



Introduction

The October 2025 Mashariki Monthly Issue analyses key conflict and geopolitical developments in the Greater Eastern Africa region through a security foresight lens. During the month, the region faced overlapping pressures across governance, security, and environmental systems, revealing both vulnerabilities and resilience. Political contestation, tightening political control, cross-border security tensions, and climate-driven displacement produced cascading risks that tested institutional capacity while highlighting opportunities for adaptive governance and coordinated regional action. Countries such as Tanzania, Madagascar, and Djibouti experienced contested political transitions, youth-led protests, and elite manoeuvres, exposing governance fragility. At the same time, cross-border tensions in Sudan, Ethiopia, and South Sudan underscored persistent security vulnerabilities. Climate shocks, including floods in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, as well as drought-driven displacement in northern Tanzania and Uganda, strained urban services, disrupted livelihoods, and intensified human mobility pressures. These overlapping crises illustrate how local events can have a profound impact, spreading across borders and challenging institutional legitimacy and response capacity. This report provides policymakers and regional actors with a forward-looking operational perspective on October 2025 developments. It examines key trends, assesses regional implications, and offers actionable recommendations across political governance, regional security, peace diplomacy, and climate-induced mobility. By highlighting risks, systemic interconnections, and potential windows for resilience, the report aims to support timely, coordinated, and evidence-based decision-making in the Greater Eastern Africa.

Key Themes

1. Political Governance

1.1 Regional Trends and Developments

October 2025 highlighted growing governance challenges across the Greater Eastern Africa region. Political control tightened in several states, limiting avenues for opposition and civic participation. In Tanzania, opposition figures were excluded from the 29 October general election, prompting demonstrations in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and Zanzibar. Security forces imposed curfews, conducted mass arrests, and implemented a nationwide internet blackout, disrupting civic activity and reportedly resulting in deaths and destruction of property (CHRAGG, 2025; The Citizen, 2025). In Madagascar, prolonged youth-led protests over unemployment, corruption, and electricity shortages culminated in a military takeover on 13th October, led by Colonel Michael Randrianirina (Al Jazeera, 2025). The African Union suspended Madagascar from its institutions, citing an unconstitutional change of government while urging a return to civilian-led administration. In Djibouti, parliament approved an amendment to the presidential age limit on 16th October, allowing President Ismail Omar Guelleh to seek another term (Al Jazeera, 2025). These developments reflect concentrated authority, constrained political competition, and reduced democratic space, exposing governance vulnerabilities even in comparatively stable states like Tanzania. These domestic developments carry implications beyond national borders, potentially influencing refugee flows, trade, and regional instability. The combination of protests, political exclusion, and executive manoeuvres illustrates how local crises cascade, testing institutional capacity while creating opportunities for targeted reforms.

1.2 Regional Implications

Governance fragility in Tanzania, Madagascar, and Djibouti generates spill-over risks across the region. Unrest in Tanzania could exacerbate refugee flows to Kenya and Zanzibar, while Madagascar's political crisis affects Indian Ocean trade routes and regional diplomatic coordination. Prolonged elite control increases the likelihood of

sustained political tension, undermining IGAD and AU mediation credibility, reducing trust in democratic processes, and limiting regional cooperation. Despite these challenges, strengthened institutions and coordinated regional support could mitigate spillovers and reinforce governance resilience. Without timely interventions, these tensions may escalate, amplifying institutional stress, cross-border ripple effects, and potential disruptions to regional stability.

1.3 Foresight Recommendations

Enhance electoral transparency: Tanzanian authorities, supported by neutral international observers, should implement post-election evaluation to restore civic trust and confidence in democratic processes.

Strengthen crisis response: Governments should establish rapid-response mechanisms to mitigate unrest while respecting human rights and preventing escalation into widespread violence.

Support institutional resilience: Madagascar and Djibouti should pursue reforms to enhance judicial independence, anti-corruption oversight, and parliamentary checks, building durable governance capacity.

Regional coordination: IGAD and AU should monitor political developments in the region and proactively guide neighbouring states to stem spillovers and regional destabilisation.

Forward-looking scenario: If these measures are implemented promptly, the region may stabilise political tensions, reduce cross-border displacement, and create conditions for institutional strengthening.

