HORN REVIEW

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# Weekly Geopolitical Report

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

**Coverage Period:** November 02 – November 08

**Publication Date:** November 10, 2026




**Issue No. 45** | 2026

# Horn Review: Weekly Report

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## 1. Ethiopia

Ethiopia and China this week reaffirmed their longstanding All-Weather Strategic Partnership through high-level talks that highlighted expanding cooperation in trade, investment and capacity building. Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos met Chinese Ambassador Chen Hai to discuss strengthening bilateral ties, with the ambassador underscoring China's continued support for the Medemer Government's development plans. Parallel discussions between Defense Minister Mohamed Idris and the ambassador focused on deepening military and strategic cooperation, including defense industry development, technology transfer and training, reflecting mutual interest in elevating practical collaboration for regional stability and national progress. These diplomatic engagements form part of a broader pattern of external partnerships that support Ethiopia's reform agenda. Defense Minister Mohamed Idris also held talks with French Ambassador Alexis Lamek, during which both sides pledged to deepen military and strategic cooperation with emphasis on capacity building, knowledge transfer and joint efforts for regional peace. Ethiopia expressed appreciation for France's role in enhancing preparedness for peacekeeping operations and sought continued support for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration process in Tigray, while France reaffirmed its commitment to multifaceted cooperation.

Complementing these bilateral advances, Ethiopia hosted senior officials from the African Union and European Union for a meeting that advanced outcomes from the previous year's Luanda Summit. Discussions centered on multilateralism, prosperity, peace and security, trade, climate action, food security and digital development, with an implementation plan aimed at delivering tangible benefits under the Joint Vision for 2030. Ethiopia presented the AU position on digital and AI governance as champion and highlighted opportunities in trade and energy while calling for resolution of challenges affecting African producers under certain EU regulations.

The same spirit of continental coordination extended to briefings for a European Union Political and Security Committee delegation. Ethiopian officials outlined ongoing national reforms, priorities for peace and sustainable development, and concerns regarding regional security dynamics in the Horn of Africa, while reaffirming commitment to constructive engagement and a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Sudan that reflects the aspirations of the Sudanese people. Both sides exchanged views

on shared priorities including sovereignty, economic development and regional integration, with the EU reaffirming its partnership with Ethiopia.

These external and continental dialogues occurred alongside a significant domestic statistical development that better captures Ethiopia's economic transformation. Following a comprehensive GDP rebasing exercise that shifted the base year and incorporated emerging sectors such as digital financial services, ride-sharing and solar installations, the size of the economy for 2024/25 was revised upward by nearly 60 percent to approximately 201 billion dollars, with 2025/26 estimates reaching about 211 billion dollars. The update, an internationally accepted practice, improves measurement accuracy, lowers key debt-to-GDP ratios and strengthens the foundation for policy, investment attraction and credit assessments as the country advances debt restructuring.

Parallel efforts toward deeper global economic integration continued with preparations for a key World Trade Organization Working Party meeting. Ethiopia's long-running accession process faces discussions in which members are pressing for more extensive commitments, reflecting the country's large population and growth trajectory, even as bilateral market-access agreements advance and domestic reforms in foreign exchange, customs and related areas demonstrate ongoing commitment to opening the economy.

Against this backdrop of economic and diplomatic activity, Ethiopia hosted the Second African Political Parties Summit, bringing together leaders and policymakers to examine how parties can drive employment creation, inclusive development and structural economic transformation beyond short-term electoral cycles. Under the theme of governing for growth, participants shared experiences, including Ethiopia's Medemer-guided reforms and infrastructure initiatives, while seeking policy continuity, regional integration and a collective Addis Ababa Declaration as a roadmap for productive governance.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed opened the summit by urging parties across the continent to prioritize leadership renewal and build consensus on long-term national development priorities that transcend changes of government. He proposed commitments on measurable strategic goals and succession planning, highlighted Ethiopia's inclusive political approach and Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda, and noted the Green Legacy Initiative's contribution of more than 50 billion seedlings toward environmental resilience. On the sidelines he met African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf to exchange views on continental governance, inclusive processes and strengthening African leadership.

Beyond continental affairs, Ethiopian-born Melat Kiros secured election to the United States Congress representing Colorado's 1st District, becoming the first Black woman

and first self-identified socialist elected to represent the state. The 29-year-old lawyer and human rights advocate, who immigrated as an infant, defeated a longtime incumbent in the primary and won decisively in the general election, focusing her campaign on healthcare, housing and related priorities.

## 2. Sudan

Sudan's war continued to intensify during the week, with drone attacks disrupting electricity infrastructure, escalating diplomatic tensions with Ethiopia, and fresh evidence highlighting the role of foreign networks in sustaining the conflict. At the same time, mounting humanitarian funding shortages, the destruction of industrial capacity and renewed political uncertainty underscored the growing costs of a war now extending well beyond the battlefield.

The most consequential regional development was the diplomatic escalation between Sudan and Ethiopia. After Khartoum accused Addis Ababa of allowing the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to launch drone attacks from Ethiopian territory, Sudan filed complaints with the United Nations Security Council and the African Union's Peace and Security Council. Ethiopian authorities subsequently ordered six Sudanese consular officials to leave the country and closed Sudan's consulate in Assosa. Sudan responded by closing Ethiopia's consulate in Gedaref, marking a sharp deterioration in relations. Sudan's allegations remain unverified independently, while Ethiopia has rejected claims of supporting the RSF and has accused Sudan of providing safe havens to Ethiopian armed opposition groups. The dispute reflects a broader regional realignment involving Egypt, Eritrea and competing interests in the Horn of Africa.

On 2 November, attacks attributed to the RSF struck electricity substations in Kassala and Northern states, including facilities in Aroma, New Halfa and the area around Merowe. The strikes extended a concentrated campaign against Sudan's power network, with more than a dozen facilities reportedly damaged over the preceding two weeks. The resulting outages threaten water pumping, medical services and other essential infrastructure, while deepening pressure on communities already affected by displacement and economic hardship. The army also reported further defections by RSF fighters in Blue Nile State, suggesting that the paramilitary group continues to face internal pressures even as its drone campaign expands.

A confidential United Nations Panel of Experts report, described by *Middle East Eye* on 6 November, reportedly found evidence linking a UAE-based security company to the recruitment and movement of Colombian mercenaries deployed to fight alongside the RSF. The report described interconnected supply and transit routes involving the United Arab Emirates, Chad, Libya and Puntland in Somalia, with foreign fighters reportedly

providing combat and technical support, including drone operations. The allegations reinforce longstanding concerns that external military and logistical networks are helping sustain the war. The UAE has consistently denied providing military support to the RSF, and the reported findings should be understood in the context of the confidential report and the evidence described by the outlet that obtained it. Nevertheless, the revelations add pressure for a more effective arms embargo and greater accountability for foreign actors implicated in the conflict.

On 5 November Australia imposed targeted sanctions and travel bans on leaders of both warring parties, including SAF commander Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti. The measures also targeted RSF-aligned figures and an associated entity over alleged serious human rights abuses. The decision reflects growing international willingness to apply pressure to both sides, rather than treating accountability as an issue confined to one faction. However, the practical impact of sanctions will depend on enforcement, coordination among international partners and whether the measures can influence the parties' conduct.

Sudan's domestic political landscape was also unsettled by the reported detention of Ahmed Haroun, head of the former ruling National Congress Party and a senior official under Omar al-Bashir. Haroun is wanted by the International Criminal Court over alleged crimes in Darfur, charges he has previously rejected as politically motivated. His reported detention followed public remarks about the relationship between his party and the army in their shared opposition to the RSF. The reasons for the detention remained unclear, raising questions about internal political alignments within the army-aligned camp and the place of former regime networks in wartime governance.

The economic consequences of the war continued to deepen. Reporting from Khartoum and Omdurman highlighted the struggle to restore manufacturing after extensive destruction, looting and the loss of machinery. Sudan's Ministry of Industry estimates that approximately 1,800 industrial facilities have been damaged, including 650 factories that were completely destroyed. Many surviving businesses operate far below their former capacity because of unreliable electricity, disrupted supply chains, limited financing and the loss of skilled workers. The collapse of domestic production has reduced employment and increased reliance on imports, adding to inflation and household hardship

On 6 November, the UN refugee agency and the International Organization for Migration warned that millions of displaced people risk losing access to emergency shelter and essential household items because of severe funding shortages. An estimated 15.4 million people require shelter assistance, yet agencies have been able to assist

fewer than one million.

Overall, the week highlighted the increasingly regionalized character of Sudan's war. Drone attacks are undermining essential infrastructure, allegations of foreign involvement are worsening relations with Ethiopia, and new reporting has intensified scrutiny of external support for the RSF. Meanwhile, sanctions and political developments have yet to produce a meaningful shift towards peace. With industrial recovery constrained and humanitarian assistance threatened by funding shortages, Sudan faces a deepening crisis that demands stronger diplomatic engagement, credible accountability and sustained support for civilians.

## 3. Egypt

Egypt and Sudan held ministerial consultations, bringing together their foreign and irrigation ministers. They reaffirmed their defense relationship and Egypt's readiness to act under the Joint Defense Agreement to protect Sudanese sovereignty. Both governments also rejected unilateral Ethiopian management of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, demanding a binding agreement on dam operations. They reiterated that Red Sea security should remain the responsibility of littoral states.

Two Egyptian military officers, including a senior Border Guards officer, were killed during an operation against illegal gold mining along Egypt's southern border. Authorities reported 151 Egyptian and 540 foreign nationals detained during the wider campaign. Reuters also reported allegations by Sudanese rights monitors that an Egyptian airstrike killed at least 72 artisanal miners in northern Sudan. Cairo's military did not address that allegation in its statement.

Egypt and the United States signed their first bilateral Strategic Objectives Framework, committing $125 million in American funding to expand opportunities for US companies operating in Egypt. Cooperation covers energy, water management, infrastructure, artificial intelligence, healthcare, education and food security. The agreement reinforces the economic dimension of the bilateral strategic relationship, particularly as Cairo seeks foreign investment and technological support amid regional instability and domestic economic pressures.

Egypt pursued several diplomatic channels to prevent renewed confrontation between Washington and Tehran. Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty spoke with Oman's Badr Al-Busaidi and Iran's Abbas Araghchi, urging restraint and a return to negotiations. He subsequently coordinated with Turkey's Hakan Fidan on diplomatic engagement with Washington and Tehran through the regional quadrilateral mechanism, working with Qatar.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Abdelatty held discussions with Cypriot Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos about Libya, Eastern Mediterranean security and the danger of renewed regional military escalation. They also reviewed preparations for the next Egypt-Cyprus-Greece trilateral summit. The ministers emphasized protecting international shipping, trade and supply chains while expanding bilateral economic cooperation. The engagement reinforces Cairo's strategic partnerships in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Abdelatty met Somali Foreign Minister Abdisalam Abdi Ali during a regional diplomatic gathering. Egypt reaffirmed its support for Somalia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national institutions, rejecting unilateral actions that could undermine its unity. The two ministers agreed to continue coordination following their earlier consultations in Egypt. The meeting reinforces Cairo's support for Mogadishu amid disputes surrounding Somaliland and Ethiopia's maritime ambitions.

