HORN REVIEW

IDEAS CONNECTIONS SYNERGY

Weekly Geopolitical Report

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

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Horn Review: Weekly Report

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1. Ethiopia

Ethiopia strengthened its diplomatic ties on 17 November 2026 when President Taye Atske Selassie received the credentials of 16 newly appointed ambassadors at the National Palace. Representing countries including the United Arab Emirates, India, Ireland, Cyprus and others, the envoys expressed commitment to deepening cooperation in trade, investment, culture and development, underscoring Ethiopia's growing role as a reliable partner with significant potential for mutually beneficial bilateral relations.

On the same day, Ethiopian Airlines Group announced the appointment of Prosperity Party Vice President Adem Farah as Chairman of its Board of Directors. Succeeding previous leadership, the move places a senior civilian political figure at the helm of Africa's leading carrier, providing strategic oversight as the airline advances major expansion initiatives that support national connectivity, trade and economic growth.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed officially unveiled a 57-hectare urban corridor development project in Addis Ababa on 18 November 2026. Spanning seven key routes with modern roads, pedestrian walkways, cycling lanes, green public spaces and improved amenities, the initiative forms part of the Medemer government's urbanization strategy to transform the capital into a more productive, inclusive and livable city capable of meeting future needs.

The Tigray Caretaker Administration reported that more than 30,000 of over 50,000 registered former fighters do not meet standard Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration criteria because wartime conditions prevented them from surrendering weapons. Officials appealed for special international support, including from the UNDP, to ensure these youth receive livelihood assistance and psychological care for successful civilian reintegration and lasting regional stability.

Also on 18 November 2026, United States Ambassador Ervin Massinga visited Mekelle with a high-level international delegation, reaffirming American support for Tigray's economic recovery, democratic transition and humanitarian needs. He emphasized coordination with the federal government and regional authorities to promote stability, inclusive growth and job creation as foundations for sustainable peace and development in northern Ethiopia.

IGAD called for a bold shift in media narratives on migration during a panel in Kampala on 19 November 2026. Officials highlighted human mobility as a historical driver of regional integration, resilience and prosperity rather than solely a crisis, while advancing frameworks such as the Free Movement of Persons Agreement to enable safe, orderly and beneficial movement across the Greater Horn of Africa.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres appointed former Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen on 21 November 2026 to the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement Lead Group for the 2026–2028 term. The appointment recognizes his leadership through the Yadam Foundation in advancing food security and nutrition, aligning Ethiopia's expertise with global efforts to address challenges in vulnerable and conflict-affected settings.

Ethiopia and the United States reaffirmed their commitment to stronger economic relations during talks between Finance Minister Fitsum Assefa and the U.S. Department of Commerce delegation. Discussions focused on expanding trade, attracting investment and advancing projects such as Bishoftu International Airport, reflecting Ethiopia's ongoing economic reforms and openness to deeper commercial partnerships.

IGAD Executive Secretary Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu on 22 November 2026 hailed Ethiopia as an indispensable regional anchor for peace, diplomacy and unity in the Horn of Africa. The recognition underscored the country's founding role in IGAD, its sustained leadership, and its capacity to unite member states in confronting shared challenges through collective action against drought, food insecurity and security threats.

Throughout mid-November 2026, Ethiopian National Defense Forces advanced operations near Badme to secure the northern border, clear remaining threats and protect national sovereignty. These measures respond to provocations and external interference, demonstrating the government's firm resolve to restore full territorial control, safeguard communities and ensure lasting peace and stability for the Ethiopian people.

2. Sudan

Sudan's conflict intensified this week as drone attacks struck residential areas and United Nations premises in greater Khartoum, while fighting expanded in Blue Nile State and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) continued operations across Kordofan. The growing use of drones has increasingly shifted the conflict beyond conventional frontlines, exposing civilian populations and critical infrastructure to sustained attacks. Meanwhile, renewed regional diplomacy and competing territorial claims reflect the growing risk of Sudan's war becoming further entangled in regional rivalries.

On November 22, drone attacks attributed to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) struck residential areas in Khartoum and Omdurman, killing civilians and damaging a UN facility while humanitarian personnel were inside. Sudanese military sources alleged that the drones originated from Ethiopia's Bahir Dar airport, an accusation that remains unverified independently and which Ethiopia has previously denied. The incident has further strained relations between Khartoum and Addis Ababa, amid Sudan's repeated allegations of cross-border support for the RSF. Separately, Sudanese authorities accused RSF fighters of executing captured soldiers in Blue Nile State, describing the killings as violations of international humanitarian law.

The battlefield also witnessed developments in southeastern Sudan, where the RSF-aligned Tasis alliance, comprising the RSF and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, claimed advances in Blue Nile State, including the capture of Bau locality and several surrounding positions. These gains, if consolidated, could increase pressure on army-held Damazin and complicate SAF defensive operations along the southeastern frontier. At the same time, SAF operations continued in West Kordofan, where the army has sought to consolidate its recent gains and reopen strategic supply routes. The competing advances underscore the increasingly dispersed nature of the war, with both sides attempting to stretch their adversary's military capacity across multiple fronts.

Drone warfare has become increasingly central to the conflict's devastating civilian toll. The UN Human Rights Office reported that more than 1,630 civilian deaths during the first half of 2026 were attributed to drone strikes, representing nearly three-quarters of documented civilian deaths during that period. Amnesty International also called for investigations into RSF drone attacks in El Obeid that struck civilian areas, warning that attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure may constitute war crimes. Meanwhile, the UN humanitarian coordinator condemned drone attacks in Khartoum that damaged homes and UN premises, emphasizing the protection of humanitarian personnel. The increasing reach and frequency of drone operations are further eroding the distinction between frontline areas and civilian spaces, deepening the humanitarian consequences of the war.

Humanitarian conditions continued to deteriorate, particularly for displaced families in Darfur facing increasingly severe shortages of food, shelter and essential services as winter approaches. Aid reductions and limited humanitarian access are leaving vulnerable communities exposed, while repeated displacement further undermines their ability to rebuild livelihoods. The conflict's prolonged duration has also intensified economic collapse, weakened public services and increased reliance on humanitarian assistance.

Diplomatically, Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea held trilateral discussions in Aswan on November 21, reaffirming support for Sudan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national institutions. The ministers also emphasized Red Sea security, freedom of navigation and the responsibility of littoral states to safeguard regional maritime security, while rejecting foreign interference and external support to armed militias. The meeting reinforces the emerging coordination among Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea amid wider regional instability and growing concerns over the war's cross-border implications.

Overall, Sudan's conflict is increasingly characterized by expanding drone warfare, multiple active fronts and deepening regional involvement. While SAF advances in parts of Kordofan and RSF-aligned gains in Blue Nile reflect a shifting battlefield, neither side appears positioned to secure a decisive outcome in the near term. The continued targeting of civilians, infrastructure and humanitarian facilities, alongside deteriorating living conditions, underscores the urgent need for renewed diplomatic efforts to prevent further fragmentation and regional escalation.

3. Egypt

Egypt and Denmark held political consultations in Copenhagen on 18 November, focusing on Sudan, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. Egypt's Assistant Foreign Minister for African Affairs Mohamed Karim Sherif met Danish Africa director Kettel Karlsen with diplomats from both countries. They reviewed the October Alamein African Forum and the quadrilateral summit involving Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia, and agreed to maintain consultations on African affairs.

Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty held meetings in Washington from 18 to 20 November with US lawmakers including Senator Jim Risch, Representative Lois Frankel, House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Brian Mast and Africa subcommittee chairman Chris Smith. He also met President Donald Trump's senior adviser for Arab and African affairs, Massad Boulos.

Talks covered bilateral trade and investment, Iran, Gaza, Sudan and maritime security. Abdelatty urged diplomatic efforts to contain regional escalation, implementation of the second phase of the Gaza plan and increased aid deliveries. With Boulos, he discussed a humanitarian truce and comprehensive ceasefire in Sudan followed by a Sudanese-led political process. He also raised Horn of Africa stability, state sovereignty and freedom of navigation through Bab el-Mandeb.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi received Libya's Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh in Cairo on 19 November. The leaders discussed bilateral relations, trade, investment,

energy and reconstruction. They witnessed the signing of agreements and memoranda covering fisheries, gas infrastructure, petroleum refining, natural resources, science, labor, training, small-business development and media cooperation. The two sides also discussed coordination between their interior ministries and issues affecting Libyan residents in Egypt.

The sixth Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development opened on 21 November under the auspices of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Organized by Egypt's foreign ministry and the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding, the two-day forum brought together approximately 400 to 500 participants. Its agenda covered African peace and security, the Red Sea and Horn of Africa, food security, trade routes, terrorism, displacement and development financing.

At the Aswan Forum on 21 November, Abdelatty warned that a growing foreign military presence in the Red Sea could raise regional tensions and threaten shipping and trade. He called for cooperation among coastal states and linked Horn of Africa stability to security in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. He also cited Egyptian training support for Somali security institutions and counterterrorism efforts against Al-Shabaab.

On 21 November, Abdelatty met Sudanese Foreign Minister Mohieddin Salem and Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh at the Aswan Forum. They said Red Sea governance and security were the responsibility of littoral states, called for freedom of navigation and rejected unilateral security or water-related measures. They reaffirmed Sudan's sovereignty, opposed foreign-backed armed militias and supported Somalia's unity. The ministers agreed to intensify consultations, with Abdelatty to brief Somalia and sustain the four-country process launched at the October Alamein summit. Egypt and Sudan signed a memorandum on training and capacity-building for Sudanese institutions through Egypt's Agency of Partnership for Development and Sudan's foreign ministry. Abdelatty and Salem also discussed Sudan's political process and reconstruction cooperation.

At the Aswan Forum on 22 November, Abdelatty met Malian Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop and discussed bilateral ties and security in the Sahel. Egypt expressed support for counterterrorism and anti-extremism efforts and proposed expanding trade, investment and capacity-building cooperation. In a separate forum session, Abdelatty said Sahel stability required security, educational and development measures addressing the causes of extremism and instability.

4. Eritrea

Military tensions along the Ethiopia–Eritrea border intensified during the reporting period, particularly around Badme and adjoining areas of northwestern Tigray. According to ACLED, Ethiopian artillery fire was reported near Badme on 9 November, followed by reported Ethiopian drone strikes against suspected Eritrean positions on 12 November and artillery exchanges and direct engagements between the two militaries on 13 November. ACLED subsequently reported that Eritrean forces had regained control of Badme around 15 November, after withdrawing in October, and deployed additional troops and heavy equipment towards Gual Gemhalo and Sembel. Its subsequent updates reported the presence of Tigrayan Democratic Forces (TDF) units alongside Eritrean forces near Gual Gemhalo on 19 November, while Ethiopian forces continued mobilising heavy equipment towards the border. Reuters reported on 18 November that the two countries had concentrated forces within striking distance of one another, although it could not independently verify reports of direct clashes.

