

Beat: Politics

## **AFREXIMBANK BETS BIG ON THE CARIBBEAN, OPENING A NEW STRATEGIC CORRIDOR**

**FOR AFRICA, FRANCE AND EUROPE**

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**USPA NEWS** - For three months, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has acted as a choke on the world economy, disrupting energy flows, shipping routes and confidence across global markets. In this context of heightened confrontation involving Iran, the United States and Israel, trade has become both a weapon and a casualty of geopolitical rivalry.

The announcement of a peace accord, yesterday by USA to be signed under the auspices of U.S. President Donald Trump and endorsed by G7 (Currently held in Evian les Bains, under French Presidency) and European leaders around 19 June, is expected to restore navigability in Hormuz and gradually normalize energy flows. Yet the shock has exposed how vulnerable the existing architecture of globalization remains and why alternative corridors matter. It is precisely against this backdrop that Afreximbank's bet on the Caribbean and the wider African diaspora becomes strategically significant.

### **AFREXIMBANKS OFFERS ALTERNATIVE Vs GLOBAL SHOCKS, VULNERABLE ROUTES**

Afreximbank's own research has long warned that Africa's trade is structurally fragile: exports remain dominated by raw materials while imports concentrate on manufactured goods and machinery, leaving the continent exposed to commodity volatility and external disruption. The three-month paralysis of one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints has turned that structural diagnosis into lived reality.

During this period, energy prices spiked, insurance and freight costs soared, and supply chains were rerouted at speed. For African economies, the shock has combined revenue losses, higher import bills and deteriorating terms of trade. For Europe, including France, it has underlined the risk of over-reliance on a handful of strategic sea lanes and the urgent need to diversify both trade geography and financial partnerships.

### **AFREXIMBANK'S CARIBBEAN TURN**

While emergency measures dominated headlines, Afreximbank has been quietly consolidating a strategic pivot toward the Caribbean. Over recent years, the bank has approved a dedicated multi-billion-dollar envelope for CARICOM states, opened a regional office in Bridgetown and backed an emerging pipeline of projects in infrastructure, energy, tourism, logistics and digital services.

This is not philanthropy; it is geopolitically informed finance. By deepening ties with CARICOM and positioning itself as a key partner for Caribbean governments and private sectors, Afreximbank is helping to weave a new south-south corridor linking Africa and the Caribbean into a single economic space. In the aftermath of the Hormuz disruption, that space looks less like a side project and more like an alternative axis of resilience.

### **FROM DIASPORA STRATEGY TO "GLOBAL AFRICA"**

The Caribbean move fits within Afreximbank's broader "Global Africa" vision. Under its diaspora strategy, the bank has supported trade missions, business forums and institutional partnerships that seek to turn historical and cultural links between Africa and the Caribbean into tangible deal flow. This includes work on payment and settlement systems designed to facilitate cross-border trade without always routing transactions through traditional Western financial centres.

In an international order where shocks can originate from sanctions, blockades or sudden escalations in strategic waterways, such instruments are more than technical fixes. They are part of a deliberate attempt to give African and Caribbean actors greater autonomy in how they trade, settle and finance their exchanges while still engaging with Europe, North America and Asia.

## FRENCH OVERSEAS DEPARTMENTS AS STRATEGIC HUBS FOR AFREXIMBANK

For France, the implications are clear. Its Caribbean overseas departments, Guadeloupe, Martinique and others occupy a unique position at the intersection of European regulation, Caribbean geography and African diasporas. The Hormuz crisis and its global economic aftermath have highlighted how valuable it is to have reliable regional platforms within reach of alternative trade and energy routes.

As Afreximbank deploys capital into Caribbean projects, French overseas departments can evolve from peripheral territories into strategic hubs linking African, Caribbean and European markets. French and European companies, already embedded in these territories, can partner with Caribbean and African actors on bankable projects backed by Afreximbank, multilateral funds and local institutions. In a post-Hormuz world, this triangle Africa/Caribbean/Europe becomes a test case for how to build more diversified, shock-resistant connectivity.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRANCE AND EUROPE VIA AFREXIMBANK

In practical terms, the Afreximbank/Caribbean axis opens several opportunity fields for France and its European partners:

Energy transition and resilience: the three-month disruption through Hormuz has reinforced Caribbean governments' determination to accelerate investment in renewables, storage and grid modernization. Afreximbank's facilities can help de-risk these projects, while French and European firms bring technology and financing expertise.

Transport, logistics and maritime links: alternative routes between Africa and the Americas gain strategic weight when a single chokepoint can freeze a large share of world trade. Afreximbank's focus on trade-enabling infrastructure intersects with European capabilities in shipping, port management and aerospace, as well as with the potential role of French Caribbean ports as connectors.

Digital finance and payment systems: experiments with regional payment platforms in both Africa and the Caribbean take on new meaning when traditional routes and currencies become politicized. European financial institutions can contribute to building bridges between these systems and EU markets, under high compliance and prudential standards.

The geopolitical context also reshapes the financial landscape. Afreximbank's largest-ever syndicated term-loan facility, completed as the Hormuz crisis strained global markets, attracted lenders from Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The geography of that investor base is a signal in itself: Africa's main trade-finance institution is increasingly able to tap diversified pools of capital beyond its traditional Western partners.

Channelled through a Caribbean strategy aligned with "Global Africa", this diversified funding can underpin new corridors less vulnerable to single-point disruptions. For France and Europe, engaging with these dynamics is not about choosing sides; it is about recognising that resilience now depends on being plugged into multiple networks rather than one dominant system.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the subsequent peace agreement announced in June have marked a turning point in how policymakers, investors and businesses think about strategic routes and economic security. For Africa, the Caribbean and Europe, the question is no longer whether the old architecture of globalisation is fragile, but what will replace it.

Afreximbank's bet on the Caribbean, framed within a broader "Global Africa" vision, is one answer: a web of south-south and south-north linkages capable of absorbing shocks and creating new opportunities. For France, with its Caribbean departments and global diplomatic reach, the choice is stark. Either it treats this as a marginal development, or it embraces the Africa/Caribbean/Europe triangle as a laboratory for a more balanced, resilient and inclusive globalisation one that takes seriously the lessons of Hormuz and the fragile peace that follows.../

This article draws on Afreximbank institutional material, public reporting and the author's own geopolitical analysis. The description of the three-month closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the broader context of confrontation involving Iran, the United States and Israel, and

the characterisation of the peace accord announced around 19 June reflect the author's interpretation and reporting at the time of writing. Readers are encouraged to cross-check fast-moving geopolitical developments with up-to-date primary sources.../

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