Abdelatty also met Djiboutian Foreign Minister Abdoulkader Houssein Omar to discuss trade, investment, energy, ports, infrastructure and technical cooperation. They reviewed security developments in Sudan and Somalia. Egypt called for stronger cooperation among Red Sea coastal states, insisting that littoral countries should lead maritime security and governance. The engagement strengthens Cairo's diplomatic presence around the Bab el-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden.

Egypt participated in the Community of Sahel-Saharan States Executive Council, where Abdelatty called for stronger regional cooperation against terrorism, organized crime and irregular migration. He particularly advocated activating CEN-SAD's Cairo-based Counterterrorism Centre and improving institutional funding, training and intelligence cooperation. The initiative reflects Egypt's concern that insecurity across the Sahel can extend into Libya, Sudan and neighboring strategic corridors.

## 4. Eritrea

The African Union is seeking to contain rising tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea through renewed diplomatic engagement and efforts to revive existing peace frameworks. Speaking at a press conference around November 4, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole Adeoye said the organisation was engaging political leaders and other stakeholders in both countries to prevent further deterioration of relations. The AU is reportedly seeking to re-energise the 2000 Algiers Agreement and the 2022 Pretoria Agreement, while former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, the AU Chairperson’s High Representative for the Horn of Africa, is undertaking consultations and shuttle diplomacy. Adeoye also underscored the importance of African-led conflict resolution and cautioned against external

interference, which he argued could prolong regional crises.

The initiative reflects growing concern within the AU that the deterioration of Ethiopia–Eritrea relations could develop into a wider regional security crisis, particularly given the existing fragility in northern Ethiopia. However, the AU's approach faces a difficult diplomatic balance. While the Algiers Agreement provides an established framework for addressing the bilateral relationship, its implementation remains politically contentious for Ethiopia, limiting the prospects of treating it as an uncomplicated basis for renewed engagement. The Pretoria Agreement, meanwhile, remains relevant to the internal dynamics of northern Ethiopia, where unresolved tensions continue to affect the broader security environment. Kenyatta's shuttle diplomacy may provide an avenue for communication, but the effectiveness of the AU's efforts will depend on whether both governments demonstrate a willingness to engage substantively with the underlying sources of tension rather than merely endorse existing peace frameworks.

The Chinese diplomatic engagements with Ethiopia and Eritrea on November 4–5 suggest that Beijing is positioning itself to play a mediating role amid the deterioration of relations between the two neighbours. The parallel consultations by China's Special Envoy for African Affairs, Liu Xianfa, with Ethiopian Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos on November 4, and China's Special Envoy for Horn of Africa Affairs, Hu Changchun, with President Isaias Afwerki on November 5, indicate an effort to engage both capitals directly. According to Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gedion briefed Liu on the prevailing peace and security situation in the Horn of Africa, while the discussions in Asmara covered bilateral relations and regional developments. Although neither side has publicly confirmed a formal Chinese mediation initiative, the timing and complementary nature of the engagements suggest that Beijing is exploring diplomatic avenues to contain tensions and prevent further deterioration.

Separately, on November 4, Eritrea's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Sophia Tesfamariam, received UN Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Guang Cong at Eritrea's Permanent Mission in New York. Their discussions covered developments in Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia, with Tesfamariam arguing that external interventions were aggravating conflicts and undermining prospects for peace. On Ethiopia–Eritrea relations, she maintained that any engagement with Ethiopia's leadership would require a prior, public and unconditional renunciation of coercion and the use of force, alongside unequivocal recognition of Eritrea's sovereignty and territorial integrity. She further cautioned the UN and AU against normalizing what she described as Ethiopian threats and territorial claims, insisting that dialogue should not legitimize the conduct of the Prosperity Party.

Asmara's insistence on these preconditions exposes a significant contradiction in its own position. While demanding unconditional respect for its sovereignty, Eritrea has itself violated Ethiopia's territorial sovereignty through direct military incursions into Ethiopian territory and support for armed proxy groups operating against the Ethiopian state. These actions make its attempt to frame the bilateral dispute exclusively around alleged Ethiopian coercion difficult to reconcile with its own conduct. Tesfamariam's rejection of what she termed false equivalence is particularly revealing: it seeks to establish an interpretation in which Eritrea's security concerns and territorial claims are treated as legitimate, while Ethiopia's concerns over Eritrean military activity and interference in its internal affairs are effectively excluded from consideration. The invocation of sovereignty as a precondition for dialogue therefore appears less like a consistent application of international norms than an effort to place the entire burden of de-escalation on Addis Ababa.

Hu Changchun's meeting with Isaias is particularly significant in this context. China's reaffirmation of respect for Eritrea's sovereignty and territorial integrity provides Asmara with diplomatic reassurance at a time when it is seeking to internationalize its position in the dispute with Ethiopia. However, Beijing's simultaneous engagement with Addis Ababa suggests that its approach is unlikely to rest exclusively on Eritrea's framing of the crisis. China has substantial interests in preventing an escalation that could destabilize the wider Horn and Red Sea environment, including the security of its military and commercial interests in Djibouti. Maintaining access to both governments is therefore important to any prospective mediation effort.

Taken together, the engagements suggest that Beijing is seeking to establish the diplomatic groundwork for a more active role in containing Ethiopia–Eritrea tensions, potentially positioning itself as an interlocutor between the two governments. China's established relations with both capitals and its economic and security interests in the region provide incentives to pursue such an initiative. Nevertheless, the prospects for mediation will depend on whether Beijing is prepared to address the underlying sources of the dispute, including Eritrea's military incursions and support for armed proxies inside Ethiopia, rather than confining discussions to general appeals for sovereignty and restraint. A mediation process that accommodates Asmara's preconditions without adequately addressing its own conduct would risk reinforcing the imbalance that currently characterizes Eritrea's diplomatic position.

Eritrea’s continued diplomatic engagement with Saudi Arabia reflects Asmara’s efforts to capitalise on the gradual thaw in Saudi-UAE relations and strengthen its position within the evolving Gulf regional alignment. The UAE’s expanding engagement with Ethiopia, reflected in high-level diplomatic exchanges and growing bilateral

cooperation, provides Eritrea with an additional incentive to deepen its relationship with Riyadh, particularly as the Gulf powers recalibrate their respective positions in the Horn of Africa. Asmara appears intent on cultivating closer ties with Saudi Arabia to diversify its regional partnerships and avoid becoming increasingly isolated as Abu Dhabi strengthens its relationship with Addis Ababa. Osman Saleh's November 4 meeting with the Saudi ambassador is consistent with this broader diplomatic calculation, although the extent to which it translates into a substantive strategic partnership remains to be seen.

PFDJ-linked officials and Eritrean diplomatic representatives have intensified public mobilisation activities among diaspora communities across several countries over the past ten days, organising seminars focused on regional developments, national resilience, sovereignty and participation in national affairs. On October 31, seminars were held in Dubai and the Northern Emirates, as well as in Sydney and other locations across Australia and New Zealand. Similar activities were reported in Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada and several cities across the United States in late October and early November. On November 1, a Strategic Defence Seminar for Eritreans from the Greater New York area, held in the Bronx, addressed geopolitical tensions in the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia's rhetoric concerning Red Sea access. The gathering resulted in the establishment of a Permanent Defence Committee and other structures for public awareness and community engagement. Further seminars were held in Port Sudan on November 6 and in the Los Angeles area on November 7, with officials calling for stronger diaspora organisation and active participation in public diplomacy and the national resilience programme.

The scale and geographical spread of these activities reflect the PFDJ's continued reliance on diaspora communities as an important source of political, financial and organisational support. Eritreans abroad constitute a critical resource base for the regime, including through financial contributions, lobbying activities, mobilisation networks and the dissemination of its political messaging internationally. The seminars therefore serve purposes beyond providing updates on developments inside Eritrea: they are also instruments for reinforcing organisational structures and sustaining the regime's influence over diaspora communities. This is particularly significant given the opposition that the PFDJ has faced among sections of the diaspora in recent years, especially younger Eritreans increasingly critical of its authoritarian governance, indefinite national service and restrictions on political freedoms.

The current mobilisation also appears to capitalise on escalating Ethiopia–Eritrea tensions to strengthen diaspora cohesion around the regime. By framing Ethiopia's maritime ambitions and regional developments primarily as threats to Eritrean

sovereignty and territorial integrity, PFDJ-linked representatives are seeking to rally nationals around a nationalist and defensive narrative. The emphasis on sovereignty as a non-negotiable principle, alongside the establishment of defence and public awareness committees, suggests an effort to translate these sentiments into more durable organisational engagement. This provides Asmara with an opportunity to redirect diaspora attention towards external threats and national defence, potentially strengthening its support base at a time when dissatisfaction with domestic political conditions remains a challenge to the regime's authority.

## 5. Djibouti

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty held separate meetings with his Somali and Djiboutian counterparts, Abdisalam Abdi Ali and Abdoulkader Hussein Omar, on November 7 on the sidelines of the 22nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States in Tripoli. The discussions reaffirmed Cairo's position that responsibility for the security and governance of the Red Sea rests exclusively with its littoral states. Abdelatty also discussed expanding economic and development cooperation with Somalia, reiterating Egypt's support for its territorial integrity, while his meeting with the Djiboutian foreign minister covered cooperation in port infrastructure, logistics, energy and maritime connectivity. Although presented as an initiative to strengthen regional maritime security, Egypt's diplomatic activity increasingly reflects a broader geopolitical calculation directed at limiting Ethiopia's strategic options in the Horn of Africa.

For Cairo, Djibouti serves two interconnected strategic purposes: protecting maritime routes whose disruption threatens Suez Canal revenues and maintaining leverage over Ethiopia, particularly regarding the GERD and Addis Ababa's pursuit of alternative maritime access. Egypt's growing engagement with Djibouti, which has included port-related investments and cooperation at Doraleh, is therefore significant beyond its stated economic objectives. By strengthening its position in a country through which the overwhelming majority of Ethiopia's maritime trade passes, Cairo gains an additional avenue of influence over Addis Ababa's economic and strategic calculations. More importantly, its insistence that Red Sea security and governance remain exclusively the responsibility of littoral states seeks to institutionalise a regional framework that excludes Ethiopia from maritime security arrangements despite its substantial dependence on the waterway. The latest consultations with Djibouti and Somalia, following the October quadrilateral summit with Eritrea and Sudan, demonstrate that Egypt is working to consolidate a diplomatic alignment around this position. While Cairo's concerns over Suez Canal security are legitimate, its broader approach increasingly instrumentalises Red Sea security and regional sovereignty to contain

Ethiopia’s maritime ambitions and preserve the existing regional balance, from which Egypt derives considerable strategic advantage.