The developments reinforce concerns over Eritrea's increasingly confrontational posture towards Ethiopia and the potential for its involvement in Tigray's internal conflict to precipitate a wider interstate confrontation. Particularly concerning is ACLED's reporting of TDF units operating alongside Eritrean forces near Badme, which, if corroborated, would further substantiate concerns about Asmara's cultivation of armed partners within Ethiopia. The reported movement of Eritrean forces back into Badme and their deployment towards adjoining areas also raises questions about the regime's military intentions along the border.

On 19 November, President Isaias Afwerki received the credentials of six ambassadors accredited to Eritrea during a ceremony at the Denden Guest House in Asmara. The diplomats represented South Africa, Spain, Hungary, South Korea, Oman and Switzerland. According to Eritrea's Ministry of Information, the ambassadors conveyed messages from their respective heads of state and expressed their countries' interest in strengthening bilateral relations. The South African and Omani representatives specifically indicated their readiness to expand cooperation across various sectors. Foreign Minister Osman Saleh and Presidential Office Director Amin Hassan attended the ceremony.

The ceremony demonstrates that Eritrea retains established diplomatic relationships despite its increasingly strained regional environment. The accreditation of ambassadors from six countries, five of whom are non-resident, should nevertheless be distinguished from substantive diplomatic initiatives or a broader improvement in Asmara's international standing. The regime continues to use its diplomatic relationships to

maintain external engagement while facing mounting scrutiny over its regional conduct, particularly its deteriorating relationship with Ethiopia. The ceremony itself offers little indication of any significant shift in the foreign-policy positions of the countries represented.

An Eritrean delegation led by Ambassador Negasi Kassa, Eritrea's representative to the European Union and the Benelux countries, participated in the 65th session of the Council of Ministers of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the OACPS–EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Brussels from 8 to 13 November. According to Eritrea's Ministry of Information, discussions included proposals for member states to assume a greater share of the organisation's operating costs previously financed by the European Union, with suggested contributions ranging from €5,000 to €50,000. Other discussions addressed sustainable financing, climate change, access to raw materials and international security amid shifting geopolitical alignments.

Eritrea's participation provides another avenue for the regime to maintain its multilateral diplomatic engagement and advance its longstanding criticism of Western influence over international institutions and development financing. The emphasis on financial autonomy and a changing multipolar order is consistent with Asmara's preference for international partnerships that place fewer political and governance-related conditions on cooperation. However, participation in the OACPS framework does not itself indicate a substantive diplomatic breakthrough or improved relations with European partners. The more relevant consideration is how the regime uses multilateral platforms to reinforce its diplomatic positioning while seeking to preserve access to external partnerships.

An Eritrean delegation led by Ambassador Fesehatsion Petros participated in the African–Nordic Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Oslo on 19–20 November. The meeting, hosted by Norway, brought together representatives from African and Nordic countries under the theme "Dialogue in an Era of Uncertainty: United for a Prosperous Future." Discussions covered diplomatic and economic cooperation, trade and investment, international institutional reform and adherence to international law. On the sidelines, the Eritrean delegation held discussions with Norwegian Foreign Ministry officials Einar Rystad and Narve Rotwitt concerning bilateral relations and challenges facing Eritrean nationals in Norway.

The participation provided Asmara with an additional multilateral platform to maintain diplomatic contacts with European governments at a time of heightened tensions with Ethiopia. The regime's emphasis on international law, sovereignty and reform of the

international order is particularly relevant given its increasingly confrontational messaging towards Addis Ababa. Its engagement with Norway also offers an opportunity to address bilateral concerns, including issues affecting Eritrean nationals residing there. However, the meeting's broader agenda was not specific to Eritrea, and its participation should not be interpreted as evidence of Nordic endorsement of Asmara's regional positions. The simultaneous participation of Ethiopia also illustrates that the forum provides a diplomatic setting in which both countries maintain external engagement despite their deteriorating bilateral relationship.

On 21–22 November, Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh addressed the Sixth Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development in Egypt, held under the theme "Redefining the Global Commons: Africa's Agency in the Age of Disruption." In his statement, Saleh called for reforms to international institutions and the global financial system, greater African representation in the UN Security Council and respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity. He devoted particular attention to Ethiopia, describing statements by Ethiopian leaders concerning Eritrea's independence and Ethiopia's lack of maritime access as threats to Eritrean sovereignty. He characterised Ethiopia's October communication to the UN Security Council and its interest in Assab as evidence of an alleged campaign of aggression, which he described as a declaration of war. Saleh also argued that the security and governance of the Red Sea should remain the responsibility of littoral states, opposing external militarisation and proxy rivalries.

The address represents a further attempt by Asmara to internationalise its dispute with Ethiopia and frame the question of maritime access as an existential threat to Eritrean sovereignty. By raising the issue at an Egyptian-hosted forum, Saleh also placed Eritrea's position within a broader regional discussion in which Cairo has its own strategic concerns regarding Ethiopia's growing regional influence and maritime ambitions. His invocation of international law and territorial integrity warrants particular scrutiny against the PFDJ regime's own regional conduct and the Eritrean involvement in Ethiopia's internal conflicts.

On 21 November, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty hosted a trilateral meeting with his Sudanese counterpart, Mohi El-Din Salem, and Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh on the sidelines of the Aswan Forum. According to the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, the three ministers agreed to strengthen consultation and coordination on regional security and shared interests, building on the October El Alamein consultative summit, which also involved Somalia. Their discussions addressed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of regional states, opposition to foreign support for armed militias, and the security of the Red Sea and freedom of navigation. The ministers reiterated that responsibility for governing and safeguarding the Red Sea rests with its littoral states

and opposed unilateral actions concerning regional security and water resources. Egypt also indicated that it would brief Somalia on the meeting's outcomes to sustain the broader consultative framework.

The meeting reflects Egypt's continued efforts to consolidate a regional diplomatic alignment involving Eritrea and Sudan, with Somalia also incorporated into the wider consultative framework. For Asmara, closer coordination with Cairo provides diplomatic backing amid its deteriorating relationship with Ethiopia, while Sudan's participation adds another dimension to the regional security environment surrounding Addis Ababa. The emphasis on Red Sea governance by littoral states is particularly consequential for Ethiopia, whose landlocked status excludes it from direct littoral-state participation despite its significant economic and security interests in the maritime corridor. This position also aligns with Egypt's broader interest in limiting Ethiopia's influence over Red Sea security arrangements and its pursuit of sea access. Although the meeting did not announce a formal military or security pact, the repeated consultations and shared positions suggest an effort to institutionalise political coordination on issues where the three countries have overlapping interests vis-à-vis Ethiopia.

On 19–20 November, Sripriya Ranganathan, Secretary for Consular, Passport and Visa Affairs at India's Ministry of External Affairs, visited Asmara for discussions with senior Eritrean officials. Her meetings included Foreign Minister Osman Saleh and Presidential Economic Adviser Hagos Gebrehiwet, with discussions covering trade and investment, banking, mining, transport and communications. She also met the ministers responsible for information, education and agriculture to discuss media exchanges, teacher training, educational infrastructure, irrigation and agricultural cooperation. The visit included engagements with Indian participants in the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme and members of the Indian community in Eritrea. Ranganathan also laid a wreath at the Asmara War Cemetery on 20 November in tribute to 16 Indian soldiers killed during the Second World War.

India's engagement reflects its interest in maintaining and expanding its diplomatic and economic presence in the Horn of Africa, particularly in sectors such as mining, transport and agriculture. For Asmara, the visit offers another opportunity to attract external partnerships and sustain diplomatic engagement amid its increasingly strained regional environment. However, the breadth of the discussions should not be mistaken for evidence of substantive economic progress. The PFDJ regime's restrictive economic environment, extensive state control and limited transparency remain significant obstacles to foreign investment. India's outreach also illustrates how Asmara continues to cultivate relationships with external powers despite the unresolved tensions with Ethiopia and the wider uncertainty surrounding Eritrea's regional conduct.

5. Djibouti

Djibouti's domestic and regional engagements during the reporting week were shaped by growing security concerns in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, an influx of Yemeni refugees, strengthened European security cooperation and renewed efforts to advance regional integration. The escalation of fighting in Yemen continued to generate humanitarian pressures on Djibouti, while the country's diplomatic activities highlighted its strategic importance to maritime security and regional stability.

On 16 November, the 2023 Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Treaty officially entered into force, replacing the organisation's 1996 founding agreement. The treaty provides a strengthened legal and institutional framework for regional cooperation, particularly in peace and security, economic integration, trade, environmental protection and resilience to climate-related challenges. On 17 November, Djibouti welcomed the development as an important milestone for regional integration. As the host country of IGAD's headquarters and its current chair, Djibouti has an important role in supporting the implementation of the new framework and strengthening cooperation among member states.

Humanitarian pressures increased as renewed fighting in Yemen triggered another wave of refugee arrivals along Djibouti's northern coastline. According to figures from the National Office for Assistance to Refugees and Disaster Victims (ONARS), reported on 19 November, 459 Yemenis arrived between 16 and 18 November, including 392 on 18 November alone. The arrivals comprised 186 children, 153 women and 120 men, highlighting the significant proportion of vulnerable people fleeing the conflict. Most were received in the Obock region, particularly around the Markazi refugee settlement. The latest arrivals added to the substantial refugee population that had reached Djibouti since September.

On 18 November, Prime Minister Abdoulkader Kamil Mohamed received Yemen's Deputy Foreign Minister Mustafa Ahmed Noman to discuss refugee protection, reception arrangements and the mobilisation of international humanitarian assistance. The discussions reflected growing concerns over the humanitarian consequences of the conflict and the need for stronger coordination between the two governments and international humanitarian partners. The increasing number of arrivals is placing additional demands on accommodation, healthcare, food, water and other essential services in Obock.

Djibouti also strengthened its defence and maritime security engagement with European partners. On 17–18 November, Defence Minister Aden Ali Mahamade participated in the Schuman Security and Defence Forum in Brussels, where he held discussions with

European and United Nations representatives. Maritime security featured prominently, particularly the protection of commercial shipping routes, submarine cables and other critical maritime infrastructure in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The minister also discussed the European Union's Operation Aspides, which protects commercial navigation against attacks in the Red Sea, and cooperation against illegal maritime activities, including shadow fleets. In discussions with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the two sides addressed regional security and preparations for a UN assessment mission to Djibouti scheduled for 1-3 December. During the engagement, European partners confirmed the existing €20 million support allocation for Djibouti's armed forces under the European Peace Facility, previously increased in September. The discussions demonstrated Djibouti's efforts to strengthen its defence capabilities and deepen international cooperation amid growing regional maritime threats.

Djibouti also expressed solidarity with Saudi Arabia following attacks against civilian and economic infrastructure in Riyadh. On 20 November, the government condemned the damage to the King Abdullah Financial District, describing the attacks as violations of international law and Saudi sovereignty. It reaffirmed its support for Saudi Arabia's efforts to protect its security and stability. The statement reflected Djibouti's diplomatic position amid escalating Houthi attacks and the expanding confrontation between the movement and Saudi Arabia.

