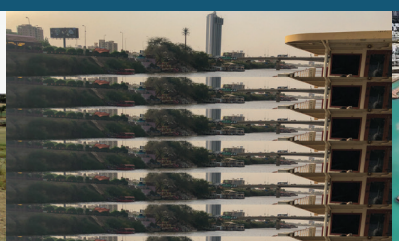
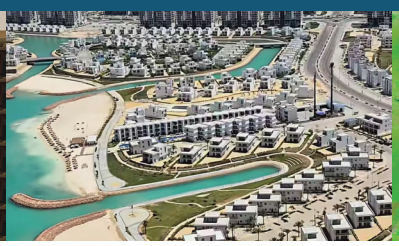
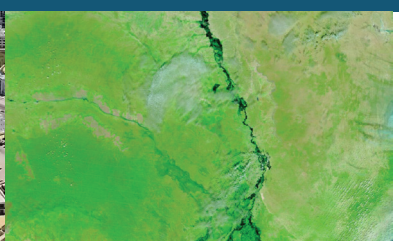
Mashariki Monthly Outlook

Anticipate | Prevent | Act

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1.0 Introduction

The month of October 2026 was marked by heightened security pressures across Greater Eastern Africa, including renewed armed confrontation in northern Ethiopia, deteriorating relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and continuing violence in Sudan and the Great Lakes region. These developments coincided with public-health and climate-related pressures, underscoring the interconnected nature of regional security challenges. Their effects crossed national borders through displacement, diplomatic tension, humanitarian needs and risks to stability.

Additionally,diplomatic engagements during the month also,reflected the strategic importance of the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and external partnerships. The 4 October 26 El Alamein summit held in Egypt brought Egypt, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan together to discuss regional cooperation, sovereignty and shared security challenges.Changing international engagement and transitions in security arrangements also raised questions about institutional capacity, national ownership and continuity of support. The implications of these initiatives depend on whether commitments translate into practical cooperation.

This Outlook examines the security and stability developments across Greater Eastern Africa during the month of October 2026. Organised around Conflict Trends, Geopolitical Shifts and Climate Security, it analyses their drivers, assesses national and cross-border implications, and identifies emerging risks and policy priorities through a strategic foresight lens. Its purpose is to inform preventive action, strengthen regional preparedness and support coordinated responses by governments and regional institutions.

2.0 Thematic Focus

2.1 Conflict Trends

During the month under review,Northern Ethiopia experienced renewed fighting across Tigray, Afar and Amhara, prompting the UN Secretary-General to call for an immediate cessation and renewed dialogue under the Pretoria Agreement(United Nations Secretary-General, 2026). Ethiopia accused Eritrean forces of incursions, while Asmara rejected the allegation.On 16 October, the federal government of Ethiopia established a six-month caretaker administration in Tigray to restore services and prepare regional elections(Reuters, 2026a). In eastern DRC, the US Treasury on 28 October sanctioned Rwanda's Ministry of Defence and a financial institution, alleging support for M23. (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2026). The sanctions introduced an external accountability dimension and complicated diplomacy surrounding ceasefire implementation across the Great Lakes. In Sudan, the UN human rights office documented at least 306 deaths from drone strikes during October's first three weeks, with attacks attributed to both the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces. (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2026). The strikes disrupted services, intensified displacement, and increased humanitarian needs in vulnerable communities across affected areas. Separately, United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei(UNISFA) reported that drone attacks near Amiet Market and Todach in Abyei on 19 October killed more than 80 people and injured many others (UNISFA, 2026).

In the Horn, unresolved political settlements and weak federal-regional dispute mechanisms sustained insecurity. (United Nations Secretary-General, 2026). In Sudan, fragmented command structures and expanding drone warfare increased civilian exposure(Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2026). In Abyei, contested authority and fragile demilitarisation arrangements leave communities vulnerable to spillover(UNISFA, 2026). In eastern DRC, external-support allegations and parallel diplomatic tracks complicated accountability and ceasefire compliance(International Contact Group, 2026). In eastern DRC, weak enforcement and limited state authority preserved armed actors' leverage, obstructed civilian protection and undermined regional stability, weakening prospects for peace(Security Council Report, 2026).

Collectively, all these developments placed civilians, humanitarian operations and regional conflict-management arrangements under sustained pressure.

