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# Cargo Movement Update #280[1]

## *Date: 3 May 2026*

## Weekly Snapshot

*Table 1 – Port volumes and air cargo flows, week on week*

| Flows | Current[2] | | | Previous[3] | | | Growth |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Import | Export | Total | Import | Export | Total | |
| **Port Volumes (TEUs)** | 21,411 | 24,393 | 45,804 | 20,093 | 22,892 | **42,985** | ↑7% |
| **Air Cargo (tons)** | 3,749 | 2,320 | **6,070** | 3,702 | 2,827 | **6,529** | ↓7% |

## Monthly Snapshot

*Figure 1 – Cyclical[4] monthly cargo volume, year on year (most metrics: Mar '25 vs Mar '26, % growth)*

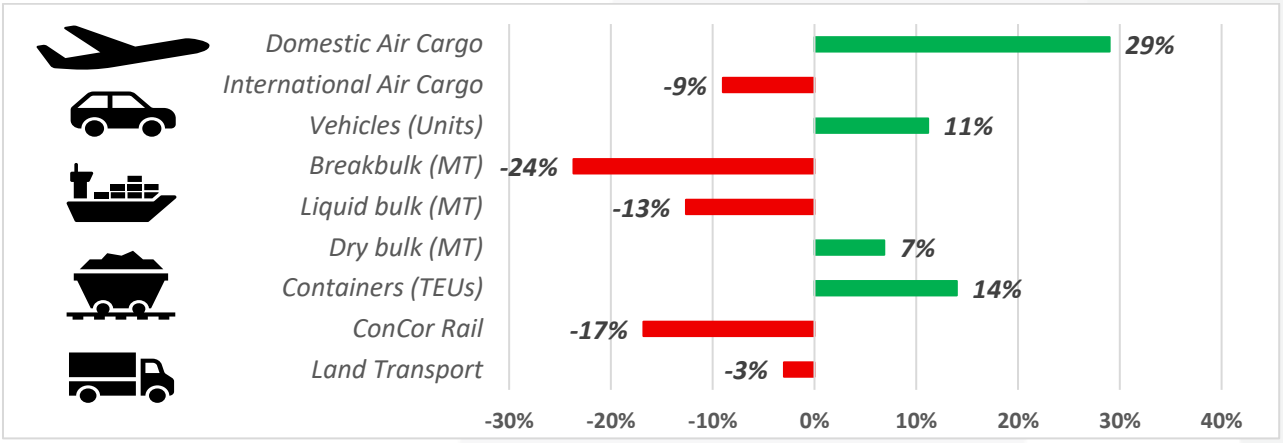
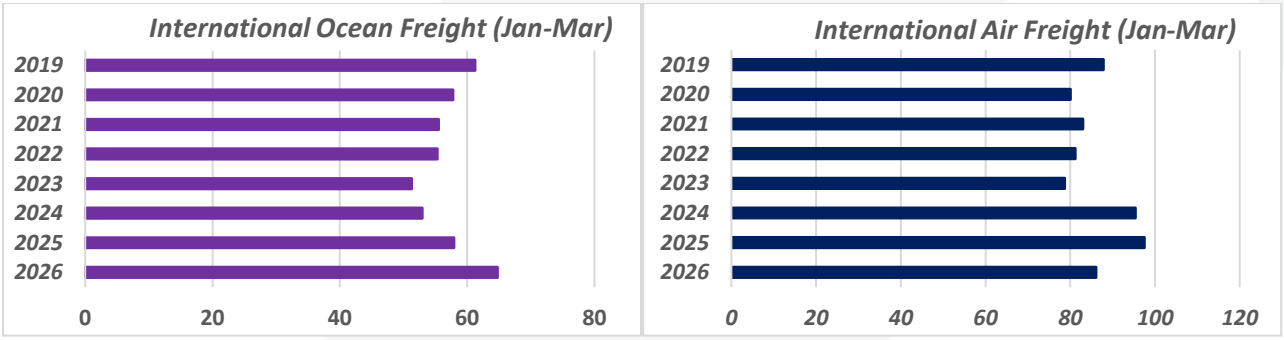



*Figure 2 – Year-to-date flows 2019-2026[5]: ocean, y/y (million metric tonnes) & air freight, y/y (kg millions)*




## Key Notes

- An average of **6,543**[6] **TEUs** were handled per day, with **7,791 TEUs** projected for next week.
- Rail cargo handled out of Durban was reported at **1,556** containers, down by **↓30%** from last week.
- Cross-border queue: **↑0.8 hrs**; transit: **↑0.8 hrs**; SA borders: **~8.7 hrs** (**↓9%**); SADC: **~7.6 hrs** (**↑17%**).
- Hormuz-related disruption affects **~650,000 TEU** of weekly Persian Gulf port traffic, with resultant congestion.
- The crisis has not yet appeared as a global reliability shock; March 2026 schedule reliability up by **↑3,9**%.
- Chargeable air cargo & capacity up by **↑3%** (w/w), as **13,000 flights** were cut in May because of jet fuel.

[1] This weekly report contains an overview of air, sea, and road freight to and from South Africa. It is the *280th* update.
[2] '*Current*' means the last seven days (a week's) of available data.
[3] '*Previous*' means the preceding 8-14 days (a week) of available data.
[4] '*Monthly*' means the last months' worth of available data compared to the same month in the previous year. Most: Mar vs. Mar.
[5] Total YTD; ocean = bulk cargo in a million metric tonnes, as reported by TNPA; air = cargo to and from all airports in a million kilograms.
[6] Figures for this week onward exclude volumes handled by DGT, as the data were not available at the time of reporting

## Executive Summary

This update provides a consolidated overview of the South African logistics network and the current state of international trade. At our container terminals, an average of **6,543 TEUs** was handled daily, a slight increase from **6,141 TEUs** the previous week.

Port operations were relatively strong across most terminals this week, despite ongoing challenges including adverse weather conditions, system issues, equipment breakdowns, and multiple public holidays. Ngqura Container Terminal and Pier 1 Container Terminal recorded notable increases in waterside volumes, alongside continued strong performance at Durban Container Terminal Pier 2 (Durban Gateway). However, equipment failures and system downtime at Pier 1 resulted in congestion and delays, which are expected to persist into the coming weeks. In the Eastern Cape, despite the return of previously unavailable berths and equipment, the outlook remains constrained due to anticipated poor weather conditions.

Global shipping remains defined by the interaction between acute disruption and latent overcapacity – ceasefire or political uncertainty aside. The Strait of Hormuz remains heavily constrained, with vessel movements reportedly down by nearly **↓90%**, affecting around **650,000 TEU** of weekly Persian Gulf port traffic and driving congestion across the Arabian Gulf, Indian subcontinent and Arabian Sea.

Although commercial idling briefly touched **1% of fleet capacity**, it has since fallen to **0,7%**, indicating that the liner market remains in "full employment"; however, at least **58 vessels**, representing around **310,000 TEU**, have diverted or sheltered, tightening effective supply.

Curiously, unlike the Red Sea crisis, Hormuz has not yet produced a global reliability shock, with March schedule reliability improving by **↑3,9%**. Meanwhile, the orderbook has reached a record **13 million TEU**, or **38,3% of fleet capacity**, with 2028 deliveries expected to exceed **5,5 million TEU**. Freight rates hardened slightly, with *Drewry's WCI* up **↑3%** to **$2 286/FEU**.

This week's international cargo flows dropped from last week, notably with outbound cargoes. The daily average amounted to **~536,000 kg** inbound (**↑1%**, w/w) and **~331,000 kg** outbound (**↓18%**). Current volumes to and from ORTIA are below the commensurate volumes of May last year (**↓2%**) and the same level as pre-pandemic May of 2019 (**↓8%**). For the full month of April, cargoes to and from ORTIA are down by a significant **↓20%** (m/m) but are up by **↑11%** (y/y) versus April 2025.

Global air cargo markets strengthened in week 17, with worldwide chargeable weight and capacity both **↑3%** (w/w), while tonnages were **↑9%** (y/y). Central and South America surged **↑19%** (w/w) on flower exports ahead of Mother's Day, while Asia Pacific rose **↑3%** (w/w) before China's Labour Day holidays. Africa remained weaker, with volumes **↓8%** (y/y). Capacity constraints persisted, with MESA capacity **↓26%** versus pre-conflict levels, pushing global spot rates to **$3.76/kg**.

IATA's March data showed a sharp reversal in global air cargo momentum, with demand (CTKs) contracting by **↓4,8%** (y/y) and international traffic down **↓5,5%**, largely due to Gulf-related disruption and weaker Middle East connectivity. Africa was the main exception, with CTKs up **↑7,0%** despite capacity falling **↓4,6%**, lifting its cargo load factor by **↑5,4%** to **49,6%**.