Domestic economic and infrastructure initiatives also featured during the week. On 19 November, a four-day workshop on electricity-sector regulation concluded in Djibouti City. Supported by the African Development Bank, the initiative examined the cost of electricity services, tariff-setting methodologies and service-quality standards to strengthen the technical and economic oversight of the electricity sector. On 20 November, representatives of water utilities from seven West and Central African countries visited the Doraleh desalination plant to examine Djibouti's experience in seawater treatment and water-resource management. The facility's first phase has a production capacity of approximately 22,500 cubic metres of drinking water daily. The visit provided an opportunity for technical exchange on desalination and sustainable water supply, particularly relevant to countries facing water scarcity and climate-related pressures.

The reporting week highlighted Djibouti's growing exposure to the humanitarian and security consequences of instability across the Red Sea while reinforcing its diplomatic and strategic importance. The arrival of hundreds of additional Yemeni refugees placed further pressure on the country's reception capacity, while the Schuman Forum engagement demonstrated its commitment to international maritime security

cooperation. The entry into force of the IGAD Treaty and domestic initiatives in housing, electricity regulation and water management also reflected continued efforts to strengthen regional integration and national resilience.

6. South Sudan

South Sudan's security situation deteriorated further this week as renewed violence in Warrap State underscored the persistent vulnerability of civilians, while the postponement of the country's first national elections continued to deepen concerns over political legitimacy and the future of the transitional period. Amid these challenges, developments in education, regional diplomacy, and economic engagement offered glimpses of continued institutional activity.

Fresh violence in Tonj East County, Warrap State, highlighted the worsening security environment. An attack in the Bol Bol Boma area was attributed by local authorities to fighters associated with the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO), reportedly operating from neighbouring Unity State. Local officials reported 24 civilian deaths, including women and children. The incident reflects the persistence of armed violence, communal tensions, and insecurity across parts of Warrap and Unity states, where political rivalries, cattle-related disputes, and cycles of retaliation continue to undermine civilian protection. Although responsibility has been attributed to opposition forces by local officials, the broader pattern of violence underscores the limitations of security arrangements and the fragility of peace beyond formal political agreements.

Political developments remained dominated by the postponement of the country's first national elections to February 11, 2027. The decision, announced by the National Elections Commission, has further extended the transitional period and intensified criticism over the government's political commitment to completing the transition. The delay has raised questions about electoral preparedness, institutional credibility, and whether the process is being used to consolidate political arrangements rather than establish a credible democratic pathway. Critics argue that repeated postponements risk undermining public confidence, while the absence of a clear consensus among political actors complicates efforts to secure a credible and inclusive electoral process. The controversy is increasingly framed not simply as a logistical challenge but as a crisis of political legitimacy, with uncertainty surrounding the country's governing arrangements and the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement continuing to shape the political landscape.

In education, 3,728 pupils from Sudan's Nuba Mountains region completed primary certificate examinations in South Sudan's Ruweng Administrative Area, despite displacement, insecurity, and disruptions to schooling. The examinations were

administered across centres in Pariang and Yida, demonstrating the importance of cross-border educational arrangements for communities affected by conflict. Nevertheless, school closures, shortages of learning materials, limited teacher training, and displacement continue to threaten educational continuity. The development reflects both South Sudan's humanitarian role in accommodating displaced populations and the growing strain on education systems operating amid regional instability.

On the diplomatic front, engagement with Russia remained part of Juba's broader effort to diversify external partnerships and strengthen bilateral cooperation. South Sudan's engagement with Moscow reflects its continued pursuit of diplomatic, political, and economic partnerships beyond traditional Western and regional interlocutors, particularly as the country navigates security, energy, and development challenges. Meanwhile, investment discussions involving the Ministry of Finance, Stanbic Bank, Trade and Development Bank, and Capium Partners under the South Sudan Oil, Power and Investment framework highlighted efforts to attract financing and expand private-sector participation. However, translating investment dialogue into tangible economic outcomes will remain dependent on improved security, regulatory predictability, institutional capacity, and confidence in the country's economic environment.

Caught between persistent insecurity, an increasingly uncertain political transition, and efforts to sustain diplomatic and economic engagement. The continued postponement of elections risks further eroding confidence in the transitional framework, while localized violence demonstrates that political uncertainty continues to coexist with serious civilian protection challenges. Without renewed political consensus, credible transition benchmarks, and stronger security arrangements, South Sudan's efforts to move toward stability and institutional consolidation will remain constrained.

7. Somalia and Somaliland

Somalia

The term extension crisis escalated with six Supreme Court judges including the ousted Chief Justice Baashe Yusuf Ahmed filing a reference at the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) in Arusha against the federal government. This followed the 5 November Supreme Court panel ruling that the president's four year mandate expired on 15 May 2026 and parliamentary mandates on 14 April that term extensions could not apply retrospectively and that the chief justice's dismissal was invalid. The government rejected the ruling deployed forces around the court withdrew judges security and the judges subsequently sought refuge. The EACJ granted the government 45 days to respond to the reference which invokes EAC Treaty principles on rule of law and judicial independence.

Amid this President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud renewed his offer of talks with the opposition at a venue of their choice conveying a message expressing willingness to meet opposition leaders including the Somali Future Council at any secure location they find acceptable. This represented a shift from earlier palace hosted proposals. The offer came after the failure of a 14–18 November consultative forum over format, venue, mediation and conditions and occurred against the constitutional and electoral deadlock stemming from the Supreme Court ruling on mandates versus the government's position on 2027 elections as well as the ongoing UAE crisis. Opposition members were consulting on the offer and no formal acceptance or date was announced.

Subsequently opposition leaders unanimously rejected further talks with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. After the president telephoned former Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon and offered to meet including at a venue of the opposition's choice with promises of major concessions and a consensus based approach to elections, opposition figures met, debated and rejected both the specific meeting and any further engagement. They cited lack of prior meaningful concessions, insistence on a one person one vote model on government terms and unmet demands for international mediation, binding guarantees, reversal of constitutional changes, and security assurances. The standoff continued amid the Supreme Court ruling on expired mandates and the broader electoral and constitutional crisis.

On 17 November President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud delivered a roughly 15 minute televised national address accusing the UAE of interference specifically alleging that Abu Dhabi supported rival factions and militias, established forces and bases outside the federal security framework and signed port agreements concerning Berbera in Somaliland, Bosaso in Puntland and Kismayo in Jubaland with regional administrations rather than the federal government. He warned of efforts to create divisions similar to those in Libya and Yemen and referenced Sudan. This escalated an already strained relationship following earlier cancellations of agreements.

On 18 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a formal statement demanding an end to UAE interference, expressing grave concern over UAE actions that bypass the federal government as the sole authority for foreign relations including parallel security arrangements and engagements with regional administrations. The statement rejected such arrangements called on the UAE to conduct all relations exclusively through federal institutions in line with the UN Charter and international law and vowed to take all necessary lawful measures to protect sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity. It distinguished between UAE government policies and people to people ties. Defence Minister Ahmed Moallim Fiqi also responded sharply to UAE comments accusing Abu Dhabi of fuelling conflicts, buying loyalties and undermining sovereignty

stating that Emirati money would not buy Somalia's will or break its unity,and criticising what he described as profiting from the tragedies of other peoples. This formed part of a broader diplomatic spat involving UAE adviser Anwar Gargash's remarks criticising President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

After a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre, Information Minister Abdifatah Kasim Mohamud announced that Somalia had ordered the UAE ambassador to leave within 72 hours and recalled its own envoy. Officials accused the UAE of violations amounting to an open invasion of sovereignty, security, land, and unity, and warned of steps against anyone cooperating with Abu Dhabi.

The UAE foreign ministry condemned the move as harming bilateral relations and its presidential adviser Anwar Gargash criticised the Somali president's approach while the GCC later backed the UAE. The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequently issued a formal rejection of Somalia's accusations and condemnation of the expulsion order, denouncing the Somali government's escalatory and hostile approach calling the position irresponsible and damaging to relations and attributing the rift to internal Somali power struggles. It noted that it had already closed its embassy and withdrawn staff in January 2026 after earlier agreement cancellations and reaffirmed ties with the Somali people. This responded to the 19 November Cabinet decision and the president's prior accusations regarding ports, bases, and regional support.

In a related development, National Security Adviser Aweis Hagi Yusuf Ahmed issued a statement on the non use of Somali territory for external conflicts, saying Somalia would not allow its territory, ports, or airspace to fuel conflicts in Yemen, Sudan, or elsewhere. He called for mutual respect, sovereign equality, and non interference framing Mogadishu's concerns around sovereignty, unity, institutions, and security to be addressed via diplomatic, security, and legal channels rather than as internal disputes. This responded to UAE statements amid the ongoing diplomatic rupture.

On another note, Somalia welcomed the U.S. decision to support a one year renewal of funding and mandates for UNSOS and AUSSOM. After earlier U.S. signals of cuts citing insufficient progress on security ownership and reform, the State Department confirmed support for a one year extension. The Somali government via statements described the U.S. as a key partner in the fight against terrorism and noted the decision reaffirms bilateral cooperation, providing a temporary reprieve for the AU mission and logistics support. The UN Security Council held a private meeting on the future of AUSSOM amid funding challenges and the approaching end of year mandate with briefings involving UN and AU officials.

The EU–Somalia Senior Officials' Meeting on security transition was held in Brussels on 19 November, co chaired by EEAS Deputy Secretary General Olof Skoog and the Somali presidential chief of staff. Defence Minister Ahmed Moallim Fiqi and partners from the UN, AUSSOM, troop contributing countries including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda, EU members, Egypt, Türkiye, the UK, US, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait discussed Somalia's roadmap for assuming full security responsibility. Talks prepared for the December UN Security Council decision on the AUSSOM mandate expiring 31 December and emphasised coordination plus an inclusive political settlement.

On the sidelines of the Aswan Forum on 21 November, the foreign ministers of Egypt, Sudan, and Eritrea reaffirmed support for Somalia's unity, reiterating backing for Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity rejecting parallel political entities, and discussing Red Sea security and regional cooperation. Egypt indicated it would brief Somalia on the discussions.

Turkish Chief of General Staff Gen. Selçuk Bayraktaroğlu visited Mogadishu where President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the Turkish general attended a ceremony for a new Somali Navy headquarters and facility in Mogadishu linked to the 2024 defence cooperation framework. They also held talks at the presidential palace on strengthening defence, security, and joint counterterrorism efforts. Bayraktaroğlu met separately with parliamentary Speaker Abdulkadir Mohamed Nur, Defence Minister Ahmed Moallim Fiqi and Somali National Army Commander Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Mohamed Mohamud. The visit scored Türkiye's role in training, equipping, and infrastructure support for Somali forces, including maritime capabilities.

The AUSSOM Ugandan/UPDF contingent handed over five Forward Operating Bases in Barawe, Lower Shabelle to the Somali National Army. The bases transferred included Embresso, Knoll, Kismayo Road, Seaport and Runway. The ceremony marked progress in the phased handover of security responsibilities as the mission prepares for further drawdown, with mandate considerations ahead of 31 December. Local leaders and commanders from both sides participated. The Ministry of Defence pledged to secure gains against Al Shabaab and advance the security transition, reaffirming commitment to maintaining momentum in operations, securing urban areas, and completing the handover of primary security responsibility to Somali forces. It noted that AUSSOM had handed over more than 20 forward operating bases over four years, enabling the mission to reduce its force strength from roughly 21,000 to about half.

