ordinary citizens. This gives the Lamu refinery political importance beyond its economic value, particularly if its progress becomes part of the wider argument over the government's record before the August 2027 vote.

Beyond domestic politics, the proposed \$16 billion Dangote refinery has become one of the clearest signs of Kenya's wider regional ambitions. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed travelled to Kenya for the September 30 groundbreaking alongside President Ruto and Aliko Dangote. The refinery is expected to process up to 700,000 barrels of crude oil per day and serve markets across East and Central Africa. Ethiopia has shown interest in acquiring a stake, while regional governments have also been invited to participate.

The project is closely tied to the wider Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport corridor, giving it importance beyond fuel production. If completed, it could strengthen Lamu as an alternative commercial gateway for landlocked countries in the region. For Ethiopia, participation in Lamu would support a broader effort to diversify fuel supply routes. Ethiopia continues to depend heavily on Djibouti for access to the sea, but an additional connection through Kenya could provide greater flexibility and reduce the risks associated with relying on one main corridor.

This helps explain Abiy Ahmed's presence at the groundbreaking. The refinery is being presented not simply as a Kenyan project, but as a regional platform that could

connect several East African economies. Its success would therefore depend not only on Kenya's domestic market, but also on whether neighbouring countries become customers, investors or long term users of the infrastructure.

Rwanda's new petroleum arrangement with Kenya supports this wider strategy. Rwanda recently received a major shipment of refined petroleum products through the Kenya Pipeline Company's Kipevu Oil Terminal in Mombasa. Kigali sees the arrangement as a way to strengthen fuel reserves and reduce exposure to disruptions in international markets. Rwanda is also developing another import route through Tanzania, showing that it is pursuing several options rather than depending on one corridor.

For Kenya, the arrangement strengthens the importance of the Northern Corridor and creates a larger potential market for future energy infrastructure. Kenyan officials have also linked Rwanda's future fuel demand to the planned Lamu refinery. This suggests that Nairobi hopes to move beyond serving mainly as a transit country and become a more important regional petroleum supplier.

Uganda's position is more cautious. President Yoweri Museveni has supported the Lamu refinery in principle but has not yet committed Uganda to investing in the project. Uganda is already developing its own refinery at Hoima and is connected to the East African Crude Oil Pipeline through Tanzania. Kampala therefore has to balance support for Lamu with its own national energy plans and existing commitments.

The situation shows that East African infrastructure projects are also part of a wider competition between regional corridors. Lamu, Mombasa, Tanga and Hoima are connected to efforts by governments to attract trade, investment and petroleum flows. Kenya therefore has to convince neighbouring countries that the Lamu refinery can complement their own plans rather than directly compete with them.

If completed at the proposed scale, the refinery could significantly strengthen Kenya's economic position. The project is expected to create tens of thousands of jobs and could also generate large amounts of electricity. Lamu could develop into an important petroleum and industrial centre, with possible expansion into fertiliser, chemicals and other related industries. This would strengthen the economic importance of Kenya's northern coast and increase the strategic value of Lamu Port.

The United States has also welcomed the project. Its response is notable because it connects economic development in Lamu with the wider security importance of Kenya's northern coast and the military infrastructure around Manda Bay. This creates

a direct link between Kenya's economic ambitions and the security environment surrounding the coast.

The refinery still faces important challenges. Local communities have raised concerns over land ownership, compensation, resettlement and environmental procedures. There are also broader questions over financing, regional participation and whether such a large project can be completed according to the announced timetable. These issues could become increasingly important as the project moves from the groundbreaking stage toward actual construction.

Kenya's continued military role in Somalia adds another dimension to this regional strategy. Kenya Defence Forces remain involved in the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia, particularly in Sector Two. For Kenya, developments in southern Somalia have direct consequences for national security because Al Shabaab activity and instability across the border can affect northeastern Kenya and the coastal region. This becomes more important as Lamu gains economic significance. The stronger Kenya's investment in ports, energy infrastructure and transport corridors becomes, the more closely regional security and economic policy get further linked.

At the same time, Kenya continues to maintain strong relations with major external powers. China remains an important partner in infrastructure, transport, renewable energy and trade, while Kenyan officials have also highlighted growing access for agricultural exports such as coffee, tea and avocados to the Chinese market. These ties remain important to Nairobi's broader economic strategy. Kenya also continues to maintain close economic and security relations with the United States. Rather than depending on one external partner, Nairobi appears to be pursuing several relationships at once. Chinese investment and market access can therefore exist alongside Western security cooperation and economic engagement, giving Kenya greater room to manoeuvre between competing international partners.

Taken together, these developments show Kenya trying to turn its geographic position into greater regional influence. Energy infrastructure, ports, transport corridors, security cooperation and foreign partnerships are increasingly being connected under the same broader strategy. Rwanda's growing use of Kenyan infrastructure, Ethiopia's interest in Lamu and Uganda's cautious approach all show that Kenya has important opportunities, but also faces strong regional competition. The main test will be whether these large projects move beyond announcements and begin producing visible economic results, especially as the country moves closer to the 2027 election.

10. The Gulf Countries

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's political and security posture during the week was marked by intensified diplomatic coordination with the United States and the UAE, a firmer warning to the Houthis over threats to the Kingdom, and efforts to operationalize the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement. Riyadh's diplomacy increasingly focused on protecting maritime security and managing the Yemen conflict while strengthening coordination with regional and international partners. Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan held talks with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington on maritime safety in the Strait of Hormuz and the escalating conflict involving Yemen. At the same time, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman received UAE Vice President Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed in Riyadh for discussions on regional cooperation, while Prince Faisal also engaged with senior members of the U.S. Senate Armed Services and Intelligence Committees. These contacts reflected Riyadh's effort to coordinate its response across both bilateral and regional channels.