On the N4 corridor, movements slightly increased for heavy-goods vehicles (despite the protest reports), as trains from KM4 to Maputo (an average of **2 trains per day**) were stable for the week. Truck volumes through the border post increased to around **1,526 HGVs per day** (**↑5%**, w/w). Overall, queue times were stable at an average of **~3.9 hours** (**no change**) at the border. The average processing times were also stable at an average of **~3.6 hours** (**no change**) per crossing

Weekly land border crossing figures in the SADC region show that the average queue time increased by almost **an hour** from last week, as transit time also increased by approximately **the same magnitude**. The median border crossing times at South African borders decreased by almost **an hour** on average, averaging **~8.7 hrs** (**↓9%**) for the week. In contrast, the greater SADC region (excluding South African-controlled) increased by slightly more than **an hour**, averaging **~7.6 hrs** (**↑17%**). This week, on average, **two** SADC borders took more than a day to cross, namely Chirundu OSBP and Kasumbalesa (the worst affected, taking around **four and a half days** to cross from the **Zambian side**).

Cross-border developments this week included **(1)** sharply rising queue times at Groblersbrug, partly reflecting diverted traffic from Beitbridge and anticipation of future 24-hour operations at Kazungula, **(2)** continued congestion at Kazungula, where queues reached approximately 4.6 km amid parking constraints, slow processing, and limited operating hours, and **(3)** corridor-security concerns, including protest action on the N3 near Heidelberg and precautionary measures in Mozambique, although the latter did not materially disrupt border operations.

In summarising this week's edition, the Hormuz crisis again illustrates a point repeatedly made in this report: disruption does not automatically translate into opportunity. Although rerouting around the Cape has lifted vessel traffic around southern Africa by as much as **↑90%**, this has not produced a commensurate increase in South African port calls or cargo volumes, largely because shipping schedules are fixed around commercial rotations, not geographic proximity. The benefit has instead accrued mainly to servicing and bunkering locations such as Port Louis, Walvis Bay and Lüderitz. At the same time, Durban and Cape Town remain constrained by congestion, weather exposure and limited spare capacity. South Africa's task is therefore not to wait for disruption, but to fix its port model, equipment base, data-sharing culture and hinterland integration.

# Contents

## 1. Ports Update

This section provides an overview of the flow of containerised cargo through our commercial ports.

### a. Container flow overview

The following tables indicate the container flows reported for the last seven days:

*Table 2 – Container Ports – Weekly flow reported for 27 April to 3 May (measured in TEUs)*

| 7-day flow reported (27/04/2026 – 03/05/2026) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Terminal** | **Daily average** | **Weekly total** | **% (w/w)** |
| **Durban Gateway Terminal (Pier 2)** | Since the transition from DCT to DGT, no information has been received. | | |
| **New Pier (Pier 1)** | 2,289 | 16,021 | ↑30% |
| **Cape Town Container Terminal** | 1,806 | 12,640 | ↓14% |
| **Ngqura Container Terminal** | 1,458 | 10,208 | ↑12% |
| **Port Elizabeth Container Terminal** | 223 | 1,561 | ↓10% |
| **Other** | 768 | 5,374 | ↑7% |
| **Total** | **6,543** | **45,804** | ↑7% |

*Source: Calculated from TPT, 2026. Updated 03/05/2026.*

An average of **~6,543 TEUs** (↑7%) was handled per day for the last week (*27 April to 3 May, **Error! Reference source not found.***). Consequently, throughput was below the projected average of **~7,791 TEUs** (↓16% actual versus projected). For the coming week, an increased average of **~7,791 TEUs** (↑19%) is predicted to be handled (*4 to 10 May*, *Table 3*).

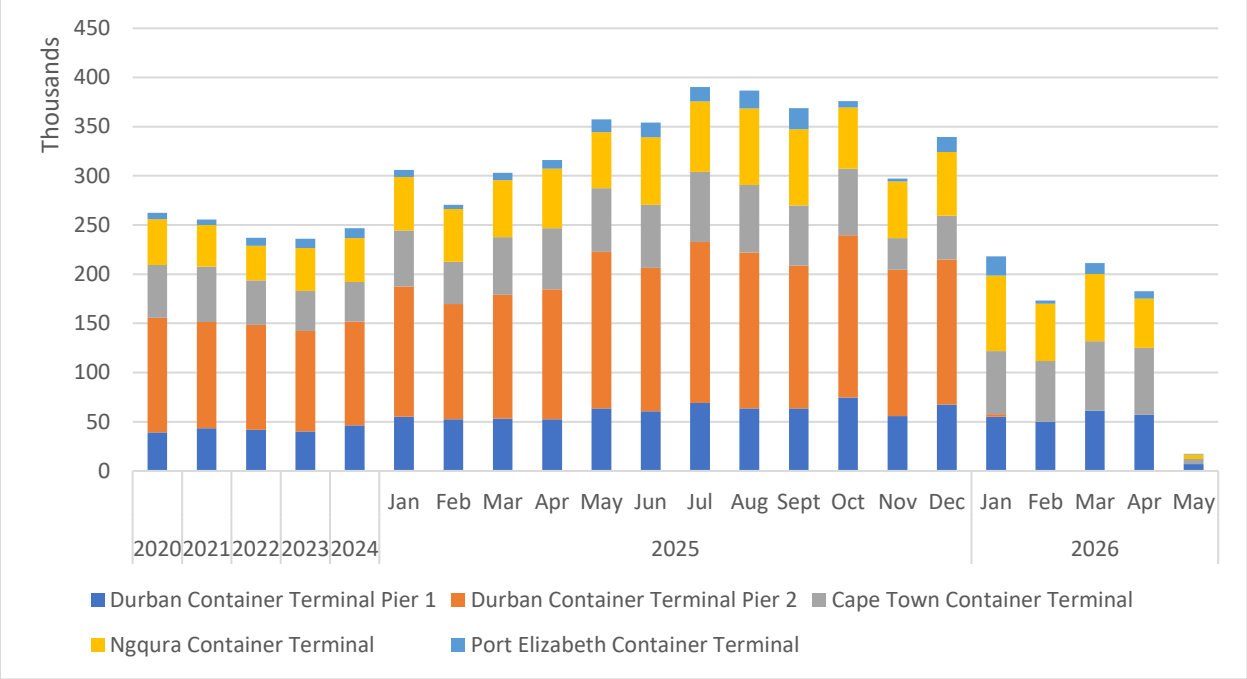
*Table 3 – Container Ports – Weekly flow projected for 4 to 10 May (measured in TEUs)*

| 7-day flow projected (04/05/2026 – 10/05/2026) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Terminal** | **Daily average** | **Weekly total** | **% (w/w)** |
| **Durban Gateway Terminal (Pier 2)** | Since the transition from DCT to DGT, no information has been received. | | |
| **New Pier (Pier 1)** | 1,982 | 13,874 | ↓13% |
| **Cape Town Container Terminal** | 2,272 | 15,904 | ↑26% |
| **Ngqura Container Terminal** | 2,181 | 15,268 | ↑50% |
| **Port Elizabeth Container Terminal** | 472 | 3,304 | ↑112% |
| **Other** | 884 | 6,190 | ↑15% |
| **Total** | **7,791** | **54,540** | ↑19% |

*Source: Calculated from TPT, 2026. Updated 03/05/2026.*

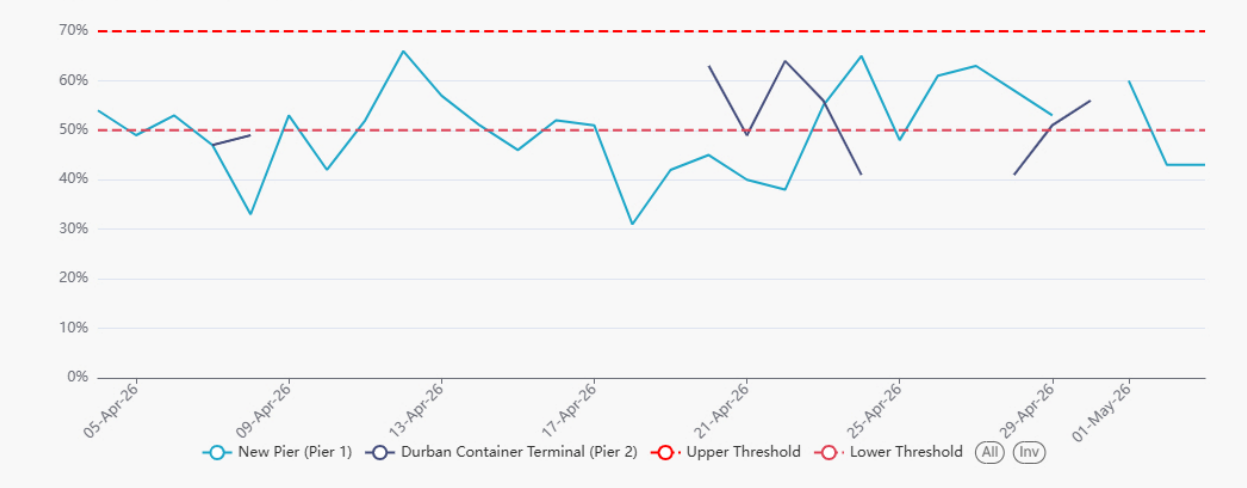
The following figure illustrates the *monthly* average flow of aggregate containerised cargo passing through our commercial ports since our reporting began during the nationwide lockdown.

