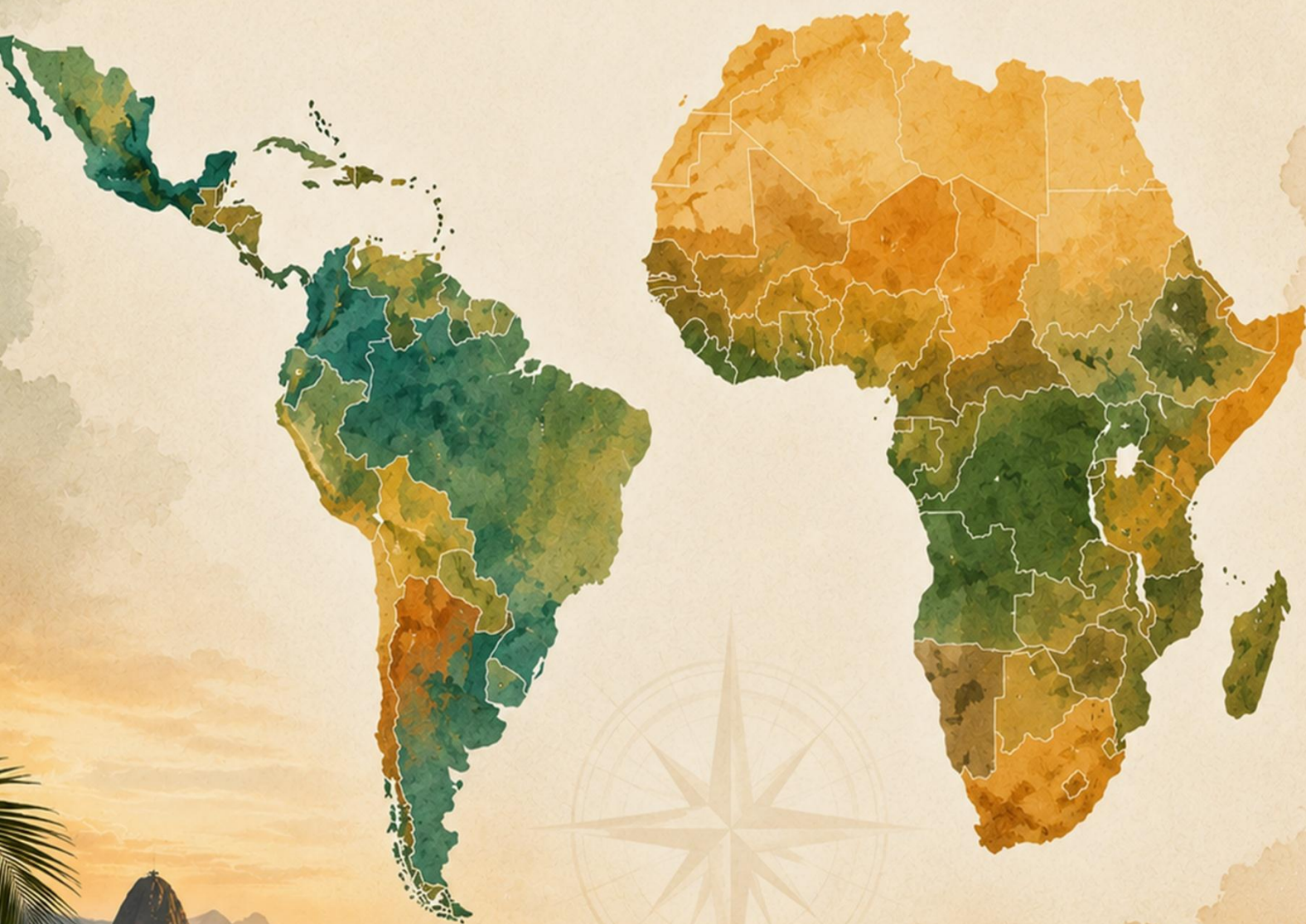


CLAWS Newsletter



Faultlines: Africa and Latin America | Volume I | Issue No. 03

By Janavi Mohanraj Jagajothi

AFRICA

SECURITY & GEOPOLITICAL

14 July ([Shabelle Media Network](#)): Jordan and Somalia Strengthen Defence Cooperation

Jordan and Somalia agreed to deepen bilateral defence cooperation following talks in Amman between Jordanian Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti and Somali Defence Minister Ahmed Moallim Fiqi. The discussions focused on regional security developments, shared security challenges, and expanding collaboration in defence, military training, and capacity building. Both sides also reviewed the Jordan Armed Forces' training programmes, joint exercises, and professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing operational readiness, strengthening defence capabilities, and promoting regional security and stability.