The Crown Prince's annual address to the Shoura Council further clarified the Kingdom's security position. He emphasized that Gulf security and stability were indivisible and warned that Saudi Arabia would respond decisively to threats against its security. He specifically criticized the Houthi movement for choosing what he characterized as chaos over regional peace, while simultaneously reaffirming Saudi Arabia's commitment to diplomatic de-escalation. The combination of a firm deterrence message and continued diplomatic engagement indicated that Riyadh was seeking to prevent further attacks while keeping political channels open.

The Makkah Joint Defense Agreement also moved toward a more active security role. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar announced preparations for an emergency meeting of the pact's Strategic Political and Defence Committee in Riyadh, involving Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Türkiye. The meeting was intended to coordinate the three countries' response to the recent increase in Houthi drone and missile attacks against Saudi infrastructure and to examine collective security measures under the agreement.

UAE

The United Arab Emirates concentrated its political and diplomatic activity on multilateral engagement, regional security consultations, and managing growing tensions involving Iran. During the United Nations General Assembly, UAE Minister of State Khalifa Shaheen Al-Marar called on international actors to prioritize diplomacy, dialogue, and mediation as mechanisms for reducing regional conflicts. He

also reiterated the UAE's position that disputes over Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa should be resolved peacefully through bilateral negotiations or the International Court of Justice. Alongside this position, he called for an unconditional ceasefire and a civilian-led political process in Sudan.

Abu Dhabi also hosted an important regional security engagement following an unannounced visit by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to meet President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. According to the material, the discussions expanded into a broader regional security consultation involving senior officials from ten countries, including the United States, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Egypt. The consultations focused particularly on intelligence cooperation and maritime security around the Strait of Hormuz. At the United Nations, meanwhile, tensions emerged between Emirati, Sudanese, and Chadian representatives through exchanges concerning external involvement and the humanitarian situation in Sudan.

Security concerns subsequently extended to aviation and relations with Iran. UAE Diplomatic Adviser Anwar Gargash described an attempted mid-air safety incident involving a flydubai flight bound for Tel Aviv as an act of terrorism. Iranian officials subsequently issued warnings to Abu Dhabi regarding its regional alignments and cooperation frameworks following the UAE's engagement with Israeli leadership. Against this backdrop, aviation and maritime corridors around the Gulf remained under heightened monitoring, with additional security checks and operational adjustments affecting commercial carriers operating from UAE hubs.

Qatar

Qatar's diplomatic agenda focused on maintaining regional communication channels, strengthening bilateral relations, and sustaining its role as an intermediary amid continuing regional tensions. Doha held its third round of political consultations with Mexico, discussing trade, investment, cultural cooperation, and collaboration in mediation and dispute settlement. Qatar also renewed direct high-level communication with Egypt through a phone call between Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdel Aty. The discussion was aimed at improving bilateral coordination and aligning positions on regional de-escalation and maritime security.

Qatar simultaneously defended its diplomatic role amid renewed criticism from Israel. Following tensions at the United Nations General Assembly, Qatari officials rejected accusations directed at Doha and reaffirmed its position as a mediator and humanitarian facilitator. Qatari leaders also continued to criticize what they described as obstructive Israeli policies toward Gaza and called for international pressure to

uphold humanitarian and ceasefire commitments. At the same time, Doha maintained its role as an intermediary between Washington and Tehran, with the Foreign Ministry emphasizing the importance of continued communication and an inclusive regional security architecture involving both Gulf Cooperation Council states and Iran.

Security concerns remained closely connected to the wider regional crisis. Qatar warned that threats against regional energy infrastructure and sovereign institutions undermine international law and regional stability. The country also participated in the ministerial meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in Rome, reaffirming its participation in regional counter-terrorism cooperation and security efforts in Iraq and Syria.

11. Africa and The Sahel Region

Mali

Mali remained under consolidated military rule while facing continuing pressure from armed insurgencies and a deteriorating humanitarian environment. The government of Assimi Goïta continued to rely on security control and regional cooperation through the Alliance of Sahel States, but the persistence of armed activity and food insecurity continued to limit the government's ability to stabilize the country.

Security pressure remained significant from both Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin and Tuareg separatist factions associated with the Azawad Liberation Front. The military government and Russian Africa Corps maintained control over Bamako and major garrison corridors, while armed groups continued to restrict movement and access in parts of the countryside.

The security situation was compounded by a serious humanitarian and food crisis. The September WFP country brief identified acute food insecurity and severe nutritional shortages, particularly in isolated northern and central areas where conflict and blockades have disrupted access to food and humanitarian assistance.

Politically, the military government continued consolidating its rule without establishing a clear democratic transition timetable. Competitive political activity and civic freedoms remained restricted, while Mali continued to deepen its alignment with Burkina Faso and Niger through the Alliance of Sahel States following the three countries' withdrawal from ECOWAS and their broader distancing from established regional and Western institutions.

Niger

Niger entered the week under heightened security pressure following deadly attacks against security forces and continued political uncertainty after the attempted military mutiny. The government remained focused on maintaining control over the capital and preserving military cohesion while relying increasingly on regional and external security partnerships.

More than 50 members of Niger's security forces were reportedly killed in two separate attacks in the western part of the country. The attacks highlighted the continued operational capacity of Islamic State affiliated militants in areas where Nigerien forces face persistent insurgent pressure.

The military government also continued to manage the consequences of the attempted mutiny in Niamey. Internal security measures remained heightened, with the authorities relying on foreign security support, including Russian assistance, while attempting to preserve command structures and prevent further challenges to the military leadership.

Niger's external security relationships also became more visible during the period. Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune confirmed that Algeria had deployed fighter aircraft to Niamey in late August to assist in preventing the mutiny against General Abdourahamane Tiani's government. At the same time, Niger continued its political and military realignment within the Alliance of Sahel States with Mali and Burkina Faso, maintaining its separation from ECOWAS and traditional Western partnerships.

DRC

The Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to face overlapping security, diplomatic, and public health pressures. Fighting in the east remained unresolved, while diplomatic discussions at the United Nations focused on the positions of Kinshasa and Kigali and the implementation of commitments concerning armed groups operating in eastern Congo.