*Figure 3 – Monthly flow reported for total container movement (thousands, 2020 to present, m/m)*




*Source: Calculated from TPT, 2026, and updated 03/05/2026.*

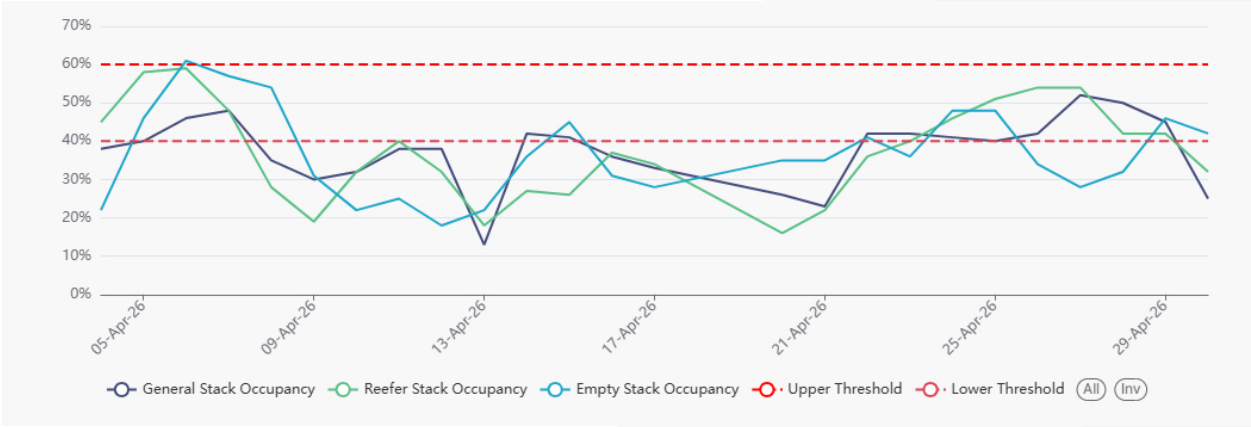
*Figure 4 – Stack occupancy in Durban, general-purpose containers (4 April to present; day on day)*




*Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2026, and updated 03/05/2026.*

The following figure shows daily stack occupancy in Cape Town over a similar period.

*Figure 5 – Stack occupancy in CTCT, GP, reefer, and empty stack (4 April to present, day on day)*




*Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2026, and updated 03/05/2026.*

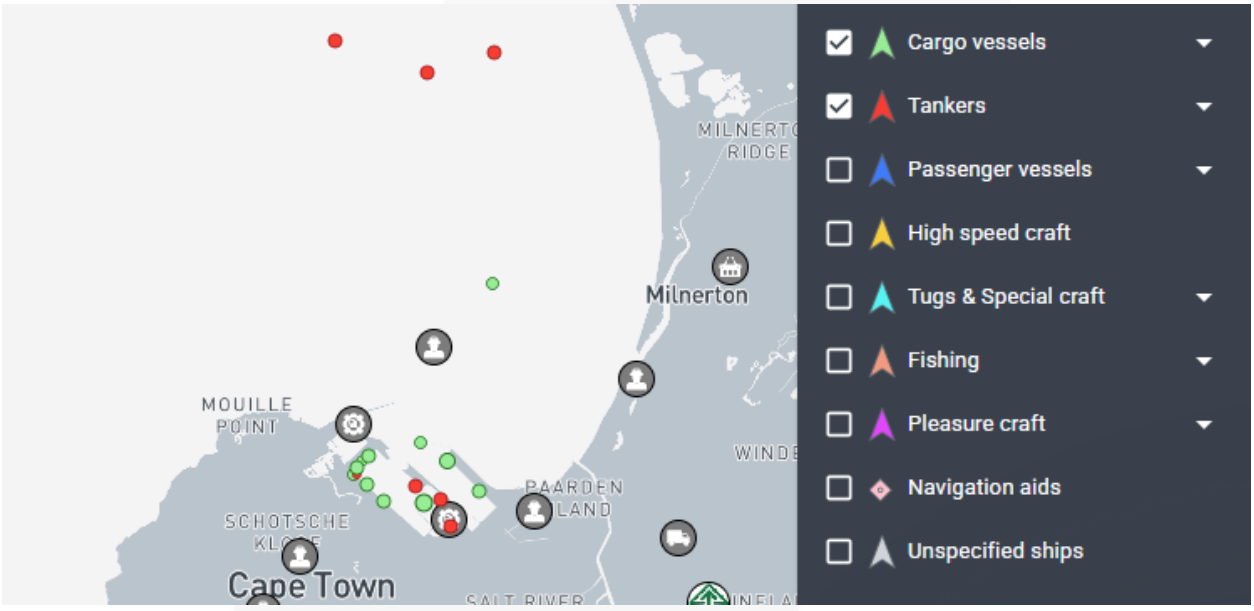
## b. Summary of port operations

### i. Cape Town

Cape Town Container Terminal had a slow week, with waterside volumes down from the previous week, likely, in part, due to the public holidays. The terminal had around six vessel calls, with vessels spending around 30 hours at anchorage and 46 hours at berth. The terminal reported an average of eight out of 9 cranes and 27 out of 32 RTGs available throughout the week. No major challenges were reported.

Cape Town Multi-Purpose Terminal similarly had a very slow week, with just one vessel call, and volumes were down significantly.

*Figure 6 – Cape Town vessel view (per vessel group)*




*Source: Marine Traffic. Updated 03/05/2026 at 14:00.*

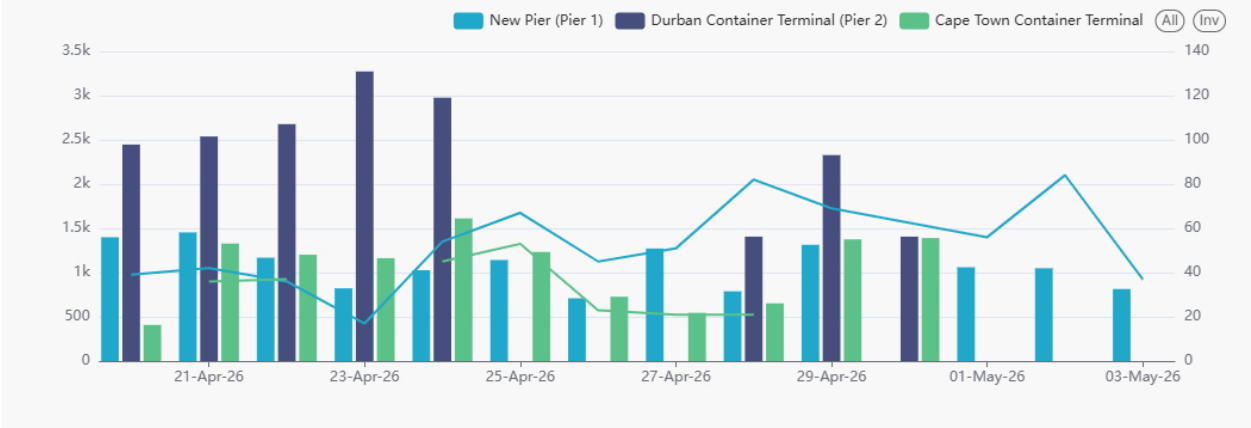
### ii. Durban

Pier 1's waterside volumes are up significantly from the previous week, likely in part due to an influx of vessels and cargo, despite the long weekends. Unfortunately, the terminal experienced significant challenges on the roadside, with abnormally high truck turnaround times due to significant RTG breakdowns, along with systems-related challenges. These challenges, paired with increased volumes on the waterside, will continue to push congestion into the Durban Port system for the coming week. The **TTT** for the week averaged **~66 minutes** (**↑40%**, w/w), and the average **staging time** was **~44 minutes** (**↑42%**).

