



1.0 Introduction

During the month of July 2026, Greater Eastern Africa's security space was characterised by convergence of governance pressures, geopolitical competition, and environmental security challenges, reflecting growing interdependence of regional security risks. Persistent armed conflicts, contested political transitions, geopolitical realignments, and environmental pressures increasingly interacted across national boundaries, amplifying systemic vulnerabilities and reinforcing the need for coordinated regional responses (Africanews, 2026; Al Jazeera, 2026; Associated Press, 2026).

The period further witnessed Greater Eastern Africa's growing strategic importance within an increasingly multipolar international order (Semafor, 2026; Decode39, 2026). Competition over maritime corridors, critical infrastructure, strategic minerals, digital connectivity, and emerging technologies intensified alongside renewed efforts by regional institutions and international partners to strengthen conflict prevention, peace support, and collective security governance (Government of Uganda, 2026; AUC, 2026; NEI Magazine, 2026). Simultaneously, environmental security assumed greater strategic significance as resilient infrastructure, natural resource governance, ecosystem protection, and climate adaptation became integral to regional peace, security, and sustainable development (UNEP, 2026; World Bank, 2026).

Against this backdrop, this Mashariki Monthly Outlook provides a concise, evidence-based assessment of the principal security developments observed during the month of July 2026 and examines their implications for peace, security, and sustainable development across the sixteen countries of the Greater Eastern Africa region. By integrating conflict trends, geopolitical shifts, and environmental security within a regional foresight framework, the Outlook supports informed policy dialogues, preventive actions, and strategic decision-making interventions.

2.0 Thematic Focus

2.1 Conflict Trends

Conflict dynamics across Greater Eastern Africa during the month of July 2026 were increasingly shaped by the interaction of contested political transitions, protracted armed conflict, and illicit conflict economies, reinforcing the regionalisation of insecurity and increasing the importance of coordinated conflict prevention. While these developments occurred within individual states, their cumulative effects underscored the growing interdependence between domestic political stability and regional peace and security.

Political transitions remained a principal source of regional security concern. In South Sudan, constitutional amendments cleared the legal pathway for the December 2026 elections (Office of the President of South Sudan, 2026). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Constitutional Court's approval of a referendum law intensified debate over constitutional reform and political legitimacy (Africanews, 2026). In Tanzania, restrictions on political mobilisation and arrests preceding planned demonstrations reflected continued pressure on civic space ahead of the electoral period (Associated Press, 2026). Collectively, these developments illustrate that constitutional and electoral reforms are most likely to strengthen political stability when accompanied by inclusive political participation, institutional accountability, and public confidence in democratic processes.

Protracted armed conflict remained the region's most immediate security challenge. In Sudan, intensified fighting around El-Obeid disrupted a strategic logistical corridor linking central Sudan with Darfur and the Kordofan region, further constraining humanitarian access (Al Jazeera, 2026). Recognising the wider regional implications of the conflict, IGAD convened the Third Forum of Special Envoys to strengthen coordination among regional and international mediation initiatives supporting the Sudan peace process (IGAD, 2026). In Somalia, the Extraordinary Summit of Troop-Contributing Countries reaffirmed regional commitment to sustaining security gains while progressively transferring security responsibilities to Somali institutions (Government of Uganda, 2026). The African Union Commission

similarly reaffirmed continued support for Somalia's security transition (African Union Commission, 2026). Nevertheless, unresolved political disagreements over governance arrangements continued to constrain progress towards durable stabilisation (France 24, 2026). Financing uncertainties surrounding Somalia's future security architecture remained an additional challenge (Standard Media, 2026).

Illicit conflict economies continued to sustain insecurity across the Great Lakes region. United States sanctions targeting Rwandan companies allegedly linked to financing M23 armed groups operating in eastern DRC highlighted the continuing relationship between illicit mineral exploitation and organised armed violence (Al Jazeera, 2026). These developments reinforce the need for stronger regional cooperation on mineral governance, intelligence sharing, financial investigations, and coordinated law enforcement to disrupt conflict-financing networks and reduce the operational capacity of armed groups.

