

Med-Or Monthly Africa Report

March 2026

Iran War: Implications
for Africa

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EDITOR'S NOTE

It has now been just over a month since we opened the Med-Or Africa office in Nairobi. As we settle into our new base on the continent, I have been particularly encouraged by the many messages and reflections we received following the first editions of this monthly report. Your feedback has been both generous and constructive, and it has prompted us to further refine the format.

Beginning with this issue, the newsletter will open with a concise one-page overview of what we see as the most relevant news across Africa over the past month. This will be followed by a more focused section in which we take a closer look at selected themes that, in our view, deserve deeper attention. It is therefore unsurprising that **this month we devote particular attention to the implications for Africa of the Iran's war.**

Like Europe and Asia, and not least the Gulf region, Africa stands primarily within the group of economic losers of this war, as Corrado Čok rightly explains. Most African economies are heavily dependent on imported fuel and hold only limited reserves. In the days ahead, citizens and businesses across the continent will inevitably feel the consequences of the sharp rise in energy prices, which will further fuel inflation and drive up the cost of living. For leaders already under pressure to keep pace with fast-growing and increasingly educated populations whose economic expectations are rising, this is an additional challenge to social stability that could hardly have come at a worse time. Luciano Pollichieni points to the case of South Africa, the continent's largest economy, whose role is further complicated by Pretoria's foreign policy orientation.

At the geopolitical level, the past decade has increasingly been marked by the gradual erosion of multilateralism and by the partial retrenchment of the United States from the global order it once helped to shape.

As middle powers step in to fill the vacuum, regions such as the Horn of Africa, alongside parts of the Sahel and East Africa, have become progressively entangled in Middle Eastern dynamics and coalitions, in what has in effect become the broader Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region.

As Gulf Cooperation Council countries understandably focus their attention on countering Iranian attacks on their own soil and will need to focus on rebuilding their image and re-adjust their diplomacy post-war, their strategic bandwidth for the Horn of Africa will inevitably narrow in the short-term. This carries significant implications for actors in Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, many of whom have over-relied in recent years on Gulf backing. For some, this shift may prove destabilising, for others, an opportunity to score points against their rivals. Yet this should not be misread as structural disengagement of the Gulf in this region. Rather, it is likely to represent just a temporary diversion within a broader geopolitical pattern that is set to endure, and in all likelihood deepen, over the medium to long term. It is therefore no coincidence that Ethiopia's prime minister was the first foreign leader to visit the UAE despite ongoing Iranian attacks. That gesture stands in stark contrast to Somalia's condemnation of Iran's actions against GCC states, notably omitting any reference to the UAE. Such symbolic gestures and omissions carry enduring political weight in Gulf monarchies.

Indeed, if there is one lesson emerging from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, it is the renewed - and perhaps even greater - strategic relevance of the Red Sea. With Hormuz likely to remain closed at least through the end of March, the coming days will be critical in assessing the next move by Yemen's Houthi movement. The key question is whether the Houthis, under Iran's pressure, will once again threaten traffic through the Bab-al-Mandeb (as they did in retaliation for Israel's war in Gaza) potentially attempting to also disrupt commercial traffic in the Red Sea. Such a development would represent a nightmare scenario for the global economy, making this war even more expensive. Alternatively, the Houthis may opt for a more cautious posture, signalling a degree of cooperation in the hope of gaining much needed resources from the Saudis and legitimising their role.

Yemen's Houthi movement is not the only arena in which Iran has exerted influence in this region. Sudan's Islamist movement has historically drawn inspiration from Iran's 1979 revolution, and some of its cadres, several of whom are still involved in today's Sudanese civil war, received ideological and security training in Iran.

That relationship, however, has weakened in recent years, as Fouad Hikmat explains in a particularly thorough and insightful analysis. Attention should also turn to the Horn of Africa, particularly the risks of a future war between Ethiopia and Eritrea for sea access, which the world can hardly afford at the moment given Eritrea's 1,400 kilometers and 200 islands in the Red Sea.

Finally, as Western countries move to evacuate their citizens stranded across the Gulf, it is worth pausing to remember the millions of African workers, who live and work in these countries, as Chepkorir Sambu writes.

They are the quiet backbone of much of the service economy that makes life and business in the region function so efficiently. For many of them, however, this life comes at a high personal cost.