Djibouti hosted the multinational Exercise Bull Shark, bringing together military personnel from the United States, France, Japan, Italy and Spain, without China’s participation, despite Beijing maintaining its largest overseas military installation in the country. According to Business Insider Africa (November 8), the exercise involved integrated air, land and maritime operations, with participating forces conducting crisis response, personnel recovery and security activities. US Africa Command confirmed the exercise, highlighting its contribution to interoperability and coordination among military partners operating in Djibouti. China’s absence is noteworthy given the proximity of its military base to the US installation at Camp Lemonnier and the growing strategic competition between Washington and Beijing. A September 2026 assessment by the Center for Strategic and International Studies also identified upgrades to China’s Djibouti base, including new communications and satellite equipment, potentially enhancing its regional intelligence-gathering capabilities.

The exercise further illustrates Djibouti’s ability to leverage its geographical position and concentration of foreign military installations to maintain relationships with competing international powers. Hosting the military facilities of the US, China, France, Japan and Italy provides the country with substantial diplomatic and economic leverage, including revenue from base agreements and associated security cooperation. However, the participation of Western and Japanese forces without China also demonstrates that Djibouti’s policy of maintaining relations with competing powers does not necessarily translate into their participation in common security arrangements. Rather, the country accommodates parallel military presences while allowing individual partners to pursue distinct operational and strategic objectives. This arrangement reinforces Djibouti’s importance as a military and logistical hub at the Bab el-Mandeb, although it also exposes the country to the strategic competition between major powers, particularly as tensions surrounding Red Sea security continue to elevate the importance of this military infrastructure.

Somalia's Speaker of the House of the People, Abdulkadir Mohamed Nur, called for closer security and political coordination with Djibouti during his first official foreign parliamentary visit since assuming office. Addressing Djiboutian parliamentarians, Nur described the security of the two countries as inseparable and praised Djibouti's historical contribution to Somalia's state reconstruction, particularly its hosting of the 2000 Arta peace conference and its subsequent military participation in operations against Al-Shabaab. He also highlighted Djibouti's diplomatic support for Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while calling for greater cooperation between the

two parliaments. Referring to growing competition and security tensions in the Horn of Africa, Nur argued that the two countries needed closer consultations and coordinated responses to emerging regional challenges. According to TRT Afrika, he deliberately selected Djibouti for his first foreign parliamentary visit as a gesture of recognition of its longstanding support for Somalia.

The visit underscores the importance Mogadishu attaches to maintaining Djibouti as a close diplomatic and security partner amid growing regional uncertainty. Djibouti's historical involvement in Somalia's political reconstruction, its contribution to the African Union's security efforts and its consistent diplomatic backing of Somalia's territorial integrity provide the relationship with an institutional foundation. The emphasis on inseparable national security also carries wider significance amid tensions surrounding Ethiopia's maritime ambitions and the dispute over Somaliland, particularly following the January 2024 Ethiopia–Somaliland memorandum of understanding. For Djibouti, closer coordination with Mogadishu reinforces its diplomatic position on Somali territorial integrity while strengthening its role in regional security affairs. Nevertheless, the statements largely reaffirm an established relationship rather than announce a new security arrangement, and their practical significance will depend on whether the proposed parliamentary and security cooperation translates into more substantive institutional coordination.

The parliamentary engagement was followed by a concrete institutional agreement, with Somalia and Djibouti signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on November 2 to strengthen cooperation between their legislative bodies. Signed by Somali Speaker Abdulkadir Mohamed Nur and Djiboutian National Assembly Speaker Dileita Mohamed Dileita, the agreement provides for exchanges of legislative expertise, staff training, legal research and institutional capacity-building. It also envisages closer coordination between parliamentary committees, the establishment of parliamentary friendship groups and the harmonisation of positions at regional and international parliamentary forums. The agreement followed Nur’s meeting with President Ismail Omar Guelleh and his calls for closer political and security coordination between the two countries.

The agreement gives institutional substance to the broader rapprochement highlighted by Nur’s visit and reflects Djibouti’s interest in consolidating its longstanding political and security relationship with Mogadishu. Its provision for coordinating positions in international parliamentary forums is particularly relevant amid regional disagreements over Somalia’s territorial integrity, Ethiopia’s maritime ambitions and the dispute surrounding Somaliland. Alongside their recent reaffirmation of the principle that Red Sea security should remain the responsibility of littoral states, the two countries are

strengthening channels through which they can sustain diplomatic coordination. Although the MoU is primarily an institutional cooperation framework rather than a new security arrangement, it reinforces the political alignment between Mogadishu and Djibouti at a time when both have an interest in resisting developments they perceive as challenging the existing regional order.

Ethiopia and China signed a $15 million grant agreement on November 5 to finance supplementary works on the Ethio-Djibouti Standard Gauge Railway. Signed by State Minister of Finance Tiguist Fisseha and Chinese Embassy Minister Counsellor Liu Xiaoguang, the agreement provides for equipment upgrades, spare parts, track maintenance machinery and technical assistance to improve the railway's operational reliability and long-term sustainability. Chinese technical experts are also expected to provide training and support to Ethiopian railway personnel. According to the Ethiopian News Agency, the funding will be channelled through the China-Aid fund and is intended to strengthen the operation and maintenance of the strategic transport corridor.

The agreement underscores the continuing importance of the Ethio-Djibouti railway to the economic relationship between the two neighbouring countries, as well as Ethiopia's dependence on Djibouti for access to international markets. For Beijing, supporting the railway helps preserve the functionality of an important infrastructure corridor in which Chinese companies played a central role in construction and financing. The assistance also reinforces China's economic and diplomatic presence in both countries, particularly as competition over regional infrastructure and maritime connectivity intensifies. For Ethiopia, improving the railway's reliability remains essential to reducing logistical constraints and sustaining its principal trade route, even as Addis Ababa pursues diversification of maritime access. The agreement therefore reflects the continued centrality of the Djibouti corridor to Ethiopia's external trade, notwithstanding the growing political emphasis on reducing dependence on a single maritime outlet.

President Ismail Omar Guelleh has appointed Aden Ali Mahamade as Djibouti's new Minister of Defence, filling a position that had remained vacant since the death of his predecessor, Hassan Omar Mohamed Bourhan, in July 2026. According to TRT Afrika, Mahamade previously served as Director of International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as Djibouti's ambassador to Eritrea. Bourhan had held the defence portfolio since 2019, including following Guelleh's re-election and the formation of the new cabinet. Mahamade's appointment brings an end to the four-month vacancy in a ministry responsible for overseeing the country's defence institutions and military affairs.

Mahamade's diplomatic background, particularly his previous posting in Asmara, is a notable feature of the appointment given the importance of regional security relations to Djibouti. However, there is insufficient evidence to interpret his selection as signalling a specific shift in defence policy or relations with neighbouring countries. The appointment comes as Djibouti navigates heightened regional tensions, maintains extensive security partnerships with foreign military powers and seeks to preserve its position as a central actor in Red Sea and Horn of Africa security affairs. His experience in international cooperation may prove relevant to managing these external relationships, although the practical direction of his tenure will become clearer through subsequent diplomatic and defence engagements.

## 6. South Sudan

South Sudan's preparations for its first national elections since independence remained overshadowed by questions over political readiness, institutional capacity and the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement. With the December 22 polls approaching, the government has continued to signal its determination to proceed, even as concerns grow over security-sector expansion, incomplete electoral preparations and the potential for renewed diplomatic tensions with Sudan.

At a November 5 United Nations Security Council meeting, Sudan objected to Juba's plan to include the disputed territory in its December electoral constituencies, arguing that the move contravenes existing agreements and undermines the territory's unresolved legal status. South Sudan defended the inclusion, emphasizing the political rights of the Ngok Dinka community. The UN warned that proceeding without a negotiated settlement could aggravate tensions between the two countries, while China urged both governments to pursue dialogue and build on existing political and security mechanisms. The dispute illustrates how the electoral process could complicate an already fragile bilateral relationship rather than simply represent a domestic political milestone.

A report by *AFP*, published by *Arab News* on November 3, highlighted the recruitment of approximately 10,000 police officers across the country as one of the most visible preparations for the polls. The recruitment drive has prompted concerns about possible political repression, particularly given persistent insecurity, poverty and allegations of corruption. The UN and African Union have questioned the country's readiness, while key provisions of the 2018 peace agreement—including constitutional reform and voter registration—remain incomplete. Against this backdrop, political parties prepared to resume inter-party dialogue in Juba on November 9 to finalize proposed resolutions and a joint communiqué. The government continues to insist that elections should proceed as

scheduled, but dialogue alone may not resolve the deeper institutional and security deficiencies affecting the transition.

The International Organization for Migration warned that approximately 100,000 people risk losing access to essential healthcare if its clinic at Wunthou, near the Sudan–South Sudan border, closes because of funding shortages. The facility provides emergency treatment, maternal healthcare, vaccinations and primary care to refugees fleeing Sudan's war, South Sudanese returnees and host communities. Since the conflict in Sudan began in April 2023, the clinic has delivered more than 400,000 medical consultations and continues to provide over 1,000 outpatient consultations weekly. Without urgent funding, closure could occur by December, weakening healthcare access at a major crossing point and increasing public health risks for displaced populations.

The broader humanitarian situation was also highlighted by *PBS NewsHour*, which reported on the combined effects of Sudan's refugee influx and reductions in foreign assistance on South Sudan's already strained health system. In response to displacement-related needs, Norway announced an additional grant of approximately US$3.2 million to the Norwegian Refugee Council. The funding will support longer-term solutions for displaced communities in Aweil, Wau, Raja, Juba and Bentiu through December 2027, including assistance with land and property rights, livelihoods, basic services and social cohesion. While this represents meaningful support, the contrast between growing needs and constrained humanitarian resources remains stark.

On November 8, Ugandan media reported that a Ugandan truck driver and his assistant had been killed in an ambush on the road between Juba and Kapoeta. The incident renewed concerns over the safety of foreign transporters despite recent assurances from South Sudanese authorities that security and non-tariff barriers affecting cross-border trade would be addressed. Such attacks risk undermining trade relations with Uganda, increasing transport costs and disrupting the supply routes on which South Sudan's import-dependent economy relies.

On the economic front, South Sudan continued to promote investment in its petroleum sector. An announcement ahead of the South Sudan Oil & Power 2026 event highlighted efforts to attract financing for exploration, production expansion and petroleum infrastructure. The country is seeking to increase crude output from approximately 174,000 barrels per day to 230,000 barrels per day, although achieving that target will depend on investment, infrastructure and a more predictable operating environment. These ambitions underscore the government's reliance on oil revenues, while the persistence of insecurity and institutional uncertainty presents significant challenges to translating investment interest into sustainable economic gains.

Overall, the week exposed the widening gap between South Sudan's electoral ambitions and the political, humanitarian and institutional conditions required to sustain a credible transition. The Abyei dispute risks adding interstate friction to an already sensitive electoral process, while insecurity and funding shortages continue to affect communities and economic activity. The central challenge is therefore not simply whether elections take place in December, but whether the process can build public confidence, strengthen institutions and avoid deepening the country's existing vulnerabilities.