The UN Security Council addressed the continuing conflict in eastern DRC alongside regional tensions and the humanitarian consequences of the fighting. Discussions included a Congolese proposal concerning the voluntary disarmament and cantonment of the FDLR. Rwanda continued to demand that Kinshasa fulfill its commitments under the Washington Accords, particularly regarding the neutralization of the FDLR, while Council representatives continued to call on Rwanda to end support for M23 and

withdraw from Congolese territory.

On the ground, armed violence in North Kivu and South Kivu continued to produce displacement and disrupt humanitarian operations. Nearly 19,000 displaced people reportedly fled the Kigonze transit camp because of violence and intimidation, while insecurity also continued to affect mining areas in Lualaba, where illegal activity and security incidents threatened mining concessions despite government efforts to strengthen state control.

The security crisis was accompanied by a severe public health emergency. The Ebola outbreak continued to expand, with confirmed cases reportedly surpassing 8,000 and deaths approaching 4,000. Insecurity in North Kivu significantly complicated surveillance, treatment, and containment efforts. The killing of a ruling-party official in Butembo after he publicly supported Ebola prevention measures further illustrated the difficult environment in which health authorities were operating.

Chad

Chad's political and security environment remained closely tied to the wider Sudan conflict, with diplomatic tensions over alleged external involvement in the war occurring alongside growing pressure from refugee movements and declining humanitarian resources. At the same time, N'Djamena strengthened its bilateral engagement with Egypt, particularly in the areas of regional security, development, and health cooperation.

The diplomatic environment was dominated by exchanges at the United Nations General Assembly between representatives of Chad, Sudan, and the UAE over alleged external involvement in the Sudan war. Sudan accused Chad of facilitating logistical support for the Rapid Support Forces, while the Chadian representative firmly rejected the allegations and maintained that Chad was pursuing strict neutrality and would not allow its territory to be used for the military objectives of any party to the conflict.

Chad simultaneously deepened its bilateral relationship with Egypt. During the Alamein-Africa Forum, the foreign ministers of the two countries emphasized the implementation of directives from Presidents Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Mahamat Idriss Déby concerning regional peace, security, and development. The two sides also signed a memorandum of understanding on health and medical supply regulation, adding a practical institutional component to their broader security and political cooperation.

The humanitarian situation along Chad's eastern border remained a major security concern. More than 55,000 Sudanese refugees had reportedly entered Chad since the beginning of the year, while the rate of arrivals increased sharply, placing additional

pressure on border management and humanitarian infrastructure. The funding crisis further complicated the situation, with UNHCR warning that approximately 319,000 refugees faced serious vulnerabilities and delays in registration and access to essential services.

Domestically, President Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno continued to exercise consolidated political control. Civic space remained tightly managed, while security forces maintained restrictive measures toward unauthorized mobilization and movements outside designated humanitarian corridors.

Central African Republic

The Central African Republic remained focused on consolidating its post-electoral political order while continuing to manage localized armed violence along several border areas. International engagement remained particularly important as discussions continued over the future configuration of MINUSCA and the country's wider security and development needs.

The United Nations Security Council incorporated the Central African Republic into its October agenda ahead of discussions concerning the renewal and possible reconfiguration of the MINUSCA mandate. International partners continued to debate a more flexible and potentially smaller UN presence, while Central African representatives argued against abrupt reductions because of continuing security vulnerabilities. The African Union Peace and Security Council also maintained coordination with the UN over humanitarian pressures and support for the country's National Development Plan.

Security problems persisted particularly in the southeast and northwest. Armed elements, including remnants of the Lord's Resistance Army and local self-defense groups, continued to conduct ambushes along routes connecting Zémio and Djéma, although Central African forces backed by Russian personnel had recently conducted operations to rescue abducted civilians. In Ouham Prefecture, an armed incursion near Bossangoa caused civilian casualties and prompted preventive displacement.

The conflict in Sudan also continued to create spillover risks along CAR's northeastern border. Fighting involving forces associated with the RSF affected the tri-border environment and placed additional logistical pressure on the delivery of medical supplies to remote border stations. At the same time, CAR maintained cross-border health surveillance in response to the spread of the Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak from neighboring areas of the DRC.

Domestically, the government continued efforts to consolidate the institutional framework of the Seventh Republic following the recent electoral cycle. The administration focused on public services, youth employment, and greater state control over natural resources. Alongside these political priorities, CAR also advanced regional energy cooperation through CEMAC initiatives intended to improve energy data coordination and attract infrastructure investment in response to persistent electricity shortages.

12. North Africa

Libya

Libya's High Council of State rejected Law No. 4 of 2026, which amended provisions governing presidential elections. The council described the legislation as unconstitutional and called for electoral rules to be established through an agreed institutional process. It reaffirmed support for simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections and urged further consultations between the House of Representatives and the High Council of State.

US Africa adviser Massad Boulos said Washington supported reunifying Libya's institutions and advancing a path toward national elections. Boulos discussed the US position during meetings connected to Libya's political process. Libya's Interior Minister Imad al-Trabelsi separately held talks with American officials on security cooperation, migration management, and bilateral coordination during his Washington visit, according to Libyan officials.

Libyan Interior Minister Imad al-Trabelsi met US National Security Council official Wayne Wahl in Washington to discuss security cooperation and coordination. The discussions covered bilateral security arrangements and migration issues. The same period saw Libya's Government of National Unity sign a cooperation memorandum with the United Nations Development Programme covering institutional cooperation within the civil service and engagement with international development partners.

Libya's Arabian Gulf Oil Company announced that well EE1HR-80 at the Majid oilfield had returned to production after nine years offline. The company reported output of 5,322 barrels per day through natural flow and said production testing recorded zero associated water. The announcement followed efforts by Libya's oil companies to restore previously inactive wells and increase available crude production.