14 July ([Shabelle Media Network](#)): US Conducts Air Strike Against Al-Shabaab in Southern Somalia

US forces, in coordination with the Somali Federal Government, carried out an air strike targeting Al-Shabaab militants near Sablaale in Somalia's Lower Shabelle region on 13 July as part of ongoing counterterrorism operations. The strike, confirmed by US Africa Command (AFRICOM), aimed to degrade the group's operational capabilities, though no casualty figures were disclosed. Separately, Somalia's Ministry of Defence reported that the elite Danab Special Forces killed seven Al-Shabaab fighters, including a commander, during a ground operation in the same region. The operations reflect continued US-Somali military cooperation to combat the Al-Qaeda-linked insurgent group, which has waged a prolonged insurgency against the Somali government for over 15 years.

14 July ([Premium Times](#)): Nigeria Refutes US Claim on Terrorist Intelligence Haul

Nigeria has disputed a US claim that American forces seized a large cache of electronic intelligence materials during a counterterrorism operation against Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). Nigerian military officials clarified that the materials were voluntarily shared with the United States as part of ongoing intelligence cooperation rather than captured by US forces. The clarification follows remarks by US counterterrorism official Sebastian Gorka, who described the intelligence haul as the largest since the 9/11 attacks. Nigerian authorities stressed that intelligence sharing forms part of long-standing bilateral

counterterrorism cooperation, underscoring efforts to maintain strategic coordination while addressing differing public narratives surrounding joint security operations.

17 July ([THISDAY](#)): US House Approves Amendment to Suspend All Assistance to Nigeria Over Security Concerns

The US House of Representatives has approved an amendment to withhold 100% of US assistance to Nigeria, increasing an earlier proposal to suspend only half of the aid. Sponsored by Representative Gregory Steube, the measure requires the US Secretary of State to certify that Nigeria has taken effective steps to combat terrorism, protect vulnerable communities, and hold perpetrators of violence accountable before assistance can resume. The proposal reflects growing concern in Washington over Nigeria's security situation and religious violence, although it must still complete the remaining legislative stages before becoming law. If enacted, the measure could affect bilateral relations while increasing pressure on Abuja to strengthen counterterrorism efforts and governance reforms.

21 July ([Morning Star](#)): Sudan Rejects US Sanctions Over Chemical Weapons Allegations

Sudan has rejected new **US sanctions** imposed over allegations that the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) used chemical weapons during the ongoing conflict with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Khartoum dismissed the accusations as unfounded, urging Washington to present evidence through recognised international legal mechanisms rather than imposing unilateral measures. The sanctions include financial, trade, and economic restrictions, as well as US opposition to international loans and technical assistance, while exempting humanitarian aid. The dispute adds to growing tensions between Sudan and the United States amid the country's protracted civil conflict and deepening international scrutiny.

23 July ([AllAfrica](#)): Political Strategist Calls for Greater Nigerian Ownership of Security Efforts

Political strategist Baba Yusuf has argued that Nigeria must assume primary responsibility for addressing its security challenges, stressing that international partners such as the United States can only provide limited support. While welcoming continued U.S.–Nigeria security cooperation, including the provision of military equipment and assistance against terrorist groups, Yusuf emphasised that long-term success depends on sustained domestic leadership and institutional capacity. He also highlighted the importance of preserving social cohesion and

ensuring that security policies contribute to stability across Nigeria's diverse religious and social communities.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