## 7. Somalia and Somaliland

### Somalia

Uganda has formally begun withdrawing its troops from Somalia with the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) spokesman Col. Chris Magezi announcing the immediate start of the drawdown of bilaterally deployed troops. The first cohort had already returned home with that phase expected to conclude within days. The full withdrawal of all Ugandan forces including those serving under the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia is planned by the end of 2027. This development follows nearly two decades of Ugandan involvement in Somalia dating back to the AMISOM era. Somali officials have noted potential risks if the exit is perceived as abrupt.

In a related operational handover, Ugandan troops transferred security responsibility for the strategic Lower Shabelle towns of Barawe, a coastal port and capital of South West State, and Shalanbood to the Somali National Army, ending more than a decade of Ugandan presence in those areas. This handover followed the previous day's announcement of the start of Uganda's bilateral troop withdrawal and forms part of the broader phased exit, including AUSSOM forces by the end of 2027.

In response to the force generation gap created by Uganda's departure, Somalia is seeking approximately 20,000 foreign troops and Turkey has reportedly pledged 15,000 troops amid the Ugandan withdrawal. Reporting indicated that President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud appealed to allies, including Turkey, for large scale troop deployments to fill gaps left by Uganda's bilateral withdrawal and anticipated AUSSOM drawdowns, aiming to prevent Al-Shabaab from reclaiming territory, notably in Lower Shabelle. Turkey was said to have agreed to deploy approximately 15,000 troops, targeting areas such as Barawe, Baidoa, and around Mogadishu, before January 2027 under the bilateral defence agreement, with plans possibly including airbase development. Troop numbers and full details of the deployment remain unverified independently.

Separately, the deputy commander of AUSSOM Sector II, Col. Daniel Musau of the Kenya Defence Forces, met with Jubaland President Ahmed Mohamed Islam Madobe in Kismayo. The discussions focused on security cooperation, stabilization in southern Somalia across Sector II, which covers Lower and Middle Juba, Gedo, and parts of Lower Shabelle, and coordination between AUSSOM and KDF forces and Jubaland authorities amid the Al-Shabaab threat and the ongoing security transition.

The Somali National Army reported killing more than 60 Al-Shabaab fighters near Leego in Lower Shabelle. The operations, conducted on 7 November by the SNA including elite Danab forces in villages around Leego, formed part of ongoing efforts linked to Operation Banooda against the group. Security officials claimed over 60 militants were killed and vehicles destroyed, though the figure has not been independently verified.

On the threat assessment front, Somalia's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ali Mohamed Omar Balcad in an interview with TRT World warned that growing military and technical cooperation between Yemen's Houthis and Al-Shabaab despite ideological differences, could enhance the Somali group's weapons, training, and operational capacity, thereby increasing threats to civilians and security forces. Reporting also highlighted Turkey's intensifying airstrikes in southern and central Somalia, including civilian casualties, highlighted the death of an elderly woman, Hawo Madow, in an airstrike on the village of Jameeco, approximately 160 kilometers northwest of Mogadishu, on 27 October, with local residents attributing the strike to Turkish aircraft and describing additional injuries.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud dismissed Supreme Court Chief Justice Bashe Yusuf Ahmed and appointed Ibrahim Idle Suleiman in his place. The presidency cited complaints from judges, judicial staff, and legal professionals about the need for a more transparent and fair justice system and directed broader judicial reforms. Critics linked the move to Bashe Yusuf having taken up an opposition petition challenging recent constitutional amendments and being on the verge of a potentially adverse ruling. The opposition and some regional states had denounced the amendments as unilateral.

Subsequently, the Supreme Court ruled the constitutional amendments null and void, declared presidential and parliamentary terms expired and ordered elections within 90 days. The court, comprising five judges and excluding the previously dismissed Chief Justice Bashe Yusuf Ahmed, invalidated amendments to the 2012 Provisional Constitution that had extended presidential and parliamentary terms from four to five years. It held that the extensions did not apply to current officeholders whose terms expired in April and May 2026, that parliament lacked authority after its mandate ended

and that the government was limited to caretaker functions.

Ousted Chief Justice Bashe Yusuf Ahmed stated publicly on 7 November that he did not feel safe in Mogadishu and demanded the withdrawal of troops from the Supreme Court. He accused President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of threatening his security following the 5 November court ruling that the president's term had expired and that his dismissal of the chief justice was unlawful and he called for the withdrawal of security personnel, claiming approximately 300 troops and vehicles, from the court premises. He sought refuge at former President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed's residence, and the judges who issued the ruling also reported security concerns. Concurrently, President Mohamud attended the swearing in of appointed replacement Ibrahim Idle Suleiman.

On the political dialogue front, the opposition National Salvation Forum agreed to dialogue with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. The opposition agreed to give the president a final opportunity to resolve the protracted dispute over constitutional amendments, electoral arrangements, and power distribution through talks. A three-member opposition delegation including former Galmudug president Abdikarim Hussein Guled and lawmakers Abdirahman Abdishakur and Abdullahi Arab, was appointed to meet a government technical committee around 14 November to set an agenda. The move followed meetings with NISA Director Mahad Salad, though participation by Puntland and Jubaland remained uncertain.

Tensions rose sharply in Beledweyne, the capital of Hiiraan region over the Hirshabelle administration. Newly elected Hirshabelle Vice President Abdifatah Hassan Afrah and former NISA director Abdullahi Mohamed Ali Sanbaloolshe arrived in the city hours apart, each with armed supporters, amid disputes over the regional leadership election that saw the re-election of Ali Abdullahi Hussein Gudlawe and the election of Afrah in Jowhar. Local reports described opposing mobilizations and raised risks of confrontation, threatening to divert forces from counter-Al-Shabaab duties. The standoff continued with risks to front lines. Hawadle traditional leader Ugaas Yusuf Ugaas Hassan had called for clan mobilization, including SNA members, against what he described as an impending federal offensive aimed at retaking the town from local militias. Reports indicated SNA and NISA personnel deploying near the Ugaas's residence, with some NISA elements defecting and reportedly controlling Beledweyne Airport. Djiboutian officers in the region were said to be mediating to prevent open confrontation.

In the South West State, tensions escalated in Baidoa. Forces loyal to former South West State President Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen reportedly moved from multiple directions near the state administration headquarters in Baidoa. This continued

a months-long dispute involving territorial gains by Laftagareen aligned groups in Bay region towns, diverting federal and regional forces from counter-Al-Shabaab operations.

The Federal Government of Somalia rejected Israel's ambassador accreditation and embassy plans in Hargeisa, Somaliland. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on 3 November declaring Israel's accreditation of Ambassador Michael Lotem to Somaliland and the laying of a cornerstone for an embassy in Hargeisa null and void and without legal effect. It described the steps, taken without federal consent, as a flagrant violation of Somalia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity, compounding Israel's December 2025 recognition of Somaliland, which had already been rejected by the African Union, IGAD, the Arab League, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

In bilateral engagement, Somalia and Indonesia discussed expanding cooperation in trade, fisheries, maritime security, and other sectors. Somalia's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hassan Mohamed Ali held bilateral talks in Jakarta with Indonesia's Deputy Foreign Minister Anis Matta. Discussions covered trade, investment, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, the blue economy, education, healthcare, infrastructure, energy, maritime security, institutional capacity-building, and coordination at the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

On the regional diplomatic front, the foreign ministers of Egypt, Somalia, and Djibouti discussed Red Sea security and Horn of Africa tensions. On the sidelines of the CEN-SAD Executive Council session in Tripoli with meetings reported around 7–8 November, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty met separately with Somali Foreign Minister Abdisalam Abdi Ali and Djiboutian Foreign Minister Abdoulkader Hussein Omar.

## Somaliland

President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro issued a warning to Mogadishu over alleged troop plans in eastern Sool. Speaking at the police anniversary ceremony, President Irro criticised reports that Somalia's National Army 26th Division was preparing to establish positions in eastern Sool, an area claimed by Somaliland and administered by Somalia's Northeastern State. He described the move as potentially leading to further violence, asserted that Somaliland forces could confront such a deployment and seize foreign-supplied equipment, and called for international attention to the matter. The reported deployment was not independently confirmed.

In a separate domestic security and social cohesion matter, Somaliland authorities and community leaders continued to address violence in Borama, Awdal region, targeting

ethnic Oromo residents. Reports indicated that more than 150 homes were damaged, looted, or burned. The incidents were linked to spillover tensions from clashes in Ethiopia's Moyale area. Awdal Governor Boqor Hassan Dahir Haddi and Information Minister Barkhad Jama Batun condemned the attacks, announced arrests of some youths, and pledged further legal action.

The House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, Planning and Investment, chaired by Mohamed Hussein Jama (Raambo), held an introductory meeting with Louise Hancock, Head of the British Office in Hargeisa. Discussions covered the general situation in Somaliland and the region, political and security developments, United Kingdom–Somaliland cooperation, and the Somaliland–Somalia dialogue.

The United Kingdom updated its travel advisory, warning against non essential travel to parts of northern Kenya, including areas near Moyale and the Ethiopian border, due to Al-Shabaab threats. The advisory reflects broader Horn of Africa security concerns relevant to regional engagements and cross border dynamics affecting Somaliland and its neighbors.

## 8. Yemen

Developments during the reporting period indicated a significant escalation of Yemen's military confrontation, particularly on the southern front, where Houthi forces advanced towards Aden while government forces intensified counteroffensive operations across Al-Jawf, Marib, Taiz and Lahij. The Houthi advance to within approximately 80 kilometres of Aden emerged as the most consequential development, raising concerns about the security of the internationally recognised government's principal southern stronghold. Although government forces subsequently reported recovering positions in parts of Lahij and making gains on other fronts, the competing operations demonstrated the intensity of the struggle for territorial control. Meanwhile, renewed Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia and deadly incidents involving military and civilian targets further widened the security implications of the fighting.

The most significant military development occurred on 2 November, when Houthi forces reportedly captured Al-Maqatirah district in Lahij governorate, advancing to within approximately 80 kilometres of Aden. According to Reuters, the offensive forced government-aligned forces to withdraw towards Tur al-Bahah and threatened the strategic road connecting Taiz with Aden. The advance

represented the closest reported Houthi approach to Aden since 2015 and raised concerns about the vulnerability of government defensive positions in southern Yemen. Beyond its immediate territorial significance, the development threatened an important transportation and reinforcement route linking government-held areas, potentially complicating the movement of military supplies and reinforcements towards the southern front.

In response, government forces intensified Operation Dawn of Yemen, seeking to prevent further territorial losses and recover strategically important positions. On 1 November, government military authorities announced the recapture of strategic positions and heights east of Al-Hazm, the capital of Al-Jawf governorate, reportedly seizing weapons and ammunition depots. On 3 and 4 November, the military announced further advances towards and into the Al-Dahida mountain range, claiming to have captured Houthi fortifications and military equipment. Fighting also continued around strategic positions in Marib. On the southern fronts, government-aligned forces subsequently reported recovering positions in parts of Al-Maqatirah district and along the Tur al-Bahah and Al-Aqroud fronts. These operations reflected an effort to contain the Houthi advance towards Aden and prevent the loss of additional strategic territory. However, the reported recovery of positions had not established a decisive reversal of the Houthi offensive, leaving the balance of control across the southern front uncertain.