Far from home, they work long hours and at times can endure difficult conditions so that they can send money back to their families. Those remittances pay school fees, support entire households and sustain fragile local economies. Above all, they carry a hope: that younger brothers, sisters and children might one day find opportunity at home, and not be forced, as they were, to leave their country simply to secure a dignified life. It is also for this reason that Med-Or has chosen to establish a presence in Africa: to expand our projects that help creating jobs and opportunities in the continent.

Umberto Tavalato
Executive Director,
Med-Or Italian Foundation for Africa

UPDATES

EAST AFRICA AND THE HORN OF AFRICA

- **Türkiye's President Erdoğan and Saudi FM Visit to Ethiopia.**

On February 17, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made a one-day visit to Addis Ababa, his first in 11 years. While energy cooperation agreements were signed, the visit focused largely on Turkish regional stance: the “one-Somalia” policy against possible recognition of Somaliland; curbing external support to the RSF; and warning against a possible escalation with Eritrea around Tigray. Similar messages had been conveyed by Saudi foreign minister just a week earlier.

- **Ethiopia's PM Abiy Ahmed visits Azerbaijan and UAE.**

After Erdoğan's visit to Addis Ababa, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali visited Azerbaijan, a major regional defence actor, to advance security partnerships. On 13 March, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed visited President Mohamed Bin Zayed in the UAE, becoming the first international leader to travel to the country under Iranian attack.

- **Countries condemned Iran retaliation against GCC.**

Eastern and Horn of Africa countries have largely approached the war with Iran through calls for de-escalation, neutrality, and concern about regional spillover rather than openly choosing sides. Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti condemned Iran's attacks on Gulf states. Somalia did as well, but deliberately avoided mentioning the UAE. Sudan Armed Forces, took distance from members of the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood declaring support for Iran. The group was declared terrorist organization by U.S. State Department on 9 March.

WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

- **West African states activate ECOWAS military force.**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agreed on a regional 2,000-troop standby force to deploy by the end of 2026. The standby force is intended to counter cross-border insurgent groups operating from the Sahel toward coastal states. Besides funding-related obstacles, the rift between ECOWAS and the military governments of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso complicates coordination and leads to parallel security arrangements outside ECOWAS frameworks.

- **Ghanaian Foreign Minister visits Ukraine.**

On February 25, Ghana's Foreign Minister, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, met Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv. Talks focused, among other things, on the ‘deceptive luring’ of African nationals into the Russian army and the return of Ghanaian prisoners of war detained in Ukraine. It appears that Ukraine demonstrated diplomatic openness by granting Ghanaian diplomats access to several captured Ghanaian nationals, potentially marking the beginning of a new phase in relations between the two countries.

- **Guinea's government dissolves opposition parties.**

Just over two months before local legislative elections, and shortly after his election to the presidency, Mamady Doumbouya dissolved 40 political parties by decree, depriving them of their legal status and banning their political activity. The measure hinders, among others, the three main opposition parties, which accuse the country's leader of attempting to build a “party-state”, and falls within a general climate of growing mistrust and progressive shrinking of political independence.

UPDATES

SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE GREAT LAKES

- **Southern African countries push back on U.S. Health Deal.**

The rollout of the U.S. America First Global Health Strategy is encountering increased scrutiny across Southern Africa. Zimbabwe has suspended negotiations on a \$350 million health agreement over concerns related to genomic data governance, while Zambia has requested revisions to a proposed \$1 billion compact. Reports that U.S. health assistance frameworks may include broader governance and investment benchmarks in the mining sector have intensified regional debates around aid conditionality and economic sovereignty.

- **Critical Mineral Diplomacy: The U.S. - DRC Strategic Partnership.**

In February 2026, the DRC government formally offered the U.S. access to the Rubaya coltan mine through their U.S. Strategic Asset Reserve partnership. The site produces 15% of global coltan and is currently occupied by Rwandan-backed M23/AFC rebels. The rebel group is currently under U.S. sanctions, which Washington has recently extended to the Rwandan army and four top generals.

