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Early Warning
Systems Centre**



The Early Warning Monitor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recent global and domestic developments point to a widening pattern of security stress, governance fragility, and rising geopolitical competition. This week's report highlights emerging tension in the highlighted nations of the world. In Nigeria, escalating terrorist violence, particularly the massacre in Kwara State, has exposed serious capacity gaps in national security, prompting direct U.S. military involvement. While this intervention may reduce immediate security costs, it raises early warning concerns around sovereignty erosion, dependency on foreign forces, and extremist backlash. Simultaneously, Nigeria's internal political stability faces strain as disagreements over electronic transmission of election results ahead of the 2027 general elections fuel public mistrust, civil society mobilisation, and the risk of pre-election unrest and post-election violence.

At the international level, strategic rivalry is intensifying across multiple theatres. NATO's expanded military presence in the Arctic signals the transformation of the region into a frontline of great-power competition, heightening the risk of arms racing, miscalculation, and the erosion of long-standing cooperative governance frameworks. In the Middle East, Iran's upgraded ballistic missile capabilities and shift toward a more offensive military doctrine have increased the

likelihood of regional arms racing and the collapse of diplomatic restraint mechanisms amid sustained U.S. military pressure.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

US EXIT FROM CLIMATE INSTITUTIONS AMID RECORD GLOBAL WARMING

The U.S. decision to exit key global climate institutions amid record global warming represents a significant weakening of international climate governance. As one of the world's largest historical emitters and a major source of climate finance, data, and scientific leadership, U.S. withdrawal undermines collective mitigation and adaptation efforts. It reduces funding for climate action, weakens shared scientific assessment processes, and limits coordinated policy responses at a time when climate impacts are intensifying. This retreat also signals declining political commitment to multilateral solutions, increasing the risk that global temperature targets will be missed and climate tipping points approached more rapidly.

The decision carries broader geopolitical and normative implications. Other countries may interpret the U.S. withdrawal as a signal to relax their own climate commitments, potentially leading to fragmented global action. At a time when climate risks are accelerating, this erosion of cooperation itself serves as an early warning signal: weakening global climate institutions reduces the world's collective capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and respond effectively to escalating climate threats.

Early Warning Implications

1. Fragmentation of climate monitoring and data systems.
2. Increased vulnerability of at-risk regions.
3. Erosion of global climate leadership and preparedness.

AS THE CLIMATE CHANGES, WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THE WINTER OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES?

Climate change is increasingly undermining the future viability of the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games as rising temperatures reduce natural snowfall and shorten winter seasons. Fewer locations can now reliably host winter sports, with the Paralympic Games particularly affected because they are held later in the season when temperatures are warmer. Growing reliance on artificial snow highlights both the severity of climate impacts and the limits of technological adaptation, given its high water and energy demands. In response, organizers are considering major adjustments such as restricting the Games to a smaller pool of colder host cities, shifting event timing, or redesigning hosting models altogether. These adaptations signal that climate

change is no longer a distant concern but a present operational challenge for global sporting events, threatening their sustainability, fairness, and long-term continuity.

Early Warning Implications

1. Declining snow reliability serves as an early warning of broader climate stress on winter-dependent regions and activities.
2. Increased dependence on artificial snow signals rising environmental and resource pressures in host areas.
3. Growing constraints on host locations warn of long-term disruptions to international sporting calendars and traditions if warming trends continue.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

NIGERIA CALLS FOR REACTIVATION OF REGIONAL STANDBY FORCE IN WEST AFRICA

President Bola Tinubu has called for the reactivation of a regional standby force and stronger intelligence coordination to address worsening insecurity in West Africa and the Sahel. Nigeria's position was conveyed at the Conference on Security Situation, Operational Challenges and Future Risk Trajectories in West Africa and the Sahel, held in Accra from January 29–30, 2026.