The AU and Somalia concluded a joint operational planning meeting in Mogadishu on integrated security transition with representatives from AUSSOM, troop and police

contributing countries, the UN Office to the African Union and UNSOS mapping out a phased handover plan to Somali security forces. The framework aims to sustain counterterrorism operations, strengthen Somali capabilities and transfer responsibilities without creating gaps. Officials including AUSSOM Force Commander Sam Kavuma and presidential senior external affairs advisor Jihan Hassan stressed coordinated planning, shared responsibility, and sustained partner support to preserve gains.

In the Hiiraan region, clashes occurred at Beledweyne's Ugaas Khalif Airport involving Hawadle/Macawisley militias and Djiboutian AUSSOM troops. Local Macawisley fighters moved onto the airport and runway to block a plane reported to be carrying federal government troops from landing, and fighting ensued with Djiboutian peacekeepers. The aircraft turned back. Initial local reports claimed Djiboutian casualties of two killed and two wounded, along with militia injuries, while Djibouti's embassy later stated its forces repelled the attempt, held the airfield and suffered no killed or wounded. The incident reflected broader Hiiraan and Hirshabelle tensions, including Hawadle clan mobilisation under traditional leader Ugaas Yusuf Ugaas Hassan against federal and regional authorities, and prior protests. Ugaas Khalif Airport was subsequently closed for two days from 21 to 22 November for runway and damage repairs following the 19 November clashes. Traditional elders, including Ugaas Yusuf Ugaas Hassan were expected to meet airport and Djiboutian officials. Local reports indicated at least one militia fighter killed and several wounded, while Djibouti maintained its forces suffered no casualties and had repelled the attempt to block a federal troop plane.

International partner airstrikes targeted alleged Al Shabaab weapons and explosives depots in the Leego area of the Bay and Lower Shabelle region. Reports indicated the strikes followed planned Somali special forces Dana operations targeting storage sites used by the group. Casualties were mentioned in some accounts but were not officially detailed at the time. This fit ongoing joint operations, with AFRICOM and Somali forces conducting related strikes from 13 to 15 November and reporting continuing into the 16th. Danab special forces with U.S. partners were reported to have struck Al-Shabaab weapons and explosives storage in the Leego area of Bay region.

The National Intelligence and Security Agency with international partners conducted operations in Moqokori district, Hiiraan region, including one on 16 November targeting Al-Shabaab commanders. The 16 November action targeted a house with several commanders and two linked to extortion and attack planning were reported seriously wounded. Related actions around 10 November killed others including a local finance figure, with announcements following shortly after.

The Somali National Army killed a senior Al-Shabaab commander in the Bakool region. The Ministry of Defence reported that SNA forces killed Mustaf Mohamed Dhayow near Moora Hagar Guudale about 20 kilometres south of Hudur. He was described as responsible for collecting money and livestock through extortion from civilians. No further casualty details were released, and Al-Shabaab did not immediately comment.

The federal government quietly relaunched Operation Banooda with a major troop convoy, dispatching a large military convoy from Mogadishu toward Yaqbariwayne village in the Bay region along the Mogadishu–Baidoa road signalling resumption of the stalled offensive after earlier heavy setbacks against Al-Shabaab including the late October Jameeco-Leego losses. Residents near Baledogle airbase reported dozens of vehicles, with some estimates exceeding 100, including technicals, fuel and supply trucks, cranes, and APCs. This followed movements of troops, including some of a roughly 3,000 strong Saudi-trained contingent from Galgaduud. The original aim was to seize Burhakaba and other Bay towns, and the earlier phase suffered heavy SNA casualties. The presidency had questioned senior officers and ordered arrests of some commanders over the prior failure.

Somaliland

Vice President and acting President Mohamed Ali Aw Abdi met in Hargeisa with Charlotte Pierre, Head of the Africa Department at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and Louise Hancock, Head of the UK Government Office in Somaliland. Discussions covered strengthening cooperation on regional security and stability, economic infrastructure, democracy and good governance, institutional strengthening and humanitarian assistance with particular emphasis on drought response and support for vulnerable communities. The Vice President thanked the UK for its support in peace building, security, and institutions, and requested increased financial assistance for priority projects, particularly through the Somaliland Development Fund and other development programmes.

Somaliland's National Intelligence Agency announced that it had detained five U.S. citizens over an alleged security threat. The agency said it had placed the five American citizens under surveillance after their arrival and detained them after an investigation indicated they intended to engage in activities posing a threat to national security. The agency handed the men over to the U.S. Embassy following the investigation. It did not disclose their identities, the specific nature of the alleged activities, evidence, entry dates, detention locations, or duration. There was no immediate independent confirmation from U.S. officials on the transfer or the men's status.

On 18 November Somaliland Ports Authority Director Ali Diriye Ahmed concluded a

working visit to Israel during which he held talks with Ashdod Port, Israel Shipyards and Israel's Shipping and Ports Administration. The two sides exchanged draft memoranda of understanding covering port development, maritime transport and investment cooperation. The visit was viewed as a concrete step by Somaliland to deepen substantive relations following Israel's recognition of Somaliland in December 2025.

On 19 November, Somaliland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement rejecting the Somali Federal Government's claims of jurisdiction over its sovereign affairs stating that its diplomatic and economic partnerships require no approval from Mogadishu. The statement was in response to recent actions by the Somali Federal Government regarding Somaliland's foreign dealings. Somaliland reiterated its historical basis of independence from Britain in 1960 and the restoration of sovereignty in 1991.

Somaliland's Ambassador to Israel, Mohamed Hagi, stated at the Jerusalem Post Australia Summit in Sydney that Berbera Port could become a trade hub connecting Israel with East African countries including Ethiopia and Kenya. He revealed that the port currently has an annual container capacity of 500,000 TEU with plans to expand to 2 million TEU.

On 20 November, The New York Times published a visual investigation report based on satellite imagery and flight tracking data stating that the UAE has transformed Berbera Airport in Somaliland into a large scale military facility including reinforced structures possible air defence installations, helicopter landing zones and a security perimeter covering an area of nearly Manhattan size. The report also noted that U.S. military flights have travelled from Djibouti to Berbera and that approximately two dozen U.S. special operations personnel are operating in Bosaso, Puntland with Washington exploring lowprofile use of these facilities rather than establishing permanent bases.

8. Yemen

Yemen's conflict intensified during the week, with Houthi territorial advances towards Aden, renewed attacks on Saudi Arabia, changes in Saudi military command and a deteriorating humanitarian situation. On 16 November, Yemen's House of Representatives unanimously approved a 55-article law designating the Houthi movement as a terrorist organisation and criminalising its activities, financing and arms supply. The legislation also provides for asset freezing and confiscation and tougher penalties for offences including attacks on civilians, laying landmines and targeting international shipping. The bill was subsequently submitted to Presidential Leadership Council Chairman Rashad al-Alimi for enactment. Its implementation remains subject to the completion of constitutional procedures and official publication. The legislation

marks a stronger domestic legal response to the Houthis, although its implementation will require safeguards to protect legitimate commercial activities and humanitarian operations.

On the military front, Houthi forces made significant territorial advances towards Aden, the interim seat of Yemen's internationally recognised government. By 16 November, the group had advanced to positions approximately 60 kilometres from the city after capturing areas in Lahj Governorate, including Al-Maqatirah and Al-Mudharabah. Government forces withdrew from positions along the Red Sea coast near the Bab al-Mandab Strait and redeployed towards Aden to reinforce its defence. The withdrawal allowed the Houthis to consolidate control over additional coastal positions and increased pressure on government-held territory in southern Yemen. Meanwhile, government forces continued operations under Operation Dawn of Yemen. On 17 November, military spokesperson Colonel Majed al-Nuzaili reported 661 attacks against Houthi positions, including 15 airstrikes, 526 artillery attacks, 53 drone strikes and 67 rocket attacks. He claimed that 173 Houthi fighters had been killed or wounded and 71 military vehicles and pieces of equipment destroyed or damaged. A separate military update on 18 November reported another 660 attacks and approximately 178 Houthi fighters killed or wounded.

Saudi Arabia also reshuffled its military command amid the deteriorating battlefield situation. On 16 November, King Salman appointed General Fayyad al-Ruwaili, the Saudi chief of general staff, to command the Joint Forces overseeing coalition operations in Yemen, replacing Lieutenant General Fahd al-Salman. The change followed territorial setbacks by Saudi-backed Yemeni forces and their withdrawal from positions near the Bab al-Mandab Strait. On 18 November, Reuters reported that Saudi officials were preparing for a military campaign against the Houthis lasting up to six months and potentially extending into 2027. Riyadh reportedly intends to secure battlefield gains through its Yemeni allies before considering negotiations, indicating that a negotiated settlement is unlikely to be imminent.

Cross-border attacks further escalated tensions between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia. On 19 November, a Houthi attack damaged the Public Investment Fund tower in Riyadh's financial district, according to Saudi Civil Defence, although no casualties were reported. On 21 November, Saudi-led coalition forces announced that they had intercepted three ballistic missiles targeting Riyadh. The Houthis also continued claiming attacks against Saudi infrastructure. On 22 November, the movement announced that it had targeted the Rabigh oil refinery on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast, claiming a direct hit. However, Saudi authorities had not confirmed the reported attack

or any resulting damage. The developments demonstrated the expanding geographical reach of the confrontation and the growing pressure on Saudi security.

Maritime security concerns also persisted in the Gulf of Aden. On 17 November, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported an attempted boarding of a cargo vessel approximately 50 nautical miles southwest of Al Mukalla by individuals aboard an armed skiff. On 20 November, another incident occurred approximately 95 nautical miles southwest of Al Mukalla, when six unidentified armed individuals aboard a skiff approached a bulk carrier and fired four shots. The vessel's armed security team returned warning shots, forcing the skiff to withdraw. No damage or injuries were reported. Although neither incident was attributed to the Houthis, the incidents highlighted continuing threats to commercial shipping in the Gulf of Aden.

The humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate, particularly in Taiz, where renewed Houthi pressure disrupted access to essential water supplies. In a report published on 19 November, Al Jazeera highlighted the loss of access to the Hadhran al-Dhabab wellfield and fuel shortages affecting water production. According to UNICEF figures, water production had fallen by nearly half, while more than 800,000 people were reported to be cut off from humanitarian assistance. Residents faced rising water prices and increasing dependence on potentially contaminated supplies, raising concerns about cholera and other waterborne diseases.

Displacement continued to increase as fighting affected western and southern Yemen. An International Organization for Migration (IOM) update published on 18 November recorded an additional 9,281 displaced people compared with its previous update of 16 November. The cumulative number displaced between 1 August and 17 November reached approximately 356,602, bringing the total recorded since the escalation began in June to 357,658. Taiz, Lahj and Aden hosted the largest displaced populations, reflecting the concentration of fighting and insecurity across these governorates.