The fighting also produced significant casualties through attacks on military installations and civilian areas. On 4 November, a Houthi ballistic missile struck Al-Jumaima military training camp in Al-Dhalea governorate, reportedly killing eight people and injuring more than 15 others. The attack demonstrated the continued threat posed by Houthi missile capabilities to government-aligned military concentrations and training facilities. On 6 November, an attack on Al-Hadara market in Al-Waziyah district of Taiz reportedly killed at least 30 people and injured eight others, according to Houthi authorities. The Houthis attributed the incident to Saudi-led coalition airstrikes, while government-aligned military authorities blamed a Houthi ballistic missile. Neither account was independently verified. The high reported casualty toll underscored the risks facing civilians as military operations increasingly affected populated areas.

Meanwhile, Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia further escalated regional security concerns. On 8 November, Saudi authorities reported intercepting several missiles targeting Riyadh and other parts of the kingdom. Falling debris from an intercepted attack damaged several floors of an administrative building belonging to Saudi Aramco in Riyadh's financial district, although no casualties were reported. The Houthis also claimed attacks against King Khalid International Airport and Aramco facilities in Riyadh and Abqaiq, but the reported targeting of these specific facilities was not independently confirmed. The incident involving the Aramco building demonstrated that even successful interceptions could result in damage to critical infrastructure and highlighted the continuing vulnerability of Saudi urban and economic centres to cross-border attacks. The escalation also increased pressure on Saudi Arabia to protect its territory while managing the military and diplomatic dimensions of its involvement in Yemen.

The humanitarian consequences of the renewed fighting were particularly evident in Taiz, where restrictions on supply routes and insecurity continued to obstruct access to essential medical services. Health facilities faced shortages of fuel, medicines and surgical equipment, limiting their capacity to respond to conflict-related injuries and other medical needs. On 4 November, the International Committee of the Red Cross delivered four truckloads of medical supplies to health facilities in the city, including surgical equipment and other essential materials. The delivery provided urgently needed assistance following disruptions to humanitarian supplies. However, the continued dependence on humanitarian deliveries highlighted the vulnerability of medical services to insecurity and restrictions on access, particularly in areas affected by prolonged fighting.

The week's developments pointed to a more dangerous military trajectory, as the Houthi advance towards Aden challenged the territorial position of the internationally recognised government while exposing the limits of its ability to secure multiple fronts simultaneously. The damage to Saudi infrastructure also demonstrated that the consequences of the conflict extend beyond the immediate battlefield. The central strategic concern is whether government forces can prevent further territorial reversals before the Houthis consolidate their southern gains and increase pressure on the wider regional security environment.

## 9. Kenya

Kenya's developments during the week were marked by increased diplomatic engagement, growing instability along its border with Ethiopia, and significant domestic economic and political developments. The country sought to strengthen its international partnerships while confronting humanitarian, public health and governance challenges.

Kenya participated in the 28th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), held in Antigua and Barbuda from 1 to 4 November, with Deputy President Kithure Kindiki leading the delegation on behalf of President William Ruto. The summit focused on trade, investment, debt, climate finance and sustainable development under the theme of accelerating partnerships and investment. Commonwealth members announced approximately $500 million in commitments supporting renewable energy, youth development and economic growth. During the summit, Kenya pursued closer economic and diplomatic relations with Caribbean countries, particularly Barbados and Dominica. On 3 November, discussions with Barbados focused on expanding trade, investment and maritime cooperation, while engagements with Dominica on 4 November sought to deepen bilateral relations. These initiatives reflected Kenya's efforts to diversify its international partnerships and expand economic cooperation beyond traditional markets.

A significant diplomatic development occurred on 3 November when Kenyan legal scholar Professor Phoebe Okowa was reelected to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a nine year term covering 2027 to 2036. Okowa secured 183 votes in the United Nations General Assembly and 13 votes in the Security Council following several voting rounds. Her reelection ensures continued Kenyan representation at the UN's principal judicial institution and strengthens the country's presence within international legal structures. The result followed sustained diplomatic lobbying and support from other African countries, including Sierra Leone, which withdrew its candidate in favour of Okowa.

Kenya also advanced bilateral diplomatic engagements with the United States, the United Kingdom and Gulf states. On 4 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighted efforts to strengthen the Kenya–US strategic partnership, while the government continued pursuing broader international cooperation in investment and security. On 2 November, British officials emphasized expanding cooperation with Kenya through engagements in Mombasa involving trade, youth employment, innovation and counterterrorism. British High Commissioner Matt Baugh and Deputy High Commissioner Ed Barnett visited local enterprises and security institutions, reinforcing existing cooperation in maritime security and economic development.

Meanwhile, Kenya sought clarification and a review of travel restrictions introduced by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait following its Ebola outbreak, raising questions about the implications for international mobility and economic relations. On 5 November, Kenya additionally reaffirmed its support for international initiatives aimed at strengthening respect for humanitarian law.

The most pressing regional security development remained the escalation of fighting in Ethiopia's Moyale area, which continued to affect Kenya's northern border throughout the week. Clashes involving communities from Ethiopia's Oromia and Somali regions displaced tens of thousands of civilians into Marsabit County. On 3 November, the United Nations reported approximately 36,000 people had crossed into Kenya, while subsequent local estimates suggested the figure had reached around 50,000. Refugees, predominantly women and children, sought shelter in temporary camps, schools and host communities, increasing pressure on already limited food, water and healthcare resources. Stray bullets from the conflict also crossed into Kenyan territory, resulting in civilian casualties and forcing some Kenyan families to relocate.

Kenyan authorities responded by strengthening security deployments and coordinating humanitarian operations with the Kenya Red Cross, UN agencies and Ethiopian officials. During his visit to Moyale, Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja confirmed that a Kenyan woman had died from stray gunfire and assured residents that security measures were being reinforced. By 6 November, approximately 10,000 displaced people remained in temporary shelters and public institutions around Moyale. The fighting also disrupted cross border trade and electricity supplies, contributing to shortages and rising commodity prices. Reports on 7 November indicated that prices of essential goods had nearly doubled in some areas, while residents increasingly travelled south towards Nairobi. The crisis demonstrated how instability within Ethiopia could directly undermine Kenyan border security, economic activity and humanitarian conditions.

On the economic front, the World Bank released its latest Kenya Economic Update on 4 November, raising its projected 2026 growth rate from 4.3% to 4.6% following stronger economic performance during the first half of the year. Nevertheless, the institution warned that corruption, weak governance and rising public debt continued to restrict economic development. Kenya's public debt reached approximately 72.3% of GDP in August, while interest payments consumed nearly one third of government revenue. The report estimated that corruption and collusion contributed up to two percentage points of GDP to annual fiscal deficits. It also emphasized that governance reforms could improve investment, employment creation and long term economic performance. The

government acknowledged the recommendations while maintaining a more optimistic growth forecast.

Another major domestic development occurred on 6 November when a Mombasa court sentenced controversial religious leader Paul Mackenzie to 200 years in prison for the deaths of 190 children and one adult in the Shakahola tragedy. His accomplices also received lengthy prison sentences. The ruling brought renewed attention to institutional failures, religious exploitation and the need for stronger oversight of extremist religious organizations. Meanwhile, political competition continued to intensify ahead of the 2027 general election. On 8 November, opposition leaders Rigathi Gachagua and Kalonzo Musyoka held a joint rally in Kitengela and pledged to present a single presidential candidate against President Ruto. Their announcement followed consultations involving other opposition figures, including Fred Matiang'i, although questions surrounding the eventual candidate and coalition arrangements remained unresolved.

Overall, the week highlighted Kenya's efforts to consolidate its international diplomatic influence while confronting the immediate consequences of regional instability. The Moyale border crisis, economic governance concerns and growing political competition remained central challenges alongside the country's expanding international engagements.

## 10. The Gulf Countries

### Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's security and diplomatic agenda was shaped by continued Houthi attacks, growing concerns over regional maritime security, and efforts to strengthen cooperation with regional and international partners. Saudi air defenses intercepted multiple ballistic and cruise missiles launched toward Riyadh, the Eastern Province, and southern parts of the Kingdom. Although the interceptions prevented more extensive damage, falling shrapnel struck an administrative building belonging to Saudi Aramco in Riyadh's King Abdullah Financial District. The Energy Ministry reported no casualties. Saudi military spokesperson Staff Major General Turki al-Maliki also confirmed the interception and destruction of two cruise missiles targeting Riyadh and the southern regions. The attacks reinforced concerns over the security of critical infrastructure and the potential consequences of continued regional escalation. In response, Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman reaffirmed the Kingdom's determination to protect its territory, citizens, maritime navigation, and global energy supplies. The U.S. diplomatic mission maintained its security alert for American citizens in the Kingdom, following an earlier order for non-emergency government personnel to leave.

Alongside its security response, Riyadh continued diplomatic engagement aimed at containing regional tensions. Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan held consultations with his Egyptian, Qatari, and Kuwaiti counterparts, with discussions focusing on preventing further escalation, protecting maritime navigation, and coordinating Arab positions. He also spoke with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, while the Saudi government maintained communication with regional and international partners. Saudi Arabia's diplomatic engagement extended to China, where National Security Adviser Musad bin Mohammed Al-Aiban met Foreign Minister Wang Yi and conveyed a message from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to President Xi Jinping. The discussions covered bilateral relations and regional developments, with Beijing emphasizing dialogue, the protection of energy security and maritime routes, and the need for a regional security framework based on consultation. The contacts reflected the importance Riyadh places on maintaining communication with major international actors as regional instability continues.

Saudi Arabia also expanded its defense and diplomatic engagement beyond the immediate Gulf region. During Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa's visit to Riyadh, the two countries signed a defense cooperation agreement alongside development loan agreements exceeding $403 million. Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman held separate consultations with his American, French, South Korean, Japanese, and Australian counterparts. The discussions covered bilateral defense cooperation, regional security developments, and coordination to contain tensions, with several partners condemning the Houthi attacks against the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia also continued its engagement with Turkey and Pakistan through the joint defense agreement, following the Turkish Parliament's approval of its ratification. In parallel, Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed Al-Khuraiji met Nigerian National Security Adviser Malam Nuhu Ribadu to discuss strengthening bilateral relations and regional developments. Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan's participation in the G7 ministerial meeting in Paris further reflected Riyadh's continued diplomatic engagement with international partners.

