

The

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Tuesday 6th - Friday 16th January, 2026

Great-Power Competition & Regional Agency in Eastern Africa

Eastern Africa is navigating a complex matrix of converging external and internal geopolitical tensions, where internal governance challenges intersect with intensifying external power competition. The region's strategic relevance is rising, fueled by its geography, resources, and role as a corridor in the US-China energy rivalry, a position demanding disciplined diplomacy to avoid binary alignment. Simultaneously, Washington's retreat from multilateralism necessitates stronger African Union coordination to fill governance gaps. Regional stability faces further tests from Ethiopia-Eritrea tensions, requiring urgent preventive diplomacy, and from Gulf rivalries spilling into the Red Sea, which calls for diversified partnerships. The cross-cutting imperative is clear: Eastern Africa must transform both external and internal pressures into leverage, fortifying regional institutions and asserting strategic autonomy to shape its future in a fragmenting world order.

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U.S. Power Projection After Caracas: What It Means for Eastern Africa

Maduro's capture signals a strategic U.S. pivot toward assertive unilateral power, demanding Eastern African leaders recalibrate diplomatic engagement with sharper strategic intent. Sovereignty legitimacy must be defended firmly while managing counter-narcotics cooperation on mutually defined terms, especially for Kenya and Tanzania as key transit jurisdictions. Security partnerships require disciplined negotiation to avert structural dependence and preserve autonomous capacity. Expanding energy frontiers in Tanzania, Uganda, and Mozambique heighten the imperative for proactive policy leverage, diversified invest-

ment portfolios, and resource-control safeguards. Strengthening regional blocs is essential to amplify collective agency, align external partnerships with national interests, and secure long-term strategic independence.



Photo Credit: foxnews.com

Wednesday 7th January 2026

Somaliland Recognition and the Reordering of Eastern Africa's Geopolitical Fault Lines

The recent recognition of Somaliland by Israel presents Eastern Africa with a strategic inflection point, carrying risks and opportunities that could reshape regional stability. While Somaliland seeks sovereignty to unlock investment, trade, and security partnerships, recognition strains Somalia's territorial integrity and tests Africa's long standing border norms. The resulting uncertainty could disrupt counterterrorism coordination, maritime security, and regional integration under IGAD. At the same time, new alignments around ports, Red Sea access, and external partnerships may reconfigure trade corridors and geopolitical influence. How

Eastern African states manage this moment will determine whether recognition fuels fragmentation or catalyzes pragmatic regional cooperation.



Photo Credit: thecitizen.co.tz

Thursday 8th January 2026

From Oil to Opportunity: Leveraging EACOP for Sustainable Growth in Eastern Africa

Uganda and Tanzania's plan to begin crude oil exports through the East African Crude Oil Pipeline in October 2026 marks a pivotal moment in the geopolitical and economic landscape of Eastern Africa. The 1,443-kilometer pipeline linking Lake Albert to Tanzania's port of Tanga will elevate Uganda into an oil-exporting state while consolidating regional infrastructure interdependence. EACOP offers opportunities for strengthening fiscal revenues, industrial linkages, energy diplomacy, and logistics corridors across the region. However, translating oil into sustainable development will depend on effective environmental governance, community inclusion,

transparent revenue management, and striking a balance between hydrocarbon gains and long-term diversification and climate resilience to support regional prosperity for future generations.

Friday 9th January 2026

Eastern Africa at a Strategic Crossroads: Navigating Power Competition, Governance Gaps, and Regional Autonomy

According to IMF 2025 projections, Eastern Africa is emerging as a regional growth hotspot, driven by oil, exports, and expanding trade. South Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania rank among the region's fastest-growing economies, with growth fueled by oil recovery, trade expansion, and economic reforms. Countries across the region are experiencing accelerated development, reflecting new opportunities for investment and diversification. Yet, these gains remain fragile: conflict, infrastructure gaps, and reliance on commodities pose risks. Policymakers must diversify econo-

mies, strengthen regional integration, and invest in resilient infrastructure to ensure growth delivers sustainable, shared prosperity.



Ethiopia–Eritrea at a Crossroads: Can Preventive Diplomacy Avert Another Horn of Africa Crisis?

The escalating Ethiopia-Eritrea tensions present a critical test for preventive diplomacy in the Eastern African region. Historical grievances, post-Tigray power dynamics, and competition over sovereignty and economic access fuel mistrust. Preventive diplomacy is essential. Structured bilateral dialogue and early engagement by regional actors can reduce miscalculation and contain escalation. Eastern African states, particularly IGAD members and mediators like Kenya, Uganda, and Djibouti, possess unique leverage to facilitate negotiations and clarify red lines. Without timely intervention, localized tensions risk cascading

into a broader regional security crisis, compounding instability in a region already strained by Sudan's war and fragile political transitions.



Photo Credit: moderndiplomacy.eu

Navigating Gulf Rivalries: Red Sea Security Risks and Eastern Africa's Strategic Choices

Eastern Africa region faces spillover from the Saudi–UAE rift in Yemen as Gulf influence deeply shapes Horn geopolitics through investments, ports, and security ties. Fragmentation of the anti-Houthi coalition and divergent Gulf visions weaken regional stability, risking prolonged conflict along Red Sea and Gulf of Aden trade routes vital to Eastern African economies. UAE backing of non-state actors contrasts with Saudi de-risking strategies, undermining cohesive peace efforts and complicating diplomacy. Eastern African policymakers should respond by reducing overreliance on any single Gulf actor, strengthening regional

maritime coordination in the Red Sea, and supporting inclusive conflict-resolution frameworks in Yemen.



Photo Credit: brookings.edu

Thursday 15th January 2026

Beyond U.S. Withdrawal: Recalibrating Eastern Africa's Multilateral Strategy

The January 2026 U.S. directive to exit 66 international organizations, conventions, and treaties marks a sharp retreat from multilateral engagement, including bodies linked to climate action, trade, migration, and peace building. This could reduce financing, technical cooperation, and diplomatic support for development and security in Eastern Africa, where many programmes rely on U.N. frameworks and global standards. In response, Eastern African states should accelerate regional coordination through regional bodies and the AU, diversify external partnerships, strengthen domestic institutions, and

invest in regional public goods. A proactive regional agency can mitigate reliance on fluctuating global commitments and sustain stability, development, and resilience.

Friday 16th January 2026

How the US–China Oil War Is Rewriting Eastern Africa's Strategic Value

Washington's effort to constrain China's oil lifelines signals a structural shift with direct consequences for Eastern Africa. As Beijing loses discounted crude secured through debt-leveraged diplomacy, it will pursue alternative supply, intensifying interest in African oil, gas, ports, and critical Indian Ocean corridors. Eastern Africa's strategic value stems less from its own production and more from control of transit corridors, refining capacity, and political alignment. US sanctions will shadow Chinese investments, politicizing energy deals and infrastructure projects. The risk is

binary alignment; the opportunity is disciplined leverage, diversified partnerships, and preserved strategic autonomy amid rapidly intensifying global power competition.