Reaffirming Nigeria's commitment to regional stability, Tinubu stressed the need for deeper multilateral cooperation to counter terrorism and transnational crime. He proposed Nigeria's National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) in Abuja as a regional intelligence and operations hub, citing its collaboration with African and regional intelligence bodies and a 2025 Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union on counterterrorism and violent extremism.

The president warned that terrorist groups are increasingly exploiting cyberspace for misinformation and disinformation, undermining security and social cohesion. He urged regional states to leverage Nigeria's cyber surveillance and intelligence infrastructure to counter cyber-enabled threats.

Tinubu described the security environment across much of West Africa as volatile, with rising civilian casualties. He noted that weak defence deployments, fragmented counterterrorism coordination, and the absence of a unified focal point have enabled militant expansion from the central Sahel into coastal states, including Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and Ghana. He also cautioned that drug trafficking networks may relocate to West Africa, increasing the risk of alliances between organised crime and insurgent groups. Political divisions, particularly between ECOWAS and AES states, were identified as major obstacles to effective cooperation.

Early Warning Implications

1. Increased risk of militant spillover from the Sahel into coastal West African states due to persistent security vacuums and weak cross-border coordination.
2. Growing links between insurgents' groups and organised crime, particularly drug trafficking and smuggling networks
3. Rising cyber-enabled threats, including disinformation campaigns by extremist groups, with the potential to undermine public trust and regional stability.

US BOOTS ON NIGERIAN GROUNDS

Following a recent delivery of a US military package to the Nigerian government in support of security operations in the country, US boots are deployed on Nigerian grounds. The deployment signals a shared assessment of the desperate need to address the terrorist threat in West Africa. While Nigerians are grateful, the deployment raises concerns about the Nigerian state's capacity to defend itself from national security threats, especially from non-state actors. In December 2025, US President Donald Trump authorised airstrikes against terrorist targets in Nigeria.

This deployment follows the killing of 172 Nigerians in Kwara state by suspected Lakurawa terrorists. Attacks by armed extremists targeted the villages of Woro and Nuku in Kwara state. The barbarism led to the killing of about 172 people in one of the deadliest assaults of its kind in recent months. The recent spates of terrorist attacks in Kwara state suggest that religious fundamentalism and violent extremism are moving closer to the southwest.

Although the Nigerian military has achieved some successes in its counterterrorism effort, this attack in Kwara State shows that much more needs to be done. The US government is welcome to help, as this will reduce the security cost, but the question is: while this security intervention is appreciated, at what cost is it being provided?

Early Warning Implications

1. Nigeria could become structurally dependent on foreign military intervention for internal security, setting a precedent that normalises external action without long-term institutional reform.
2. The US may temporarily suppress attacks but also internationalise local conflicts. Extremist groups could retaliate by expanding operations southward or increasing recruitment under an "anti-Western occupation" narrative

IRAN HAS UPGRADED BALLISTIC MISSILES

Iran has completed a technical upgrade of its ballistic missile arsenal and formally shifted its military doctrine to a more offensive one. Iran is in relentless pursuit of this ambition because it can see that the US only fears nuclear-capable states. While serious apprehensions linger between the two states, negotiations have been ongoing to manage the tensions. Although the US has deployed a carrier strike group and additional air defence systems to the region, further threatening Iran. Iranian officials have warned that any US attack would prompt an immediate retaliation “where no American would be safe,” risking a broader threat.

Early Warning Implications

1. Collapse of diplomatic restraint mechanisms as negotiations become performative, not substantive.
2. Iran’s offensive posture may trigger counter-measures from Israel, Gulf states, and the US, including pre-emptive doctrines or expanded missile defence systems.

RUSSIA-EUROPE TENSIONS OVER UKRAINE

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says European leaders have shifted from seeking Russia’s “strategic defeat” to a cautious reassessment after realising such goals were illusory. He argued Western military strategies in Ukraine have failed, comparing Europe’s approach to the historical defeats of Napoleon and Hitler. Lavrov criticised renewed European militarisation, particularly Germany’s expanded defence ambitions, as preparation for war. He accused NATO of remaining US-controlled and condemned Europe’s contradictory portrayal of Russia as both weakened and threatening. Lavrov concluded that Europe’s hardline stance has backfired and now undermines emerging peace talks on Ukraine.

