



By: TA | AP Brief

About 90 ships have crossed the Strait of Hormuz since the outset of the war with Iran



About 90 ships including oil tankers have crossed the Strait of Hormuz since the outset of the war with Iran and it is still exporting millions of barrels of oil at a time when the waterway has been effectively closed, according to maritime and trade data platforms.

Many of the vessels that passed through the strait were so-called “dark” transits evading Western government sanctions and oversight that likely have ties to Iran, maritime data firm Lloyd’s List Intelligence said.

More recently, vessels with ties to India and Pakistan have also successfully crossed the strait as governments stepped up negotiations.

As crude prices spiked above \$100 a barrel, U.S. President Donald Trump **pressured allies** and trade partners to send warships and reopen the strait, hoping to bring oil prices lower.

Most shipping traffic through the **Strait of Hormuz**, a waterway for global oil and gas transport that supplies roughly one-fifth of the world’s crude oil, has been halted since early March, after the war started. About 20 vessels have been attacked in the area.

However, Iran has still managed to export well above 16 million barrels of oil since the beginning of March, trade data and analytics platform Kpler estimated.

Due to Western sanctions and associated risks, China has been the biggest buyer of Iranian oil.

There has been “continued resilience” in Iran’s oil export volumes, said Kpler trade risk analyst Ana Subasic.

Iran has managed to profit from oil sales and also “preserve its own export artery” by using control over the chokepoint, said Kun Cao, client director at consulting firm Reddal.

Iran’s oil export data estimates are largely aligned with maritime traffic data.

Diplomatic intervention

At least 89 ships crossed the Strait of Hormuz between March 1 and 15 – including 16 oil tankers, according to Lloyd’s List Intelligence, down from roughly 100 to 135 vessel passages per day before the war.

More than one-fifth of the 89 vessels were believed to be Iran-affiliated, while Chinese and Greece affiliated ships are among the rest, it said.

Other vessels also have been getting through.

The Pakistan-flagged crude oil tanker Karachi, controlled by the Pakistan National Shipping Corp., passed through the strait on Sunday, Lloyd’s List Intelligence said.

Shariq Amin, a spokesman at the Pakistan Port Trust, refused to confirm or deny which route the MT Karachi had used but he said the ship would soon safely reach Pakistan.

Vessels may be transiting with at least some level of diplomatic intervention - Richard Meade

The India-flagged liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) carriers Shivalik and Nanda Devi, both owned by state-owned Shipping Corp. of India, also traveled through the strait around March 13 or 14, according to Lloyd’s List Intelligence.

LPG is used as a primary cooking fuel by millions of Indian households.

India’s foreign minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, told the Financial Times the two vessels’ were able to pass following talks with Iran. Iraq was also in talks with Iran to allow Iraqi oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, its state-run news agency reported.

Vessels may be transiting “with at least some level of diplomatic intervention,” said Richard Meade, editor-in-chief of Lloyd’s List. So, Iran may have “effectively created a safe corridor” with some ships passing close to the Iranian coast.

Some vessels near or in the strait were found to have declared themselves as **China-linked** or with all Chinese crew to reduce risks of being attacked, based on an earlier analysis on ship tracking platform MarineTraffic. Analysts believe they were taking advantage of China's closer ties with Iran.