Taken together, these developments during July 2026 indicate that conflict across Greater Eastern Africa is increasingly driven by the interaction of governance contestation, armed violence, and illicit conflict economies. Strengthening the region's peace architecture will therefore depend on effective preventive diplomacy, coordinated mediation, accountable governance, and enhanced cross-border security cooperation.

Foresight Recommendations

- **The African Union Commission, through the Peace and Security Council, and IGAD, through the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN),** should establish a coordinated preventive diplomacy framework by integrating joint constitutional and electoral risk assessments, coordinated mediation deployments, and structured political dialogue among national stakeholders to prevent governance disputes from escalating into violent conflict.

- **The African Union, AUSSOM, the Federal Government of Somalia, and Troop-Contributing Countries** should implement a conditions-based security transition framework by linking force transition to measurable benchmarks on political reconciliation, security sector reform, institutional capacity, and sustainable financing to preserve security gains and strengthen nationally led stabilisation.
- **The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the East African Community (EAC), and national governments** should strengthen regional governance of strategic minerals by harmonising certification systems, expanding intelligence sharing, coordinating financial investigations, and conducting joint cross-border law enforcement operations to disrupt conflict-financing networks operating across eastern DRC.
- **National governments, Regional Economic Communities, the African Union, and development partners** should strengthen electoral conflict prevention by reinforcing the independence of electoral management bodies, protecting civic space, facilitating inclusive political dialogue, and strengthening constitutional accountability mechanisms to reduce the risk of election-related violence during political transitions.

Forward-Looking Scenario: Current trajectories indicate that conflict across Greater Eastern Africa will continue to be shaped by the interaction of governance contestation, protracted armed conflict, and illicit conflict economies. While constitutional reforms, mediation initiatives, and security transitions present opportunities for greater stability, unresolved political grievances, shrinking civic space, and conflict-financing networks are likely to sustain regional security pressures. The effectiveness of preventive diplomacy, coordinated mediation, and cross-border security cooperation will therefore remain a critical determinant of the region's peace architecture.

2.2 Geopolitical Shifts

Geopolitical developments across Greater Eastern Africa during the month of July 2026 reflected intensifying strategic competition centred on maritime trade corridors, strategic infrastructure, emerging technologies, and defence partnerships. The region's position along the Red Sea, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, and the Western Indian Ocean continued to strengthen its geopolitical significance within global trade, energy security, and an increasingly multipolar international order.

Maritime security and strategic connectivity remained central to regional diplomacy. Renewed insecurity in the Red Sea and persistent attacks on commercial shipping reinforced the strategic importance of the Bab el-Man-deb Strait and expanded international engagement with littoral states (Sema-for, 2026). The United States strengthened diplomatic engagement with Eritrea and Somalia to deepen maritime security cooperation (Semafor, 2026). Italy and Djibouti concluded a strategic partnership covering digital connectivity, energy systems, transport infrastructure, and strategic dialogue (Decode39, 2026). Seychelles also reaffirmed defence and maritime security cooperation with the United States (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Seychelles, 2026). Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate that maritime security is increasingly shaping diplomatic influence, economic resilience, and strategic competition across Greater Eastern Africa.

Defence diplomacy continued to evolve through strengthened bilateral and regional partnerships. Kenya and the United Kingdom resumed negotiations on a revised defence cooperation framework, reaffirming the enduring importance of strategic defence partnerships in regional security cooperation (ABC News, 2026). Regional governments participating in the Kampala Summit reaffirmed political support for the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) despite continuing operational and financial constraints (Government of Uganda, 2026). The African Union Commission likewise reaffirmed the importance of sustained African-led peace support efforts backed by international partners (African Union Commission, 2026). Together, these developments indicate a gradual evolution towards African-led security governance supported by targeted international cooperation.