Algeria

President Abdelmadjid Tebboune addressed the African Union's High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on South Sudan, calling for continued international support for the country's political transition ahead of planned presidential elections. Tebboune reaffirmed Algeria's commitment to South Sudan and continued Algerian participation in the African Union mechanism established to support peace, political dialogue, and institutional stability there.

Energy ministers from Algeria, Tunisia, Italy, Austria, and Germany signed the Algiers Ministerial Declaration supporting the SouthH2 green hydrogen corridor. The proposed project would transport renewable hydrogen from Algeria through Tunisia to Italy, Austria, and Germany. The participating governments also agreed to establish technical support arrangements for feasibility studies, infrastructure planning, and further development of the proposed cross-Mediterranean energy corridor.

President Abdelmadjid Tebboune said Algeria had deployed fighter jets to Niger during an attempted coup. He said the aircraft were sent after unrest in Niamey and described the deployment as a response to developments affecting Niger's stability. The disclosure provided Algeria's first public confirmation of direct military involvement during the episode surrounding attacks on government and military sites.

Algeria joined Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, and Oman in an OPEC+ meeting that maintained production levels for November. The seven producers reviewed global oil market conditions and reaffirmed their commitment to the group's production agreement. The countries scheduled their next meeting for November 1 to review market developments and determine future production arrangements.

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13. Middle East

Israel-Iran

Washington and Tehran continued indirect discussions concerning a possible framework for ending the confrontation involving Iran and reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Proposals under discussion reportedly included a ceasefire, sanctions relief, the release of Iranian funds and renewed nuclear negotiations. Israel remained closely involved in the surrounding regional security environment as diplomatic discussions proceeded alongside continued military preparations.

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf warned that regional infrastructure could face attack if Iran's security was not guaranteed. He linked the warning to oil exports and broader regional security conditions while discussions between Iran and the United States continued. The statement added to concerns over possible consequences for infrastructure and energy facilities across the wider Middle East.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly shared Israeli intelligence concerning renewed Iranian nuclear activity with UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed during their meeting in Abu Dhabi. The information was reported to include construction activity at the Pickaxe Mountain facility near Natanz. The UAE's official account of the meeting focused on bilateral and regional relations and did not publicly provide details of the intelligence discussion.

The Israel Defense Forces reported completing an operation in Mansouri in southern Lebanon aimed at Hezbollah infrastructure. The military said the operation destroyed

hundreds of sites, including tunnels and rocket-related facilities, and reported discovering weapons systems in the area. Israeli authorities described the activity as part of continuing operations directed at Hezbollah capabilities in southern Lebanon.

The Israel Defense Forces reported launching an interceptor against a suspicious aerial target over southern Lebanon while Israeli troops were conducting operations in the area. According to the military, no warning sirens were activated because the target did not pose a threat to Israeli civilian communities. The circumstances surrounding the aerial activity remained under examination by Israeli authorities.

Israeli forces said they intercepted a drone that had crossed from Jordan carrying weapons. The military reported that the aircraft was carrying nine Kalashnikov rifles, magazines and a pistol. Israeli authorities said surveillance systems detected the aircraft before forces located it. The weapons and drone were transferred to Israeli police for further investigation into the suspected smuggling operation.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that Israel had indications that hostile actors could attempt attacks before the parliamentary election. Speaking during a military visit, he said Israeli forces were prepared to respond to threats from multiple directions. The statement came amid heightened regional tensions and increased security attention surrounding the approaching national election.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid received a security briefing concerning possible attacks on several fronts before the election. Netanyahu's office said the briefing involved senior security personnel and included detailed information. Lapid subsequently called for public security information to be communicated through established national security mechanisms. The episode brought security assessments into the political environment surrounding the election campaign.

Hamas confirmed the death of Izz al-Din al-Bik, identified as commander of its Northern Gaza Brigade, following an Israeli strike in Gaza City. Hamas said he had previously served in the brigade's intelligence structure before assuming command. Israeli officials said he had been involved in attack planning and recruitment activities.

The Israeli military reported that an airstrike in Gaza City killed Ammar Mahmoud Muhammad al-Sharafi, whom it identified as a company commander in Hamas's military wing. The military said he had participated in efforts to rebuild Hamas military capabilities and had been involved in attacks against Israeli forces. Palestinian sources reported additional casualties following the strike.

The Israeli military said a Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative involved in rocket activity was killed in an Israeli strike in Khan Younis. Israeli authorities identified the

individual as Bilal Mahmoud Suleiman Samiri and said he had participated in attacks and ambushes involving Israeli forces. The announcement formed part of continuing Israeli military operations in Gaza.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Israel's naval base at Ashdod and said Israel would strengthen its naval capabilities. Defense officials briefed him on maritime security challenges and naval operations, including activities in the southern sector. Netanyahu also referred to the broader maritime environment involving the Strait of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb and Israel's Mediterranean shipping routes.

The Pentagon awarded Raytheon a provisional multiyear contract valued at approximately \$20.7 billion to accelerate production of AIM-120 AMRAAM missiles. The decision followed increased demand for air-defense and air-combat capabilities after U.S. military operations in the Middle East and continuing support for Ukraine. The production increase has implications for the broader defense environment surrounding Israel.

Israel Aerospace Industries reported a record defense order backlog and outlined continued development of integrated systems combining radar, missile defense, unmanned platforms and other capabilities. Company leadership said demand remained strong across international markets. The announcement reflected sustained activity in Israel's defense industry and continued emphasis on integrated technologies across several operational domains.

A FlyDubai flight traveling from Dubai to Tel Aviv made an emergency landing in Saudi Arabia after the co-pilot attacked the captain inside the cockpit. Passengers and reserve pilots helped regain control of the aircraft. Israeli officials described the incident as a suspected attempt to crash the aircraft, while authorities in the United Arab Emirates began investigating the circumstances.

