



## GLOBAL APERTURE

On April 21, the United States announced that it will [extend the ceasefire](#) with Iran while maintaining its naval blockade, continuing to restrict maritime traffic and sustain pressure on Iranian oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz. Shipping conditions [remain highly unstable](#), with minimal vessel transits, hundreds of ships and thousands of seafarers stranded, and a fragmented operating environment shaped by overlapping U.S. enforcement actions, Iranian routing controls, and [renewed security threats](#), making a near-term return to normal operations unlikely.

Air freight markets remain under pressure, with rates continuing to rise [despite weaker demand](#) and only partial recovery in capacity following earlier disruptions. Ongoing geopolitical tensions, longer flight routings, and elevated jet fuel costs are expected to sustain tight capacity conditions—particularly through the Middle East—supporting continued volatility in global air cargo operations.

## REGIONAL FOCUS – AMERICAS

**United States:** U.S. Customs and Border Protection [launched its tariff refund portal](#) on April 20, allowing importers to begin filing claims following the court-ordered reversal of duties, with thousands of companies submitting applications on the first day. Refund processing is expected to be largely automated, with payments potentially issued within 60–90 days after acceptance, though high submission volumes and system limitations may impact filing timelines.

Kintetsu World Express (USA), Inc. recently announced that it is offering [CAPE refund processing support](#), including claim submission, reporting, and refund tracking services for customers where it acts as customs broker.

Air connectivity between the U.S. and the Middle East [has declined by 59%](#) as of April 17 amid ongoing geopolitical tensions, reducing available capacity on key long-haul routes and disrupting global air freight flows. The drop in passenger flights is expected to significantly limit bellyhold cargo capacity, creating constraints for shipments moving between the Americas and Middle East.

**Canada:** Construction of the Contrecœur container terminal at the Port of Montreal [is underway](#), marking a major expansion project that will increase the port's capacity by approximately 60% and add up to 1.15 million twenty-foot equivalent units annually. The new terminal, expected to begin operations by 2030, is designed to improve access to European and Mediterranean markets while supporting trade diversification and reducing capacity constraints at one of Canada's key logistics gateways.

## REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

**India:** Government officials raised “deep concerns” after two Indian-flagged vessels [were attacked on April 18](#) while attempting to transit the Strait of Hormuz. Authorities have urged Iran to facilitate safe passage for India-bound shipments, underscoring ongoing security risks for vessels operating in the region.

**Vietnam:** On April 17, CMA CGM announced plans [to expand the Gemalink terminal](#) at Cai Mep port, increasing capacity from 1.7 million to 3 million twenty-foot equivalent units annually by the end of 2027. The project includes quay extensions, expanded yard space, and additional equipment, supporting growing import-export volumes and strengthening the region's role in global supply chains

## REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

**Europe:** The International Air Transport Association warned on April 20 that jet fuel shortages linked to disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz [could lead to flight cancellations across Europe](#) by the end of May, as supply constraints tighten. Industry groups including Airlines for Europe and Airports Council International Europe are urging coordinated contingency planning and alternative fuel sourcing, while some carriers have already begun adjusting schedules and grounding aircraft due to rising fuel costs.

The European Union said it may require member states [to share jet fuel reserves](#) if shortages emerge, as authorities consider stronger coordination measures amid ongoing supply concerns. Officials are also evaluating minimum stock requirements and alternative sourcing options, as rising fuel costs continue to impact airline operations and capacity across the region.

The European Union agreed [to expand its sanctions framework](#) to target those responsible for obstructing navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. European leaders also began planning a potential [multinational maritime mission](#) to help secure commercial shipping through the waterway. The proposed measures—including sanctions, mine clearance, and vessel escorting—reflect growing efforts to restore safe transit conditions, though ongoing security risks and operational uncertainty continue to impact global shipping flows.

**Italy:** A nationwide transport strike planned for April 21 [was called off](#) following last-minute negotiations, avoiding widespread disruption across road, port, and airport operations. However, residual delays are expected, with rerouted cargo awaiting new unloading slots and air freight shipments—particularly through Milan and Rome—facing potential rollovers of up to 48 hours.

**Germany:** Strike action from April 16–17 by pilots at Lufthansa Cargo, led by the Vereinigung Cockpit, [disrupted freighter and passenger operations](#), reducing both dedicated and bellyhold cargo capacity at key hubs including Frankfurt and Munich, with shipment restrictions and embargoes in place through April 20. On April 16, amid this strike action, Lufthansa [announced broad capacity cuts](#) that included phasing out its CityLine unit, whose employees participated in these strikes, and removing aircraft across its network—further tightening air freight capacity as rising fuel costs and geopolitical pressures continue to impact operations.