Europe and the United States must maintain cordial ties with Russia because Ukraine sits at the heart of European security, and a durable peace is impossible without Moscow’s direct cooperation. Continued hostility risks escalation, miscalculation, and prolonged instability that could spill beyond Ukraine and damage global economic and energy security. Constructive engagement with Russia will preserve diplomatic channels and a negotiated settlement that will address the central security concerns of all parties.

Early Warning Implications

1. Europe’s rearmament, framed as deterrence, may reinforce Russian threat perceptions and lock all parties into long-term confrontation.
2. Competing narratives of victory and defeat reduce incentives for compromise. Early indicators include the sidelining of diplomatic initiatives, breakdown of ceasefire talks, and escalation that risks spillover into energy markets and broader European security.

GOVERNANCE & ELECTION

SENATE PASSES ELECTORAL BILL 2026, RETAINS RULES ON E-TRANSMISSION

As the Nigerian electoral cycle draws closer, tension builds within the polity as the ruling party rejects mandatory electronic transmission, with oppositions insisting on e-transmission of electoral result real time for the upcoming General Election in 2027. The ambiguity in the Electoral Bill 2026, following hours of robust debate, is increasing the tension within the public, with civil rights groups and human rights advocates campaigning for a nationwide protest against the Senate majority's rejection of mandatory electronic transmission. This action has severe nationwide security implications and, therefore, calls for legislative measures to enhance sustainable electoral protocols.

The ruling party in the senate with the majority, rejected a proposal to mandate real-time electronic transmission of election results while approving significant reforms to election timelines, penalties for electoral offences and voting technology. At the centre of the controversy is Section 60, which governs the transmission of polling unit results. Senators voted down a recommendation by the Senate Committee on Electoral Matters that would have compelled presiding officers to upload results to the INEC Result Viewing (IReV) portal in real time. Instead, lawmakers retained the approach in the 2022 Electoral Act, which allows electronic transmission after votes are counted and publicly announced at the polling unit. Relatedly, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which concluded work on the timetable and schedule of activities for the 2027 general election, is unable to release it due to ongoing amendments to the Electoral Act by the National Assembly.

Early Warning Implications

1. Heightened Risk of Pre-Election Unrest and Mass Mobilisation
2. Erosion of Electoral Legitimacy and Post-Election Violence Risk

PUBLIC HEALTH

WHO RECOMMENDS HIGH TAX REFORMS ON CHEAP SUGARY DRINKS AND ALCOHOL

Last week, the World Health Organization advised countries with high intake of cheap sugary drinks and alcohol to raise taxes on these items to reduce their intake. Nigeria is one of these countries. Cheap sugary drinks and affordable alcoholic drinks are now in circulation in Nigeria, and this poses a threat to public health. The majority of the consumers of these products are the Nigerian youths and the low-income earners who cannot afford original drinks and resort to cheap and sometimes fake products.

The cheap products are easily accessible, they are ubiquitous, and the reason for this is as a result of low excise tax on them. WHO believes that if the tax on these products is raised, accessibility becomes hard, resulting in low consumption and minimal health complications. Different diseases are connected to the consumption of these cheap products including obesity, cancer, heart diseases, mental instability, etc which cases, which cause about 75% of global deaths. In the same vein, the National Agency for Food and Drug

Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has banned sachet alcoholic beverages due to the health risks inherent in the consumption of these drinks.

Early Warning Implications

1. WHO has an initiative tagged "3 by 35", an initiative that recommends a 50% raised tax reform by 2035 in countries with cheap sugary drinks and alcohol. This allows for less affordability and less consumption, thereby improving public health.
2. Curbing the consumption of these products through higher taxes lowers the risks of non-communicable diseases like diabetes, obesity, heart disease and cancers. Nigeria needs a sane generation to drive its economy.



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