20 July ([Liberian Observer](#)): Liberia Faces Uncertainty Over Permanent Ban on Female Genital Mutilation

Liberia's proposed legislation to permanently prohibit female genital mutilation (FGM) faces renewed uncertainty after Internal Affairs Minister Francis Sakila Nyumalin announced plans to lift the current moratorium once new regulations for traditional practices are introduced. The development has sparked concern among women's rights organisations and human rights advocates, who had welcomed President Joseph Boakai's submission of the Act to Cultural Practices of Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage to permanently outlaw FGM. While supporters argue the ban is necessary to protect women and girls from harmful practices, opponents contend that abolishing FGM undermines Liberia's cultural traditions. The debate highlights ongoing tensions between cultural preservation, public health, and human rights, with the proposed legislation still awaiting parliamentary approval.

22 July ([AllAfrica](#)): Nigerian Parliament to Investigate Xenophobia-Related Losses in South Africa

Nigeria's House of Representatives has launched an investigation into the casualties, economic losses, and property abandoned by Nigerians affected by recurring xenophobic attacks in South Africa. The inquiry will document the human and financial impact of violence against Nigerian residents and recommend diplomatic, legal, and bilateral measures to improve accountability, strengthen protections for Nigerians in South Africa, and promote compliance with international human rights obligations. Lawmakers cited repeated outbreaks of xenophobic violence since 2008 and growing concerns over renewed anti-foreigner campaigns, arguing that a comprehensive assessment is necessary to inform future policy and diplomacy.

23 July ([AllAfrica](#)): Civic Group Calls for United Opposition Ahead of Nigeria's 2027 Elections

Concern Nigeria, a civic organisation, has urged opposition political parties to overcome internal divisions and build a united coalition ahead of Nigeria's 2027 general elections. The group warned that ongoing leadership disputes and factionalism could weaken democratic competition and strengthen the ruling party's electoral prospects. It called on major opposition

parties, including the PDP, LP, ADC, NNPP, SDP, and others, to prioritise national interests, strengthen internal democracy, and convene a national dialogue to develop a common platform based on shared policies and coordinated grassroots mobilisation.

23 July ([New Zimbabwe](#)): Opposition Challenges Zimbabwe's Constitutional Amendment No. 3 in Court

An opposition National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) executive member has filed a case in Zimbabwe's Constitutional Court seeking to nullify Constitutional Amendment No. 3 (2026), arguing that the amendment process violated constitutional procedures. The application contends that Parliament introduced provisions not subjected to public scrutiny, unlawfully extended the presidential and parliamentary terms from five to seven years, and altered the method of electing the President in ways that benefit the incumbent. It also argues that President Emmerson Mnangagwa should have recused himself from assenting to the legislation due to a conflict of interest. The case seeks to have the entire amendment declared null and void, with the Constitutional Court yet to set a hearing date.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

17 July ([Vanguard](#)): Nigeria's External Reserves Rise to \$52 Billion Amid Economic Reforms

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor Olayemi Cardoso announced that Nigeria's external reserves have increased to approximately \$52 billion, while net external reserves have surpassed \$40 billion, attributing the gains to reforms that restored investor confidence and unified the foreign exchange market. Cardoso stated that the elimination of multiple exchange-rate windows has improved market stability and attracted growing foreign investment. He also expressed confidence that the ongoing banking recapitalisation programme will strengthen financial resilience, expand private-sector lending, and support long-term economic growth. The CBN expects that sustained reforms, stronger bank supervision, and improved macroeconomic stability will gradually reduce inflation and interest rates, creating a more favourable environment for businesses and investment.

21 July ([Vanguard](#)): Drug Trafficking Through Nigerian Ports Threatens Trade and Investment

A report by the Sea Empowerment & Research Center (SEREC) warned that the increasing use of Nigerian seaports as transit routes for drug trafficking is undermining the country's

international trade reputation, economic competitiveness, and investment climate. The report stated that continued narcotics trafficking could lead to stricter cargo inspections by destination countries, longer clearance times, higher logistics costs, and an elevated maritime risk profile. To address the challenge, SEREC recommended shifting from seizure-based enforcement to an intelligence-led approach, including AI-driven cargo profiling, non-intrusive cargo scanners, enhanced container tracking, stronger inter-agency coordination, and full implementation of the National Single Window platform to improve cargo monitoring and risk management.