Like Pier 1, Durban Gateway Terminal seems to have had a busy week, despite public holidays. The terminal had around 9 vessel calls (though some are still working), with an average time at anchorage of 20 hours, and 95 hours at berth for the vessels that have completed. The estimated container volumes for the week are around 25,000, averaging to around 3,500 containers per day. The terminal reported approximately 10 out of 15 cranes available throughout the week, though the reports on crane availability appear to have ceased since the public holidays.

The following figure summarises the performance of Cape Town and Durban's container terminals for the last two weeks, focusing on gate moves and time spent in the terminals.

*Figure 7 – Durban & Cape Town: Gate moves (left axis) and time spent in the terminal (in minutes, right axis)*




*Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2026, and updated 03/05/2026.*

The queue of container vessels waiting outside Durban **was stable** this week. On Thursday afternoon (7 May), **two** container vessels were waiting outside at anchorage for Durban, **one** for DGT and **one** for Point. The queue of dry (**one**), liquid (**seven**), and breakbulk (**one**) **was stable** from last week:

*Figure 8 – Durban vessel view (per vessel group)*


*Source: Marine Traffic. Updated 03/05/2026 at 14:00.*

### iii. Eastern Cape

Despite poor weather conditions and public holidays, the Ngqura Container Terminal reported a slight increase in volumes from the previous week. This improvement is likely due to berth D100 completing maintenance and returning to operation. Some significant weather delays are, however, anticipated for the coming week.

Port Elizabeth similarly experienced weather delays, in this case leading to a slight reduction in volumes from the previous week. The terminal reported that the second STS crane has returned to operation, following an extended outage for planned maintenance.

### iv. Richards Bay

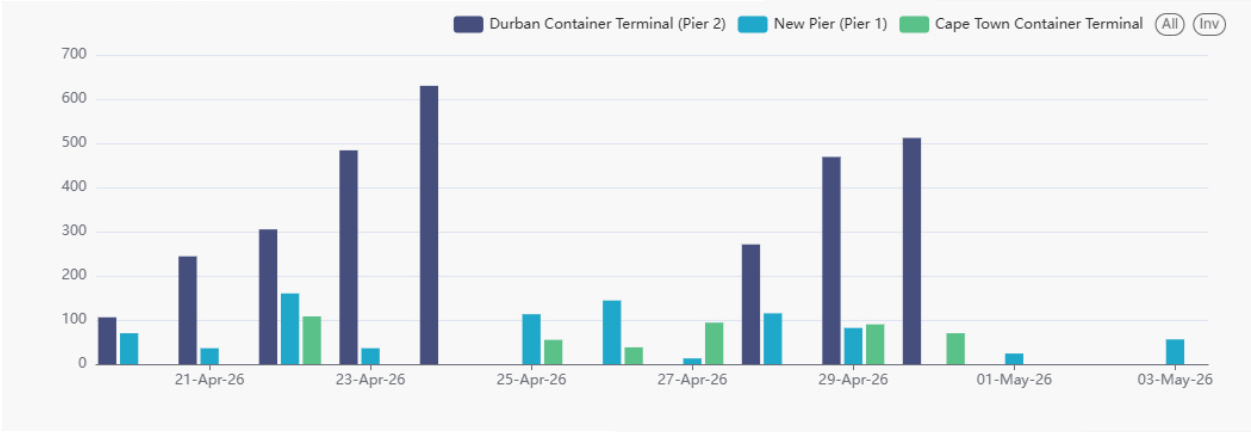
The daily average coal throughput for the week **decreased** and averaged around **135,000 tons** (↓**20%**, w/w) a day. An average of **22 trains** was serviced on the landside (**up** from last week's **21**), and **right on target** (**22** trains).

### v. Transnet Freight Rail (TFR)

In the last week (*27 April to 3 May*), rail cargo on the ConCor line out of Durban was reported at **1,556** containers, down by ↓**30%** from the previous week's **2,232** containers. [7]

[7] Reported volumes are lower than usual due to incomplete data coverage for the reporting week; DGT did not report operational figures for Monday or Friday, both of which coincided with public holidays.

*Figure 9 – TFR: Rail handled (Pier 1, Pier 2, and CTCT)*




*Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2025. Updated 03/05/2026.*

## 2. Air Cargo Update

### a. International air cargo

The following table shows the inbound and outbound air cargo flows to and from ORTIA for the week (*27 April to 3 May*). For comparative purposes, the average air freight cargo (inbound and outbound) handled at ORTIA in *May 2025* averaged **~889,012 kg**.

*Table 4 – International inbound and outbound cargo from OR Tambo*

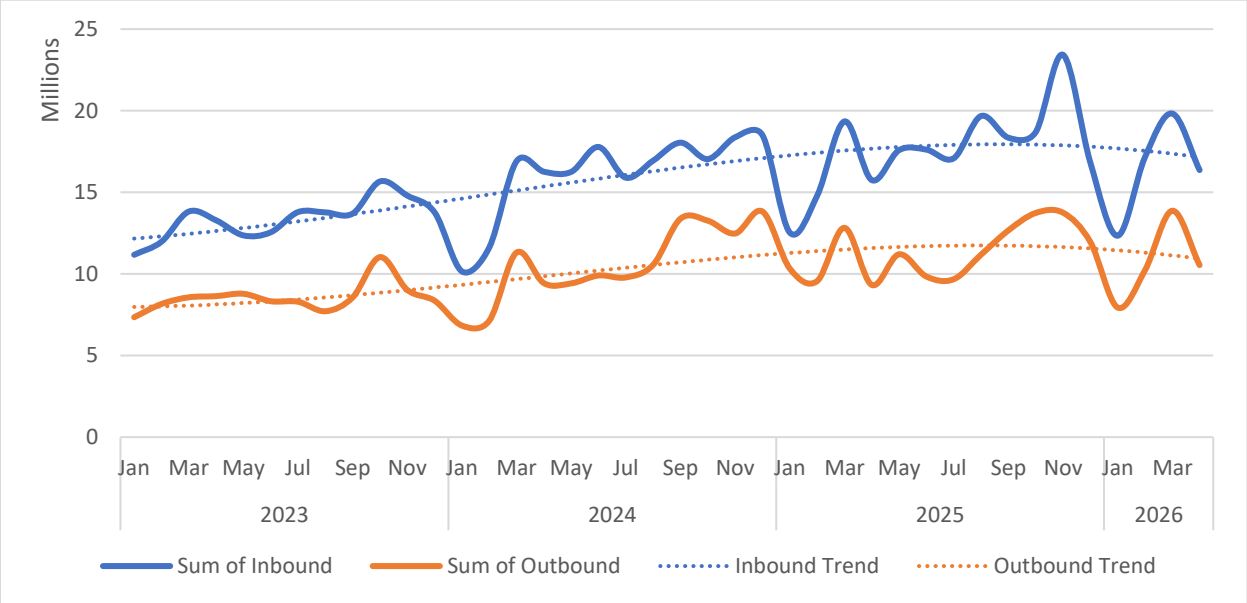
| Flows | Daily Ave. | Weekly Vol. | Change (w/w) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Volume inbound** | **535,630** | **3,749,408** | **↑1%** |
| **Volume outbound** | **331,483** | **2,320,380** | **↓18%** |
| **Total** | **867,113** | **6,069,788** | **↓7%** |

*Courtesy of ACOC. Updated: 26/04/2026.*

This week's international cargo flows dropped from last week, notably with outbound cargoes. The daily average amounted to **~536,000 kg** inbound (**↑1%**, w/w) and **~331,000 kg** outbound (**↓18%**). Current volumes to and from ORTIA are below the commensurate volumes of May last year (**↓2%**) and the same level as pre-pandemic May of 2019 (**↓8%**). For the full month of April, cargoes to and from ORTIA are down by a significant **↓20%** (m/m) but are up by **↑11%** (y/y) versus April 2025.

The following figure shows the international air cargo flows to and from ORTIA since the start of 2023:

*Figure 10 – International cargo: ORTIA (kg millions)*




*Calculated from ACOC. Updated: 03/05/2026.*

## 3. Road and Regional Update

### b. Lebombo border post update

In the last week (*27 April to 3 May)*, movements slightly increased for heavy-goods vehicles (despite the protest reports), as trains from KM4 to Maputo (an average of **2 trains per day**) were stable for the week.