Governments across the region continued to diversify strategic partnerships beyond traditional security cooperation. Russia expanded engagement with Burundi through discussions on small modular nuclear reactors (NEI Magazine, 2026). Mauritius acceded to the Artemis Accords, strengthening cooperation in space, science, and technological innovation (SatellitePro ME, 2026). Comoros advanced collaboration with international partners on sustainable blue economy governance (United Nations Environment Programme, 2026). Madagascar strengthened cooperation with the World Bank to enhance urban resilience and strategic infrastructure (World Bank, 2026). Collectively, these initiatives illustrate an increasingly diversified regional approach to diplomacy that seeks to strengthen economic resilience while preserving strategic autonomy.

Taken together, geopolitical developments during the month of July 2026 demonstrate that Greater Eastern Africa is increasingly emerging as a strategic bridge linking Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the Indo-Pacific. As international engagement intensifies, the region's long-term geopolitical influence will depend on its ability to coordinate regional priorities, diversify strategic partnerships, and preserve policy autonomy amid growing global competition.

Foresight Recommendations

- **The AUC, IGAD, the EAC, and relevant maritime coordination mechanisms** should develop an integrated regional maritime strategy by harmonising maritime domain awareness, critical infrastructure protection, intelligence sharing, and diplomatic coordination to strengthen security and resilience across the Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean.
- **National governments, supported by Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and development partners**, should institutionalise strategic risk assessments for major defence, infrastructure, energy, digital, and technology partnerships by integrating national security, economic resilience, and foreign policy considerations into investment and cooperation decisions to strengthen long-term strategic autonomy.
- **The AUC, the ICGLR, and RECs** should establish a regional framework for critical and strategic minerals by promoting transparent governance, regional value addition, secure supply chains, and responsible investment to enhance economic resilience and reduce geopolitical vulnerability.
- **Regional governments, the AUC, and international partners** should strengthen regional cooperation on cybersecurity, digital infrastructure resilience, space cooperation, and technology governance through joint standards, information-sharing mechanisms, and coordinated capacity-building programmes to improve resilience against emerging geopolitical and technological risks.

Forward-Looking Scenario: Current geopolitical trends indicate that Greater Eastern Africa will continue to attract intensified international engagement driven by maritime trade, strategic infrastructure, emerging technologies, and critical supply chains. While expanding partnerships present significant opportunities for investment and economic transformation, increasing strategic competition will require governments to strengthen regional coordination, maintain balanced diplomatic engagement, and safeguard strategic autonomy. The region's geopolitical influence will increasingly depend on its ability to translate external partnerships into sustainable regional development, collective security, and long-term strategic autonomy.

2.3 Environmental Security

Environmental security across Greater Eastern Africa during the month of July 2026 was increasingly shaped by the interaction of natural resource governance, climate resilience, ecosystem protection, and critical infrastructure, reinforcing environmental resilience as a strategic pillar of regional peace, sustainable development, and human security. These developments demonstrated that environmental systems are no longer peripheral to regional security but increasingly influence economic stability, public health, and long-term resilience.

Natural resource governance emerged as a strategic environmental security priority. International attention to conflict minerals in eastern DRC reinforced the importance of responsible resource governance and environmentally sustainable mineral management (Al Jazeera, 2026). In Burundi, discussions with Russia on the development of small modular nuclear reactors reflected growing regional interest in diversifying lower-carbon energy systems to strengthen long-term energy security (NEI Magazine, 2026). Collectively, these developments illustrate that sustainable management of strategic resources and energy systems will increasingly determine the region's capacity to balance environmental sustainability with long-term socioeconomic development.

Marine ecosystems and the blue economy continued to gain strategic importance. Comoros adopted a national sustainable blue economy policy placing ecosystem restoration, sustainable fisheries, coastal resilience, and marine resource governance at the centre of national development planning (United Nations Environment Programme, 2026). These initiatives reinforce growing regional recognition that healthy marine ecosystems are fundamental to food security, biodiversity conservation, climate adaptation, and sustainable livelihoods across the Western Indian Ocean.