Overall, the reporting week highlighted a significant shift in Yemen's military and regional-security environment. Houthi advances towards Aden and their consolidation of positions near the Bab al-Mandab Strait have increased pressure on the internationally recognised government and its Saudi-backed allies. Riyadh's military restructuring and preparations for a prolonged campaign suggest a further escalation rather than an immediate return to negotiations. Meanwhile, the continued deterioration of humanitarian conditions and insecurity affecting maritime traffic underline the wider consequences of the conflict for Yemen and regional stability.

9. Kenya

Kenya's geopolitical developments during the week centred on diplomatic engagement with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), regional security challenges, and efforts to strengthen its international influence.

The most significant diplomatic development occurred on 22 November, when President William Ruto attended a quadripartite summit in Oyo, Republic of Congo, alongside DRC President Félix Tshisekedi, Republic of Congo President Denis Sassou Nguesso, and Togo's Faure Gnassingbé. The meeting sought to resolve tensions between Nairobi and Kinshasa, which deteriorated after Kenya hosted the December 2023 launch of the Congo River Alliance (AFC), a political and military coalition associated with the M23 rebel movement. The two presidents agreed to work toward restoring full diplomatic relations, including the return of ambassadors, and reaffirmed respect for sovereignty and noninterference in domestic affairs. The agreement represents an important opening for Kenya's relations with the DRC, although its implementation will require further diplomatic engagement.

Kenya also strengthened its standing in international diplomacy on 16 November, securing reelection to the Council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) during the organisation's Plenipotentiary Conference in Doha, Qatar. Kenya received 136 of 173 votes, the highest tally among African candidates, securing a Council seat for the 2027–2030 term. The result preserves Nairobi's influence in international telecommunications governance and its ability to advocate African priorities concerning digital infrastructure, connectivity and emerging technologies.

Along the Kenya–Ethiopia border, fighting between armed groups associated with Ethiopia's Oromia and Somali regional administrations continued to create security and humanitarian challenges. The violence, which intensified in October, has driven tens of thousands of Ethiopian civilians into Kenya's Marsabit County. Reports published during the reporting period described continuing insecurity around Moyale, including the displacement of Kenyan residents and the danger posed by weapons fire crossing the border. Kenyan authorities strengthened security measures, while humanitarian agencies continued assisting displaced families. The conflict has transformed an Ethiopian territorial dispute into a direct concern for Kenya's border security, civilian protection and relations with Addis Ababa.

Kenya's security concerns were also reflected in President Ruto's 18 November State of the Nation Address and the accompanying national security assessment presented to Parliament. The assessment highlighted terrorism, regional instability and domestic political tensions as major challenges. The government's assessment also drew attention

to political intolerance and potential threats to national cohesion as Kenya approaches the 2027 elections.

In bilateral diplomacy, Kenya held discussions with Slovenia on 19 November in preparation for a ministerial visit scheduled for 25–27 November. The engagement focused on political cooperation, trade, investment and regional peace and security, including developments in Sudan, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region. Meanwhile, Nairobi hosted the Third Global Parliamentary Summit Against Hunger and Malnutrition on 16–17 November, bringing together international legislators and development partners. President Ruto used the gathering to advocate stronger parliamentary cooperation, regional agricultural trade and greater African participation in global decision making.

Overall, Kenya's diplomatic opening with the DRC marked the week's principal development, while insecurity along its borders and continuing regional conflicts remained major strategic concerns.

10. The Gulf Countries

Saudi Arabia

King Salman issued military appointments on 16 November, naming Lieutenant General Fahd Al-Salman as adviser to the defense minister for military affairs. The royal order also assigned Chief of General Staff General Fayyad Al-Ruwaili to serve as commander of the Joint Forces while retaining his existing post. The changes were announced by the Saudi Press Agency as part of the kingdom’s senior military command structure.

A Saudi delegation led by Major General Abdullah bin Hadi Al-Hajri met Somali Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre in Mogadishu on 17 November. The talks focused on cooperation against extremist ideologies, including those promoted by Al-Shabaab. Saudi Arabia offered to share expertise through public-awareness campaigns, training and technical assistance. The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation between the Saudi counter-extremism center and Somalia’s National Tubsan Centre.

Saudi Arabia condemned Iranian attacks on Kuwait and Bahrain and an attack on a UAE-owned oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz on 18 November. The foreign ministry said the incidents threatened freedom of maritime navigation and commercial routes. Riyadh called for the attacks to end, urged respect for international law and good-neighbor relations, and supported diplomatic negotiations to preserve regional security and stability.

Houthi attacks and Saudi responses escalated between 18 and 22 November. The Yemen coalition said it intercepted cruise missiles launched toward Riyadh and drones aimed at the capital and southern regions, while Saudi forces struck Houthi missile and drone positions in Yemen. Saudi Arabia condemned attacks that damaged a tower in Riyadh's King Abdullah Financial District and called on the international community to respond. The coalition later announced a targeted operation against Houthi threat sites. On 22 November, the Houthis claimed they had hit the Rabigh refinery on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast; Saudi authorities had not confirmed damage. Riyadh also told the UN Security Council that Houthi attacks on oil facilities threatened Yemen's exports and deprived the country of resources.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met US Central Command chief Admiral Brad Cooper in Riyadh on 19 November. They reviewed bilateral relations, especially military cooperation, and discussed regional developments. Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman also met Cooper separately to discuss defense cooperation, regional security, stability and peace. Saudi Chief of General Staff Fayyad Al-Ruwaili and National Security Adviser Musaed Al-Aiban attended the crown prince's meeting.

Saudi Arabia condemned Israeli military incursions into Syria's Quneitra and Daraa countryside on 18 November. The foreign ministry described the actions as violations of Syrian sovereignty and international law and reaffirmed its support for Syria's unity and territorial integrity. Riyadh called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from areas entered in southern Syria and urged respect for the 1974 disengagement arrangements.

Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan spoke by telephone with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on 22 November. They discussed regional developments, diplomatic efforts and cooperation in multilateral forums. Pakistan's foreign ministry said the ministers also considered convening a meeting of the Regional Four group, which includes Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey, to coordinate positions on regional issues.

UAE

UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed received a written message from Russian President Vladimir Putin on 16 November. Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu delivered the message during a visit to Abu Dhabi. The UAE said the exchange covered bilateral relations and regional and international developments. The presidential statement also referred to UAE efforts to host Russia-Ukraine contacts and mediate exchanges of prisoners between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed spoke by telephone with Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani on 17 November. They reviewed bilateral relations and regional developments, including diplomatic efforts to address current tensions. The UAE foreign ministry said the call reflected ongoing coordination between Abu Dhabi and Doha on regional issues and cooperation, including the security of maritime navigation.

A vessel operated by Abu Dhabi's ADNOC Logistics and Services was attacked in the Strait of Hormuz on 17 November. The company said one crew member was missing and 11 were injured, while the remaining crew were evacuated. Oman's emergency authorities said they rescued 24 crew members from the Panama-flagged tanker Tara Gas and continued searching for the missing person as firefighters worked to extinguish the blaze.

The UAE issued successive condemnations after Iranian attacks across the Gulf during the reporting period. On 17 November, it condemned renewed attacks on Bahrain; on 18 November, it denounced a drone attack on Kuwait; and on 22 November, it again condemned an attack on a Bahraini civilian industrial facility that caused a fire and material damage. The UAE described the attacks as violations of sovereignty and threats to security and stability, expressed solidarity with Bahrain and Kuwait, and backed measures to protect their populations. The statements followed reported drone and projectile attacks during the wider regional confrontation and were issued as Gulf governments increased public coordination over security concerns. Each statement called for de-escalation and respect for international law.

Somalia's dispute with the UAE escalated through public accusations and diplomatic measures. On 17 November, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud accused Abu Dhabi of interference and support for security structures outside federal control, including in Somaliland, Puntland and Jubbaland. On 19 November, Mogadishu ordered the UAE ambassador to leave within 72 hours and recalled its own envoy. The cabinet decision followed a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre. The UAE rejected the accusations and said it had closed its Mogadishu embassy and withdrawn staff in January 2026 after Somalia cancelled bilateral agreements. On 20 November, the Gulf Cooperation Council secretary-general criticized remarks by Somali officials targeting the UAE. Mogadishu described its measures as protecting Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The UAE's ambassador to Ethiopia, Abdullah Hassan Al Shamsi, presented his credentials to President Taye Atske Selassie in Addis Ababa on 19 November. The meeting addressed bilateral relations and ways to strengthen cooperation between the

two countries. The credential presentation followed the appointment of the ambassador and marked a formal diplomatic engagement between Abu Dhabi and Addis Ababa during a week of renewed regional attention to Horn of Africa relations.

Abdullah bin Zayed spoke by telephone with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on 20 November about regional developments, including the humanitarian situation in Sudan. The UAE foreign ministry said the ministers discussed efforts to support a ceasefire and address the conflict's humanitarian consequences. Bin Zayed reiterated Abu Dhabi's support for international and regional efforts aimed at securing an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and a civilian-led political process.

UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed met US Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin in Abu Dhabi on 21 November. They discussed bilateral cooperation and regional developments in the Middle East. The meeting took place amid heightened Gulf tensions and followed other UAE-US contacts concerning regional security and Sudan. UAE officials described the discussion as part of ongoing coordination with Washington on strategic relations and shared security interests.

The UAE condemned a Houthi attempt to target several areas in Saudi Arabia on 19 November. The foreign ministry described the attack as a threat to Saudi security and stability and expressed solidarity with the kingdom. Abu Dhabi reaffirmed its position against attacks on civilian areas and infrastructure and said it supported measures taken by Saudi Arabia to protect its territory and population.

11. Africa and The Sahel Region

Mali

Mali pursued closer engagement with Egypt while continuing military operations against armed groups across northern and central parts of the country. Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop met his Egyptian counterpart, Badr Abdelatty, on the sidelines of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development. Their discussions covered security developments in the Sahel, with Egypt reaffirming its support for Mali's counterterrorism and anti-extremism efforts. The two sides also considered expanding security coordination and capacity-building initiatives, including institutional training through Al-Azhar. The meeting built on earlier high-level engagements between transitional leader General Assimi Goïta and Egyptian officials, reinforcing Bamako's efforts to diversify its regional and international partnerships beyond traditional Western frameworks.

The Malian Armed Forces (FAMa) conducted several operations against armed groups, including a hostage-rescue mission in the In-Tebezas area, approximately 110 kilometers southeast of Kidal. Following aerial reconnaissance and targeted strikes by attack helicopters, airborne troops assaulted a militant detention compound and freed 24 captive Malian soldiers, who were subsequently transported to Gao. The operation was accompanied by airstrikes against suspected armed-group gathering sites near Kidal. Additional strikes targeted positions southwest and east of the city, where militants and vehicles were reportedly assembled. In central Mali, FAMa also conducted operations northeast of Niono in the Ségou region, reporting the killing of four fighters and the destruction of motorcycles and a pickup truck.