- Truck volumes through the border post increased to around **1,526 HGVs per day** (**↑5%**, w/w).
- Overall, queue times were stable at an average of **~3.9 hours** (**no change**) at the border.
- The average processing times were also stable at an average of **~3.6 hours** (**no change**) per crossing.

The following table summarises the flows in the last seven days:

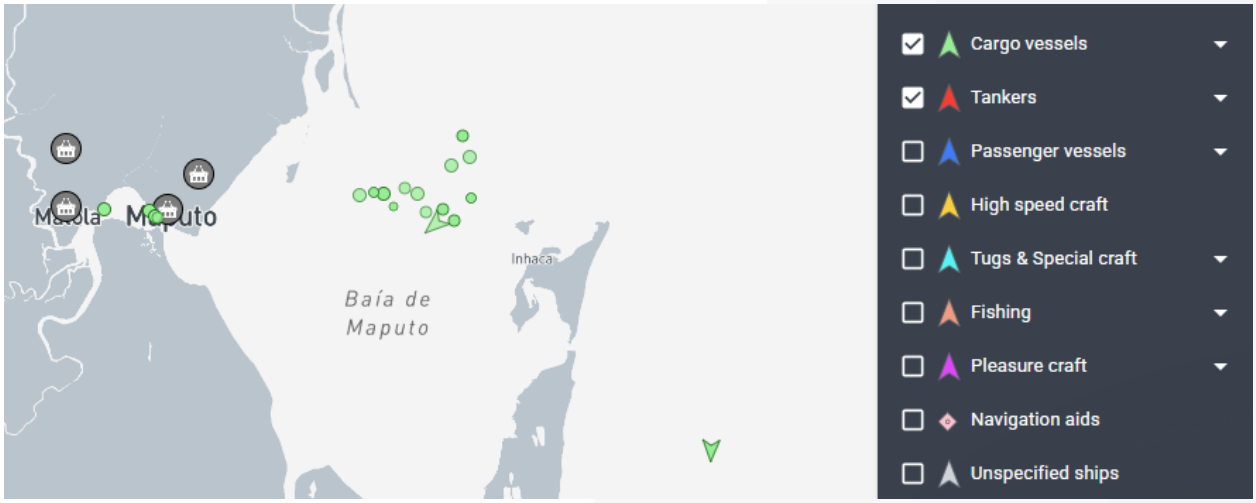
*Table 5* – Lebombo border post update

| | Trucks Entering KM4 | Trucks Exit KM4 | Mineral Trucks | General Cargo | Micro Importers | Export (full) | Fuel Tankers | Trucks staging in KM4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average | 1,526 | 1,452 | 1,140 | 188 | 52 | 74 | 41 | 251 |
| % (w/w) | **5%** | **5%** | **5%** | **4%** | **18%** | **-4%** | **-27%** | **5%** |

*Source: BUSA Bulletin - Mozambique Critical Supply Chain, week ending 03/05/2026.*

The following shows a snapshot of the vessels waiting for the Port of Maputo:

*Figure 11 – Maputo vessel view (per vessel group)*




*Source: Marine Traffic. Updated 13/04/2026 at 14:00.*

### c. SADC cross-border and road freight update

Notable trends this week in cross-border road freight within South Africa and the broader SADC region:

- Overall, the average queue time increased by almost **an hour** from last week, as transit time also increased by approximately the same magnitude.
- The median border crossing times at South African borders decreased by almost **an hour** on average, averaging **~8.7 hrs** (**↓9%**) for the week.
- In contrast, the greater SADC region (excluding South African-controlled) increased by slightly more than **an hour**, averaging **~7.6 hrs** (**↑17%**).

1. **Groblersbrug:**
    a. Queue times have increased sharply over recent weeks, with growing volumes reportedly diverted from Beitbridge due to higher cost and time pressures on that route.
    b. Anticipation that Kazungula may soon move to 24/7 operations has also contributed to increased traffic through Groblersbrug – awaiting an implementation date.
2. **Kazungula:**
    a. Queueing remains a significant operational constraint, with the queue reportedly measured at 4.6 km yesterday morning.
    b. Key challenges include inadequate parking capacity on the Zambian side, slow processing, and constrained operating hours.
3. **Roadside enforcement:**
    a. The Transit Assistance Bureau has reminded drivers and transporters that law enforcement officers may inspect documentation but may not remove or withhold licences, passports, or cross-border documents to compel payment of a “spot fine”.
    b. Transporters are advised that roadside payments should not be made under coercive circumstances.

4. **N3 corridor disruption:**
    a. Protest action near Heidelberg disrupted traffic on the N3, with reports of burning tyres placed in the roadway and protesters allegedly rolling burning tyres toward oncoming vehicles.
    b. Transporters were advised to avoid the area. Reported causes varied, including prolonged local power outages and allegations relating to the employment of foreign truck drivers.
    c. In contrast, reports of trucks being set alight or shot at could not be independently verified.
5. **Mozambique:**
    a. Notifications were received last week regarding possible protest action in Mozambique, prompting precautionary measures by transporters to mitigate potential damage or loss.
    b. The protest action ultimately did not materialise in a way that materially disrupted border operations.

The following table shows the changes in bidirectional flows through South African and SADC borders:

*Table 6 – Delays[8] summary – South African borders[9] (both directions)*

| Border Post | Direction | HGV[10] Arrivals per day | Queue Time (hours) | Border Time – Best 5% (hours) | Border Time – Median (hours) | Est. HGV Tonnage per day | Weekly HGV Arrivals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beitbridge | SA-Zimbabwe | 592 | 20.7 | 5.3 | 20.4 | 17,760 | 4,144 |
| Beitbridge | Zimbabwe-SA | 487 | 4.6 | 1.3 | 4.4 | 14,610 | 3,409 |
| Groblersbrug | SA-Botswana | 216 | 20.4 | 1.4 | 20.2 | 6,480 | 1,512 |
| Martin's Drift | Botswana-SA | 181 | 3.6 | 1.0 | 3.4 | 5,430 | 1,267 |
| Kopfontein | SA-Botswana | 227 | 7.4 | 1.5 | 7.2 | 6,810 | 1,589 |
| Tlokweng | Botswana-SA | 30 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 900 | 210 |
| Vioolsdrift | SA-Namibia | 30 | 6.2 | 1.4 | 6.1 | 900 | 210 |
| Noordoewer | Namibia-SA | 20 | 3.1 | 0.5 | 3.0 | 600 | 140 |
| Nakop | SA-Namibia | 30 | 6.5 | 1.3 | 6.3 | 900 | 210 |
| Ariamsvlei | Namibia-SA | 20 | 1.2 | 0.4 | 1.1 | 600 | 140 |
| Skilpadshek | SA-Botswana | 319 | 11.5 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 9,570 | 2,233 |
| Pioneer Gate | Botswana-SA | 63 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1,890 | 441 |
| Ramatlhabama | SA-Botswana | 219 | 4.6 | 1.1 | 4.4 | 6,570 | 1,533 |
| Ramatlhabama | Botswana-SA | 73 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 2,190 | 511 |
| Lebombo | SA-Mozambique | 1,456 | 3.9 | 1.0 | 3.6 | 43,680 | 10,192 |
| Ressano Garcia | Mozambique-SA | 1,382 | 2.4 | 0.2 | 2.3 | 41,460 | 9,674 |
| **Sum/Average** | | **5,345** | **6.2** | **1.2** | **5.3** | **160,350** | **37,415** |

*Source: Calculated from TransAfricaBorder & Crickmay, week ending 26/04/2026.*

*Table 7 – Delays summary – Corridor perspective*

| Corridor | HGV Arrivals per day | Queue Time | Border Time – Best 5% | Border Time – Median | Est. HGV Tonnage per day | Weekly HGV Arrivals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Beira Corridor** | 320 | 8.2 | 3.4 | 7.9 | 9,600 | 2,240 |

