



1.0 Introduction

This Issue analyzes key developments that shaped the Greater Eastern Africa region through a conflict and geopolitical foresight lens during the month of March 2026. During this period the region was characterised by intersecting pressures across conflict, geopolitical, and environmental security domains across the 16 countries within the region. Conflict trends reflected internal political ruptures, localised armed clashes, and shifts in military alignments, which contributed to population displacement, governance challenges, and cross-border security risks. Geopolitical developments, including the East African Community leadership transition, new regional financing mechanisms, and deepening engagement with external actors such as China, the EU, and the United States, illustrated evolving diplomatic alignments and institutional adaptation, with implications for regional stability, economic integration, and multilateral cooperation. Environmental and climate pressures were pronounced, with flash floods in Kenya causing fatalities, displacements, and infrastructure disruption, while variable rainfall in Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania, and parts of Sudan occasioned vulnerabilities in livelihoods, mobility, and food security. Collectively, these dynamics demonstrate a complex regional security landscape, where overlapping drivers of instability, environmental stress, and institutional recalibration interact, creating both acute and chronic vulnerabilities. The Outlook provides a concise, evidence-based assessment of these developments in March 2026 and their implications for resilience, stability, and human security across Greater Eastern Africa.

2.0 Thematic Focus

2.1 Conflict Trends

During the period under review, the Greater Eastern Africa region experienced heightened conflict pressures, driven by fragmented governance, shifting military postures, and cross-border security challenges. In Somalia, South West State severed cooperation with the Federal Government on 17th March 26, reflecting deepening federal-regional tensions. This was followed by federal forces' recapture of Baidoa on 30th March 26, which triggered the resignation of the state's president and civilian displacements (Reuters, 2026). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda partially withdrew troops from eastern positions due to operational friction with local authorities, revealing coordination gaps in counter-insurgency operations (Nile Post, 2026). South Sudan witnessed intercommunal violence in Jonglei State, displacing over 5,000 civilians amid weak local governance and limited security coverage (UN OCHA, 2026). Border clashes and localised confrontations in Ethiopia and Sudan further strained humanitarian access and underscored persistent security vulnerabilities along cross-border fault lines (Al Jazeera, 2026). These events highlight the persistence of fragmented authority, fluid military alignments, and localised governance gaps, promoting displacement risks and regional instability.

Foresight Recommendations

- IGAD, supported by AU, should convene Somali federal and regional leaders to establish a formal dispute-resolution framework, including mediation nodes and monitoring mechanisms to reduce federal-regional clashes in the country.

- AU should support DRC and Uganda to establish an operational coordination unit to manage troop transitions and sustain counter-insurgency coherence.
- Regional governments, in collaboration with AU and the UN, should deploy mobile civilian protection teams to contested zones to prevent displacements and enhance civilian security.
- Border security task forces should institute real-time incident reporting systems and de-escalation protocols between neighbouring states to pre-empt cross-border spillovers.

Forward-Looking Scenario: Conflict trends experienced in the Greater Eastern Africa region in the month of March 26 suggests that the region will likely experience continued fragmentation, with episodic escalations where authority is contested. Somalia's internal fissures may deepen without high-level mediation, while troop realignments in the DRC region could escalate re-emergence of insurgents. Persistent cross-border incursions threaten to entrench insecurity tensions unless coordination of border security task forces is strengthened.

2.2 Geopolitical Shifts

Greater Eastern Africa's geopolitical environment in the month of March 2026 exhibited strategic recalibration, institutional adaptation, and growing external engagement. The 25th Ordinary Summit of the East African Community (7th March 26) resulted in leadership transition to Uganda and adoption of an equity-based financing framework aimed at enhancing regional integration and shared resource management (Standard Media, 2026). Kenya obtained zero-tariff export access to China under the Early Harvest Agreement, strengthening trade and economic diplomacy (People Daily, 2026). Kenya also received an invitation to attend the 51st G7 summit in June 26 in Canada, as a guest, reflecting her elevated international visibility (Kenyan Wall Street, 2026). EU-AU coordination advanced political and humanitarian strategies in eastern DRC to sustain ceasefire implementation and facilitate humanitarian access, while the United States initiated a security capability assessment in Madagascar, highlighting its growing external security interest (EEAS, 2026; U.S. Embassy Madagascar, 2026). Regional states navigated domestic institutional reforms, balancing internal governance with multilateral engagements. All these developments underscore a dynamic geopolitical landscape, where external influence, integration efforts, and strategic partnerships collectively shape regional stability and strategic trajectories.

