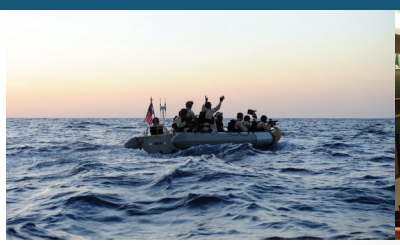
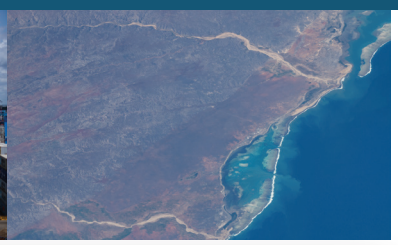
Mashariki Monthly Outlook

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1.0 Introduction

The month of September 2026 exposed a Greater Eastern African security environment in which conflict, geopolitical competition, and environmental pressures increasingly interacted across borders (Associated Press, 2026). Renewed fighting in northern Ethiopia, institutional restructuring in South Sudan, and renewed confrontation in Baidoa(Somalia) demonstrated continuing weaknesses in political and security containment (Reuters, 2026a). At the same time, the eastern DRC conflict remained embedded in a wider diplomatic process, while renewed Somali piracy and displacement across the Bab el-Mandeb connected insecurity on the African mainland to maritime pressures beyond it (Al Jazeera, 2026b). Geopolitical developments also strengthened the strategic importance of ports, energy corridors, and external partnerships, illustrated by the Kenya-Rwanda petroleum connection, Tanzania's bid for a 2029–2030 United Nations Security Council seat, and negotiations surrounding the Chagos Islands and Diego Garcia (Kenya News Agency, 2026). Environmental and health pressures added another layer, with the DRC Ebola outbreak expanding geographically and acute food insecurity deepening in southern Madagascar (FEWS NET, 2026). These September occurences consequently points to a regional security system in which local shocks can transmit through political, maritime, energy, health, and humanitarian networks. This Outlook analyses conflict, geopolitical, and environmental-security trends across Greater Eastern Africa in the month of September 2026,using the security foresight lens.

2.0 Focus Area I:

Conflict Trends

September's conflict pattern was marked less by one regional theatre than by different mechanisms of insecurity with implications extending beyond their immediate theatres. In northern Ethiopia, fighting involving Tigrayan forces and federal forces spread across parts of Tigray and into adjoining Afar and Amhara areas, with reported fighting around Erebti and the Alamata-Sekota axis and renewed pressure on the 2022 Pretoria settlement (Associated Press, 2026; Reuters, 2026a). The significance lies in the geographic expansion of armed confrontation beyond the immediate Tigray theatre and the renewed risk of interaction with Ethiopia's neighbouring security environment. In South Sudan, President Salva Kiir's September 22 amendment of the National Elections Act removed requirements linking elections to completion of a permanent constitution and national census, followed by the dissolution of the transitional government (Reuters, 2026b). In Somalia, fighting on September 28 in Baidoa, South West State, between federal forces and fighters loyal to the ousted regional president demonstrated that the contest over federal-regional authority remained capable of generating urban armed confrontation;MSF reported damage to a health facility, the killing of a healthcare worker and obstruction of medical access (Al Jazeera, 2026a; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2026). The maritime dimension also sharpened: RUSI recorded six commercial vessels seized off the Somalia coast since late April, with more than 60 seafarers held at the time of its September 23 assessment (Royal United Services Institute, 2026). In Sudan, United Nations reporting recorded continuing drone strikes across Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile, including attacks affecting fuel stations and other critical infrastructure (United Nations, 2026).

Forward-Looking Scenario: If fighting in northern Ethiopia continues to expand geographically, pressure could move toward transport corridors linking Tigray, Afar and neighbouring states. In South Sudan, institutional changes could intensify competition if political actors contest the amended electoral framework outside agreed security arrangements. In Somalia, further fighting around Baidoa could weaken federal-regional coordination, while continued piracy could increase pressure on maritime security and coastal governance. In Sudan, continued drone strikes could sustain civilian displacement and disrupt critical infrastructure even where diplomatic efforts reduce the intensity of particular fronts.