The government also continued efforts to secure fuel supply routes threatened by insurgent blockades. FAMa and Russian Africa Corps personnel jointly escorted a convoy of 756 fuel tankers into Bamako, marking the third major military-escorted fuel convoy during the month. The operation was intended to counter the blockade imposed by Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) along important supply corridors. The reliance on joint military escorts with Russian forces illustrates the importance of external security support to the government's efforts to maintain access to essential supplies and protect strategic transport routes.

Niger

Niger continued to pursue cross-border security coordination while deepening its diplomatic and strategic alignment with neighboring Algeria and the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). A new security arrangement involving Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad reportedly grants military forces a limited right of pursuit, extending up to five kilometers across shared borders, to track fleeing militants and armed bandits. The agreement specifically targets Boko Haram, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), and other armed groups operating across the Lake Chad Basin. It represents an effort to restore practical operational coordination among regional states despite Niger's earlier withdrawal from the Multinational Joint Task Force.

Security cooperation with Algeria also expanded. Nigerien and Algerian forces jointly escorted a convoy of 53 trucks traveling toward Agadez through northern Niger. The operation reflected growing coordination along the Algerian-Nigerien border following Algeria's authorization to deploy troops into northern Niger for counterterrorism operations and infrastructure protection. The two countries also held high-level discussions in Niamey concerning the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline (TSGP). Beyond its strategic infrastructure implications, the engagement reinforced diplomatic ties ahead of Niger's planned construction activities on the project. Algeria's diplomatic presence in

Agadez further reflected its growing engagement with northern Niger.

Niger also participated in the first Forum of Retired Ambassadors of the Alliance of Sahel States, bringing together former diplomats from Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. The gathering focused on pooling diplomatic experience to strengthen the confederation's international position, regional security architecture, and common foreign policy orientation. In a separate development, former Nigerien President Mahamadou Issoufou attended a public event in Abuja, where he emphasized the historical diplomatic and security ties between Niger and Nigeria. His remarks underscored the interconnected nature of their security interests despite recent political tensions between the AES and ECOWAS. Nevertheless, Niger's broader geopolitical position remained difficult. Its military-led administration continued to face strained relations with Western partners and ECOWAS while relying heavily on AES solidarity and Russian Africa Corps support following the reported mutiny at Base 101 in Niamey.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo pursued diplomatic efforts to restore relations with Kenya while continuing to press for adjustments to the United Nations peacekeeping mission's mandate in the country's eastern provinces. At a quadripartite summit in Oyo, Republic of the Congo, President Félix Tshisekedi and Kenyan President William Ruto agreed to work toward restoring diplomatic relations, including the return of ambassadors and the resumption of bilateral cooperation mechanisms. The meeting was hosted by Republic of the Congo President Denis Sassou Nguesso and attended by Togo's President of the Council of Ministers, Faure Gnassingbé, who serves as the African Union mediator for the eastern DRC crisis. Separately, Foreign Minister Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner met with UN peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix in Aswan to advocate for a MONUSCO mandate more closely tailored to security requirements in eastern DRC ahead of its renewal.

The country's diplomatic position also remained affected by tensions with Rwanda. The leadership contest within the International Organisation of La Francophonie became deadlocked, prompting member states to postpone the election for another year. Meanwhile, negotiations between Kinshasa and Kigali over implementation of the Washington Accords remained stalled, particularly over the neutralization of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the lifting of Rwanda's defensive measures. These disputes continued to complicate efforts to establish a sustainable framework for de-escalation in eastern DRC.

Domestic political tensions persisted following President Tshisekedi's approval of the referendum law, which allows constitutional amendments and the drafting of a new

constitution. The legislation has intensified concerns among opposition groups that it could provide a legal pathway for extending the president's tenure beyond the existing constitutional limits. Former president Joseph Kabila, who leads the Front for the Refoundation of the Nation (FRN), delivered a national address criticizing the government's record and accusing it of deepening political divisions and conflict.

Security conditions in the east remained volatile. The FRN continued efforts to consolidate control along the RN3 around Bunyakiri in South Kivu's Kalehe district despite counter-efforts by pro-government forces. Separately, Congolese security forces reportedly killed at least 14 people during clashes with an anti-government sect. In Ituri, renewed fighting near a hospital forced medical workers and humanitarian personnel to shelter inside a maternity ward for more than 24 hours, disrupting humanitarian operations amid continuing clashes involving government forces, M23, and other armed groups.

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso continued to manage the humanitarian and diplomatic consequences of Guinea's restrictions on artisanal gold mining, while deepening cooperation with Mali under the Alliance of Sahel States. The government concluded a large-scale repatriation operation involving 76,169 people who had been affected by the restrictions and subsequent displacement. In a formal communiqué, Ouagadougou praised Mali for providing temporary refuge and logistical support during the transit. The government also announced coordination with diplomatic missions to repatriate 1,994 foreign nationals, including citizens of Togo, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Niger, who had been caught up in the movement. The crisis coincided with growing diplomatic friction between Burkina Faso and Guinea after commentary and caricatures broadcast on Burkina Faso's national television generated public backlash and regional debate over bilateral relations.

Relations with Mali also advanced through the formalization of a Local Cross-Border Cooperation Grouping. The initiative is intended to institutionalize coordination between local administrations and security authorities along their shared border within the AES framework. Meanwhile, Burkina Faso's military authorities intensified legal pressure on critics living abroad. Human Rights Watch reported that the government had sent international arrest warrants and extradition requests to Côte d'Ivoire, France, and the United States. Ouagadougou also requested that U.S. authorities compel Meta to identify administrators of Facebook pages critical of the government.

Domestic political and administrative measures reflected the authorities' continued consolidation of control. Burkina Faso's specialized counterterrorism court opened six

judicial cases involving at least 45 exiled journalists, activists, and former officials, including former transitional president Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba. The individuals face allegations related to terrorism financing and destabilization. Separately, the Council of Ministers adopted a decree dissolving the Pharmacists' Union of Burkina Faso. The government also announced administrative appointments across the Ministries of Security, Justice, and Territorial Administration. President Ibrahim Traoré was scheduled to preside over the inauguration of the first phase of the Faso Technology Academy in Pabré, an institution operating directly under the Presidency and intended to train domestic engineers as part of the government's technological sovereignty agenda.

Security forces also engaged armed assailants in Ouagadougou. Regional security reporting indicated that three gunmen were killed and four additional suspects were neutralized during the incident. Authorities had not publicly disclosed the attackers' affiliations or motives. The government also announced stronger regulatory and operational measures intended to protect civil aviation against unlawful interference.

Chad

Chad’s security and diplomatic engagements reflected an effort to diversify its partnerships while cautiously re-engaging with traditional security partners. Chadian and French forces conducted joint tactical exercises in N'Djamena, focusing on counterterrorism, interoperability, and territorial defense. The drills marked a measured improvement in security cooperation following the breakdown of the previous defense arrangement and the withdrawal of French troops. Separately, the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) launched the second year of its Saudi-supported Sahel training programme in N'Djamena. The programme, which runs through December, provides training for Chadian defense and security personnel in military operations, intelligence coordination, counterterrorism financing, and media strategy. In eastern Chad, defense and security forces presented several suspected criminals to authorities as part of an ongoing campaign against insecurity. Chadian forces also remained deployed in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, alongside international contingents supporting Haitian authorities in their efforts to confront armed gangs.

Diplomatic engagement with neighboring Sudan continued through a meeting between Foreign Minister Ahmed Kogri and Sudan’s Chargé d’Affaires, Dr. Abdallah Abakar Saleh, who delivered an official message from Sudan’s foreign ministry concerning bilateral relations and shared regional issues. Chad also participated in the European Union’s Schuman Security and Defence Forum in Brussels, where Minister of Armed Forces Issakha Malloua Djamous presented N'Djamena’s position on subregional security challenges and international defense partnerships. In another diplomatic

development, China's ambassador formally bid farewell to Chadian authorities following the conclusion of his mission. Chad also maintained its engagement in multilateral diplomacy, dispatching Minister Delegate Fatimé Aldjineh Garfa to Kigali to represent the country at the Francophonie ministerial conference. Chad's Permanent Representative in Geneva, Ahmad Makaila, meanwhile, participated in the selection hearings for the next Director-General of the World Health Organization.

Domestic political tensions intensified following demonstrations in N'Djamena organized by supporters of the opposition party Les Transformateurs, led by Succès Masra. Police used tear gas to disperse the banned demonstrations, which called for a return to constitutional order. Police spokesperson Paul Manga reported approximately 50 arrests following clashes, road blockades, and reported security breaches near the U.S. Embassy. The unrest was followed by the dismissal of Division General Djontan Marcel, head of the National Gendarmerie, reportedly for refusing to take a tougher approach toward the protesters. Meanwhile, campaigning opened for a National Assembly by-election to fill the seat left vacant by the death of deputy Hassan Moussa Yakub. Prime Minister Allah-Maye Halina was also summoned to appear before the National Assembly for a plenary interpellation initiated by deputy Mahamat Ahmat Lazina to review the government's mid-term record. The presidency additionally announced a series of regional administrative appointments following President Mahamat Idriss Déby's security tour of several provinces.

Chad strengthened its diplomatic representation in Ethiopia following the accreditation of its newly appointed ambassador, Dr. Saleh Hissein Hassan Haliki. He formally presented his letters of credence to Ethiopian President Taye Atske Selassie at the National Palace in Addis Ababa. In addition to managing bilateral relations, the new ambassador serves as Chad's Permanent Representative to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, giving N'Djamena diplomatic representation at the headquarters of both continental institutions.

Although no direct bilateral security agreement between Ethiopia and Chad was reported, developments surrounding Sudan created overlapping diplomatic concerns for both countries. In Addis Ababa, UN Special Envoy Pekka Haavisto held discussions with African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf on escalating border and proxy tensions between Ethiopia and Sudan. The discussions highlighted the wider regional implications of Sudan's conflict and the importance of diplomatic coordination through the African Union. This regional diplomatic activity coincided with Chad's own engagement with Sudanese representatives in N'Djamena, illustrating the shared importance of Sudan's instability to the two countries' regional calculations.

Central African Republic

The Central African Republic experienced a significant change in the leadership of its UN peacekeeping mission, alongside renewed debate over the future of international security assistance and persistent domestic political and security challenges. UN Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Mohamed Ag Ayoya of Mali as the new Special Representative for the CAR and Head of MINUSCA. Ayoya, who previously served as the mission's Deputy Special Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator, succeeds Valentine Rugwabiza of Rwanda. The appointment followed the Security Council's renewal of MINUSCA's mandate and reduction of its authorized military troop ceiling to 12,000 personnel. Authorities and residents in the northeastern prefecture of Vakaga welcomed the extension, emphasizing the mission's role in civilian protection and border stabilization. However, Central African political analysts called on the incoming mission chief to establish a clear, phased withdrawal timetable and prioritize the transfer of security responsibilities to national forces.