Foresight Recommendations

- The East African Community should implement a monitoring mechanism for the equity-based financing framework, establishing measurable benchmarks for integration and security cooperation to ensure effective institutional oversight and reduce political friction among member states.

- Kenya should develop a comprehensive geopolitical risk assessment framework to balance benefits from external partnerships, including trade, security, and multilateral engagements, while safeguarding strategic autonomy.
- AU and EU should institutionalise a joint Great Lakes peace architecture with defined objectives for ceasefire enforcement, humanitarian access, and conflict resolution to stabilise eastern DRC.
- Regional governments should strengthen diplomatic coordination in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea regions, aligning positions on maritime security, foreign investment, and conflict prevention strategies.

Forward-Looking Scenario: Geopolitical dynamics in Greater Eastern Africa are likely to intensify in future, with member states leveraging multivector diplomacy to secure investment and strategic partnerships. EAC institutional reforms may enhance coordination if effectively implemented, while EU and US engagement in the region could provide stability dividends but may increase competition for influence. Regional states' ability to balance external partnerships with domestic governance priorities will critically shape stability, integration progress, and the potential for diplomatic and security tensions in the short term.

2.3 Environmental Security

In March 2026, Greater Eastern Africa experienced significant environmental and climate pressures with tangible human security implications. In Kenya, intense rainfall experienced from 6–9 March 26, caused flash floods, killing at least 108 people, displacing thousands, and disrupting infrastructure, transport, and utilities (Reuters, 2026). In Uganda, a regional Urban Flash Flood Forecasting workshop convened disaster management and meteorological experts from multiple regional states to improve early warning systems and cross-border coordination (Mirage News, 2026). At the same time, the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) reported localised vegetation stress in parts of Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, reflecting uneven rainfall distribution and agricultural vulnerability (ICPAC, 2026). These developments illustrate how climate variability intersects with mobility, livelihoods, and community safety, with extreme events amplifying displacement risk and straining local governance. This demonstrated the urgency of future anticipatory planning and integrated climate-information systems to mitigate recurrent environmental shocks and preservation of stability in the region.

Foresight Recommendations

- National disaster management authorities in the region should operationalise displacement monitoring linked to early warning systems to expedite humanitarian responses during hydrometeorological events.

- ICPAC and national meteorological agencies should expand targeted climate information dissemination to farming and pastoral communities, supporting adaptive livelihood planning.
- Regional Governments should accelerate investments in urban drainage, flood mitigation, and climate-resilient infrastructure in high-density and flood-prone areas.
- Regional governments in collaboration with international partners should fund anticipatory mechanisms to address adverse credible climate related forecasts to enable timely, pre-emptive humanitarian and infrastructure support across the region.

Forward-Looking Scenario: The Environmental and climate pressures experienced in March 2026 in Greater Eastern Africa are likely to remain dynamic. Hydrometeorological extremes, particularly flash floods, may continue to disrupt communities, strain infrastructure, and trigger localised displacement. Strengthened climate services, early warning systems, and anticipatory funding mechanisms can mitigate impacts, but uneven implementation may sustain vulnerabilities. Prevailing climate variability will continue to affect agricultural productivity, mobility, and livelihood resilience, with localised ecological stress shaping the human security landscape in the near term.

3.0 Conclusion

Developments across Greater Eastern Africa in March 2026 present a complex interplay of conflict, geopolitical realignment, and environmental stressors. Conflict dynamics reflect fragmented governance with implications for mobility and security, while geopolitical shifts demonstrate deepening external engagement and institutional adaptation. Environmental and climate pressures, particularly severe flooding and evolving climate risk governance, underscore acute links between natural hazards and community vulnerability. Together, these thematic dynamics signal a regional security environment characterised by intersecting pressures on state and societal stability. Robust mediation, coordinated regional diplomacy, strengthened early warning systems, and anticipatory environmental planning will be essential to mitigating risks in the coming months. This Outlook provides a verified evidentiary basis for decision makers to anticipate emerging security pressures and inform proactive interventions.

4.0 References

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