



1.0 Introduction

The month of August 2026 exposed a regional security environment in which political settlements, expanding external partnerships, and increasingly uneven climate conditions tested the ability of institutions in the Greater Eastern Africa to contain pressures before they manifest themselves. Conflict developments showed that negotiated settlements remain vulnerable where local enforcement and verification are weak, allowing local violence to generate displacement and wider insecurity (Al Jazeera, 2026).

African security institutions strengthened preparedness and operational cooperation, while maritime arrangements responded to renewed pressure in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden (Eastern Africa Standby Force, 2026). Geopolitical engagement also extended into maritime and energy cooperation, increasing the number of actors and institutional interfaces shaping regional security (Djibouti Code of Conduct, 2026).

Climate conditions added a different layer of exposure, with significant rainfall variation across the region and forecasts pointing to heightened rainfall risks in several areas later in 2026 (IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre, 2026). Health pressures further demonstrated how insecurity and population movement can complicate emergency containment across borders (World Health Organization, 2026a, 2026b). This Outlook assesses what these highlighted developments portend for the region's capacity to anticipate, contain, and manage emerging security pressures in the region.

2.0 Thematic Focus

2.1 Conflict Trends

The month of August exposed a recurring conflict-management weakness across Greater Eastern Africa: political settlements can reduce organised confrontation without eliminating the local conditions that reproduce violence. In western Tigray, renewed fighting around Sheraro and Shererina on 1 August breached the November 2022 Pretoria Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, signed in Pretoria, South Africa, on 2 November 2022, followed by the movement of hundreds of Tigrayans into Sudan, turning a domestic security breakdown into a cross-border pressure (Al Jazeera, 2026a, 2026b).

Sudan's renewed RSF assault on Al-Obeid demonstrated a different form of containment failure, as territorial fighting placed a major urban population at risk while constraining access to essential services (Reuters, 2026a). Somalia showed another pathway when federal forces retook Baidoa on 17 August after fighting with forces aligned with former South West president Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen, linking contested federal authority to armed confrontation (Reuters, 2026b). In South Sudan, the 24 August ambush of a UNMISS patrol in Jonglei, which resulted in the killing of two peacekeepers and the injury of seven people, underscored the exposure of peace-support operations (PSOs) where armed actors remain insufficiently contained (United Nations Mission in South Sudan, 2026).

Eastern DRC offered a more institutional response, with a field verification mission deployed to Minembwe on 24 August to monitor ceasefire compliance (Al Jazeera, 2026c). The regional risk therefore lies increasingly in the gap between political agreement, local enforcement, and timely verification.

Foresight Recommendations

- **AU and IGAD should create a regional conflict-verification mechanism linking verified ceasefire violations, armed incidents, and political-security alerts across Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia.** It should apply common escalation thresholds and refer persistent deterioration to designated political and mediation channels.
- **Peace-process guarantors should institutionalise field verification of security commitments.** Monitoring teams should receive defined geographic mandates, common reporting procedures and direct escalation channels to guarantors, shortening the interval between reported violations, verification and political response.
- **AU, IGAD and UN humanitarian actors should pre-agree emergency on access protocols for conflict-affected corridors.** Governments and humanitarian agencies should establish procedures for civilian movement, humanitarian access and emergency logistics that can be activated when fighting disrupts population centres or transport routes.
- **National authorities should strengthen civilian mechanisms for contested political authority.** Constitutional, electoral and subnational disputes should be channelled through structured mediation involving appropriate civilian institutions and regional facilitators before political disputes become security confrontations.

Conflict Trends — Forward-Looking Scenario: The most likely near-term trajectory is continued localised conflict, with political settlements holding unevenly where enforcement remains weak. A higher-risk pathway would involve renewed violence generating displacement, armed mobilisation or political spillover across borders. A more contained trajectory would depend on credible local enforcement, rapid verification of violations, and functioning political channels capable of addressing disputes before they become armed confrontations.

2.2 Geopolitical Shifts

The month of August showed Greater Eastern African states and institutions deepening cooperation through purpose-specific partnerships rather than a single alignment structure. On 12–13 August, the DRC and Rwanda, alongside the United States, Qatar, Togo and the African Union Commission, advanced mechanisms to monitor and verify implementation of the Washington Accords, while the DRC presented its FDLR disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration plan (U.S. Department of State, 2026).

The 10–14 August EASF meetings in Kampala reinforced the parallel African institutional track, with member states addressing operational readiness, capability verification, resource mobilisation and the need for stronger political support for the force (Eastern Africa Standby Force, 2026). Maritime cooperation followed a similar logic as DCoC states advanced work towards a proposed Combined Task Force following renewed piracy and armed robbery in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden (Djibouti Code of Conduct, 2026).

Energy cooperation added another critical-infrastructure layer through Uganda and Tanzania's Tanga Regional Energy Hub arrangement (Office of the President of Uganda, 2026) and Mauritius's petroleum cooperation with India (Prime Minister's Office, Mauritius, 2026). Rwanda and Uganda also strengthened direct border-security coordination through their 27–29 August proximity-commanders meeting (Rwanda Defence Force, 2026).

Taken together, these developments indicate that regional security capability is increasingly being assembled through overlapping bilateral, African and external arrangements, making interoperability, information-sharing and institutional coordination increasingly consequential.