Foresight Recommendations

- **Establish a Horn de-escalation channel:** The African Union and IGAD should convene Ethiopia and Eritrea, establish military hotlines and incident-notification procedures, and publish monthly verified records of incidents and responses, with quarterly reviews tracking unresolved disputes and diplomatic follow-up.
- **Protect civilians in Sudan and Abyei:** UNISFA, OHCHR and humanitarian agencies should coordinate casualty verification, safe access, medical evacuation and evidence preservation, publishing monthly updates on civilian harm, obstruction and protection gaps for affected communities and relevant regional authorities directly.
- **Investigate attacks on civilian sites:** The African Union Commission and OHCHR should support impartial investigations of drone strikes, preserve forensic evidence and assess command responsibility, referring substantiated findings to competent accountability mechanisms while protecting witnesses and avoiding premature public attribution.
- **Coordinate Great Lakes ceasefire monitoring:** The AU Panel of Facilitators, EAC, SADC and ICGLR should align monitoring of eastern DRC commitments, verify alleged external support through agreed procedures, and report quarterly on ceasefire compliance, civilian protection and humanitarian access outcomes.

Forward-Looking Scenario: If current responses persist, insecurity may remain concentrated across northern Ethiopia, Sudan and eastern DRC. A border incident, intensified drone attacks or renewed offensives could widen violence and displacement. Conversely, credible mediation, verified ceasefire compliance, humanitarian access and restraint could contain escalation if parties accept monitoring and sustain dialogue regionally.

2.2 Geopolitical Shifts

On 4 October 2026, Egypt, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan adopted the El Alamein Joint Declaration, affirming sovereignty, consultation and littoral-state responsibilities for Red Sea governance and navigation (Government of Somalia, 2026). The declaration followed diplomatic expulsions involving Ethiopia, Eritrea and Egypt, prompting the African Union Commission to urge restraint and clarify that its statement did not assign responsibility to a neighbouring state (African Union Commission, 2026a). On 28–29 October, Russia and the African Union held the Third Russia–Africa Summit in Moscow, co-chaired by Russia and Burundi in its capacity as AU chair; the AU Commission and Russia signed the 2027–2029 Action Plan, covering peace and security, technology, infrastructure and trade (African Union Commission, 2026b). Uganda and South Sudan discussed proposals for the Juba–Nimule road, cross-border electricity connectivity, joint border security and a one-stop border facility to facilitate trade(Uganda Media Centre, 2026). Somalia's UN political mission, UNTMIS, completed its transition and ceased operations on 31 October 26, transferring mandated functions to Somali institutions and UN agencies to strengthen national ownership(United Nations in Somalia, 2026). Together, these developments span maritime governance, external partnerships, institutional transition and connectivity, but differ in status and implementation.

These initiatives reveal a regional order shaped by competing sovereignty claims, external partnerships and uneven implementation capacity. Red Sea littoral-state assertions may strengthen consultation but also narrow participation in decisions affecting wider maritime users(Government of Somalia, 2026). The AU clarification exposed sensitivities around attribution and non-interference among member states. (African Union Commission, 2026a) Russia's action plan offers a broad cooperation framework but creates no binding obligations(African Union Commission, 2026b). Somalia's UN political mission ended on 31 October, transferring functions to national institutions and UN agencies(United Nations in Somalia, 2026). The vulnerability is the gap between commitments, institutional capacity, and accountable delivery across the region(United Nations Security Council, 2026).

Foresight Recommendations

- **Operationalise El Alamein commitments:** Egypt, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan should establish a standing consultative mechanism on Red Sea navigation and security, publish agreed priorities, invite relevant coastal institutions, and issue regular six-monthly progress reports to prevent exclusive or competing arrangements.
- **Manage Somalia's UN transition:** Somalia government, the UN country teams and AUSSOM should publish a responsibility matrix, identify capacity gaps, maintain human-rights monitoring and report quarterly to parliament and the United Nations Security Council on continuity of political and security functions consistently.
- **Improve partnership transparency:** The African Union Commission should encourage publication of major security, infrastructure and financing agreements, including obligations, timelines and dispute clauses, and conduct independent annual peer reviews assessing effects on national sovereignty, local capacity and regional cooperation outcomes.
- **Deliver cross-border connectivity commitments:** Uganda and South Sudan should establish a joint implementation unit for road, electricity and border proposals, publish agreed milestones and consult traders; Djibouti should track AfCFTA reforms against domestic industrial output, diversification and value-chain participation indicators.