Developments in Yemen and the wider Red Sea region remained another important part of Saudi policy. Riyadh continued supporting the internationally recognized Yemeni government and its efforts to strengthen security, while Saudi Ambassador to Yemen Mohammed Al-Jaber discussed further support for the Yemeni government and population with German Foreign Office official Clemens Hach. Saudi officials also rejected reports published by *The Wall Street Journal* concerning alleged demands and compensation arrangements involving the Houthis, describing the claims as baseless and emphasizing the group's attacks and rejection of peace efforts. On the ground, Saudi Arabia continued supporting security forces in Hadhramaut and Al-Mahra, with the first

batch of security vehicles being commissioned in Mukalla under the supervision of Arab Coalition forces. These efforts indicate Riyadh's continued interest in strengthening local security arrangements in eastern Yemen and protecting its wider interests along the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Saudi engagement also extended to humanitarian and regional infrastructure initiatives. Under the direction of King Salman, the Saudi Embassy in Sudan launched a prosthetic limbs project in the Red Sea region through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center. Meanwhile, the Gulf Cooperation Council advanced its regional connectivity agenda through the signing of the general agreement for the Gulf railway project. The proposed network will extend approximately 2,100 kilometres, with passenger trains expected to reach speeds of up to 200 kilometres per hour and freight trains operating at between 80 and 120 kilometres per hour. Full operation is expected by the end of the decade. At the economic level, Saudi authorities continued to emphasize diversification and domestic performance. The Purchasing Managers' Index reached 55.3 points, its highest level since the beginning of the year, while the Economic and Development Council reviewed developments in startups, venture capital, foreign trade, and anti-money-laundering measures. The transfer of ten healthcare clusters to the Holding Health Company also formed part of the ongoing restructuring of the healthcare sector. Riyadh reiterated its commitment to maintaining reliable energy supplies to international markets through investment in infrastructure, storage, and alternative export routes. It also condemned the targeting of the Qatari gas carrier *Al Mayeda* and expressed solidarity with Doha, calling for stronger international measures to protect maritime navigation and energy supplies.

## UAE

The UAE continued to manage the effects of regional security tensions while maintaining its diplomatic and economic engagement with international partners. The National Crisis and Emergency Management Authority sustained heightened public preparedness measures in response to the evolving security environment. The U.S. diplomatic mission also issued a security alert advising American citizens to monitor local developments, remain cautious during potential aerial incidents, and avoid large gatherings and areas with a significant security presence. Maritime security remained another concern, particularly around the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman. In a separate incident, the UAE coordinated a maritime rescue operation in the Gulf of Oman, saving 22 crew members after a ship caught fire. These developments highlighted the importance of maritime safety and emergency coordination as regional tensions continued to affect the surrounding waters.

Diplomatically, Abu Dhabi maintained its engagement with regional and international partners. The UAE hosted the country's Government Annual Meetings, bringing together more than 500 government leaders, cabinet members, and executive council representatives to review national priorities and government initiatives. The meetings reflected the continued emphasis on policy coordination and institutional performance. The UAE also received Palau President and Pacific Islands Forum Chair Surangel Whipps Jr., accompanied by Forum Secretary-General Baron Divavesi Waqa. Their discussions focused on strengthening cooperation between the UAE and Pacific Island countries, particularly in climate finance, renewable energy investment, South-South cooperation, and support for the Pacific Resilience Facility. The visit reflected Abu Dhabi's continued efforts to broaden its international partnerships beyond the Middle East and strengthen its engagement with smaller island states on development and climate-related issues.

### Qatar

Qatar continued to play an active diplomatic role in efforts to contain the regional confrontation between the United States and Iran. Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani intensified shuttle diplomacy, making several visits to Tehran to help bridge differences between Washington and Tehran. The Qatari Foreign Ministry confirmed that Doha was facilitating the exchange of proposals aimed at preventing further escalation. Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani also held a telephone conversation with U.S. President Donald Trump to discuss regional de-escalation. The proposals under discussion included reciprocal steps involving the lifting of the U.S. naval blockade on Iran and the release of frozen Iranian assets in exchange for reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Despite the slow pace of negotiations, the Qatari prime minister expressed confidence that the U.S. administration remained interested in reaching a diplomatic solution.

Doha's mediation efforts were accompanied by wider regional consultations. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman held telephone discussions with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The consultations focused on maritime security, regional de-escalation, and the possibility of a broader regional peace agreement. Qatar's diplomatic engagement was also expected to continue through a scheduled meeting between the Qatari prime minister, President Donald Trump, and Vice President JD Vance in Washington. The discussions were expected to address the stalled negotiations with Iran and the wider regional security situation. These contacts demonstrate Doha's continued effort to maintain communication between the principal parties while coordinating with regional

partners.

Beyond its immediate mediation role, Qatar also advanced a broader diplomatic proposal through the prime minister's address at the Oxford Union. He introduced the concept of a "Thriving States" framework, envisaging cooperation among small, prosperous, and trusted countries that could combine their diplomatic and economic networks to support international stability. The proposal was presented as a way to build a global "supply chain of peace" through closer coordination among states with the capacity to contribute to diplomatic initiatives and economic cooperation. It reflected Qatar's interest in expanding its international diplomatic role beyond the immediate Middle Eastern crisis.

Meanwhile, security concerns remained elevated. The U.S. Embassy in Doha issued an alert advising American citizens to exercise caution amid potential attacks by Iranian-supported Houthi forces, regional airspace disruptions, and possible threats to U.S. interests. Qatar also introduced an administrative measure concerning its border infrastructure. The Ministry of Justice published a new issue of the Official Gazette formally designating Umm Al Houl Port and Dukhan Air Base Airport as official maritime and air entry and exit points. The decision added to the country's ongoing regulatory and security arrangements as it continued to manage the effects of regional instability.

## 11. Africa and The Sahel Region

### Mali

Mali's transitional government continued to combine domestic political control, religious engagement, and closer security cooperation with Russia and its Alliance of Sahel States partners. The High Islamic Council presented an official guide on countering extremist discourse to Prime Minister Abdoulaye Maïga. The initiative reflected an effort to involve domestic religious institutions in addressing ideological radicalization and countering extremist narratives. Politically, however, the military-led administration under General Assimi Goïta continued to govern without a clear electoral timetable, while restrictions on civil society and the delay in restoring constitutional rule remained unresolved.

Mali also continued to strengthen its strategic relationship with Russia. President Assimi Goïta concluded high-level discussions with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, focusing on deeper intelligence and defense cooperation. His subsequent visit to Ouagadougou included discussions with Burkina Faso's leader, Captain Ibrahim Traoré, on counterterrorism, regional integration, and political coordination among

Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. These engagements reinforced the Alliance of Sahel States as a framework for cooperation among the three military-led governments, particularly in response to their shared security challenges and changing relationships.

Nevertheless, the security situation remained difficult. Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin intensified blockades targeting highways and fuel supply routes leading to Bamako, worsening existing energy and supply disruptions. The restrictions placed additional pressure on transportation and economic activity, while highlighting the vulnerability of routes connecting the capital to other parts of the country. The Malian General Staff continued to report counter-insurgency operations against armed groups in central and northern areas, although coordination challenges involving Russian Africa Corps elements remained part of the broader security picture. International concern also increased, with France joining the United States and United Kingdom in advising their citizens to leave Mali. The U.S. Embassy also moved to evacuate non-emergency personnel as security conditions deteriorated. Meanwhile, preparations continued for the Bamako Defense and Security Expo, which was expected to bring together military equipment providers and regional defense representatives.

### Niger

Niger continued to deepen its regional engagement beyond the Alliance of Sahel States, particularly through a new cooperation arrangement with eastern Libya. Prime Minister Ali Mahaman Lamine Zeine led a political and military delegation to Benghazi, where he signed a memorandum of understanding with eastern Libyan military commander Khalifa Haftar. The agreement was intended to expand cooperation across several areas and reflected Niger's interest in strengthening relations with authorities controlling eastern Libya. The development is significant given the importance of cross-border security and political relationships across the Sahel and North African regions.

Niger's external relations also remained shaped by continuing disagreements with European partners. Algerian state media dismissed reports that the European Union had made an official diplomatic inquiry or sought clarification regarding Algerian military deployments under bilateral memorandums of understanding with Niger. The reports were described by the Algerian Press Service as fabricated. Separately, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu issued condolences to Niger's military leader, General Abdourahamane Tiani, following the death of his father. The gesture came against a background of continuing diplomatic tensions between Niger and Nigeria following the military takeover and subsequent regional realignments.

Domestically, the military-led administration under General Tiani continued to consolidate its authority following the suspension of traditional multiparty political

arrangements and Niger's withdrawal from ECOWAS and other regional security frameworks. The country remained part of the Alliance of Sahel States alongside Mali and Burkina Faso, whose members continued to face jihadist insurgencies and shifting security alignments involving groups such as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin. The agreement with Haftar therefore added another dimension to Niger's regional diplomacy as the government sought to broaden its partnerships while confronting persistent security challenges.

## DRC

The security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remained severe, with military discipline, attacks against civilians, and the spread of Ebola adding to the country's existing challenges. In Goma, a military court sentenced 66 soldiers from the 3415th regiment to death after convicting them of mutiny, disobedience of orders, and cowardice in the face of enemy forces. The case followed their withdrawal from frontline positions in Walikale territory during earlier fighting involving the Front pour la Refondation de la Nation (FRN) and M23 coalition. Four soldiers were acquitted, while another received a ten-year prison sentence. The scale of the sentences highlighted the government's efforts to enforce military discipline amid continuing pressure on its forces in the eastern provinces.

Violence against civilians also continued. An attack in Beni Territory reportedly killed at least 30 people, according to local sources cited by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Local authorities attributed the attack to the Allied Democratic Forces, which also reportedly burned homes and destroyed a health centre. The violence further complicated humanitarian conditions in North Kivu, where insecurity has continued to obstruct access to affected communities. The Ebola outbreak involving the Bundibugyo virus also remained a major concern. Reported figures placed confirmed cases between approximately 10,668 and 10,741, with deaths ranging from 5,198 to 5,230. The variation in reported figures reflected the different estimates available in the source material. Security incidents in North Kivu forced response teams to suspend some operations temporarily, while patients reportedly fled an observation centre. These disruptions weakened containment efforts and increased the difficulty of managing the outbreak in an already insecure environment.

Political tensions continued alongside the security and health crises. Former President Joseph Kabila's rebranded politico-military coalition, the Front pour la Refondation de la Nation, increasingly linked regional peace discussions to the political future of President Félix Tshisekedi. The coalition challenged existing constitutional arrangements and the possibility of extending presidential power beyond the current

constitutional framework. Meanwhile, Tshisekedi's administration was reportedly working to counter Kabila-linked political networks within the Southern African Development Community headquarters in Gaborone. At the regional level, the African Union Peace and Security Council and the European Union Political and Security Committee held their annual joint consultative meeting in Addis Ababa. Discussions focused on the conflict in eastern DRC and called for the implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the withdrawal of Rwandan forces from Congolese territory, an end to Congolese support for the FDLR, and the dismantling of parallel administrations. UN peacekeeping representatives also held contact with the Kabila-led coalition in eastern Congo as part of continuing diplomatic and stabilization efforts.