AS THE GULF CRISIS DRAGS ON, AFRICA BRACES FOR AN ECONOMIC AND ENERGY STORM

CORRADO ČOK

The US-Israeli attack on Iran led to a sharp surge of oil prices. Crude prices have set around \$100 per barrel in the past days, as the Strait of Hormuz remains essentially closed to commercial shipping. With no clear end in sight to the conflict, the world needs to brace for a phase of sustained energy prices. Like Europe and Asia, Africa is set to suffer the consequences of this global storm too.

The transportation and energy sectors are the most affected. Higher crude and oil shipment costs are gradually reflecting on fuel prices at the pump, with Mogadishu already registering a 77% increase. Aviation companies have been hit not only by fuel prices but also by the cancellation of Gulf routes, on which they heavily rely. Ethiopian Airlines – the continent's largest carrier – reported losing \$137 million a week due to the war in the Gulf. Energy is yet another problem. Similarly, Africa's shipping faces increased freight and insurance costs while also rerouting from Dubai's port, a key transit hub for African trade with the world.

As 26.5% of Africa's energy consumption derives from oil (and 17.6% from natural gas), electricity bills will soon increase, especially in countries that rely less on renewable sources. Energy-intensive sectors, like heavy manufacturing and mining, will go under severe strain and investments in them might slow down consequently. In the long run, this crisis will likely push African countries to enhance domestic fuel production; here they could meet the interest of Gulf countries willing to hedge against the Hormuz Strait.

But single countries experience different conditions, and the crisis appears to have (partial) winners and losers. Africa's 38 net hydrocarbon importers, such as South Africa, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya, stand squarely on the losing end. Pressure will mount not only on citizens and businesses but also on their macroeconomic stability, especially on government budgets, currency exchange and the balance of payments.

On 9th March, South Africa witnessed the largest selloff of its bonds since 1996. With over 20 countries, like Djibouti, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, already facing serious financial difficulties, increased risk perceptions driven by the Gulf war is poised to exacerbate Africa's debt crisis.

Then there are Africa's large hydrocarbon exporters: Africa's partial winners of this crisis, like Angola, Gabon and Nigeria. There, on the one hand, oil revenues boost government budgets and local currencies, also creating fiscal room for governments to stabilize the economy. On the other, these countries continue to rely on imported fuels or, like in the case of Nigeria, local refineries purchase national crude at international benchmark prices, while their electricity production is heavily oil-based. Consequently, public finances are set to benefit from the current oil price bonanza, but households and enterprises will not be spared by inflationary effects.

Africa's middle class is expected to bear the brunt of the crisis since it relies on transported goods and has access to electricity. Inflation has not increased visibly yet, but it is expected to kick in soon, as inventories shrink. Chiefly, food prices are set to go up due to the impact of higher transportation and chemical fertilizer costs. Additionally, higher electricity bills, which were already hardly affordable for many before the crisis, will curb the middle class' purchasing power further.

This can translate into social turmoil over time. The cost of living was a unifying element of youth protests in recent years, from Senegal to Mozambique, from Uganda to Angola. Those cost-of-living crises were largely the result of another energy crisis: the one unleashed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This overall suggests that if energy prices remain high, new waves of protests could occur in the near future.

HOW THE IRAN CONFLICT COULD RESHAPE THE RED SEA

UMBERTO TAVOLATO

Iran's decision to close the Strait of Hormuz in response to U.S. and Israeli strikes has implications that extend well beyond the Gulf. The disruption of one of the world's most critical maritime corridors threatens the flow of energy exports from the Gulf to global markets. Saudi Arabia has already redirected seven million oil-barrels a day through Red Sea terminals, now operating at full capacity. Attention is therefore increasingly shifting toward another vital chokepoint: the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, which links the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and ultimately the Suez Canal. On 12 March, Iran's new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei called for new frontlines to be opened. Any instability in this corridor would be a nightmare scenario for the global economy - a two-front war that chokes both the Red Sea and the Gulf and a blow for the U.S.

A pivotal factor is Yemen, whose political structure, though geographically rooted in the Arabian Peninsula, more closely resembles that of a Horn of Africa state than that of a Gulf monarchy, to its own detriment. The Houthi movement has previously demonstrated its ability to threaten maritime traffic in the Bab al-Mandeb, particularly during the escalation linked to Israel's war in Gaza two years ago. Although the Houthis maintain a well-known relationship with Iran, they also retain considerable operational autonomy. Under current circumstances, the group faces two possible strategic paths. On one hand, it could escalate attacks on maritime traffic responding to pressure from Iran and the prospect of losing a long-time sponsor, using external confrontation to consolidate domestic support amid growing economic pressure and demands for its soldiers' salaries. Such a move would carry substantial risks by potentially drawing retaliation not only from the United States and Israel but also from Saudi Arabia, as its Red Sea oil-pipeline and oilfields would become targets.