Saudi Arabia declined an Israeli request to permit Israeli military aircraft to collect passengers stranded after the FlyDubai emergency landing. Saudi authorities subsequently facilitated arrangements surrounding the passengers and detained co-pilot. The episode highlighted practical limitations in security cooperation between Israel and Saudi Arabia despite expanding contacts involving regional security, aviation and diplomatic coordination.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered a comprehensive review of security procedures governing foreign civilian flights arriving in Israel following the FlyDubai incident. The review was assigned to an examiner appointed by the National Security Council. Israeli authorities said the assessment would examine existing aviation-

security arrangements and determine whether additional procedures were required for incoming international flights.

The United Arab Emirates confirmed that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had met President Mohamed bin Zayed in Abu Dhabi. The Emirati government said the discussions addressed bilateral relations and regional developments. The meeting took place amid intensified regional security concerns and was also accompanied by reports concerning information allegedly provided by Israel regarding Iran, which Israeli and Emirati statements treated differently.

Britain's Green Party voted to classify Zionism as a form of racism and renewed its support for a single democratic state in historic Palestine. The Israeli government criticized the decision, and Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar barred party leader Zack Polanski from entering Israel. The development generated further discussion in Britain concerning the party's position on Israel and Palestine.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Britain remained an ally while criticizing policies adopted by the British government toward Israel. His comments followed continuing disagreements involving Gaza and settlement-related measures. Netanyahu's statement maintained the importance of the bilateral relationship while reflecting differences between the two governments over Middle Eastern policy and Israel's conduct of the regional conflict.

Israel's Supreme Court overturned the Central Elections Committee's decision to bar the Ra'am and Joint List Arab political lists from participating in the parliamentary election. The court also reinstated Knesset member Ofer Cassif. The decisions followed legal arguments concerning election eligibility and political expression and preserved the participation of the two principal Arab-majority political lists.

Balad leader Sami Abu Shehadeh withdrew his candidacy for the parliamentary election after the Supreme Court indicated that his disqualification was likely to remain in effect. The case concerned comments he had made about the October 7, 2023 attack. The decision occurred alongside the court's ruling restoring the two major Arab political lists for the election.

Reports concerning warnings allegedly received by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu before the October 7, 2023 attack became a significant issue in Israel's election campaign. Netanyahu disputed the allegations, while reporting cited claims that officials from Arab states had conveyed concerns before the attack. The issue has focused attention on intelligence assessments, government responsibility and the continuing political debate surrounding October 7.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu filed a defamation lawsuit seeking NIS 2.6 million from Israeli media organizations and journalists over reports concerning alleged warnings before the October 7 attack. The case adds a legal dimension to an ongoing political dispute over the government's handling of intelligence warnings and responsibility for security failures preceding the attack.

Polling showed a closely divided electoral landscape ahead of Israel's parliamentary election. A survey placed Gadi Eisenkot's Yashar party ahead of Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud, while projections showed the principal Netanyahu-aligned and opposition blocs separated by only a small number of seats. The figures indicated continued uncertainty over which political grouping could assemble a governing majority.

Turkey

On September 28, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan visited Abu Dhabi and met President Mohamed bin Zayed, Vice President Mansour bin Zayed and National Security Adviser Tahnoun bin Zayed. The talks focused on bilateral cooperation, regional security and Yemen, where Houthi advances were raising risks around the Red Sea and Gulf. Ankara's diplomacy combined crisis management with closer coordination with a major regional partner.

On October 2, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan would hold emergency talks in Riyadh over Iran's suggestion of political engagement with Yemen's Houthis. The move turned the August Mecca Joint Defence Agreement into an immediate policy test, forcing Ankara to balance solidarity with Saudi Arabia against the risk of entering a broader Yemen confrontation involving Iran-linked forces.

On October 4, Turkey said its foreign and defense chiefs would attend the Mecca pact's strategic political and defense committee on October 5 in Riyadh. Hakan Fidan, Yasar Guler and Gen. Selcuk Bayraktaroglu were scheduled to join Saudi and Pakistani counterparts. The meeting signals institutionalization of the trilateral alliance as Yemen and Red Sea insecurity push members toward practical coordination and contingency planning.

On October 1, Reuters reported that Syrian government officials and Hezbollah representatives had secretly met in Turkey in September, allegedly with Turkish security and intelligence facilitation. Syrian and Turkish authorities then denied the meeting. The episode nevertheless put Ankara at the center of an alleged effort to manage post-Assad tensions involving Damascus, Hezbollah, Lebanon and Iranian

influence, highlighting Turkey's potential convening role despite uncertainty over the meeting itself.

On September 30, Turkey's National Security Council reviewed counterterrorism, the "Terror-Free Türkiye" process, Syria's territorial integrity, stronger Iraq cooperation and regional conflicts involving Iran, Israel, Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen and Ukraine. The statement showed Ankara integrating domestic security priorities with an increasingly regional strategic agenda. Syria and Iraq remained central because Turkey continues to link border security, militant threats and regional political order.

On October 2, Al-Monitor reported that Sudanese officials were expanding contacts with Turkey and Saudi Arabia as Red Sea security cooperation intensified and Sudan's war continued. Parallel discussions in Ankara and Riyadh preserve Turkey's diplomatic channel with Khartoum and connect it to Saudi-led regional coordination. Sudan therefore remains relevant to Ankara's wider strategy of mediation, security partnerships and maritime interests around the Red Sea.

On October 3, reporting in the Turkey and Syria coverage highlighted Lebanon's effort to secure Ankara's support for linking its ports to a railway corridor running through Syria toward Turkey and the Gulf. The proposal fits Turkey's broader push for regional connectivity and trade routes. For Lebanon, Turkish backing could integrate the country into emerging transport networks shaped by postwar reconstruction and Gulf-oriented commerce.

On October 1, Turkey and Greece remained at an impasse over the planned Great Sea Interconnector linking Greece, Cyprus and Israel, with Ankara insisting that work cannot proceed across seabed areas it claims without prior coordination. Turkey invoked its maritime claims and the 2019 Turkey-Libya memorandum. The dispute keeps Eastern Mediterranean energy infrastructure tied to competing interpretations of maritime jurisdiction and strategic access.