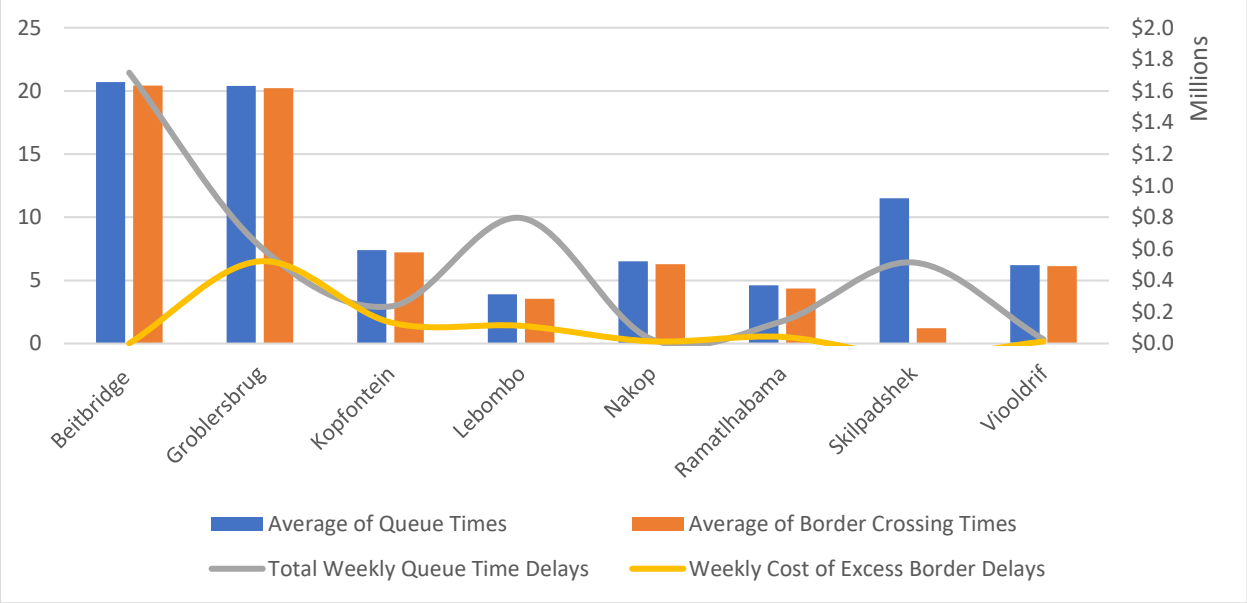
[8] Delays result from various factors like inadequate infrastructure, congestion, poor coordination, and lack of transparent border processes. Issues can be reported through the UNCTAD/AfCFTA NTB platform or FESARTA's TRANSIST Bureau.
[9] Note: From this week onwards, bi-directional flows through the Ramatlhabama border post between South Africa and Botswana has been added.
[10] Heavy Goods Vehicles. Note: These statistics are rolling averages; therefore, they would not typically change weekly but rather monthly.

| Corridor | HGV Arrivals per day | Queue Time | Border Time – Best 5% | Border Time – Median | Est. HGV Tonnage per day | Weekly HGV Arrivals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Central Corridor** | 798 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 23,940 | 5,586 |
| **Dar Es Salaam Corridor** | 1,819 | 24.6 | 6.6 | 24.6 | 54,570 | 12,733 |
| **Maputo Corridor** | 2,838 | 3.2 | 0.6 | 2.9 | 85,140 | 19,866 |
| **Nacala Corridor** | 127 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3,810 | 889 |
| **North/South Corridor** | 3,621 | 18.2 | 3.8 | 18.2 | 108,630 | 25,347 |
| **Northern Corridor** | 2,817 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 92,520 | 21,588 |
| **WBNLD Corridor** | 961 | 4.1 | 1.1 | 3.5 | 28,830 | 6,727 |
| **Trans Cunene Corridor** | 100 | 4.3 | 0.9 | 4.1 | 3,000 | 700 |
| **Trans Kalahari Corridor** | 100 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3,000 | 700 |
| **Trans Oranje Corridor** | 116 | 14.1 | 6.2 | 13.9 | 3,480 | 812 |
| **Sum/Average** | **13,617** | **7.8** | **1.9** | **7.7** | **416,520** | **97,188** |

*Source: Calculated from TransAfricaBorder & Crickmay, week ending 26/04/2026.*

The following graph shows the weekly change in cross-border times and associated estimated costs:

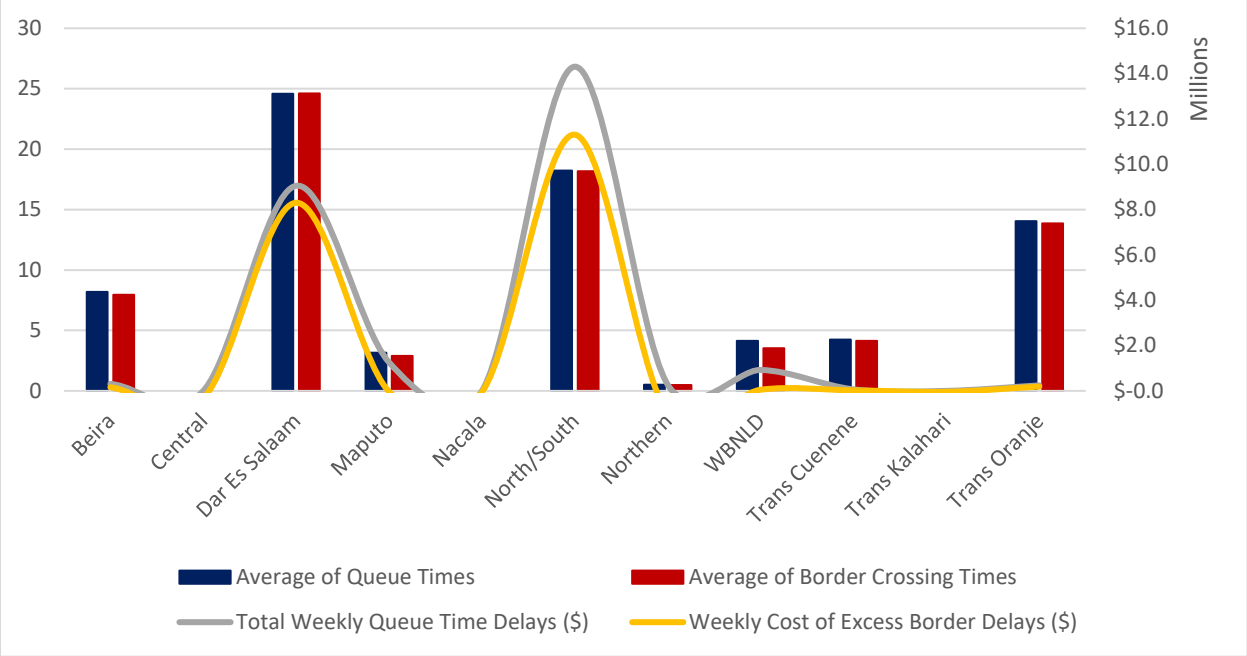
*Figure 12 – Weekly cross-border delays & estimated cost from an SA border perspective (hours & $ millions)*




*Source: Calculated from TransAfricaBorder & Crickmay week ending 26/04/2026.*

The following figure echoes those above, this time from a corridor perspective.

*Figure 13 – Weekly cross-border delays & estimated cost from a corridor perspective (hours & $ millions)*




*Source: Calculated from TransAfricaBorder & Crickmay, week ending 26/04/2026.*

In summary, cross-border queue time averaged **~7.8 hours** (up by **~0.8 hours** from the previous week's **~7.0 hours**), indirectly costing the transport industry an estimated **$26.4 million** (**R439 million**). Furthermore, the week's average cross-border transit times hovered around **~7.7 hours** (up by **~0.8 hours** from the **~6.9 hours** recorded in the previous report), at an indirect cost to the transport industry of **$18.5 million** (**R308 million**). The total indirect cost for the week amounts to an estimated **~$44.9 million** (**R747 million**, up by **↑11%** from the **~R670 million** in the previous report).

## 4. International Update

The following section provides some context around the global economy and its impact on trade, mainly an update on **(a)** the global shipping industry, and **(b)** the global aviation industry.

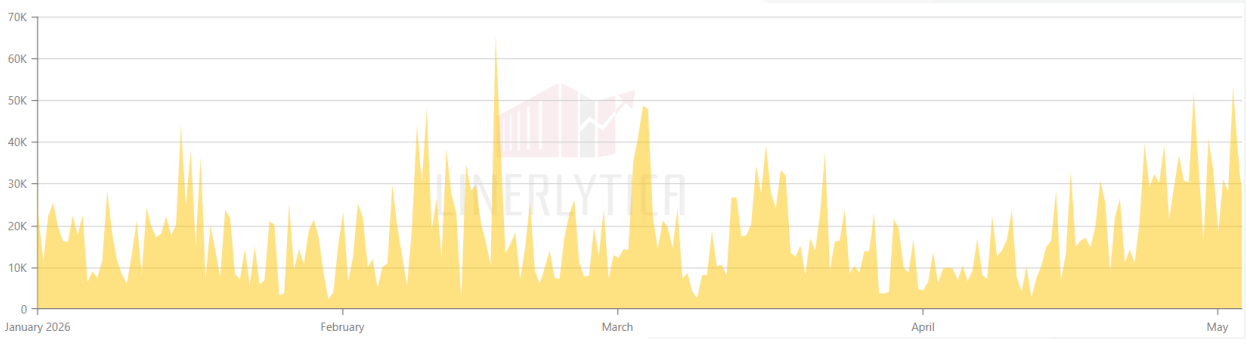
### a. Global shipping industry

#### i. Strait of Hormuz/Iran conflict

The Strait of Hormuz remains a live disruption rather than a normalising corridor. Commercial shipping is still heavily constrained, with only minimal vessel movements (down by nearly **↓90%**), no meaningful queue of commercial ships preparing to transit, and carriers awaiting credible security procedures before resuming operations.

