



GLOBAL APERTURE

Severe air freight disruptions on the Asia–Europe corridor due to the ongoing Middle East conflict have led forwarders [to introduce alternative solutions](#) such as “express ocean” services, combining ocean and air transport to maintain cargo flow. With reduced air capacity and extended ocean transit times, logistics providers are adopting hybrid routings to balance speed and reliability while mitigating ongoing operational disruptions.

The U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) issued Maritime Advisory 2026-004 on March 16, [warning that security risks in the Strait of Hormuz and surrounding waters remain high](#), and instructing U.S.-flagged vessels to ignore Iranian diversion orders and maintain distance from military ships. The guidance also highlights increased navigation disruptions and reporting requirements, urging ship operators to coordinate closely with U.S. naval authorities and follow enhanced security procedures.

That same day, the International Maritime Organization said about 3,200 vessels carrying roughly 20,000 seafarers [were trapped west of the Strait of Hormuz](#) as attacks on merchant shipping continued to disrupt traffic across the Persian Gulf region. The International Maritime Organization Council is set to meet March 18–19 in London to address the crisis, while ship operators are being urged to maintain strict security measures and follow Best Management Practices for Maritime Security guidance.

REGIONAL FOCUS – AMERICAS

United States: As of March 18, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security shutdown [entered its fifth week](#), with more than 300 Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers resigning



since February 13, raising concerns about aviation security staffing and airport operations. The Airforwarders Association warned that prolonged shortages could impact cargo processing reliability and capacity planning, urging Congress to restore funding and stabilize operations.

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

Singapore: Bunker fuel suppliers in Singapore [have begun reducing purchase volumes](#) and tightening sales as volatility linked to Middle East disruptions continues to create uncertainty in marine fuel availability. While overall supply remains adequate, distributors are prioritizing key customers and adjusting operations as vessels consider rerouting away from affected hubs such as Fujairah.

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

As disruptions and airspace closures impact major Gulf airports, European hubs such as Istanbul and Frankfurt [may absorb diverted traffic](#), according to analysts, forcing airlines to adjust routing. However, capacity constraints at key gateways like London Heathrow, Paris Charles de Gaulle, and Amsterdam Schiphol may limit how much additional volume can be handled, with broader impacts on global network reliability if disruptions persist.

Middle East: On March 17, vessel tracking data [showed ships rerouting](#) through Iranian territorial waters to exit the Strait of Hormuz, signaling a shift toward controlled, permission-based transits as security risks persist. Traffic through the strait has dropped sharply, with most movements now outbound, indicating that vessels already in the Gulf are leaving while new entries remain limited.

Saudi Arabia: The port of Jeddah [has emerged as a key alternative gateway](#) for Gulf-bound cargo as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has forced supply chains to reroute through Red Sea ports and overland corridors. Carriers are establishing multimodal routes linking Jeddah to Gulf markets, though longer inland transport distances and limited rail infrastructure continue to present challenges for onward distribution.

United Kingdom: London Heathrow Airport reported cargo volumes of nearly 130,000 tonnes for February 2026, [up 4% year over year](#), driven by increased use of bellyhold capacity on passenger flights. The airport is monitoring Middle East disruptions and preparing to accommodate additional flight demand while continuing to emphasize the need for expanded capacity, including a third runway.