Foresight Recommendations

- **IGAD and the AU** should establish a shared northern-Horn conflict-monitoring cell linking verified incidents from Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia. The mechanism should use common incident definitions, geographic coordinates, and escalation thresholds to distinguish isolated violence from developments capable of producing cross-border displacement or military spillover.
- **Ethiopian federal authorities, Tigrayan representatives, and relevant Afar authorities** should establish direct incident-prevention channels covering the Tigray-Afar interface, particularly around Erebti and transport routes connecting the affected areas. The mechanism should exchange verified security information and address civilian movement before local clashes generate wider displacement.
- **South Sudanese political and security actors, supported by IGAD and the AU,** should separate electoral administration from armed political competition by establishing a political-security dialogue around the amended electoral framework. The process should address institutional representation, security guarantees, and the protection of political participation without substituting for the country's formal constitutional and electoral institutions.
- **The AU, IGAD, and UN mechanisms dealing with Sudan** should strengthen documentation of external military supplies entering Sudan. Verified information should distinguish weapons transfers, financial support, technical assistance, and personnel movements, allowing diplomatic engagement to focus on demonstrable supply channels rather than competing allegations.

3.0 Focus Area II: Geopolitics

September showed that strategic access, diplomatic arrangements and infrastructure are becoming increasingly consequential to regional security calculations. On the Red Sea's African side, UNHCR recorded an estimated 2,935 arrivals in Djibouti by September 17 after people fled escalating violence in Yemen, with arrivals through Obock, Khor Angar, Moulhoule and Godoria, demonstrating how instability beyond Africa can rapidly create pressure on African territory (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2026a, 2026b). In the Great Lakes, the September 16–17 Geneva meeting of the DRC-Rwanda Joint Security Coordination Mechanism reviewed implementation of the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity, while fighting continued in eastern DRC and key security commitments remained unresolved (Al Jazeera, 2026b). In East Africa's energy geography, 40,000 tonnes of petroleum products arrived at Kipevu Oil Terminal 2 in Mombasa for Rwanda under the June 29 Kenya-Rwanda framework, equivalent to approximately one month of Rwanda's consumption (Kenya News Agency, 2026). Tanzania formally announced its candidacy for the 2029–2030 UN Security Council term (Daily News, 2026), while Mauritius reaffirmed that its sovereignty over the Chagos Islands is non-negotiable and remained engaged with the United Kingdom over the future of the islands and the strategic Diego Garcia base (Prime Minister's Office, Mauritius, 2026; Reuters, 2026c). These developments point to a regional environment in which ports, maritime chokepoints, energy corridors and diplomatic access increasingly reinforce one another.

Foresight Recommendations

- **IGAD, Djibouti and humanitarian agencies** should integrate maritime displacement information from Yemen with reception, registration and protection planning in Obock. The mechanism should combine arrival monitoring, reception capacity and maritime movement information so that sudden increases in Bab el-Mandeb crossings can be identified before local reception systems become overstretched.
- **The United States, African Union, Qatar, Togo, DRC and Rwanda** should maintain a single implementation matrix for the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity. The matrix should assign each security commitment to the responsible party, record verification requirements, and distinguish political declarations from independently demonstrated implementation.
- **Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and relevant EAC institutions** should develop a corridor-security framework around petroleum movement from Mombasa through the Northern Corridor. The framework should connect port security, pipeline and road protection, customs coordination and contingency planning for disruptions affecting Rwanda and other land-linked markets.
- **Mauritius, the United Kingdom and relevant African and Indian Ocean institution**s should maintain structured consultation on the Chagos settlement while separately protecting the continuity of regional maritime-security arrangements. Dialogue should distinguish sovereignty questions from operational requirements surrounding Diego Garcia and wider Indian Ocean security.