Iran's requirement that vessels coordinate passage with its military has added procedural and geopolitical uncertainty, while "*forced inactivity*", diversions, sheltering, and AIS deactivation are still absorbing effective liner capacity. *Linerlytica* estimates that Hormuz-related disruption affects around **650,000 TEU** of weekly Persian Gulf port traffic, with congestion concentrated in the Arabian Gulf, Indian subcontinent, and Arabian Sea:

*Figure 14 – Container port congestion: West Asia (Capacity in TEUs)*

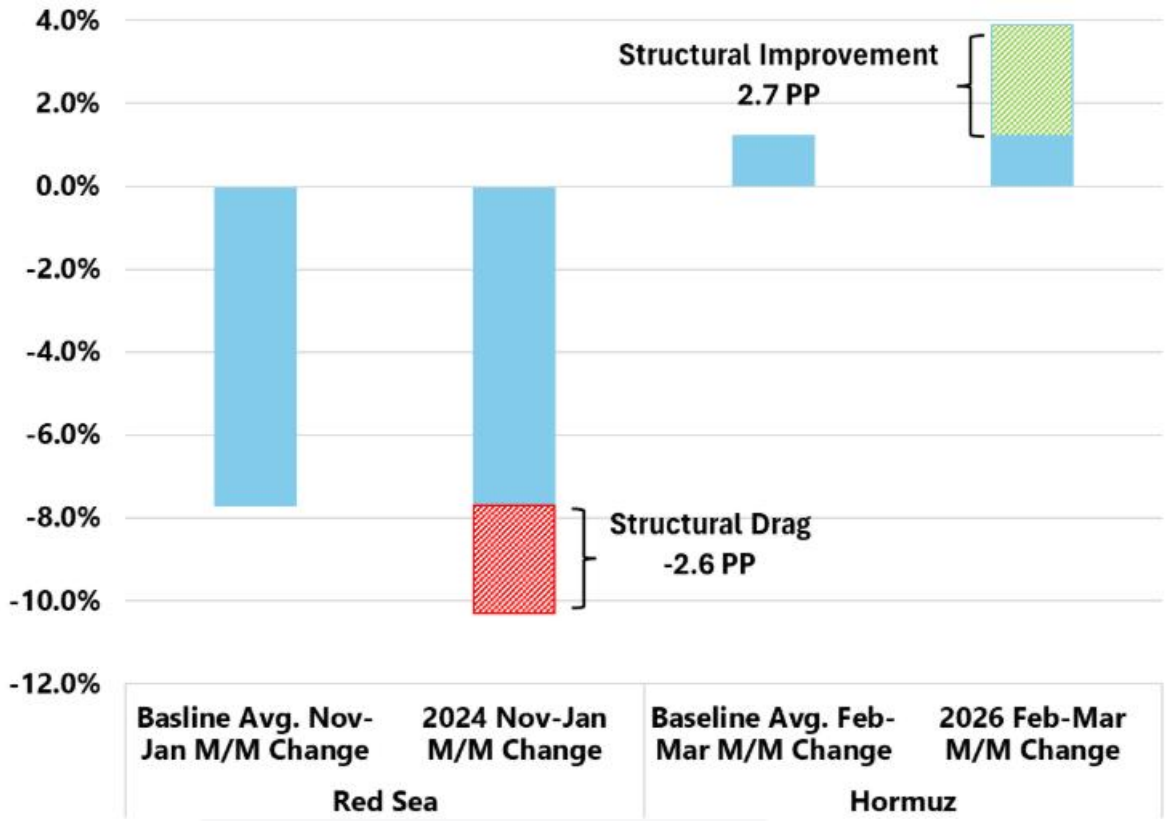



*Source: Linerlytica*

However, the wider liner market remains in "full employment": commercial idling briefly reached **1% of fleet capacity** but has since fallen to **0,7%**, with no evidence of structural idling. Instead, at least **58 vessels**, representing around **310,000 TEU**, have diverted or sheltered, reducing available tonnage for normal revenue service and tightening effective supply, according to Alphaliner.

Curiously, *Sea-Intelligence's* latest analysis contrasts the systemic effects of the Red Sea crisis with the Strait of Hormuz disruption. The Red Sea crisis imposed a global transit-time penalty, materially dragging down schedule reliability as vessels rerouted around southern Africa. By contrast, the Hormuz disruption has not yet appeared as a global reliability shock; March 2026 global schedule reliability improved by **↑3,9**%.

*Figure 15 – Global schedule reliability: impact of Red Sea versus Hormuz*




*Source: Sea Intelligence*

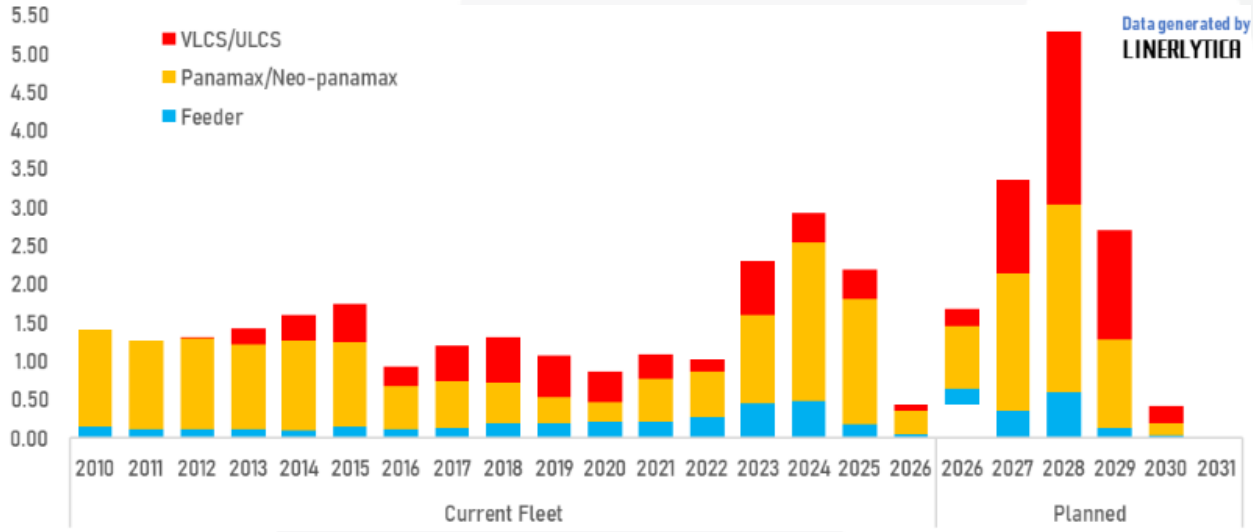
The reason is structural: rather than waiting indefinitely outside a blocked strait, carriers largely abandoned Middle East calls, causing a near-collapse in vessel arrivals to the region. However, this shifted the disruption landside, as diverted cargo was discharged at hubs such as West Coast India and Colombo, overwhelming yard capacity and creating congestion on otherwise unrelated trade lanes.

Recent carrier responses also confirm that the disruption is becoming increasingly operationalised rather than treated as a temporary shock. MSC has announced a new Europe–Red Sea–Middle East Express service linking European ports with King Abdullah, Jeddah and Aqaba, with Gulf cargo then routed via multimodal/land bridge connections, effectively formalising Saudi Arabia and Red Sea gateways as bypass corridors into the Gulf.[11] At the same time, the reported explosion and fire aboard HMM Namu, with the vessel towed to Dubai and all crew safe, underlines that vessel security risks remain material in and around the Strait, particularly as Iran has announced a maritime control zone in the area.[12]

### ii. Global container orderbook

The containership orderbook has reached a record **13 million TEU**, following the latest wave of newbuilding orders and lifting the orderbook-to-fleet ratio to a post-GFC high of **38,3%**. Ordering momentum has accelerated sharply in 2026, with new contracts in the first four months already exceeding **1,9 million TEU**. At the current pace, annual contracting could surpass the 2025 record of **5,1 million TEU**. Delivery pressure is now increasingly concentrated in 2028, where firm orders have already reached **5,2 million TEU** and only limited yard slots remain available. Once these slots are filled, a total of 2028 deliveries are expected to exceed **5,5 million TEU**. The medium-term implication is clear: while conflict-related disruption is temporarily absorbing capacity and keeping the market tight, the underlying supply pipeline remains exceptionally heavy, raising the risk of renewed overcapacity once operational distortions normalise.