22 July ([Tanzania Daily News](#)): Mine Trade Expands Local Content Efforts in Tanzania's Mining Sector

Mine Trade Limited reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening Tanzania's mining sector through capacity building, technology transfer, and strategic partnerships at the Fifth Local Content Compliance Forum (LCCF 2026) in Mwanza. The company emphasised that local content extends beyond procurement to developing Tanzanian expertise by employing local engineers, technicians, and specialists across major mining operations, including Barrick Bulyanhulu and Barrick North Mara. Through partnerships with global equipment manufacturers such as Metso, Hansa-Flex, and ABC Ventilation, Mine Trade aims to introduce advanced mining technologies while enhancing the long-term capabilities of Tanzanian professionals. The initiative reflects the company's strategy to support industrial development, sustainable mining services, and greater local participation in the country's mining value chain.

24 July ([Leadership](#)): Dangote Refinery Raises \$2.5 Billion in Africa's Largest Private Equity Placement

Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals FZE has completed a \$2.5 billion private equity placement, the largest corporate equity fundraising by an African company. The offering was 3.7 times oversubscribed, attracting international and African institutional investors, sovereign-linked funds, development finance institutions, and strategic partners, including the Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) and India Infra Buildco, facilitated by Afreximbank. The proceeds will finance the expansion of the refinery and petrochemical complex, strengthening domestic refining capacity, reducing Africa's dependence on imported petroleum products, and enhancing the continent's long-term energy security. CEO Aliko Dangote said the capital raise supports the company's expansion strategy while broadening its shareholder base and reinforcing investor confidence in its long-term growth.

HEALTH AND HUMANITARIAN

7 July ([U.S. Embassy in Malawi](#)): United States Delivers Breakthrough HIV Prevention Medication to Malawi

The United States has delivered the first shipment of lenacapavir, a long-acting HIV prevention medication, to Malawi, making it one of only ten countries selected for the programme. The handover, conducted by the US Embassy and Malawi's Ministry of Health, supports the country's goal of ending HIV/AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. Developed by US-based Gilead Sciences, lenacapavir represents a major advance in HIV prevention and reflects continued US support for strengthening Malawi's healthcare system, expanding access to innovative treatments, and enhancing long-term public health resilience through bilateral cooperation.

22 July ([AllAfrica](#)): Cholera Outbreak in Borno State Surpasses 35,000 Suspected Cases

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has warned that a worsening cholera outbreak in Nigeria's Borno State has resulted in over 35,500 suspected cases and 198 deaths as of 12 July 2026. The outbreak, driven by overcrowded settlements, limited access to clean water, poor sanitation, and inadequate healthcare, has overwhelmed treatment facilities since it began in May. MSF has supported two Cholera Treatment Centres, five Cholera Treatment Units, and 17 oral rehydration points, treating more than 24,000 patients, while an oral cholera vaccination campaign reached over 2.6 million people. Despite these efforts, transmission continues to spread, including into neighbouring Plateau State, prompting calls for expanded vaccination, improved water and sanitation infrastructure, and strengthened disease surveillance and healthcare access.

BILATERAL INDIA-AFRICA

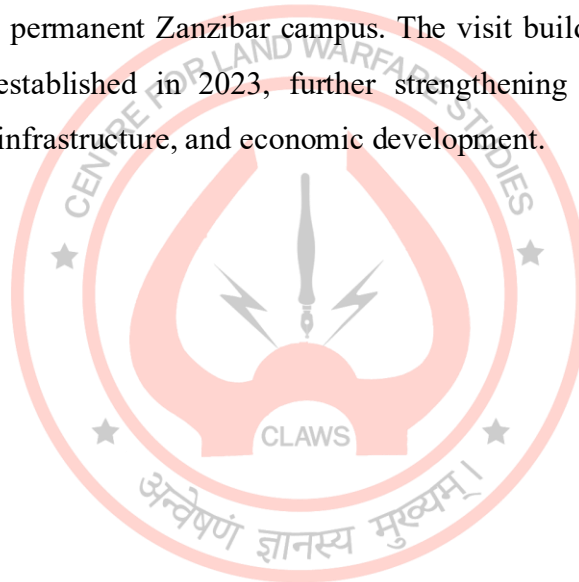
25 June ([MEA](#)): Prime Minister to Visit Seychelles for Golden Jubilee National Day Celebrations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook a State Visit to Seychelles from 27–29 June at the invitation of President Patrick Herminie to attend the country's Golden Jubilee National Day celebrations as the Guest of Honour. The visit included bilateral talks to review cooperation across maritime security, development, trade, and regional issues, alongside an address to the Seychelles National Assembly and interaction with the Indian diaspora. An Indian defence contingent and two Indian Navy ships also participated in the celebrations, underscoring the