2.1 Regional Trends and Developments

The security environment in October 2025 reflected growing political fractures, escalating militarisation, proxy alignments, and humanitarian disruption across Greater Eastern Africa. In Sudan, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) captured El Fasher on 8th October, ending an eighteen-month siege. UN OCHA reported at least 43 civilian deaths and 72,500 displaced persons, with humanitarian corridors disrupted and migration flows redirected toward Chad, South Sudan, and Libya (OCHA, 2025). In Ethiopia, the graduation of Rapid Support and Defence Operations (RSADO) recruits in Afar on 12 October intensified strategic competition with Eritrea over Red Sea access, increasing the risk of cross-border clashes and local escalation (Addis Standard, 2025). In South Sudan, President Salva Kiir dismissed and appointed military commanders on 15th and 22nd October. These changes reflect factional balancing, which undermines institutional cohesion and raises the risk of localised conflict (Africa News, 2025). In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), clashes between the March 23 Movement (M23) and the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) in North Kivu displaced civilians, disrupted trade, and strained humanitarian access (Gulf Times, 2025). These local escalations trigger cascading risks, including refugee flows, disruption of trade corridors, and strain on humanitarian and security institutions. If unaddressed, these dynamics could amplify cross-border tensions and prolong regional instability. At the same time, coordinated monitoring and rapid intervention provide windows to contain escalation and strengthen institutional response.

2.2 Regional Implications

Persistent insecurity across Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the DRC produces significant spillover effects. Refugee inflows into Uganda, Rwanda, Chad, and Eritrea increase pressure on local resources and urban services. Cross-border arms flows and armed group activity undermine IGAD, AU, and ICGLR coordination, weakening conflict prevention mechanisms. Without timely interventions,

local conflicts may evolve into chronic low-level wars, disrupting humanitarian aid, trade, and regional economic integration. Conversely, rapid deployment of regional security teams, preventive diplomacy efforts, and humanitarian support can stabilise hotspots, maintain trade and integration corridors, and reinforce governance and security institutions.

2.3 Foresight Recommendations

Deploy regional security teams: IGAD, AU, and ICGLR should establish joint security teams ready to deploy along the Sudan–South Sudan, Ethiopia–Eritrea, and DRC–Rwanda/Uganda borders within two weeks of early-warning signals, to contain troop movements and militia mobilisations.

Strengthen humanitarian response: UN OCHA and national authorities to prepare for rapid delivery of aid to displaced populations, prioritising high-density settlements.

Control transnational arms flows: Border inspections and oversight should target key crossings into Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and DRC to limit weapons trafficking and protect civilians.

Facilitate early conflict mediation: Governments and regional actors should engage local authorities, community leaders, and armed groups in dialogue and confidence-building interventions immediately after escalation alerts.

Forward-looking scenario: If regional security teams and rapid humanitarian response are deployed promptly, conflict escalation can be contained, refugee flows managed, and trade and integration corridors preserved. Delays, however, risk prolonged instability, cross-border displacement, and humanitarian crises.

3. Peace Diplomacy

3.1 Regional Trends and Developments

In October 2025, mediation efforts across Greater Eastern Africa advanced, but implementation challenges persisted. In Sudan, the African Union (AU) appointed Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni to lead negotiations between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) (BBC Africa, 2025). An AU special summit was convened in Addis Ababa on 20th October to bring both parties to the table (UG Diplomatic, 2025). Initial dialogue occurred, but disagreements over ceasefire terms and territorial control delayed meaningful progress. Implementation of the Doha Agreement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) stalled due to delays in prisoner releases and monitoring, hence weakening confidence in the peace process (Gulf Times, 2025). The ICGLR and Qatar provided oversight, but slow verification reduced the effectiveness of the agreement. Simultaneously, the planned Regional Economic Integration Framework between Rwanda and the DRC was postponed because of disputes over troop withdrawals and security guarantees, illustrating how security compliance and economic diplomacy are tightly linked (Taarifa, 2025). These parallel challenges in Sudan and the DRC illustrate how unresolved disputes can propagate instability across neighbouring states, creating cascading risks that threaten governance, security, and regional economic initiatives.

3.2 Regional Implications

Partial or delayed implementation of peace agreements increases transnational pressures. Population movements from North Kivu to Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania, combined with unresolved tensions in Sudan, strain humanitarian systems and disrupt trade corridors. Neighbouring countries, including Kenya and South Sudan, face

secondary migration pressures and growing demands on local services. Weak enforcement undermines the credibility of the AU and ICGLR, potentially emboldening armed groups and reducing trust in institutional mediation. Delayed economic initiatives, such as the Rwanda–DRC framework, also threaten regional trade, investment, and broader socioeconomic stability. If these issues remain unaddressed, institutional stress may deepen, and cross-border tensions could escalate. Coordinated verification, timely diplomacy, and targeted interventions offer a window to restore trust, reinforce stability, and advance regional cooperation.

3.3 Foresight Recommendations

Strengthen monitoring and verification: AU and ICGLR should deploy joint teams within one week of escalation alerts to oversee prisoner releases, ceasefire compliance, and troop withdrawals in Sudan and the DRC.