Forward-Looking Scenario: The security significance of the region's ports and corridors could increase if conflict, migration and energy disruptions continue to cross national boundaries. Sustained pressure around Bab el-Mandeb could increase Djibouti's humanitarian and maritime-security burden. Expanding use of Mombasa Port for regional energy supply could increase the strategic value of the Northern Corridor, while unresolved DRC-Rwanda commitments and Chagos negotiations could keep diplomatic and security interests closely connected across the Western Indian Ocean and Great Lakes.

4.0 Focus Area III: Environmental & Climate Security

September demonstrated that environmental and health pressures can become security concerns when they interact with weak access, population movement, and limited response capacity. In the DRC, the Bundibugyo virus disease outbreak had reached 63 health zones across seven provinces by September 23, including Dungu in Haut-Uélé province bordering South Sudan; WHO reported 7,890 confirmed cases and 3,799 deaths, while conflict, displacement and limited access continued to obstruct surveillance, contact tracing and treatment (World Health Organization, 2026). In southern Madagascar, FEWS NET reported that Toliara II and Amboasary Atsimo remained in Crisis, IPC Phase 3, after erratic rainfall and prolonged dry spells contributed to below-average production and unusually early exhaustion of household food stocks (FEWS NET, 2026). Tanzania's ten-year National Adaptation Plan covers 36 programmes across 18 sectors and identifies weather-related agricultural losses of at least US$200 million annually, illustrating the scale of adaptation requirements (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2026). In Comoros, the September inauguration of three UAE-financed solar PV plants with a combined installed capacity of approximately 20 MW, 16 MWh of battery storage and about 30 kilometres of medium-voltage transmission lines represented a concrete effort to strengthen electricity resilience and reduce dependence on imported diesel (Masdar, 2026). The common security issue is therefore not environmental change alone, but the capacity of institutions and communities to absorb shocks without generating wider humanitarian or economic instability.

Forward-Looking Scenario: The DRC Ebola outbreak could create greater cross-border health pressure if insecurity continues to obstruct surveillance and population movement increases. In Madagascar, early exhaustion of food stocks could deepen household vulnerability as the lean season progresses. Across the Indian Ocean islands, dependence on imported energy and maritime supply routes means that climate shocks, external conflict, and infrastructure disruption could reinforce one another where domestic response capacity remains limited.

Foresight Recommendations

- **The DRC, Uganda and South Sudan, supported by WHO and regional health authorities,** should establish an intensified cross-border surveillance arrangement around Dungu and adjoining movement routes. It should connect case reporting, contact tracing, referral pathways and border-level risk communication so that disease transmission can be detected before it spreads through established mobility networks.
- **Madagascar's national food-security authorities and humanitarian partner**s should prioritise Toliara II and Amboasary Atsimo for early food, livelihood and market-support measures. Assistance should combine household food access with protection of productive assets to reduce reliance on coping strategies that weaken recovery capacity.
- **Tanzania's Vice President's Office, sector ministries and local government**s should translate the National Adaptation Plan into geographically targeted vulnerability and investment packages. Coastal, agricultural, livestock, fisheries, health and water risks should be mapped against local exposure so that national adaptation financing reaches the areas facing the highest demonstrated losses.
- **Comoros, Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar, working with development and maritime-security partners**, should integrate energy resilience and climate exposure into Indian Ocean security planning. National risk assessments should identify dependencies on imported fuel, vulnerable maritime supply routes and critical infrastructure whose disruption could amplify climate-related or external shocks.

5.0 Conclusion

September 2026 demonstrated that Greater Eastern Africa's security challenge is increasingly the interaction between distinct pressure points. Conflict in northern Ethiopia, institutional change in South Sudan and confrontation in Baidoa revealed different forms of political-security stress, while the DRC-Rwanda process showed the distance between diplomatic commitments and security conditions on the ground. Maritime insecurity around Somalia and the Bab el-Mandeb connected African security to developments beyond the continent, while energy corridors and strategic ports acquired greater regional significance. Ebola transmission in the DRC and food insecurity in southern Madagascar showed how weak response capacity can transform health and environmental pressures into wider security concerns. The foresight requirement is to detect these pathways early and strengthen institutions before risks cross borders.

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