strategic maritime partnership. The visit reaffirmed Seychelles' importance in India's Vision MAHASAGAR and reinforced bilateral cooperation in the Indian Ocean under India's broader Global South engagement.

20 July (MEA): Zanzibar President's Visit Reinforces India–Tanzania Strategic Partnership

President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi, paid an official visit to India from 17–20 July, where he held bilateral talks with Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan and met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. Discussions focused on expanding cooperation in the blue economy, tourism, technology, health, education, trade, and development partnerships, with particular emphasis on IIT Madras Zanzibar as a regional centre of excellence. President Mwinyi also attended the IIT Madras Convocation, unveiling the master plan for the permanent Zanzibar campus. The visit builds on the India–Tanzania Strategic Partnership established in 2023, further strengthening bilateral cooperation in education, technology, infrastructure, and economic development.



LATIN AMERICA

SECURITY & GEOPOLITICAL

30 June ([The Rio Times](#)): Costa Rica Conducts Largest Anti-Drug Operation in Its History

Costa Rican authorities launched Operation Riverside, the country's largest anti-narcotics operation to date, deploying approximately 1,500 security personnel across nearly 100 coordinated raids in five provinces. More than 40 individuals were arrested, while authorities seized hotels, holiday rental properties, restaurants, ranches, and other commercial assets allegedly used to launder proceeds from drug trafficking. Conducted with support from the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the operation targeted a criminal network that continued operating despite the extradition of its alleged leader, known as “Pecho de Rata.” The crackdown highlights Costa Rica's expanding role as both a transit and financial hub for transnational organised crime and underscores the government's increasing focus on dismantling the financial infrastructure sustaining narcotics trafficking.

15 July ([Reuters](#)): Sheinbaum Rejects US Allegations Linking Mexican Government to Cartels

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum rejected allegations by US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Administrator Terry Cole that the Mexican government is effectively aligned with criminal cartels, describing the remarks as politically motivated and unsupported by evidence. She reiterated Mexico's commitment to bilateral cooperation against organised crime while insisting that such collaboration must respect Mexican sovereignty. The exchange reflects growing friction between Mexico and the Trump administration over security policy, as Washington continues to intensify pressure on Mexico through terrorist designations, criminal investigations, and demands for stronger action against drug trafficking organisations.

20 July ([Aljazeera](#)): Sinaloa Cartel Leader 'El Mayo' Zambada Sentenced to Life in US

Mexican drug lord Ismael “El Mayo” Zambada, a longtime leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole by a US federal court in Brooklyn after pleading guilty to racketeering and drug trafficking charges. Zambada admitted responsibility for trafficking millions of kilograms of cocaine into the United States over several decades. Prosecutors argued that despite his imprisonment, security concerns remain due to the cartel's continued operational strength under loyal associates. The sentencing marks another major

victory in the United States' long-running campaign against the leadership of the Sinaloa Cartel, following the life sentence imposed on Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán in 2019.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

06 July ([Anadolu Agency](#)): Peru's Sánchez Concedes Defeat, Pledges Opposition Oversight

Peruvian presidential candidate Roberto Sánchez formally conceded defeat to President-elect Keiko Fujimori following the official certification of the June 2026 election results by the National Elections Jury (JNE). While acknowledging the institutional outcome, Sánchez reiterated concerns over alleged electoral irregularities and announced the formation of an opposition coalition in Congress to exercise oversight of the incoming administration. The coalition also intends to pursue legislative efforts aimed at securing the release of former President Pedro Castillo, who has remained imprisoned since his failed attempt to dissolve Congress in 2022. Fujimori, who secured 50.135 per cent of the vote, is scheduled to assume office on 28 July 2026, marking the beginning of a new political phase amid a deeply polarised domestic landscape.