Forward-Looking Scenario. Current diplomatic channels may sustain consultation while commitments remain unevenly implemented. Exclusive maritime arrangements, opaque external agreements, or a weak Somali transition could intensify strategic competition and constrain policy autonomy. Conversely, transparent partnerships, regular regional consultation and measurable delivery of connectivity commitments could strengthen regional agency and cooperation over time.

2.3 Climate Security

October rainfall across the Greater Horn was uneven, with ICPAC observations recording wet anomalies in parts of Somalia, southeastern Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan, alongside drier conditions in other locations; ICPAC's ten-day monitoring recorded very low or no rainfall in parts of Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan, showing that regional wet signals did not eliminate local deficits and that crop establishment, pastoral water access and flood preparedness faced different pressures across locations(IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre, 2026a). In Somalia, Bardheere received 93 millimetres of rain during the first five days of October 26, while the Shabelle River at Jowhar rose rapidly, prompting concern over flood exposure(United Nations Development Programme, 2026). FAO's Somalia Water and Land Information Management system issued a flood advisory for the Juba and Shabelle rivers on 13 October26, identifying heightened risk around Jowhar(GEOGLAM, 2026). In Mauritius, declining reservoir storage prompted emergency measures, including additional boreholes, river abstraction, and water tankers for affected communities(Government Information Service of Mauritius, 2026). FEWS NET warned that heavier rains could compound food insecurity in areas still recovering from drought, particularly along Somalia's Juba and Shabelle rivers(FEWS NET, 2026).

These conditions become security concerns when exposure intersects with weak infrastructure and unequal access to essential services. Somalia's flood risk reflects the interaction of intense rainfall, river levels, settlement exposure, and infrastructure deficits(United Nations Development Programme, 2026). Forecast information has limited value unless translated into accessible warnings and anticipatory action(IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre, 2026b). In Mauritius, declining storage and disruptions expose the consequences of constrained water availability and service reliability(Government Information Service of Mauritius, 2026). Food-security monitoring links rainfall variability to crop conditions and livelihood risks across the region(FEWS NET, 2026). The underlying vulnerability is institutional: uneven capacity to anticipate, communicate, and manage climate-related shocks(United Nations Development Programme, 2026).

Foresight Recommendations

- **Link forecasts to anticipatory finance:** ICPAC, national meteorological services and disaster agencies should define forecast triggers, pre-arrange contingency funding and issue timely, accessible advisories, then publish post-event reviews measuring whether assistance reached exposed households before flood or drought losses escalated.
- **Reduce river-basin flood exposure:** Somalia's federal and state authorities, with FAO and humanitarian partners, should maintain river monitoring, clear drainage, communicate evacuation routes and pre-position relief around Juba and Shabelle floodplains, prioritising displaced and drought-affected communities through publicly monitored plans.
- **Restore confidence in water services:** Mauritius's government and Central Water Authority should publish distribution schedules, reservoir data and allocation criteria, expand grievance channels and report service restoration monthly publicly, ensuring emergency measures reach underserved rural households and vulnerable institutions equitably.
- **Protect climate-sensitive livelihoods:** Kenya and other climate exposed countries should integrate climate information with extension services, resilient infrastructure and accessible finance, measure adoption and livelihood outcomes by location, publishing results rather than treating announcements or forecasts as evidence of resilience outcomes.

Forward-Looking Scenario.Uneven rainfall and water-service pressures may persist under current response capacities. Severe river flooding, infrastructure disruption, or prolonged supply interruptions could deepen livelihood losses and public grievances. Conversely, trusted local warnings, anticipatory finance, river monitoring, and transparent water allocation could reduce exposure if institutions deliver timely assistance to exposed households.

3.0 Conclusion

Developments of the month of October 2026,demonstrate that Greater Eastern Africa's security depends on the capacity of states and regional institutions to manage interconnected pressures. Conflict escalation exposes civilians and weakens regional stability; diplomatic initiatives create opportunities for cooperation but require implementation, transparency and accountability. Climate-related hazards become security risks where vulnerable communities face inadequate infrastructure, unreliable services and limited preparedness. These pressures reinforce the importance of regional coordination, credible information and institutional capacity. Governments and regional organisations must translate political commitments and early warnings into timely, measurable protection and service delivery. Regional resilience will ultimately be judged by outcomes for affected communities consistently.

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