Enhance diplomatic coordination: IGAD, AU, and national governments should hold weekly briefings to align mediation strategies and prevent conflicting external guarantees from donors such as Qatar.

Release targeted funding quickly: Donor and regional actors should provide timely financial and logistical support for monitoring and local peacebuilding initiatives.

Link security and economic frameworks: Governments should resume regional economic initiatives, such as the Rwanda–DRC integration framework, only after confirmed security compliance, ensuring tangible bene

Forward-looking scenario: If verification, coordination, and funding are implemented promptly, peace agreements can be enforced, population movements managed, and regional trade and political cooperation strengthened. Continued delays, however, risk prolonged instability, humanitarian strain, and weakened institutional credibility.

4. Environmental Migration

4.1 Regional Trends and Developments

In October 2025, climate-driven population movements and environmental stress intensified across the Greater Eastern Africa region. Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia experienced extreme rainfall and flash floods between 12–18 October, displacing over 52,000 people, damaging crops, and straining local resources in regions such as Ethiopia's Somali Region (UN OCHA, 2025). Northern Tanzania (Mara and Simiyu regions) and Uganda (Karamoja and Teso) faced prolonged drought, prompting rural-to-urban migration to Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Kampala, increasing pressure on urban services (UN OCHA, 2025). In Rwanda, landslides and temporary relocations affected households in Kayonza and Ngoma districts. Southern Madagascar continued to experience drought, causing internal displacement and crop failure, while Northern Mozambique (Cabo Delgado and Nampula) faced floods from cyclones, triggering cross-border relocation into Tanzania (Al Jazeera, 2025). The 7th Expert Working Group under the Kampala Declaration on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change convened in Entebbe on 14 October, emphasising coordinated adaptation planning, shared data systems, and financing mechanisms to support communities displaced by environmental shocks (IOM Burundi, 2025). These events illustrate how climate shocks propagate across borders, creating cascading risks that threaten livelihoods, urban infrastructure, and regional governance capacities.

4.2 Regional Implications

Climate-induced mobility is increasing pressure on humanitarian systems, urban services, and regional trade networks. Population movements from Ethiopia, Somalia, northern Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Madagascar, and Northern Mozambique strain urban peripheries in Nairobi, Kampala, Kigali, and Dar es Salaam. Port disruptions in Comoros threaten trade corridors linking the eastern African islands to the mainland. Competition over land and water following floods and droughts heightens the risk of localised conflict

and social tension. Without coordinated adaptation, institutional stress may deepen, humanitarian systems may be overextended, while urban and rural vulnerabilities could escalate. Timely interventions offer a window to strengthen resilience, stabilise mobility flows, and reinforce regional cooperation.

4.3 Foresight Recommendations

Strengthen cross-border coordination: IGAD, AU, and national disaster agencies should prepare and deploy rapid response task forces in good time to manage climate-induced displacements.

Accelerate adaptation finance and infrastructure: Donor agencies and governments should release funds in good time to ensure completion of critical infrastructure, including flood protection and water management systems.

Enhance early-warning and data systems: National meteorological agencies, IOM, and UN OCHA should provide real-time information on rainfall, temperature anomalies, floods, and droughts to guide anticipatory relocation and resource allocation.

Integrate climate mobility into governance and security planning: Governments should include displacement scenarios in urban planning, resource allocation, and cross-border contingency frameworks to reduce tension and maintain stability.

Forward-looking scenario: If rapid coordination, targeted funding, and effective early warning systems are deployed promptly, population movements related to climate induced stress can be managed, urban systems stabilised, and regional resilience strengthened. Delays or inadequate responses risk increased displacement, heightened food insecurity, and worsening social and cross-border tensions.

Conclusion

This October 2025 issue has highlighted the complex interplay of governance fragility, security pressures, and climate-induced mobility across the Greater Eastern Africa region. Events from contested elections in Tanzania and a military takeover in Madagascar to escalating tensions in Sudan and the Ethiopia-Eritrea corridor, and widespread climate displacement illustrate how political, security, and environmental stressors are interconnected and can propagate across borders. These developments underscore the importance of inclusive governance, credible institutions, coordinated security responses, and proactive climate adaptation. Timely, evidence-based, and collaborative action can create windows for stabilising governance, reinforcing security, and mitigating human vulnerability. Conversely, delays in verification, coordination, or intervention risk cascading instability, humanitarian strain, and weakened institutional credibility. Looking ahead, regional actors must strengthen early-warning systems, cross-border coordination, and integrated planning that links governance, security, and climate responses. Effective implementation of these measures will be critical to sustaining stability, fostering resilience, and managing complex interlinked risks in the coming months.

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