Alternatively, the Houthis may opt for restraint, using the broader regional crisis to strengthen their diplomatic leverage with Riyadh to gather critical financial support to pay soldiers and bring relief in northern Yemen while advancing their quest for greater international recognition in Yemen's political future.

Another area of concern lies in Ethiopia, which wants access to the Red sea, where signs of renewed tension in the Tigray region have recently emerged. With global attention focused on the confrontation with Iran, some actors in the Horn of Africa may perceive this as an opportunity to act with reduced international scrutiny. Whether conflict resumes will likely depend on military calculations. The fact that large troop deployments and logistical preparations, including blood bank resupplies, have not yet led to open hostilities suggests that there is still precious time to attempt reconciliation. This calculus may also be influenced by the position of the UAE (and Israel), Ethiopia's main partner in the GCC, now itself under Iranian pressure.

Finally, the crisis should not be interpreted as reducing the strategic engagement of Gulf states in the Horn of Africa. If the reliability of the Strait of Hormuz is called into question, the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, and African countries such as Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti will become even more strategically important. Once the immediate crisis subsides, the geopolitical competition that has drawn Middle Eastern powers into the Horn of Africa over the past decade may intensify rather than diminish.

INVISIBLE VICTIMS: THE PLIGHT OF AFRICANS TRAPPED IN THE MIDDLE EAST'S CROSSFIRE

CHEPKORIR SAMBU

When the Russia-Ukraine war broke out in February 2022, African students caught up in the war were stranded and experienced immense difficulties accessing humanitarian assistance. As they fled the war with the rest, they were confronted with discrimination, worsened by limited support from their governments. Since then, global conflicts, which have been on the rise, have become a source of apprehension for most Africans in the diaspora. They have revealed intersectional vulnerabilities, weaknesses in African governments' diplomatic protection measures, and great levels of global interconnectedness. The latest U.S./Israel-Iran war has re-created these humanitarian dynamics for Africans in the Middle East.

Millions of Africans live and work in the Middle East, with Gulf countries hosting the majority of them - estimated at 3.6 million. Saudi Arabia alone hosts over 750,000 African migrant workers, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE). While African migrants to the Middle East come from all over Africa, the bulk of them are from East Africa, primarily Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya; proximity to the region may explain these migratory patterns. Most of them migrate for job opportunities due to high unemployment at home or as refugees displaced by conflicts.

African migrants, many of them women, are predominantly employed in low-skill sectors, such as domestic work, transport and logistics, security, and construction. The kafala system, enforced in many Middle-Eastern countries, attaches the visa status of these migrants to their employers, who often confiscate their passports and other identity documents once they arrive. This system offers no labour protection for Africans who find themselves working in cruel conditions with few to no alternatives. Moreover, African consular services tend to be inadequate or reliant on honorary consuls as points of contact. Therefore, when a war or crisis erupts, Africans become the most vulnerable category - highly unsafe and susceptible to insecurity.

Since the war began on 28 February, the U.S. and Israel have conducted extensive airstrikes on Iran and Lebanon, while Iran has targeted U.S. bases in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iraq. Africans in these countries have been caught in the crossfires. Casualty statistics are not disaggregated, but it is possible that some Africans have formed part of the more than 2,000 civilians so far killed and about 20,000 injured.

Several African governments have responded by advising their nationals to immediately leave the region. South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda have begun evacuations: Uganda evacuated 43 Ugandan students in Iran by bus to the Turkish border; Kenya chartered a repatriation plane on 5 March, evacuating hundreds of its nationals from the UAE; and 6,300 South Africans have so far registered themselves for assistance with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation. In most cases, governments have adopted a wait-and-see approach, advising their nationals to stay indoors and remain vigilant.

Still, most Africans are unable to leave either because of the high cost of evacuation and unavailability of flights, or they simply do not see any prospects of returning home and have chosen to take their chances. Some are still reporting to work owing to economic hardships and lack of options.