Domestic politics were shaken by the sudden death of former Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye, a prominent opposition figure and leader of the Republican Convention for Social Progress (CRPS). Tiangaye was also a key member of the opposition coalition, the Republican Bloc for the Defense of the Constitution (BRDC). His death in Bangui occurred shortly after he returned to his law office following a period of illness. The incident prompted political scrutiny, with opposition figures including Martin Ziguélé demanding transparency amid wider concerns about unexplained deaths and disappearances. Governance concerns also remained prominent following the release of the 2026 Mo Ibrahim Foundation governance index, which ranked the CAR 50th among 54 African countries, with a score of 31.3 out of 100.

Security incidents continued in several parts of the country. In the northwestern Ouham prefecture, unidentified armed men ambushed and killed a Central African Armed Forces soldier and a motorcycle taxi driver near Bossangoa as they traveled from Kouki. In the southeastern Haut-Mbomou prefecture, security around Zémio remained fragile. Although no major new clashes were reported along the main corridors, allowing limited civilian and humanitarian movement to resume, reports indicated continuing tensions and alleged detentions involving Russian Wagner auxiliaries operating near the town. In the northwest, local authorities and their partners completed the installation of demarcation and water-point infrastructure along transhumance corridors in Ouham-Pendé. The initiative is intended to reduce recurring clashes between herders and farmers over access to land and water.

12. North Africa

Libya

A suspected drone attack struck the Russian Navy corvette Merkury at Benghazi's naval base on November 22, leaving the vessel heavily damaged and reportedly capsized. The ship had docked for refuelling and supplies under an arrangement with the eastern administration. No party has claimed responsibility. A separate drone-boat incident involving a Maltese-flagged commercial vessel was also reported off Benghazi. The incidents bring the Russia–Ukraine conflict closer to Libyan territory and expose the security risks of hosting external military assets amid the country's political fragmentation.

The National Oil Corporation reported that the armed blockade of the Hamada–Zawiya pipeline had continued for more than 20 days, resulting in an estimated 302,778 barrels of lost output and approximately $30.8 million in losses. The disruption threatens supplies to the Zawiya refinery and highlights the continued ability of armed groups to use critical infrastructure as political leverage.

Diplomatically, Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah's November 19 visit to Cairo produced nine agreements with Egypt covering energy, petroleum refining, fisheries, labour and other areas of cooperation. Two days later, he travelled to Istanbul for talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin on Libya's political and security situation. The sequence is significant. Dbeibah is seeking to preserve relations with two competing regional powers without becoming exclusively dependent on either. Egypt is expanding its engagement with Tripoli while maintaining ties with eastern actors, but continues to oppose the 2019 Libya–Turkey maritime agreement. Ankara, meanwhile, retains substantial security and economic interests in Libya. The successive visits illustrate Tripoli's diplomatic balancing and the continuing intersection of Egyptian-Turkish competition and cooperation. Separately, the ICC confirmed that the trial of former Mitiga Prison official Khaled El Hishri is scheduled for May 2027, while Russia again challenged the Security Council's Libya referral.

Algeria

Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf attended the Nordic–African Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Oslo on November 19–20, holding discussions with European and African counterparts. His programme included meetings with Norwegian energy officials and executives from Equinor and Scatec, reflecting Algeria's efforts to attract investment and deepen energy cooperation beyond its established markets. Separately, a Sonatrach delegation met Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in Mogadishu on November

22 to discuss cooperation in oil and natural-resource development. These engagements reinforce Algiers' energy diplomacy and its ambitions as an African energy partner. Algeria was also re-elected to the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission.

Relations with Morocco remained tense following an Algerian Defence Ministry announcement that border guards killed two Moroccan nationals in the Naâma sector on November 20 after they allegedly ignored orders to stop. The ministry also reported dismantling a 17-member trafficking network and seizing approximately 1.9 tonnes of cannabis resin allegedly originating from Morocco. The claims have not been independently verified. Meanwhile, Algiers continued its diplomatic dispute with Paris over the detention of an Algerian consular official and reported the discovery of an arms cache near Bordj Badji Mokhtar, close to the Malian border. The developments underline Algeria's simultaneous concerns over western-border tensions, Sahel insecurity and its broader diplomatic and energy outreach.

Morocco

The withdrawal of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) entered its physical phase on November 16, when the first five military observers departed Laayoune. Following the non-renewal of its mandate on October 31, the UN began liquidation on November 1, with full withdrawal targeted for January 31, 2027. The departure removes an important field-monitoring mechanism and could give Rabat greater diplomatic room to advance its Autonomy Plan. However, it also reduces independent verification and may increase the risk of escalation. The UN maintains that MINURSO's withdrawal does not extinguish the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination, and diplomatic efforts through the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy will continue.

On November 18, King Mohammed VI launched the MAD 4 billion "Morocco Offer", a roadmap to develop the national defence industry. By 2035, Rabat aims to meet approximately 40% of its military and security requirements through domestic production, generate more than 65% of sector revenue from exports and create around 50,000 jobs. Building on its aerospace, automotive and electronics industries, the initiative signals a shift from arms procurement towards domestic production and export capacity, with implications for the regional military balance. Morocco also expanded security cooperation with the UAE through an intelligence-sharing agreement and with France through judicial cooperation targeting transnational crime. Separately, authorities seized 1.83 tonnes of cannabis resin in two operations in Tangier.

13. Middle East

Israel

Israel's Knesset elected Matan Kahana of Gadi Eisenkot's Yashar party as speaker on 17 November, with 66 lawmakers voting for him and 52 backing the alternative candidate. Kahana replaced Likud's Amir Ohana. The vote gave the opposition-led parliamentary bloc control of the speakership and several committee chairmanships, positions that influence the legislative agenda during the ongoing coalition negotiations. It marked an early parliamentary shift.

On 18 November, Gadi Eisenkot met Naftali Bennett, Yair Lapid, Yair Golan and Avigdor Liberman at the Knesset. The opposition leaders said their first priority was a national emergency government led by Eisenkot to replace Benjamin Netanyahu. They described Israel as facing security, social and international emergencies and pledged to coordinate their efforts during government formation. On 21 November, Bennett publicly backed a broad government under Eisenkot and said he would not join a Netanyahu-led administration. On 22 November, Eisenkot's Yashar party and Likud representatives held a four-hour meeting in Herzliya on a possible unity arrangement. They discussed substantive positions and agreed to meet again, but announced no agreement. The meeting followed an earlier round on 15 November, while Netanyahu continued advocating a broad unity government.

On 18 November, the Knesset advanced preliminary bills repealing legislation on judicial appointments and the attorney-general's powers, with each measure receiving 63 votes to 47. Lawmakers also approved a waiver from the standard 45-day waiting period for several bills, including a proposed broadcast-regulation overhaul. The votes were initial legislative stages and each measure still required further readings before enactment. Further committee work remained.

Israel's attorney-general instructed the caretaker government on 17 November to suspend the tender process for construction in the E1 settlement area east of Jerusalem until a new government is formed. The instruction halted the immediate tender timetable for the controversial housing project. The E1 plan has long been opposed by Palestinians and foreign governments because of its location between East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

US Central Command chief Admiral Brad Cooper met Israel's military and intelligence chiefs in a trilateral consultation on 18 November. The participants were IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir and Mossad Director Roman Gofman. The Israeli military said they discussed regional developments, shared security challenges and

operational coordination. Cooper's visit took place amid heightened concern over Iran and continuing conflict across several regional fronts.

The Israeli military said on 16 November that it had struck a weapons shipment in the Beqaa Valley town of Janta in eastern Lebanon. The IDF stated that the shipment had been transferred from Syria and was intended for Hezbollah. The strike formed part of Israel's continuing operations against the transfer and storage of weapons for the Lebanese armed group.

Reports of possible Israeli military action against Iran intensified between. Channel 13 reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had told a security meeting that an operation against Iran was unavoidable, while the Washington Post reported that he had asked Mossad to prepare covert options. An Israeli security official disputed aspect of that account. On 20 November, IDF spokesman Effie Defrin said the military remained ready for defensive and offensive scenarios. Avigdor Liberman said a strike lacked a current security justification. On 22 November, Channel 12 reported that military intelligence had warned Netanyahu that a unilateral attack could trigger a multi-front conflict involving Lebanon, Syria and Gaza. The reports were not accompanied by an announced Israeli decision to launch an operation.

An Israeli airstrike hit a vehicle in Gaza City on 21 November, killing three Palestinians, according to Gaza health officials and witnesses cited by Reuters. Witnesses said the vehicle appeared to be carrying packaged food and displayed a World Central Kitchen logo, while the organization said it was not affiliated with the vehicle. The IDF later said those killed were Islamic Jihad operatives using a logistics vehicle.

On 20 November, an Israeli settlement security coordinator shot and killed Palestinian Hamza Masoud Salim Abdo in the central West Bank; the IDF said it was reviewing the incident. On 22 November, Palestinian homes and vehicles were set alight in several communities near Ramallah. Gadi Eisenkot condemned the arson as "Jewish terror," demanded a crackdown and called for arrests. Israeli police said they were investigating the attacks.

The Israeli military said on 18 November that its forces had entered an area beyond the Gaza ceasefire's Yellow Line in central Gaza and demolished a Hamas tunnel. The IDF described the operation as a targeted action against underground infrastructure. The announcement came amid continuing Israeli operations against Hamas positions and military facilities during the ceasefire period, which began in October.

On 19 November, the foreign ministers of 16 countries, including Turkey, Egypt, Saudi

Arabia, Somalia and the UAE, issued a joint statement welcoming British and Australian sanctions linked to Israeli settlement activity. They condemned settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian territories, called for accountability and further measures against involved entities, and urged implementation of the Gaza plan and a two-state settlement based on the 1967 lines.

An Israeli military investigation into violence near Jericho on the night of 16 November found that a 62-year-old Palestinian woman was likely killed by gunfire from an Israeli civilian aimed at stone-throwers. The IDF said Palestinians and Israelis had clashed in Area A, and that Palestinians had attacked Israeli civilians with vehicles, stones and clubs. Police and military investigators continued examining the incident and the sequence of gunfire.

Turkey

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan attended the second Ministerial Meeting on Cross-Regional Security and Connectivity in Brussels on 16 November, on the margins of the EU Foreign Affairs Council. Discussions covered regional security, trade corridors and transport links, including the Middle Corridor and Development Road projects. Fidan also met Romanian Foreign Minister Dan Neculaescu and other European counterparts during the visit.

Türkiye secured seats on two international bodies during the reporting period. On 16 November, the Foreign Ministry announced the country's re-election to the International Telecommunication Union Council. On 20 November, Turkey was elected to the International Civil Aviation Organization Council for the 2027–2030 term, receiving 133 votes from 158 voting states. Ankara said the selections reflected its participation in multilateral technical governance.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Defense Minister Yaşar Güler met Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani and Defence Minister Murhaf Abu Kasra in Ankara on 17 November. The discussions covered defense, security, trade, energy and reconstruction. Fidan called for Israel to end actions affecting neighboring states and for a security arrangement in southern Syria based on the 1974 disengagement agreement.