On October 4, Al-Monitor reported that Turkey had revived discussions with the United States over additional F-16 purchases as Ankara faces an aging combat-aircraft fleet and uncertainty surrounding F-35 access. The renewed talks reflect a broader effort to bridge capability gaps before the domestic KAAN fighter matures. They also signal continued reliance on U.S. systems while Turkey develops greater indigenous aerospace autonomy.

On October 1, Turkey confirmed that the first two of twelve British C-130J transport aircraft are expected to arrive in December under a roughly \$730 million agreement. The acquisition strengthens Ankara's strategic mobility and logistics capacity while

older transport assets are phased down. It also deepens defense-industrial cooperation with Britain, giving Turkey another Western procurement channel as it expands indigenous production across airpower and support systems.

On September 28, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held an unusually long meeting with North Rhine-Westphalia Premier Hendrik Wüst, widely viewed as a potential future German leader. The discussion covered economic cooperation, European Union-Turkey relations, NATO and regional issues. The encounter provided Ankara with a direct channel to an influential German political figure and underscored Turkey's effort to deepen ties with Europe through bilateral political networks.

On September 30, Turkey seized an Iran-based Caspian Airlines aircraft at Istanbul Airport after a court order linked to roughly \$3.4 million in unpaid debts. Passengers and crew were removed while the aircraft was held. Although presented as a commercial enforcement action, the incident added a politically sensitive layer to Turkey's relations with Iran and demonstrated Ankara's willingness to apply domestic legal authority to Iranian state-linked aviation assets.

14. Global Powers

Washington and Tehran continued indirect diplomacy over a possible ceasefire and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, with Iran submitting proposals through intermediaries and the Trump administration responding while maintaining pressure over the nuclear issue. At the same time, the United States completed its withdrawal from its remaining military bases in Iraq, ending a two-decade military presence and creating a new regional security environment in which Iran-backed groups are expected to have greater room for manoeuvre.

In the Horn of Africa, Washington became more directly engaged as fighting intensified in northern Ethiopia. The United States called on Ethiopia and Eritrea to exercise maximum restraint and urged dialogue as the conflict in Tigray escalated, while U.S. lawmakers and other American actors also called for an end to the fighting. The developments became particularly significant after federal forces retook Mekelle, raising concerns about a wider Ethiopia-Eritrea confrontation and the potential regionalization of the conflict.

U.S. counterterrorism operations also continued in Somalia. AFRICOM announced strikes against al-Shabaab conducted in coordination with the Somali government, including operations on September 24 and 25 that were publicly announced on September 28 and 30. This indicates that despite Washington's broader strategic attention being concentrated on the Middle East, its counterterrorism posture in East

Africa remains active. AFRICOM also used the week to strengthen longer-term military partnerships and regional security cooperation through its engagement with the Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

On October 1, the Trump administration confirmed the redirection of about \$52 million in military assistance originally allocated to European and Middle Eastern partners toward Panama, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. Washington justified the move through its emphasis on countering narcotics and strengthening security partnerships in Latin America. The decision is significant because it provides another indication of the administration's effort to place the Western Hemisphere more centrally in U.S. security policy while reducing some commitments elsewhere. The decision to move military aid from countries including Slovakia, North Macedonia, Tunisia and Iraq toward Latin American partners generated criticism in Congress, particularly because some of the funds had originally been intended to support European partners affected by Russia-Ukraine conflict. This is more consequential than a simple budgetary adjustment because it potentially signals a broader recalibration of U.S. alliance priorities.

Washington increased pressure on European partners over energy security. The United States warned France and Germany that they could face restrictions on U.S. diesel exports unless they released parts of their emergency fuel stocks. The dispute reflects the wider energy-security consequences of the Middle East conflict and shows Washington using its position as an energy supplier to influence European policy during a period of elevated fuel prices.

U.S.-Russia contacts continued despite the confrontation over Ukraine. On September 29, Russian presidential envoy Kirill Dmitriev held discussions with U.S. officials concerning the Ukraine war and energy-related initiatives. The contacts indicate that Washington and Moscow continued exploring areas for negotiation even as the broader strategic confrontation remained unresolved.

Taiwan-U.S. relations also saw a notable development. On October 5, Taiwan's Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung visited Arizona to inaugurate a new de facto Taiwanese representative office in Phoenix. Although Taiwan and the United States lack formal diplomatic relations, the move represents continued expansion of practical bilateral ties and comes shortly after the Trump-Xi summit.

The State Department updated its list of countries subject to the U.S. visa-bond programme on October 2. Ethiopia remains among the countries covered, with implementation dating to April 2. The programme allows consular officers to require eligible applicants to post a bond before receiving certain B-1/B-2 visas. This is

relevant to U.S.-Ethiopia relations, although I would treat it as a secondary development in a geopolitical weekly brief.

Washington also adjusted its defence-export framework. On September 30, the State Department moved to remove Syria from the ITAR list of countries subject to the strictest arms-transfer restrictions, effective October 1, while separately proposing changes to narrow parts of the U.S. Munitions List. This forms part of the administration's broader effort to make U.S. defence exports faster and less restrictive for selected partners.

Beijing reiterated on September 30 that disputes between Iran and the United States should be resolved through political and diplomatic means and called for a return to negotiations. This followed Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's recent engagement in Beijing. China is consequently attempting to preserve a diplomatic role in the conflict while protecting its broader interests in Gulf energy flows and regional stability.

In his September 30 National Day address, Xi emphasized economic resilience, technological innovation and national stability. The timing was significant because China is preparing for an important Communist Party gathering in October, making economic performance and political stability particularly important to Beijing's leadership.

Speaking at the Valdai Discussion Club on October 1, President Vladimir Putin warned that Russia could use the full range of capabilities at its disposal if it faced a major military confrontation with Europe, specifically referring to concerns over the future security of Kaliningrad and European preparations for a potential conflict with Russia. The statement reinforced Moscow's deterrence messaging at a time when European governments are expanding defence preparations and military support for Ukraine.