Foresight Recommendations

- **AU, IGAD and EAC should establish a regional partnership-coordination framework to address the coordination gap created by overlapping bilateral, continental and external arrangements.** The framework should map participating states, mandates, external partners, information channels and geographic coverage, enabling institutions to identify duplication, capability gaps and coordination requirements.
- **DCoC signatory states should develop the operational framework for the proposed Combined DCoC Task Force.** The framework should define command relationships, maritime information-sharing procedures, national responsibilities and legal handover arrangements, while establishing clear interfaces with existing regional and international maritime operations.
- **EAC member states should incorporate major cross-border energy infrastructure into regional security planning.** Affected governments should identify infrastructure whose disruption could affect multiple countries and establish shared protection standards, emergency-response procedures and continuity arrangements covering storage, transport, refining and distribution networks.
- **AU, IGAD and EAC should assess interoperability when new external partnerships are established to address fragmented information protocols and operational responsibilities.** Arrangements involving surveillance, intelligence, border security or critical infrastructure should be assessed for mandate compatibility, information protocols and operational responsibilities, while preserving states' ability to pursue legitimate bilateral cooperation.

Forward-Looking Scenario: Greater Eastern Africa is likely to continue developing multiple partnerships around defined security, maritime and infrastructure requirements. A convergent trajectory would see bilateral initiatives reinforce African regional mechanisms through compatible information and operating arrangements. A fragmented trajectory would produce overlapping mandates, parallel reporting channels and uneven geographic coverage. The principal variable will be whether institutional coordination develops at the same pace as partnership expansion.

2.3 Environmental and Climate Security

The month of August presented Greater Eastern Africa with highly uneven climate exposure, with ICPAC reporting wetter-than-normal conditions in western Kenya and parts of Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and South Sudan, alongside persistent rainfall deficits across parts of Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti (IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre, 2026a, 2026b). This divergence means that climate risk cannot be managed through a uniform regional response, since the same seasonal system can produce water stress in one location and flood exposure in another.

ICPAC's 18 August seasonal outlook increased the planning significance of this variation, with ICPAC projecting a 90% likelihood of enhanced October–December rainfall, in the context of a strengthening El Niño, across southern Ethiopia, central-to-southern Somalia and northeastern Kenya, alongside a high likelihood of rainfall exceeding 400 mm in parts of Somalia, Kenya, the Lake Victoria Basin, Burundi, western Rwanda and western Tanzania (IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre, 2026c).

Kenya's rising water levels around Lakes Baringo and Bogoria, which displaced thousands of people and damaged infrastructure during August, illustrated how localised hydrological impacts can quickly exceed community response capacity (Kenya News Agency, 2026). A concurrent human-security pressure emerged in the DRC, where Bundibugyo virus disease expanded to 60 health zones across six provinces by 26 August, while WHO maintained that insecurity and population movement complicated containment and that cross-border transmission remained a risk (World Health Organization, 2026a, 2026b).

The central preparedness challenge is therefore managing geographically differentiated and potentially concurrent shocks before their combined demands exceed local response systems.

Foresight Recommendations

- **AU and IGAD should integrate climate forecasts into multi-hazard preparedness planning.** Regional and national assessments should combine forecast rainfall, population exposure, infrastructure vulnerability and service capacity, with responsibilities assigned in advance for locations facing overlapping pressures.
- **IGAD and national meteorological and disaster-management authorities should convert forecasts into predefined response thresholds.** Country and district authorities should link rainfall forecasts to specific actions, including drainage clearance, evacuation preparation, emergency-stock positioning and infrastructure inspections, allowing intervention before forecast hazards become severe impacts.
- **IGAD and national health authorities should strengthen cross-border surveillance where population mobility intersects with infectious-disease outbreaks.** Health, border and humanitarian authorities should share alerts, laboratory information and verified case data along corridors connecting affected areas with neighbouring countries.
- **National governments should prioritise infrastructure exposed to recurrent flooding and rainfall variability.** Roads, bridges, water systems, health facilities and displacement sites should undergo seasonal vulnerability assessments, with contingency financing and emergency-repair arrangements established before periods of elevated rainfall risk.

Forward-Looking Scenario: The remainder of 2026 presents a differentiated climate-risk trajectory. Wetter conditions could improve water and pasture availability in some areas while producing flooding, infrastructure damage, and disease exposure elsewhere. A prepared trajectory would convert forecasts into early action before impacts accumulate. Delayed intervention would increase displacement and service pressures as hazards exceed local response capacity.

3.0 Conclusion

The month of August 2026 showed that Greater Eastern Africa's security risks are increasingly shaped by the capacity of institutions to contain pressures before they escalate. Conflict developments exposed weaknesses between political settlement and local enforcement; geopolitical developments showed that expanding functional partnerships can increase capability while also creating coordination demands; and environmental conditions demonstrated the value of acting before climate and human-security pressures exceed local response capacity.

Across the three domains, the common vulnerability is not the absence of mechanisms but the gap between early warning, institutional coordination and timely action.

The months ahead will therefore test whether national and regional institutions can convert early warning alerts into decisive actions, make diverse partnerships interoperable, and translate forecasts into anticipatory measures before separate pressures combine into broader regional risks.

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Editor

Dr. Solomon Njenga, PhD
Deputy CEO, Director of
Research and Programmes

Contributors

Agnes Maina
Research Fellow

Alfred Eket
Research Fellow

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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