On 17 November, Hakan Fidan said the Saudi-Turkish-Pakistani defence arrangement, referred to by Turkish officials as the Mecca alliance, could expand after it became institutionalized. He described the three countries' cooperation as a framework for regional security. In a television interview on 22 November, Fidan said Turkey's immediate contribution would focus on Saudi Arabia's defence and that Ankara had made no decision to deploy troops to Yemen. He said cooperation could include air-

defense capabilities and other military support. Fidan said the immediate purpose was to strengthen Saudi Arabia's defense, with possible participation by other regional partners considered after the trilateral framework had been institutionalized.

Defense Minister Yaşar Güler told parliament on 18 November that procurement work for F-16, F-35, Eurofighter and C-130J aircraft was continuing according to schedule. He said the first two C-130J aircraft were expected in December and discussed Ankara's efforts to resolve outstanding issues affecting F-35 participation. Güler also addressed US sanctions and constraints imposed by the American Congress on defense decisions.

Turkey's Defense Industry Agency signed a contract with Otokar on 18 November for the supply of new 4×4 tactical armored vehicles to the Turkish Land Forces. The agreement covered production and delivery of the vehicles under a procurement program for the armed forces. Otokar said the contract followed the company's selection in the procurement process and that deliveries were expected to continue into 2028.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced on 19 November that the first three Bayraktar Kızılelma unmanned combat aircraft had entered the inventory of Turkey's armed forces. The aircraft were developed by Baykar and are designed for air-to-air and air-to-ground missions. The announcement marked the initial induction of the platform into military service, following it flight-test program and earlier public demonstrations of the aircraft.

Turkey's Chief of General Staff, General Selçuk Bayraktaroğlu, visited Mogadishu on 21 November and met Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the speaker of parliament, the defense minister and the army chief. The two sides pledged closer defense and security cooperation and joint counterterrorism efforts. Bayraktaroğlu also attended the laying of the foundation stone for a new Somali Navy headquarters, part of the countries' 2024 defense cooperation framework.

NATO's Edge 2026 defense-industry conference was held in İzmir during the week, bringing together alliance officials and companies from Turkey and other member and partner states. The programmed addressed innovation, industrial cooperation, defense technology and the alliance's future capability requirements. Turkish officials used the gathering to present national defense-industry developments and call for closer cooperation between NATO and industry representatives.

Turkey hosted the COP31 United Nations climate conference in Antalya, where negotiations continued into overtime before ending without a political agreement on 22 November. The Turkish presidency circulated revised draft texts and sought compromise on language covering climate action and implementation. Disagreement

centered on whether the final text should explicitly refer to reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Saudi Arabia opposed such wording and pressed for carbon-capture language, while the European Union and vulnerable states rejected a text omitting fossil fuel. Around 130 countries backed a letter calling for a reference to transitioning away from fossil fuels. The Turkish presidency said no country had received preferential treatment, and conference president Murat Kurum closed the talks after confirming that consensus had failed.

On 22 November, Fidan said an agreement between the United States and Iran was important to easing the regional crisis and global financial pressures. He said Turkey continued to support mediation over the Strait of Hormuz and had been in contact with Qatar's prime minister about diplomatic efforts. Fidan argued that regional disputes should be addressed through political engagement and that a settlement would help restore maritime and economic stability.

Fidan said on 22 November that Ankara and Washington had the political will to resolve their defense disputes, including problems linked to US sanctions and Turkey's exclusion from the F-35 program. He said the US administration had lifted delays affecting some long-standing ammunition purchases. He added that Congress constrained the administration's options on issues governed by legislation, including the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

Fidan and Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalın met Libyan Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibeh in Istanbul on 22 November. The meeting took place during the Libyan leader's visit to Turkey and addressed bilateral relations and regional developments. Turkish officials did not release detailed decisions from the meeting. Dbeibeh's visit came as Ankara continued engagement with Libya's Government of National Unity on political, security and economic matters.

Fidan criticized Israeli restrictions on the entry of metal containers intended for winter aid into Gaza, according to remarks broadcast on 22 November. He said the restrictions affected preparations for cold weather and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Palestinians. His comments came during a television interview in which he also discussed the ceasefire, the next phase of the Gaza plan and Turkey's diplomatic contacts with regional and international actors.

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan met European Commission Executive Vice-President Raffaele Fitto in Ankara on 20 November. Fidan urged the European Union to prevent the Greek Cypriot administration from holding Türkiye-EU relations hostage and called for progress on modernizing the customs union. The meeting addressed bilateral relations and cooperation between Ankara and European institutions and economic

integration, according to Turkish official reporting.

Turkey's intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalın met a senior Hamas delegation led by political bureau chief Khalil al-Hayya in Istanbul on 21 November, according to Turkish security sources reported by Anadolu. The meeting addressed Israeli ceasefire violations in Gaza, developments in the West Bank, restrictions affecting Palestinians and worsening humanitarian conditions. The discussions also covered steps to implement the Gaza ceasefire, revive the peace plan and facilitate humanitarian deliveries to the enclave.

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 US blockade, sanctions relief, the release of frozen assets, compensation for 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 17 November 2026 the UN Security Council held a private meeting on the situation in Somalia, focusing on AUSSOM. Briefings were expected from Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Martin Kimani and AU Special Representative/AUSSOM Head El Hadji Ibrahima Diene along with an update on the 2713 Al-Shabaab Sanctions Committee. Discussions occurred during uncertainty over the mission's future, UNSOS logistical support and financing with reports that the United States had shifted to support a one-year renewal of AUSSOM and UNSOS mandates current AUSSOM authorisation runs to 31 December 2026.

On 13/17 November 2026 reporting dates vary slightly across sources, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2838 (2026) extending the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and its support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism until 15 November 2027. The resolution was adopted under Chapter VII by a vote of 13 in favour, none against with two abstentions (China and Russian Federation). It called for investigation into a December 2025 drone attack on UNISFA personnel and cooperation with related inquiries.

Africa Union

On or around 19 November 2026, African Union Commission Chairperson H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf issued a statement welcoming the 16 November entry into force of the 2023 IGAD Treaty. He congratulated IGAD Heads of State and Government and Executive Secretary Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, underscoring that strong Regional Economic Communities are essential pillars of the AU's integration structure and Agenda 2063. He expressed confidence that the treaty would strengthen IGAD's capacity on peace and security, climate resilience, food security and economic integration and reaffirmed the AU Commission's commitment to partnership with IGAD based on coordination, subsidiarity and complementarity.

On 18 November 2026 in Mogadishu the African Union Commission and the Federal

Government of Somalia convened a joint operational planning meeting at AUSSOM headquarters to develop an integrated security transition plan for the progressive transfer of security responsibilities to Somali Security Forces. Participants included AUSSOM Troop and Police Contributing Countries the United Nations Office to the African Union and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia. Officials including Deputy SRCC Amb. Mouktar Osman Karie and Force Commander Lt. Gen. Sam Kavuma, stressed collective ownership, coordinated planning, preservation of operational continuity, avoidance of security gaps, sustained support to Somali forces and continuation of counterterrorism and stabilisation gains. The plan is intended as a coordinated framework for the phased handover.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

On 16 November 2026, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development announced that its 2023 Treaty Establishing IGAD had entered into force, replacing the 1996 Agreement that had governed the organisation for three decades. The treaty, adopted by regional leaders in Djibouti on 12 June 2023, required ratification by two thirds of the eight member states. By September 2026, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan had completed ratification meeting the threshold confirmed at the 74th Extraordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers. Executive Secretary Dr Workneh Gebeyehu described the milestone coinciding with IGAD's 40th anniversary as the start of a new phase of stronger institutional capacity, clearer responsibilities for its organs and deeper cooperation on peace and security, drought resilience, economic integration, trade, health and education. Existing institutions and decisions continue, subject to alignment with the new framework. He urged remaining members Eritrea, Sudan and Uganda to complete ratification.

The fourth edition of the IGAD Media Awards took place in Kampala, Uganda, on 19–20 November 2026 under the theme "Human Mobility for Regional Integration Free Movement, Decent Work, Protection and Shared Prosperity." The event included a knowledge ShareFair and culminated in an awards ceremony recognising 20 journalists and media professionals from across the region for outstanding reporting on migration, forced displacement, labour mobility and related issues. Kenya recorded the highest number of winners. IGAD Executive Secretary Dr Workneh Gebeyehu and Ugandan officials participated. The awards aim to promote responsible, human centred journalism that portrays mobility as a driver of integration and shared prosperity.

In the period, IGAD convened ministerial and high-level meetings in Nairobi focused on accelerating food systems transformation, addressing food insecurity noting that roughly 21 percent of the region's approximately 300 million people face food insecurity, with

women, children and adolescent girls particularly affected and related challenges including climate, conflict and floods. Discussions covered sharing practices among member states including Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan identifying priorities and strengthening regional coordination for resilient food systems and livelihoods.

European Union

The EU participated as a member of the Quintet in the 13 November joint statement on Sudan detailed under IGAD. On 19 November 2026, the EU and the Federal Republic of Somalia held a Senior Officials Meeting in Brussels on Somalia's security transition. The meeting allowed Somalia to present its vision, enabled partners including UN, AUSSOM and troop-contributing countries to exchange views on coordination and informed preparations for the expected UNSC renewal of the AUSSOM mandate. It was co-chaired by EEAS Deputy Secretary-General Olof Skoog and Somali officials, with participation from the EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa and other partners.

Kenya's security and defense cooperation with the European Union continued to gain momentum, building on the early-November handover of the first batch of non-lethal military equipment to the Kenya Navy at Mtongwe Naval Base in Mombasa under the European Peace Facility part of a €20 million approximately KSh 3 billion package approved by the EU Council in June 2024 to strengthen KDF operational capabilities, including diving and search and rescue gear, night vision goggles and protective equipment for the Navy's Special Operations Squadron with the broader measure covering tactical UAVs, electronic warfare equipment and a mobile medical facility to enhance border security along the Kenya and Somalia frontier and protect maritime shipping lanes.

The cooperation was further highlighted at the Nairobi "Road to Schuman" Forum on Nov 2 a preparatory meeting ahead of the EU's Schuman Security and Defense Forum in Brussels on Nov 17–18 which brought together defense institutions, regional partners and security experts to examine maritime threats in the Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean, evolving terrorist threats and the role of regional security arrangements including AUSSOM.

This was reinforced by the fifth EU–Kenya Security and Defense Dialogue held in Nairobi on Nov 3, where counterterrorism, maritime security and cyberspace were identified as priority areas and President William Ruto's Nov 12 announcement that Kenya and the EU had agreed to upgrade relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership marking 50 years of diplomatic ties a development that caps this momentum and signals deeper long-term engagement. Kenya's separate bilateral Defense

Cooperation Agreement with France signed in October 2025 and ratified by the National Assembly in April 2026 provides additional context for Kenya's expanding European defense engagement while the EU's naval operations including EUNAVFOR Atalanta and Aspides alongside its Training Mission in Somalia, further underscore the bloc's stepped-up role as a security actor in a region facing growing threats from al-Shabaab, maritime crime and illicit trafficking.

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