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AFRICA 2026

Perspectives from the Horn of Africa Preventing Malign Actions. Vital Supply Lines

High Level Workshop

Organised by the NATO Defense College Foundation (NDCF)

*in cooperation with
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, Fondazione CSF, and the
NATO Defense College (NDC)*

Rome, 9 July 2026

Venue: NH Roma Centro (Via dei Gracchi, 324, 00192)

As governments increasingly shift from crisis response to crisis prevention, the Horn of Africa has emerged as one of the most critical testing grounds for anticipatory security and preventive diplomacy. Located at the crossroads of Africa, the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific, the region sits astride the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea, a strategic maritime corridor through which a significant share of global trade and energy flows transit.

Recent disruptions in the Red Sea have once again highlighted the region's strategic relevance. Regional conflicts, terrorism, illicit trafficking and hybrid threats continue to affect the broader security continuum stretching from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, with direct implications for global supply chains, energy security and critical infrastructure.

Against this backdrop, the NATO Defense College Foundation, will convene a High-Level Workshop. Senior policymakers, diplomats, military officials and leading experts will discuss how preventive diplomacy, strategic foresight and enhanced cooperation between NATO, the African

Union, the European Union and regional organisations can strengthen stability and cooperative security across the region.

The Workshop will be opened by **Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo** (President, NATO Defense College Foundation), **Marjorie Apruzzese** (Senior Research Advisor, NATO Defense College), and **Nicoletta Pirozzi** (Counselor, Fondazione CSF), followed by opening remarks from Ambassador **Sem Fabrizi** (Ambassador of Italy to Ethiopia).

Session I, chaired by **Francesca Fraccaroli** (Chief, Global Security Information Centre, UNDSS), will focus on deterrence and strategic resilience in the Horn of Africa. Speakers will include **Bankole Adeoye** (Head of the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department, African Union, tbc), **Alberto Munisso** (Senior Analyst, NATO Strategic Direction South Hub), **Giuseppe Mistretta** (Former Director for Sub-Saharan Africa, MAECI), **Fabio Massimo Ballerini** (Counsellor, Office of the Diplomatic Adviser to the Prime Minister and Mattei Plan for Africa Task Force, Presidency of the Council of Ministers), and **Luca Mieke** (Chef de Cabinet, EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, EEAS).

An interactive dialogue, moderated by **Gaja Pellegrini-Bettoli**, (Independent Journalist and Author), will feature **Nicola Minasi** (Head of the Crisis Unit, MAECI) and **Niagalé Bagayoko** (Chair, African Security Sector Network) to discuss preventive diplomacy in Ethiopia through the findings of the NDCF Analytical Framework.

Session II, moderated by **Patrick Smith** (Editor-in-Chief, Africa Confidential and The Africa Report), will examine predictive security and strategic foresight as essential tools for building long-term resilience in the Horn of Africa. Speakers will include **Alan Boswell** (Project Director for the Horn of Africa, International Crisis Group), **Bitania Tadesse** (Policy Specialist for Africa, International Peace Institute), **Jesutimilehin O. Akamo** (Research and Policy Analysis Unit Coordinator, Institute for Peace and Security Studies), and **Jalale Getachew Birru** (Senior Analyst for the Horn of Africa Region, ACLED).

Finally, the Workshop will conclude with closing remarks by **Nicoletta Bombardiere** (Director General for Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Asia and Oceania, MAECI).

The event will be conducted entirely in **English** and will also be **livestreamed on Youtube**. Further details can be found in the attached programme.

PARTICIPATION: please write to ndcf.africa2026@gmail.com (Rossella Citro, +39 338 207 4805) specifying whether you wish to attend in person or remotely.

INTERVIEWS: when registering for the event, please indicate any interest in interviewing one or more speakers by Tuesday, July 7. We will inform the relevant speakers and arrange interviews accordingly.

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