Africans in the Middle East significantly contribute to their home countries' GDPs through remittances, totalled at an overall of \$28.3 billion in 2023. Kenya, with about 500,000 nationals in the Middle East, and which received \$5 billion in total remittances in 2023 (4% of its GDP), encourages labour migration. War disruptions, therefore, threaten to reduce this source of income, further compounding the impending economic crisis. Regardless, African governments should prepare for a prolonged war and put in place measures to protect their nationals in the Middle East. A continental strategy is particularly needed to protect refugees who are highly vulnerable and risk re-displacement.

SOUTH AFRICA'S BALANCING ACT AMIDST THE IRAN-US CONFLICT

LUCIANO POLLICHIENI

The conflict between the United States, Israel, and Iran has placed South Africa in a precarious position, forcing the government to reconcile its ties with Tehran against the hard realities of global economic dependency. While Pretoria's diplomatic stance remains anchored in advocating for multilateralism—consistently challenging military actions it deems violations of international law—the domestic and international consequences of this posture are intensifying as the conflict threatens to derail the country's fragile economic recovery.

The economic impact of the conflict is already manifesting through global market volatility. Following the sudden leadership change in Iran and the subsequent surge in hostilities, oil prices spiked near \$120 per barrel. As a net importer of petroleum, South Africa is highly vulnerable; these energy costs are rapidly filtering into transport and food prices, directly eroding household purchasing power. Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana, who presented a 2026 budget focused on fiscal consolidation and debt stabilization just a few days before the start of the war, faces a significant stress test. While the Treasury's initial projections—which forecast GDP growth of 1.6%—were built to withstand moderate shocks, Godongwana has acknowledged that a prolonged conflict may necessitate a downward revision to 1.3%. The South African Reserve Bank (SARB) now faces a tightening policy environment, where the inflationary pressure from imported fuel may force the postponement of anticipated interest rate cuts, further constraining domestic investment.

This economic fragility is compounded by the diplomatic fallout from South Africa's "BRICS-Plus" affiliations. Tensions with Washington reached a boiling point in January 2026 with the "Will for Peace" naval exercises. Despite reports that the South African presidency attempted to limit Iran's involvement to observer status, the high-profile participation of Iranian naval vessels off the coast of Simon's Town was interpreted in Washington as a direct provocation.

The United States have reportedly again asked South African government to distance itself from Teheran, after the beginning of the military operations in Iran, but this request was rebuffed by Pretoria's high-level officials who have reiterated their commitment in following an independent approach to the current crisis. This episode has provided substantial ammunition to US lawmakers sceptical of South Africa's foreign policy, raising the stakes for the next round of Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) reviews. For South African exporters in the automotive and agricultural sectors, the threat of exclusion from AGOA or the imposition of blanket tariffs on trade with "adversarial" partners creates a high-stakes, volatile environment that undermines the strategic benefits of BRICS membership.

Domestic opinion reflects this deepening disconnect. While the ANC maintains its narrative of anti-imperialist, multipolar solidarity, political opposition and civil society are increasingly vocal about the tangible costs of this diplomacy. Critics argue that the government's focus on high-level ideological posturing—such as the controversial naval drills—ignores the administrative and consular failures that left many South African nationals vulnerable in the Middle East. Furthermore, the perceived lack of coordination between the Presidency and the military during the preparation of the exercises has fuelled a broader public debate regarding the government's institutional competence and its prioritization of ideological alliances over the practical needs of the national budget.

Ultimately, Pretoria's desire to act as a bridge-builder through the BRICS platform is being tested by the reality that its membership in the bloc offers limited direct trade advantages compared to the duty-free market access provided by the United States. As South Africa grapples with the fallout of the Iran conflict, the persistent gap between its international geopolitical signalling and the practical needs of its national economy creates a volatile reality, forcing the state to choose between the relationship to its partners and the imperatives of national economic survival.

THE IMPACT OF THE CURRENT MIDDLE-EAST WAR ON SUDAN

FOUAD HIKMAT

The escalation of conflict in the Middle East, particularly the confrontation involving Iran, carries profound implications for Sudan's internal dynamics. These implications stem from historical connections between Sudan's Islamist movement and Iran, the shifting regional alignments around the Red Sea, and the ongoing civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). As regional tensions intensify, these historical and political linkages are resurfacing in ways that could shape Sudan's military cohesion, political positioning, and international engagement.