15. European Countries

The UK's foreign and security agenda over the past week was shaped by the intersection of the Iran conflict, relations with the United States, Russia, and Britain's wider European positioning. The most significant development was the security incident surrounding RAF Fairford, where several people were arrested over an alleged plot against the base hosting U.S. B-1 bombers used in operations against Iran. Prime Minister Andy Burnham said there were "strong indications" of Iranian involvement, while Tehran rejected the allegation and summoned the British ambassador. The United States subsequently withdrew all of its B-1 bombers from

Fairford, adding a new security dimension to Britain's involvement in the Iran conflict.

Relations with Europe also remained an important part of Burnham's emerging foreign-policy direction. During his Labour Party conference speech, the prime minister criticized the consequences of Brexit and said Britain would examine options for a closer relationship with the European Union, including potentially going much further than the current arrangements. He also emphasized continued support for Ukraine and discussed European security alongside his wider foreign-policy agenda.

On October 2, defence ministers from the JEF met in Iceland and agreed to deepen support for Ukraine, strengthen cooperation across the Arctic, High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea, and improve collective responses to Russian. They also discussed Canada's possible accession to the JEF framework. For Britain, which plays a central role in the grouping, this reinforces London's effort to build flexible European security arrangements alongside NATO.

On October 2, President Emmanuel Macron joined other G7 leaders in a videoconference on global energy security, followed by a G7 commitment to release emergency oil and diesel reserves. France's involvement reflected the growing pressure on European governments to contain the economic consequences of the disruption to Middle Eastern energy supplies.

France also continued to reinforce its European defence partnerships. On October 1, France and Belgium held their first Nuclear Steering Group meeting in Paris, reflecting efforts to deepen European strategic cooperation around nuclear deterrence and defence. Paris has increasingly presented European strategic autonomy and stronger European defence capabilities as necessary complements to NATO, particularly amid uncertainty surrounding the future U.S. role in European security.

Germany's most significant development was Chancellor Friedrich Merz's October 4 visit to Kyiv, where he announced a new €1 billion military assistance package for Ukraine and an additional €350 million for energy infrastructure. The military support includes long-range weapons, combat drones and satellite technology. Germany and Ukraine also signed 14 agreements worth approximately €6.6 billion involving air-defence systems, radar equipment and drone-interceptor technology.

On October 2, G7 governments agreed to release 100 million barrels of oil and diesel from emergency reserves following pressure from Washington. Germany's participation reflected the importance of stabilizing fuel markets as disruption linked to the Iran conflict continued to push energy prices higher. The issue is particularly sensitive for Berlin because Germany remains highly exposed to industrial energy

costs.

Italy's main security concern during the week was the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb. Defence Minister Guido Crosetto said on October 2 that the European contribution to protecting maritime traffic remained insufficient and called for greater participation by EU members in the Aspides naval mission. Rome has also indicated that it could increase its own contribution if other European governments make comparable commitments.

16. International and Regional Organizations

United Nation

The UN Security Council prepared closed consultations on the deteriorating situation in northern Ethiopia during the first week of October 2026 with a Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs official expected to brief members on the escalating crisis and its potential to unravel the 2022 Pretoria Agreement according to the Security Council Report's October Monthly Forecast. Council members' concerns focused on the threat of regional spillover particularly given the sharp deterioration in Ethiopia and Eritrea relations after Addis Ababa closed its embassy in Asmara and expelled ten Eritrean diplomats on 1 October, prompting Eritrea to sever all diplomatic ties. Ethiopia concurrently expelled an Egyptian diplomat, adding to tensions over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and Red Sea security.

The UN Secretary-General's spokesperson described the situation as "extremely worrying and murky," noting that escalating drone activities and airstrikes were placing civilians and humanitarian operations at growing risk with aid access being negotiated case by case. The Security Council's October agenda also includes its annual briefing on UN-AU cooperation with the 20th annual joint consultative meeting between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council scheduled for 23 October in New York preceded by an informal joint seminar on 22 October.

International partners continued discussions on AUSSOM financing and logistical support via UNSOS on the margins of UNGA 81 and in bilateral meetings with earlier UN Secretary-General talks with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud emphasizing sustainable funding and an orderly transition. The financing situation remains precarious the United States has agreed to a 12-month drawdown of UNSOS beginning January 2027 rather than an immediate cutoff buying time but not providing long-term certainty for a support office with an annual budget of approximately \$500 million.

The EU has committed an additional €75 million (\$87 million) from the European Peace Facility covering up to 85% of stipends for the roughly 12,000 AUSSOM personnel and funding the mission only until 30 June 2026 . Egypt has called for funding through the African Peace Fund and warned that failure to secure long-term support would undermine years of collective investment in Somali state institutions. The Secretary-General met President Mohamud on 22 September, reiterating UN commitment to supporting Somalia's national priorities and discussing continued support for AUSSOM.

UNTMIS operations are set to conclude by 31 October 2026, with UNSOS mandated to provide administrative and logistical support to UNTMIS on a cost-recovery basis until that date after which UNSOS will enter in-situ liquidation and assume new human rights due diligence functions previously handled by UNTMIS .

Africa Union

From 28 September to early October 2026 the African Union Commission closely monitored heightened tensions involving Ethiopia, Eritrea and Egypt, urging maximum restraint and the preservation of communication channels in line with the AU Constitutive Act. On 22 September AU Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf expressed deep concern over military escalation in northern Ethiopia, including the seizure of airports in Mekelle, Axum and Shire by Tigrayan forces and called for immediate de-escalation and a return to the 2022 Pretoria Agreement framework tasking AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa Olusegun Obasanjo with urgent engagement. The AU also highlighted risks posed by new political-military alliances reversing post-2020 gains.