Climate-resilient infrastructure increasingly emerged as a cornerstone of environmental security. Madagascar strengthened cooperation with the World Bank to improve climate-resilient urban infrastructure and expand employment opportunities through sustainable urban development (World Bank, 2026). Conversely, continued damage to water systems, electricity infrastructure, and essential public services in Sudan demonstrated how protracted conflict can accelerate environmental degradation and increase humanitarian vulnerability (Al Jazeera, 2026). Together, these contrasting developments demonstrate that environmental security increasingly depends on sustained investment in climate resilience alongside the protection of essential infrastructure during periods of conflict and environmental stress.

Foresight Recommendations

- **The AUC, IGAD, national governments, and environmental authorities** should integrate environmental security into regional peace and development frameworks by incorporating climate risk assessments, ecosystem protection, critical infrastructure resilience, and natural resource governance into national security planning, regional early warning systems, and resilience strategies to reduce long-term environmental risks.
- **National governments, development finance institutions, and local authorities** should accelerate investment in climate-resilient urban infrastructure, sustainable water systems, and resilient energy infrastructure by adopting risk-informed planning standards, climate-resilient engineering, and long-term maintenance frameworks to strengthen adaptive capacity to environmental and socioeconomic shocks.
- **The African Union Blue Economy Strategy implementation mechanisms, the Indian Ocean Commission, IGAD, and coastal states** should strengthen regional cooperation on marine ecosystem governance by integrating sustainable fisheries management, coastal resilience, marine pollution control, ecosystem restoration, and blue economy planning to safeguard environmental sustainability and maritime livelihoods.
- **National governments, Regional Economic Communities, and international financial institutions** should harmonise regional environmental governance standards for strategic minerals and emerging energy technologies by strengthening environmental safeguards, transparent resource management, sustainable value chains, and environmental impact oversight to support responsible economic transformation.

Forward-Looking Scenario: Current environmental trends indicate that Greater Eastern Africa will increasingly confront interconnected challenges involving natural resource governance, climate resilience, ecosystem protection, and critical infrastructure. Continued investment in resilient infrastructure, sustainable energy systems, and blue economy initiatives presents significant opportunities to strengthen regional adaptive capacity. However, environmental degradation, infrastructure disruption, and weak resource governance could continue to undermine human security and sustainable development. The region's long-term environmental resilience will increasingly depend on integrating climate adaptation, ecosystem governance, and resilient infrastructure into regional peace, development, and economic planning.

3.0 Conclusion

Developments during July 2026 demonstrate that Greater Eastern Africa's security environment is becoming increasingly interconnected, with governance, geopolitics, and environmental resilience emerging as mutually reinforcing dimensions of regional stability. Political transitions, armed conflict, strategic competition, climate pressures, and natural resource governance increasingly transcend national borders, underscoring that contemporary security challenges can no longer be addressed through isolated national responses or sector-specific interventions.

The reporting period further illustrates that the region's future stability will depend less on responding to individual crises but more so on strengthening the institutions and governance systems capable of anticipating, preventing, and managing complex transboundary risks. This requires preventive diplomacy, accountable governance, strategic coordination, resilient infrastructure, sustainable resource management, and stronger regional cooperation to function as complementary elements of an integrated regional security architecture.

Looking ahead, Greater Eastern Africa's long-term trajectory will increasingly be determined by the ability of national governments and regional institutions to strengthen regional peace architecture, safeguard strategic autonomy, and build environmental resilience simultaneously. The extent to which these three strategic pillars are translated into coordinated policy action will shape the region's capacity to reduce conflict, manage geopolitical competition, promote sustainable development, and enhance long-term human security.

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Editor

Dr. Solomon Njenga, PhD
Director of Research and Programmes

Contributors

Agnes Maina
Research Fellow

Alfred Eket
Research Fellow

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UNDP
LaTribune
Sudans Post

Mashariki Research and Policy Centre

-  Address: P.O. Box 650-00621, Nairobi, Kenya
-  Phone: +254 734 088 233
-  Email: info@masharikirpc.org
-  www.masharikirpc.org