Sudan-Iran ties are rooted in the ideological networks of Sudan's Islamist movement, consolidated under former president Omar al-Bashir and partly grounded in a shared resistance to Western influence.

Following Iranian president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's visit to Sudan in 1991, cooperation deepened. Iran assisted in establishing the Yarmouk Military Industrial Complex in 1996 and conducted military training programs while promoting ideological outreach among Sudanese youth. Sudanese territory also reportedly served as a transit corridor for weapons destined for Hamas and Hezbollah, which led to Israeli airstrikes on the Yarmouk complex.

By 2014, increasing international pressure compelled Bashir to reduce reliance on Iran. Sudan realigned toward Gulf states, joining the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen in 2015, and formally cut diplomatic ties with Tehran in 2016. Nonetheless, informal contacts between Islamist factions and Iranian actors persisted.

After the 2019 revolution, Sudan's transitional authorities under Abdel Fattah al-Burhan sought to reposition the country internationally. In October 2020, Sudan moved toward normalization with Israel through the Abraham Accords, which contributed to its removal from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism. Islamist actors initially receded but gradually regained influence, culminating in support for the October 2021 military coup.

In 2023, Islamist fighters aligned with SAF forces against RSF's anti-Islamist stance.

The civil war relaunched a primarily pragmatic rather than strategic engagement with Iran. In October 2023, months after the outbreak of fighting between SAF and RSF forces, Sudanese and Iranian diplomats met in Baku to explore potential areas of cooperation. Facing isolation and restrictions on military procurement, Sudan's leadership has sought alternative sources for advanced weaponry, notably drones, while Iran requested access to Sudan's Red Sea coast to establish a monitoring and surveillance presence for maritime activity.

Considering both strategic sensitivity and international scrutiny, Sudan declined Iran's request but agreed to procure drones on a commercial basis, highlighting a transactional rather than strategic alliance. Meanwhile, units of the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood and the Al-Baraa bin Malik Brigade are believed to have received training and support from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, heightening the sensitivity of their role amid broader regional tensions.

In March 2026, the United States designated the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood, the core organizational structure of the Sudanese Islamic Movement, as a terrorist entity, citing its involvement in violence and connections to Iran.

This designation complicates General Burhan's position. The SAF has relied on Islamist networks for recruitment and battlefield support, but continued association now carries heightened diplomatic and political risks. Islamist fighters have contributed thousands of combatants to the war and aim to convert their military role into renewed political influence. At the same time, Burhan has sought to distance the military from overt ideological alignment, warning armed groups against public support for Iran and asserting that such stances do not reflect SAF's policy. This underscores a widening tension between international legitimacy and reliance on ideologically-driven allies.

The U.S. designation may intensify mistrust between SAF leadership and Islamist factions. These groups could perceive distancing from Iran or engagement with Western pressure as a betrayal, while Burhan faces pressure from Gulf states and other regional actors to limit Islamist influence within the military coalition.

Potential consequences include: Fragmentation within the pro-SAF coalition, especially among Islamist militias and local mobilization networks; increased pressure to restructure or demobilize Islamist-linked units, reinforced by Burhan's recent directive requiring all armed groups to operate under SAF command; and political contestation over the post-war order, as Islamist actors seek to transform military contribution into political leverage.

Recent SAF successes have depended not only on regular army units but also on allied militias and Islamist fighters. Any deterioration in relations whether due to international pressure or disputes over Iranian influence could undermine the coalition's cohesion.

Operationally, reduced cooperation could slow SAF offensives and compromise local security in recaptured areas. Politically, balancing the need for international legitimacy with reliance on Islamist allies will become increasingly challenging.

The convergence of the Middle East conflict, Sudan's Islamist networks, and evolving international attitudes toward the Sudanese Islamic Movement adds a complex layer to Sudan's civil war. General Burhan faces a strategic challenge: maintaining battlefield alliances that have strengthened the SAF's military position while managing rising international and regional pressures tied to Iran. How this balance is managed will likely determine both the war's trajectory and the shape of post-conflict political arrangements in Sudan.

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