## Chad

Chad's foreign and security policy continued to undergo significant adjustments as N'Djamena moved to redefine its defense relationships while seeking closer economic and strategic cooperation with Russia. The government announced the termination of its longstanding defense cooperation agreement with France following a visit by French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot. Foreign Minister Abderaman Koulamallah presented the decision as an assertion of national sovereignty rather than a complete diplomatic break. Nevertheless, the move carries important implications for the French military presence, which has included approximately 1,000 troops stationed in the country. At the same time, Chad called for faster implementation of its bilateral agreements with Moscow. Foreign Minister Ahmed Kogri emphasized the need to translate commitments made during Russia-Africa summits into concrete projects, particularly in industrialization, technology transfer, and infrastructure. Taken together, these developments reflect N'Djamena's effort to diversify its external partnerships while asserting greater control over its security and diplomatic relationships.

Despite these diplomatic adjustments, Chad continued to face considerable security challenges along its borders. Travel advisories issued by international governments highlighted the risks of terrorist kidnappings in the Lake Chad Basin, particularly around its borders with Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger. Concerns also persisted along the border areas adjoining Sudan and the Central African Republic. Tensions remained particularly serious following confrontations near Tissi, where Chadian authorities accused Central African Republic forces of entering Chadian territory and causing casualties during military operations. These accusations added to existing border sensitivities and demonstrated the difficulties of maintaining security across areas affected by armed groups and regional conflicts.

The spillover from Sudan's civil war continued to place pressure on Chad's domestic

conditions. The country received further waves of Sudanese refugees, reinforcing its position as the largest host of Sudanese refugees in the region. The growing humanitarian burden has placed additional pressure on food security, water access, and healthcare services in host communities. Alongside these challenges, the government sought to promote the livestock sector through the National Livestock Salon, which brought together breeders from all 23 provinces. The initiative reflected the importance of livestock to the national economy and the government's efforts to support productive sectors amid wider economic and humanitarian pressures.

## Central African Republic

The Central African Republic continued to face domestic political tensions and insecurity in its peripheral regions, while discussions over the future of the UN peacekeeping presence remained a major diplomatic concern. The government declared an opposition protest illegal after the Republican Bloc for the Defence of the Constitution announced plans to demonstrate against rising fuel prices. Government spokesperson Evariste Ngamana warned that the authorities would prevent the protest from taking place. The dispute added to tensions between the government and opposition groups following the earlier detention of four senior civil society figures during a shutdown. Opposition parties and activists also renewed their criticism of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra's efforts to extend his rule, with some threatening to boycott upcoming electoral phases. Their objections remain closely linked to the constitutional referendum that removed presidential term limits.

At the United Nations, discussions intensified over the future of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The Security Council considered the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mission for another year, with an authorized strength of 12,000 military personnel. The debate reflected differences over the pace and conditions of the mission's eventual withdrawal. The African Union and CAR authorities supported a gradual and coordinated reduction of foreign forces, arguing that national institutions should progressively assume greater responsibility for security. However, several Security Council members remained concerned that a premature withdrawal could create a security vacuum, particularly in peripheral areas where state control remains limited. In a separate development, French security company Amarante secured a contract to protect European Union delegation staff in Bangui, despite earlier disagreements and legal disputes involving the CAR Ministry of the Interior.

Security challenges remained particularly visible in the country's northeastern and southeastern regions. The spillover from Sudan's civil war continued to affect the tri-

border area connecting the Central African Republic, Chad, and Sudan, where cross-border raids, weapons proliferation, and localized instability were reported. Vakaga prefecture remained especially exposed to these pressures. Elsewhere, the Coalition of Patriots for Change, led by former President François Bozizé, continued to pose a security threat in peripheral areas. In Haut-Mbomou, recurring clashes involved the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe militia and remnants of the Lord's Resistance Army. Meanwhile, the Central African Armed Forces continued to depend heavily on foreign military support to secure strategic mining areas and border corridors. Operations remained closely coordinated with Rwandan forces and Russian personnel, including former Wagner elements and Africa Corps members. This continued reliance on external security partners highlighted the importance of foreign military cooperation to the government's efforts to maintain control beyond the capital.

## 12. North Africa

### Libya

Nigerien Prime Minister Ali Mahaman Lamine Zeine visited Benghazi, where he signed a strategic cooperation protocol with eastern Libyan Prime Minister Osama Hamad and Libyan National Army Deputy Commander Saddam Haftar. The agreement covers political, economic, military and security cooperation, strengthening ties between Niger and eastern Libya.

Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah met US Africa adviser Massad Boulos to discuss institutional unification and implementation of the political agreement reached through the 4+4 committee.

The UN Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) for another year, until 31 October 2027. The renewal prioritised political reconciliation, institutional unification and preparations for national elections. UN Special Representative Hanna Tetteh met Saddam Haftar and newly elected House of Representatives Speaker Al-Salihin Abdel Nabi. Discussions focused on implementing the 30 August political agreement, unifying state institutions and advancing national elections.

Libya and Djibouti signed three memoranda of understanding to strengthen bilateral cooperation, reflecting Tripoli's efforts to expand its diplomatic engagement across Africa. Egypt reopened its embassy in the Libyan capital after 12 years of closure. The development marked an important step in restoring diplomatic relations and expanding Cairo's engagement with western Libya.

### Algeria

Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf visited N'Djamena as President Abdelmadjid Tebboune's special envoy. He met Chadian President Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno and delivered a message from Tebboune. Discussions focused on bilateral relations, regional security and cooperation across the Sahel-Saharan region. Both sides also reviewed the implementation of 27 bilateral agreements.

In lights of, Nigerien Prime Minister Ali Mahaman Lamine Zeine visit to Benghazi and the signing a strategic cooperation agreement with eastern Libyan authorities aligned with Khalifa Haftar. Algeria was concerned about Niger's growing relationship with Haftar's eastern Libyan network. The agreement introduced another regional security actor into Niger's expanding political and military partnerships. Ahmed Attaf's diplomatic engagement in Niamey reflected Algeria's efforts to preserve its influence in its southern neighborhood amid growing regional competition.

### Morocco

The President of the UN General Assembly announced a plenary meeting for 10 November under the UN procedure for reviewing Security Council vetoes. The meeting followed Russia's veto of the American-backed Western Sahara resolution on 30 October.

King Mohammed VI convened a high-level meeting to discuss the situation following MINURSO's mandate expiration. Moroccan authorities outlined priorities concerning security, territorial administration and continued development projects in Western Sahara.

## 13. Middle East

### Israel

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited South Korea and met President Lee Jae Myung. The two countries signed cooperation agreements covering nuclear-project financing, energy, mining and technology. Defense-industrial cooperation, critical minerals and joint exports were also discussed. Ankara and Seoul reiterated their $15 billion trade target, while South Korea continued discussions over participation in Turkey’s proposed Sinop nuclear power project.

Turkey’s parliament approved the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan by 279 votes to 119. The agreement establishes collective-defense commitments, intelligence sharing, military coordination and defense-industrial

cooperation. An armed attack against one member is treated as an attack against all. However, deployment of Turkish forces would require separate parliamentary authorization. The agreement strengthens Ankara's strategic security relationship with Riyadh and Islamabad.

The European Commission published its 2026 Turkey report, raising concerns about judicial independence, democratic standards, fundamental rights and the treatment of political opposition. Ankara rejected the assessment, particularly its criticism of the Turkish Libyan maritime memorandum and Eastern Mediterranean policy. Turkey accused Brussels of favoring Greek and Cypriot positions while disregarding Turkish interests. The disagreement highlights the continuing gap between Ankara's European integration ambitions and its increasingly autonomous regional posture.

Erdoğan publicly reaffirmed Turkey’s strategic relationship with Azerbaijan after tensions emerged following President Ilham Aliyev's absence from the Turkic States summit in Ankara. The disagreement followed criticism by Turkish figures of Azerbaijan's school headscarf restrictions. Erdogan removed an adviser whose comments had aggravated the dispute. He subsequently visited Shusha for Azerbaijan's Victory Day celebrations, where both presidents reaffirmed their alliance.

Turkey’s Foreign Ministry protested a French-flagged vessel's planned marine scientific research activity connected with cable-laying operations inside waters Ankara claims as its continental shelf. Turkey argued that the vessel required Turkish authorization and rejected navigational warnings issued by Greece and the Greek Cypriot administration. The dispute highlights continuing tensions over maritime jurisdiction, undersea infrastructure and energy connectivity in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan visited the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, meeting President Tufan Erhürman, Prime Minister Ünal Üstel and Foreign Minister Tahsin Ertuğruloğlu. Discussions addressed bilateral relations and developments in the Cyprus dispute. Ankara reiterated its support for the Turkish Cypriot administration's political status and security, while maintaining its position that a two-state arrangement represents the most realistic settlement framework.

Fidan met Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs, reinforcing bilateral security coordination. At the TRT World Forum, he called for international cooperation to protect maritime chokepoints and diversify trade corridors, warning that disruptions could threaten global economic security. He also coordinated with Egypt over diplomatic efforts to prevent renewed US-Iran escalation, working with Qatar through the regional quadrilateral mechanism.

Turkey’s ten-year defense and economic cooperation framework with Somalia remains a significant part of Ankara's regional security position, particularly its commitment to developing, training and equipping the Somali Navy. No verified announcement of a new Turkey-Somalia defense agreement or Ethiopia-Turkey maritime arrangement emerged during the reporting period. Ankara's mediation between Somalia and Ethiopia over maritime access also remains relevant to its Horn of Africa strategy.

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## 14. Global Powers

The United States carried out limited defensive strikes against Iranian targets in the Strait of Hormuz, according to a US official cited by the Associated Press. The strikes reportedly targeted Iranian personnel using surface-to-air missiles against US assets. Explosions were also reported on Qeshm Island. The operation took place amid an existing US naval blockade and a wider military build-up, raising concerns that the confrontation could return to a more extensive phase of hostilities.

Washington's position remained coercive but not wholly closed to diplomacy. President Donald Trump indicated that he was not seeking an immediate escalation if negotiations produced progress, while warning that US forces had identified additional infrastructure targets in the event of renewed fighting. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, by contrast, said the negotiations remained far from a breakthrough, describing Iran's demands as unrealistic. Tehran's reported conditions include an end to the US blockade, sanctions

relief, the release of frozen assets, compensation for war damage and a wider regional ceasefire.

The diplomatic channel continued through Qatar. Trump was scheduled to meet Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani at the White House on 9 November. Qatar has remained a key intermediary between Washington and Tehran, conveying proposals and attempting to bridge differences over the nuclear programme, sanctions and the terms for ending the conflict. The meeting was scheduled, not yet a concluded negotiation or agreement.

On 7 November, US Central Command announced the creation of Task Force Iron Gate, a unit based in Tampa, Florida, tasked with coordinating efforts to restrict Iran's movement of advanced weapons, dual-use technology, sanctioned goods and illicit revenue through its land borders and the Caspian Sea. The initiative extends Washington's pressure campaign beyond the naval blockade of Iranian ports in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. CENTCOM said the naval blockade had prevented more than $25 billion in Iranian crude oil exports.