*Figure 16 – New ship deliveries by year with breakdown by size*




*Source: Linerlytica*

[11] Van Marle, G. 05/05/2026. MSC bridges the strife with new Europe-Red Sea-Middle East Express.
[12] Koo, A. 05/05/2026. Strait-stranded HMM cargo ship crew all safe after explosion.

### iii. Global freight rates

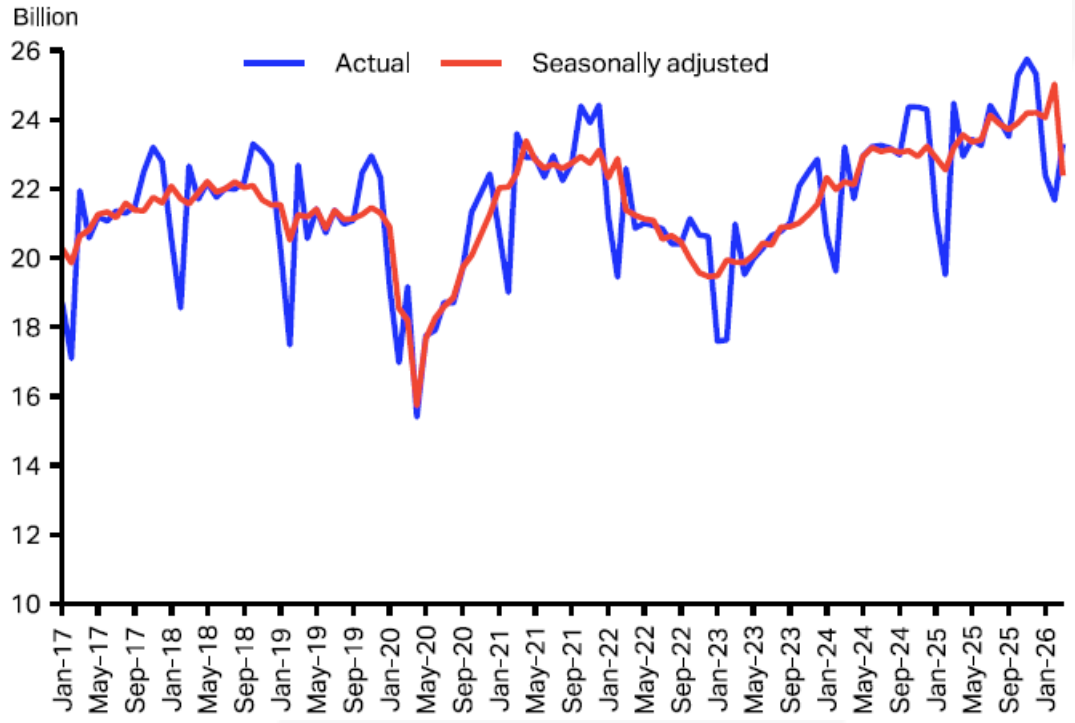
Freight rates hardened slightly, with *Drewry's WCI* up **↑3%** to **$2 286/FEU**, per 40ft container.

Carriers appear to have arrested the Q1 earnings decline, with early COSCO and ONE results showing EBIT margin improvements of around **↑4%** versus 4Q 2025, supported by resilient Q2 freight rates and partial recovery of higher fuel costs. Charter rates have also strengthened amid sustained vessel demand and continued market-share competition, while aggressive fleet expansion has pushed the containership orderbook to a new record of **13 million TEU**.

## b. Global air cargo industry

For March, IATA's latest "*Air Cargo Market Analysis*" indicates a clear reversal from February's strong growth, with global air cargo demand (CTK) contracting by **↓4,8%** (y/y) and international traffic down **↓5,5%**. Capacity (ACTK) fell broadly in line with demand at **↓4,7%**, leaving the global cargo load factor virtually unchanged at **47,9%**. The deterioration was overwhelmingly driven by Gulf disruption, with Middle East CTKs collapsing by **↓54,3%** and ACTKs by **↓52,4%**. Africa was the main outperformer, with CTKs up **↑7,0%** despite capacity declining **↓4,6%**, lifting its load factor by **↑5,4%** to **49,6%** (however, the short-term reversal is evident – see below). Jet fuel costs also surged, reinforcing elevated cargo yields.

*Figure 17 – Industry CTK (billions)*

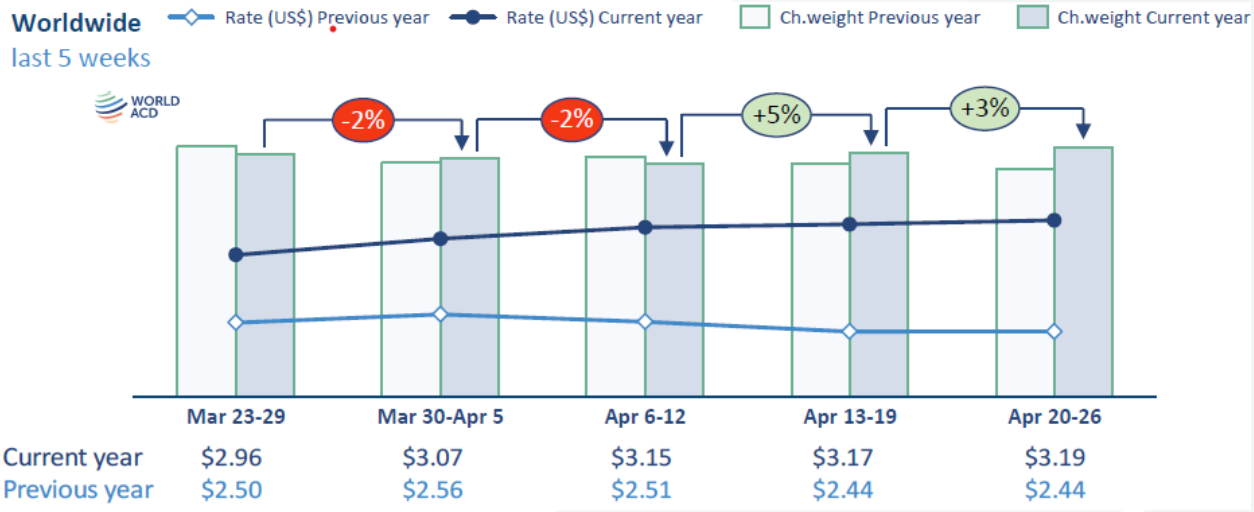



*Source: IATA*

The high-frequency WorldACD data show that international air cargo markets strengthened further in week 17, with worldwide chargeable weight and capacity both rising by **↑3%** (w/w). Growth was partly seasonal, led by a **↑19%** (w/w) surge from Central and South America as flower exports moved ahead of Mother's Day. In comparison, Asia Pacific tonnages rose by **↑3%** ahead of China's Labour Day holidays. Global tonnages were **↑9%** (y/y), supported by strong growth from Europe (**↑20%**), Central and South America

(↑**12%**) and Asia Pacific (↑**8%**). However, Middle East and South Asia volumes remained ↓**3%** (y/y), and Africa was ↓**8%** (y/y).

*Figure 18 – Chargeable weight and rates (past five weeks)*




*Source: World ACD*

Capacity constraints persist, with global capacity still ↓**3%** below pre-conflict levels and MESA capacity ↓**26%** lower. Rates continued rising, with global spot rates at **$3.76/kg** and full-market rates ↑**30%** (y/y). Airlines have reportedly cut **13,000 flights** in May as jet fuel prices soar due to the conflict.[13]

Global chargeable air cargo and capacity both up by ↑**3%** (w/w), as **13,000 flights** were cut in May because of jet fuel.

**ENDS** [14]

[13] Moreau, E. 06/05/2026. Airlines cut 13,000 flights in May as jet fuel prices soar.

[14]**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

*This initiative – **The Cargo Movement Update** – was developed collectively by the Private Sector at large to provide visibility of the movement of goods during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report is authored by the Southern African Association of Freight Forwarders (SAAFF) and distributed by Business Unity South Africa (BUSA). SAAFF acknowledges the input of several key business partners and associations in compiling these reports, which have become a weekly industry staple.*