07 July ([Miami Herald](#)): Cuba Secures UN Debate on US Sanctions Amid Declining International Support

Cuba secured a United Nations General Assembly debate on the impact of United States sanctions, but the proceedings highlighted a gradual erosion of international backing for Havana. While 136 countries voted in favour of the debate, nine opposed and 30 abstained, reflecting a notable increase in countries distancing themselves from Cuba compared to previous years. Several Caribbean states, traditionally among Havana's strongest supporters, either abstained or declined to participate, while numerous European countries also withheld support. During the debate, Cuba accused the United States of intensifying its economic pressure through sanctions, whereas Washington argued that Havana was using the UN to deflect attention from domestic governance failures and human rights abuses. The voting pattern suggests growing diplomatic challenges for Cuba as the Trump administration continues to reshape international support for its sanctions policy.

10 July ([Miami Herald](#)): Cuba's Back-Channel US Talks Trigger Rare Divisions Within Pro-Government Camp

The prominent role of Raúl Guillermo Rodríguez Castro, grandson of former Cuban leader Raúl Castro, in back-channel negotiations with the United States has sparked an unusual public debate among Cuba's pro-government supporters. Although Rodríguez Castro holds no formal government office, Cuban authorities confirmed that he was designated by the country's leadership to serve as an interlocutor in discussions with the Trump administration. The revelation prompted criticism from several pro-government intellectuals and commentators, who questioned both his lack of institutional authority and his public profile amid Cuba's ongoing economic crisis. The episode has exposed rare divisions within Cuba's political establishment while highlighting the growing importance of informal diplomatic channels in US-Cuba relations under heightened bilateral tensions.

10 July ([Aljazeera](#)): Peru's President-elect Fujimori Seeks to Restore Diplomatic Relations with Mexico

Peru's President-elect Keiko Fujimori has expressed her intention to restore diplomatic relations with Mexico, signalling a possible end to the bilateral dispute that followed Mexico's decision to grant political asylum to associates of former President Pedro Castillo. Diplomatic ties deteriorated after Mexico extended asylum to former Prime Minister Betssy Chávez, prompting Peru to sever relations and declare Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum persona non grata. While Mexico maintains that its actions are consistent with international asylum law, Peru has accused Mexico of interfering in its domestic affairs. Fujimori's remarks indicate a potential diplomatic reset ahead of her inauguration on 28 July 2026, although Mexican officials have stated they will await formal engagement from the incoming administration.

16 July ([Reuters](#)): Nicaragua Cuts Diplomatic Relations with Italy over Extradition Dispute

Nicaragua has severed diplomatic ties with Italy after renewed Italian demands for the extradition of Alessio Casimirri, a former member of the Red Brigades convicted for his role in the 1978 kidnapping and murder of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro. The diplomatic dispute escalated after Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani criticised Nicaragua for providing protection and citizenship to Casimirri. Managua rejected the remarks, noting that its constitution prohibits the extradition of Nicaraguan citizens. The episode underscores

growing diplomatic tensions between Nicaragua and several European states amid broader concerns over the Ortega government's international relations and rule-of-law commitments.

20 July ([Aljazeera](#)): Ortega Declares Nicaragua Will No Longer Hold Elections

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega announced that the country will no longer hold elections, arguing that future polls would enable United States-backed opposition groups to regain power. Speaking during celebrations marking the 47th anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution, Ortega declared that the era of opposition parties returning to government had ended. The announcement follows years of democratic backsliding, including the disputed 2021 elections, the extension of presidential terms to six years, and the appointment of Vice President Rosario Murillo as co-president. International human rights organisations and the United Nations have accused the Ortega administration of systematically suppressing political opposition, restricting civil liberties, and consolidating authoritarian rule.