The situation deteriorated further on 1 October when Ethiopia closed its embassy in Eritrea and expelled ten Eritrean diplomats, prompting Eritrea to sever all diplomatic relations with Ethiopia. Ethiopia also expelled an Egyptian diplomat with Egypt responding in kind. The diplomatic crisis unfolded alongside renewed fighting in Tigray where Ethiopian federal forces recaptured Mekelle airport from Tigrayan fighters in early October and amid Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia holding a quadrilateral summit in New Alamein City, Egypt, on 4 October issuing a joint declaration opposing unilateral actions and asserting the role of Red Sea littoral states. The AU Commission stated it stands ready to support efforts toward de-escalation, dialogue and peaceful resolution of differences.

AUSSOM continued supporting Somali-led operations and the gradual transfer of security responsibilities to Somali forces amid ongoing Al-Shabaab threats with Mission Head Ambassador El-Hadji Ibrahima Diene meeting U.S. Embassy Deputy

Chief of Mission Ruth Anne Stevens-Klitz in Mogadishu on 29 September 2026 to discuss mandate implementation, logistical support and international coordination. The mission's mandate runs through 31 December 2026, though financing and sustainability challenges remain central concerns with the AU calling for predictable funding for African-led peace operations and the UN warning that continued logistical support is essential to preserve security gains.

Reports also indicated potential Ethiopian troop adjustments linked to domestic developments with Ethiopia reportedly planning to withdraw more than 3,000 troops from Somalia as renewed fighting at home puts pressure on Addis Ababa to redirect military resources a Somali Defense Ministry official stated Mogadishu had not received formal notification of any withdrawal plan.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

On September 28, Kenya fast tracked parliamentary processes to ratify the IGAD Transhumance Protocol, with lawmakers, policymakers and technical teams advancing efforts to formalize cross-border pastoral mobility frameworks supporting regional livestock trade and conflict mitigation in arid and semi-arid lands. The Protocol was formally tabled in the National Assembly and committed to the Departmental Committee on Agriculture and Livestock for consideration. The instrument seeks to exploit the full social and economic potential of the pastoral system by allowing free, safe and orderly cross-border mobility of transhumant livestock and commits Member States to invest adequate resources to pastoral regions and harmonize national laws and policies related to livestock and pastoral development.

Kenya signed the Protocol in June 2024 becoming the fifth IGAD Member State to do so after Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda. Public participation on the ratification instrument closed on 8 April 2026 following the required constitutional process under Articles 118 and 2(5) and (6). The Protocol focuses on conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution while encouraging cooperation among neighboring countries to address common cross-border challenges including livestock disease control and unregulated movement.

IGAD and Somalia's One Health ministries wrapped up a four day joint mission in Mogadishu on 1 October 2026, producing a costed time-bound Ebola Virus Disease preparedness and response workplan under the Pandemic Fund-backed PREPARE Project . The workplan builds directly on Somalia's existing national EVD Preparedness and Response Plan, integrating human, animal and environmental health perspectives from the outset and aligns national investments with regional priorities including cross-border surveillance, laboratory interoperability, specimen referral and

points of entry preparedness.

By the mission's close the teams had established a detailed work plan and budget a regional and cross-border alignment matrix a procurement plan and implementation schedule a monitoring and results framework and endorsed implementation roles with a consolidated action tracker. The initiative follows recent Bundibugyo Ebola outbreaks in the DRC and Uganda that prompted the Pandemic Fund to activate emergency financing procedures with Somalia's mission marking the first in a series of country consultations.

On 29 September 2026 Djibouti President and IGAD Chairperson Ismail Omar Guelleh addressed the African Union High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on South Sudan (C5), urging South Sudan's leaders to adopt a clear and definitive roadmap for the political transition and for elections scheduled for December 2026 stressing that neither South Sudan nor the region can afford further delays. He noted that while the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan has provided the country's longest period of ceasefire recent developments including the March 2025 Nasir incident and subsequent violence had heightened tensions and increased the risk of renewed large scale conflict with active violence persisting in several states and causing growing internal displacement and cross-border movements.

Guelleh expressed concern over political decisions taken following the violence including initiatives to amend key aspects of the peace agreement and uncertainty over the sequencing of the transition stating that this state of affairs undermines credibility and confidence in the peace process. He reaffirmed IGAD's commitment to working with the African Union, the United Nations and all regional and international partners to support peace efforts, while emphasizing that the primary responsibility for determining the way forward rests with South Sudanese leaders saying "IGAD cannot substitute itself for that political will it can however accompany it, support it and wherever necessary, firmly recall it."

The C5 Plus Summit adopted a Declaration reaffirming the Revitalized Agreement as the paramount legal instrument governing the transition and calling on all parties to cease hostilities, uphold the Permanent Ceasefire, release persons arbitrarily detained on political grounds and adopt a feasible, consensual and time bound electoral roadmap. The meeting followed South Sudan's dissolution of the Transitional Government of National Unity on 22 September 2026 and the commencement of an Inter-Party-Political Dialogue on 24 September 2026 with the National Elections Commission having declared 22 December 2026 as the election date.

The African Union High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on South Sudan (C5), chaired by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, convened a virtual summit with IGAD member states on 29 September 2026, bringing together Presidents Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti, William Ruto of Kenya, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia, Salva Kiir of South Sudan, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and AU Commission Deputy Chairperson Selma Malika Haddadi to assess progress toward the December 2026 elections. The summit adopted a Declaration reaffirming the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) as the paramount legal instrument governing the transition calling on all parties to immediately cease hostilities, uphold the Permanent Ceasefire, release persons arbitrarily detained on political grounds and adopt a feasible consensual and time-bound electoral roadmap.

President Guelleh stressed that neither South Sudan nor the region nor the Continent can afford a further delay while President Ramaphosa emphasized that holding credible elections must be preceded and accompanied by a genuine inclusive political process. The Declaration welcomed the commencement of the Inter-Party Dialogue on Election-Related Matters on 24 September 2026 and Nigeria's pledge of technical support for electoral officers while expressing deep concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation marked by acute food insecurity and displacement.



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