Washington continued its efforts to bring Russia and Ukraine towards a negotiated settlement. On 5 November, Russian and Ukrainian representatives met at the White House in an initiative organised by First Lady Melania Trump. The White House presented the meeting as part of an effort to consolidate a local ceasefire in Oleshky and the surrounding Kherson region. The ceasefire reportedly enabled nearly 800 civilians to evacuate, although it did not amount to a broader cessation of hostilities.

Separately, US envoy Steve Witkoff announced that Washington would host another round of trilateral negotiations involving Russia and Ukraine in Abu Dhabi on 10–11 November. The proposed discussions are expected to address ending the war, post-war security arrangements, de-escalation and humanitarian issues. US representatives are also expected to consult European officials in Brussels on security guarantees and reconstruction.

Rwanda and South Africa face removal from AGOA. On 2 November, the Office of the US Trade Representative announced that President Trump had notified Congress and the two governments of his intention to terminate their eligibility for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), effective 1 January 2027. Washington cited concerns relating to trade and investment barriers, governance and national-security interests. The announcement represents a significant use of trade preferences as a means of applying political and economic pressure on African governments.

US–DRC strategic partnership advances. On 6 November, American and Congolese

officials met in Paris for the second meeting of the Joint Steering Committee established under their Strategic Partnership Agreement. The two sides reviewed progress on investment and infrastructure projects, including the Lobito Corridor, and discussed opportunities for greater US private-sector involvement in the DRC's strategic mineral sector. The meeting also recognised the signing of the corridor's concession agreement as an important implementation milestone.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio travelled to Paris for the G7 foreign ministers' meeting scheduled for 9–10 November. The agenda includes Ukraine, the Middle East, humanitarian assistance, energy prices, counternarcotics and artificial intelligence.

On 2 November, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning announced that Beijing would dispatch three senior envoys on separate visits across the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. Liu Xianfa, China's Special Representative on African Affairs, was scheduled to visit Ethiopia, Djibouti and Egypt; Hu Changchun, the Foreign Ministry's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, was to visit Eritrea; and Middle East envoy Zhai Jun was to travel to Iran, Oman and Saudi Arabia. Beijing described the visits as an effort to promote dialogue, reduce tensions and contribute to regional peace and stability.

The diplomatic initiative became more concrete on 4 November, when Liu Xianfa met Ethiopian Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos in Addis Ababa. According to China's Foreign Ministry, the discussions covered bilateral relations and the situation in the Horn of Africa. Liu reiterated President Xi Jinping's four principles for China's engagement in African conflict resolution: African leadership, equity and justice, ending hostilities and building peace, and addressing both the symptoms and root causes of conflicts. He said Beijing hoped tensions in the region would ease and was prepared to work with all parties to support regional stability. Gedion, in turn, expressed Ethiopia's readiness to maintain communication with China and promote regional peace through consultation and mutually beneficial cooperation.

On 9 November, President Trump said he expected to meet Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin at the APEC leaders' summit in Shenzhen on 18–19 November. The possibility of a trilateral meeting has attracted attention because the three leaders could discuss several major international issues, including the war in Ukraine, the Iran conflict and nuclear arms control. However, the meeting's format and agenda have not been formally confirmed by all three governments.

On 7 November, the Kremlin confirmed the composition of Russia's delegation for the forthcoming trilateral negotiations with the United States and Ukraine in Abu Dhabi. The delegation will be led by presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky and include Deputy

Foreign Ministers Sergei Ryabkov and Mikhail Galuzin, as well as senior military and intelligence officials, including Igor Kostyukov, head of Russia's military intelligence. The inclusion of diplomatic, military and intelligence representatives indicates that Moscow intends to address both the political terms of a settlement and its military and security dimensions.

President Vladimir Putin met the delegation on 6 November during a Russian Security Council meeting devoted partly to preparations for the negotiations. He thanked the United Arab Emirates for hosting the talks and discussed the Russian position with the officials who will represent Moscow. The Abu Dhabi meeting, scheduled for 10–11 November, will be the first trilateral round since February.

## 15. European Countries

On 9 November, the United Kingdom voted in favour of a short technical extension of the UN sanctions measures on Sudan, which were due to expire on 9 October. In its explanation of vote at the Security Council, the UK described the extension as a temporary measure that would provide additional time for negotiations on how the sanctions regime should respond to the changing conflict. London argued that the regime should be strengthened to reflect the geographical expansion of fighting and constrain the flow of weapons and other external support sustaining the war.

On 3 November, the UK government responded to a parliamentary question about the risk of wider regional conflict arising from the deterioration of Ethiopia–Eritrea relations, renewed fighting in northern Ethiopia and the war in Sudan. The government reiterated its concern about the regional implications of the conflict and called for an end to hostilities, compliance with international humanitarian law, humanitarian access and a return to African Union-led dialogue.

On 5 November, British Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Kate Foster addressed the Security Council on the situation in Abyei, expressing concern over continued violations of the area's demilitarised status. She condemned drone attacks near Amiet Market and Todach on 19 October, which killed and injured civilians and displaced thousands. She also raised concerns about sexual and gender-based violence and the continuing lack of accountability.

On 2 November, the UK and Germany held their second Defence Ministerial Council under the Trinity House Agreement, signed in October 2024. Defence Secretary Wes Streeting and German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening European defence capabilities, supporting Ukraine and reinforcing NATO's deterrence posture.

France assumed a prominent diplomatic role this week as host of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 9–10 November, under its 2026 G7 presidency. The agenda includes the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, Sudan, the Horn of Africa, Venezuela, Cuba and Haiti, alongside maritime security, humanitarian assistance and energy security. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, South Korea and Ukraine have also been invited to participate.

On 3 November, the British government announced that France and the UK would jointly lead Exercise Koalicja in Poland from 9–22 November. The exercise involves approximately 2,800 personnel from 11 countries and is designed to test the deployment, protection and logistical support of a multinational force that could assist Ukraine after a cessation of hostilities. It will include land, air and maritime components, with Turkey coordinating the maritime element.

On 8 November, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot confirmed that European countries, including France, would participate in discussions in Abu Dhabi on 10–11 November concerning the future of Ukraine. The talks are organised by the United States and involve Russian and Ukrainian delegations. Barrot had not yet confirmed who would represent France.

One of the more significant European political developments this week came from Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. In a letter to European Council President António Costa, Meloni criticised what she described as Europe's fragmented approach to negotiations over Ukraine. She argued that separate diplomatic initiatives by individual European governments risk weakening the EU's negotiating position and making the continent less influential in US-led peace efforts

## 16. International and Regional Organizations

### United Nation

On 5 November 2026, the UN Security Council held a briefing and consultations on the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and implementation of Resolution 2046. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa Guang Cong briefed. Discussions covered the fragile security situation in Abyei including recent drone attacks, the need to renew UNISFA's mandate expiring 15 November, bilateral dialogue between Sudan and South Sudan and humanitarian impacts. Cong noted challenges from the Sudan conflict affecting relations and the importance of safeguarding dialogue on Abyei's final status.

In early November 2026, the Security Council's programme included a private meeting

on AUSSOM and work related to the 2713 Al-Shabaab sanctions regime with expected action later in the month on extension. Discussions continued to address financing, operational challenges for AUSSOM, Somali security transition and residual UN support arrangements following earlier mission conclusions.

### Africa Union

On 5–6 November 2026 in Addis Ababa, the AU Peace and Security Council and the EU Political and Security Committee held their 9th Annual Joint Retreat focused on maritime security, counterterrorism or violent extremism, AI governance in peace and security and Women, Peace and Security followed by their 17th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting. Co-chaired by Côte d'Ivoire's Ambassador Antonin B. Bieke and Ambassador Lene Mandel Vensild, the meeting discussed AUSSOM in Somalia, Sudan, eastern DRC, the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin. The joint communiqué stressed no military solution in Sudan or eastern DRC, called for cessation of hostilities, protection of civilians, unhindered humanitarian access, an end to external interference and predictable financing for AU-led peace support operations including via UN resolution 2719. It expressed concern over AUSSOM's financial and operational challenges and reaffirmed support for Somali owned security transition and African ownership of peace efforts.

On 4 November 2026 at AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, the AU, League of Arab States and Organization of Islamic Cooperation held a Consultative Meeting of the Tripartite Coordination Mechanism on Palestine. Representing AU Commission Chairperson H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Ambassador Moussa Mohamed Omar reaffirmed Africa's solidarity with the Palestinian people rooted in AU decisions including the February 2026 Declaration and called for an end to occupation.

On 6 November 2026 in Addis Ababa, AU Commission Chairperson H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf addressed the Second African Political Parties Summit. He urged political parties to prioritise serving citizens, strengthening democratic governance and building consensus on development priorities under Agenda 2063 rather than solely seeking power. He highlighted responsibilities including policy development, bridging citizens and institutions, promoting pluralism, transparency, accountability and meaningful participation of women and youth, while referencing the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the Maputo Protocol.

Around 1–3 November 2026, Sudan's army aligned government lodged formal complaints with the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council in which it alleged that Ethiopia had allowed the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to use its territory to launch drone attacks against Sudan since February 2026. Sudan claimed

dozens of attacks causing civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure and called for condemnation and measures to uphold sovereignty. The complaints were submitted as Sudan's own claims Ethiopia has rejected such allegations and maintains that it is not involved in the Sudan conflict and respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbors. The matter remained before the AU PSC and UNSC with no decision reported during the period.

### Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

On 4 November 2026, IGAD and the European Union held a Political and Security Committee meeting in Djibouti. IGAD Deputy Executive Secretary H.E. Mohamed Abdi Ware, speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary, called for stronger political coordination and sustained cooperation to address peace and security challenges. He highlighted the need to advance peace efforts in Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan, protect civilians, ensure humanitarian access and strengthen maritime security in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. IGAD reaffirmed its commitment to working with the EU to promote lasting peace, stability and regional resilience.

On or around 6 November 2026, IGAD Ministers in charge of Refugee Affairs met in Nairobi. Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Interior Kipchumba Murkomen stressed the need to review progress on refugee protection, inclusion and durable solutions across the Horn of Africa noting Kenya hosts over 860,000 refugees and highlighting the Shirika Plan. IGAD Executive Secretary Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu noted the region hosts 5.1 million refugees 70% women and children and praised progress under the IGAD Support Platform, including strengthened asylum systems and cross-border cooperation with support from partners such as the EU, UNHCR, UNDP and the World Bank. The meeting called for intensified collaboration, responsibility sharing and durable solutions.

### European Union

The EU Political and Security Committee, led by Chair Ambassador Lene Mandel Vensild, visited Djibouti and Ethiopia. Activities included a 3 November visit to EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta's flagship in Djibouti, meetings with Djiboutian authorities on security and defence cooperation, the IGAD and EU Political and Security Committee meeting on 4 November, and 5 November briefing in Ethiopia in which Ethiopian officials set out their assessment of regional developments, including Ethiopia's concerns regarding Eritrean forces and the defence of its sovereignty. These engagements fed into the AU and EU joint meetings in Addis Ababa on 5–6 November, where the EU joined calls for de-escalation, civilian protection and sustainable financing for African-led operations in Somalia and elsewhere.

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