24 July ([The Haitian Times](#)): Haiti Begins Voter Registration for Long-Delayed Elections

Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) has launched voter registration in nine of the country's ten departments, excluding the West Department, including Port-au-Prince, due to persistent gang violence and insecurity. The initiative marks another step towards Haiti's first national elections in nearly a decade but has drawn criticism over the absence of an official electoral calendar and concerns about the credibility of the process amid worsening security conditions. Civil society organisations and international observers have called for a transparent electoral timetable, while the United Nations has urged Haitian authorities to advance electoral preparations alongside efforts to restore security. The success of the electoral process will depend largely on improving security and expanding voter registration to areas currently under gang control.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

22 July ([Scripps News](#)): Brazil Threatens Reciprocal Tariffs After New US Trade Measures

Brazil has threatened reciprocal trade measures after the United States announced a 25 per cent tariff on selected Brazilian imports, citing alleged unfair trade practices. Brasília rejected the allegations, stating that most US exports enter Brazil duty-free and that the average tariff on American products remains low. The Brazilian government indicated it may invoke its 2025 reciprocity law and pursue legal action through the World Trade Organization (WTO). While

the new US tariffs exempt products such as coffee, beef, orange juice, and aircraft components, they are expected to affect approximately US\$7.4 billion worth of Brazilian exports. The dispute comes amid ongoing trade tensions between the two countries and is expected to influence negotiations over market access, supply chains, and Brazil's broader strategy of diversifying export destinations beyond the United States.

23 July ([South](#)): Former Mexican Trade Official Urges Balance Between USMCA Integration and Global Trade

Former Mexican Ambassador to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Roberto Zapata stated that Mexico should preserve North American economic integration while maintaining diversified global trade partnerships as negotiations over the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) continue. The latest talks follow the United States' decision not to renew the agreement during its mandatory six-year review, with discussions expected to focus on automobiles, steel, aluminium, agriculture, and labour. Zapata noted that Mexico's priority is to secure relief from US tariffs on key manufacturing sectors while safeguarding the free movement of goods within North America. He argued that although deeper regional integration remains essential for Mexico's export-driven economy, the country must also preserve access to global supply chains spanning Europe, Latin America, and Asia, highlighting the challenge of balancing economic dependence on the United States with broader trade diversification.

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE

10 July ([Aljazeera](#)): Amazon Deforestation Falls to Lowest Level in a Decade Under Lula

Brazil recorded its lowest first-half Amazon deforestation rate in a decade, with 1,295 square kilometres of rainforest cleared between January and June 2026—a 38 per cent decline compared to the same period in 2025, according to the National Institute for Space Research (INPE). The figures reflect continued progress under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's anti-deforestation agenda, including stronger environmental enforcement and renewed commitments to eliminate illegal deforestation by 2030. Despite the gains, Lula's environmental policy continues to face scrutiny over plans to expand offshore oil exploration near the mouth of the Amazon River. The latest data also strengthens Brazil's position ahead of the 2026 presidential election and reinforces its role in global climate mitigation efforts.

MIGRATION & HUMANITARIAN

12 July ([Aljazeera](#)): US Third-Country Deportation Policy Leaves Cuban Migrants Stranded in Mexico

The United States' expanded use of third-country deportations has left thousands of Cuban migrants stranded in Mexico, where many face legal uncertainty due to Cuba's limited acceptance of deportees. The policy marks a departure from decades of preferential treatment afforded to Cuban migrants in the United States and underscores the broader tightening of US immigration enforcement. The development has generated humanitarian concerns while illustrating the regional implications of evolving US migration policies for Mexico, Cuba, and Central America.

INDIA — BILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH AFRICA & LATIN AMERICA

07 July ([PIB](#)): India and Costa Rica Hold First Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) Meeting

India and Costa Rica convened the first Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meeting to review bilateral trade and identify new avenues for economic cooperation. The two sides noted the growth in bilateral merchandise trade to approximately USD 391 million in 2025–26 and discussed measures to expand trade and investment. Discussions covered regulatory cooperation, standards and certification, food safety, pharmaceutical regulation, and export facilitation to reduce technical barriers to trade. India highlighted opportunities for collaboration in pharmaceuticals, digital technologies, manufacturing, and innovation, while Costa Rica outlined its regional trade integration framework. Both countries agreed to strengthen business-to-business engagement and institutional cooperation, reaffirming JETCO as the primary mechanism for advancing bilateral trade, investment, and sectoral partnerships.

22 July ([Moneycontrol](#)): India Expands FTA Push in Latin America and Africa to Secure Critical Minerals

India is accelerating negotiations on free trade agreements (FTAs) with Chile and exploring deeper trade engagement with resource-rich countries across Latin America and Africa as part of its strategy to secure critical mineral supplies. The renewed focus follows slower progress in FTA negotiations with Peru, prompting New Delhi to intensify discussions with Chile, where negotiations are expected to advance in the coming months. The initiative aims to diversify access to key minerals such as lithium, copper, and cobalt, which are essential for electric

vehicles, renewable energy technologies, and advanced manufacturing. The FTA push complements India's National Critical Mineral Mission by combining trade diplomacy with resource security, reducing dependence on single suppliers and strengthening resilient supply chains for the country's clean energy and industrial transition.

23 July ([DD India](#)): India and Panama Deepen Trade and Strategic Partnership

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal held talks with Panamanian Foreign Minister Javier Eduardo Martínez-Acha Vásquez to strengthen bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, logistics, digital cooperation, and business-to-business engagement. The discussions focused on improving market access and exploring the adoption of India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), including the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), to enhance digital payments and governance. Separately, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and the Panamanian Foreign Minister agreed to expand cooperation in maritime security, shipping, logistics, and skill development. During his visit, Vásquez described Panama as India's gateway to Latin America, highlighting the Panama Canal's strategic role in global trade and calling for the elevation of bilateral ties into a long-term strategic partnership.

7 July ([The Hindu](#)): BRICS Nations Adopt Guwahati Declaration to Combat Drug Trafficking

BRICS member states adopted the Guwahati Declaration, reaffirming their commitment to strengthen cooperation against illicit drug trafficking and transnational organised crime through enhanced intelligence sharing, law enforcement collaboration, and the use of digital technologies. The declaration highlighted concerns over the rise of synthetic drugs, diversion of precursor chemicals, misuse of virtual assets, and the exploitation of maritime and digital networks by criminal organisations. India called for a partnership based on real-time intelligence sharing and proposed greater cross-border training and a BRICS Virtual Workshop Group. The initiative aligns with India's 2026–29 anti-drug strategy, reflecting a broader push to institutionalise multilateral cooperation against evolving transnational narcotics threats.

21 July ([PIB](#)): India Hosts 16th BRICS Health Ministers' Meeting to Advance Global Health Cooperation

India hosted the 16th BRICS Health Ministers' Meeting in Chandigarh from 22–24 July under its 2026 BRICS Chairship, focusing on strengthening cooperation in health security, pandemic

preparedness, digital health, equitable access to healthcare, and resilient health systems. Guided by the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability," the meeting brought together ministers and officials from the 11 BRICS member states to deliberate on nine priority areas, including tuberculosis research, digital health architecture, mental wellness, healthy lifestyles, and traditional medicine. The meeting also aimed to adopt the BRICS Health Ministers' Declaration, reinforcing the bloc's commitment to advancing Universal Health Coverage and strengthening the Global South's role in shaping global health governance.



About the Author

Janavi MOHNRAJ JAGAJOTHI is currently serving as a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi. Her research primarily focuses on Africa, Latin America, and Energy Security, with particular interest in strategic affairs, geopolitical developments, and India's evolving external engagements with the Global South. She is motivated to pursue her doctoral studies in the field of International Relations and Strategic Studies. Prior to joining CLAWS, she was an Erasmus+ ICM scholarship holder and undertook an academic exchange at the Université Catholique de Lille, France. She completed her Master's in International Relations from Loyola College, Chennai, where she developed a strong academic foundation in international security, foreign policy analysis, political communication, area studies, and International Relations theory. With a multidisciplinary academic background and a focus on contemporary global strategic dynamics, Janavi brings analytical depth to her work on Africa, Latin America, energy policy, and broader geopolitical and security issues.

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