

Hormuz Trade Collapse

UKMTO warns of rising threats to global trade and maritime safety.

● **Hormuz shipping has fallen over 90% amid regional conflict.**

● **Dozens of vessels have been damaged or impacted in the Gulf.**

● **About 20,000 sailors may be affected or stranded.**

Shipping through the strategic Strait of Hormuz has fallen by more than 90 per cent since the outbreak of conflict in the Middle East, according to maritime monitoring experts, raising alarm over global trade disruptions and growing risks to seafarers.

Experts from the Royal Navy-led UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), which monitors key waters from its base in southern England, said more than two dozen vessels have been damaged or reported casualties while attempting to pass in and out of the Gulf during the escalation.

Beyond the sharp decline in maritime traffic, UKMTO has



warned of a potential humanitarian crisis, with an estimated 20,000 sailors currently affected or stranded in Gulf waters due to heightened insecurity and disrupted shipping routes.

The centre, which functions as both an emergency contact hub for seafarers and an information service for shipping companies, also cautioned that global at-

tention on the Strait of Hormuz could create conditions for a resurgence of piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Established after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, UKMTO has become a key coordination point for maritime safety across the Red Sea, Gulf waters and northern Indian Ocean, earning a reputation among governments and

shipping operators for rapid and impartial reporting.

The region had only recently seen a return to relative stability after earlier waves of Somali piracy in the late 2000s and renewed attacks on commercial shipping by Houthi rebels in late 2023 disrupted key sea lanes. That fragile recovery is now again under threat.

Lebanon Crisis Deepens



A residential building in Beirut, Lebanon, lies in ruins.

At least nine people were killed in southern Lebanon on Thursday as continuing hostilities intensified, deepening a humanitarian crisis marked by rising civilian casualties, worsening food insecurity, and strained public services.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that at least 13 others were injured in multiple airstrikes and military activity across southern towns, citing Lebanese authorities.

Between April 17 and 28 alone, 48 people were killed and 183 injured. Since the escalation began on 2 March, more than 2,500 people have been killed and over 7,800 wounded, according to Lebanon's health ministry.

Despite a declared ceasefire, OCHA described the situation as "fragile and volatile," warn-

ing that ongoing violence continues to obstruct humanitarian access and recovery efforts. Aid agencies have nonetheless conducted around 100 assisted missions to hard-to-reach areas through a UN-coordinated system.

Meanwhile, economic disruption linked to the conflict has further worsened living conditions. Rising prices and supply shortages are driving acute food insecurity, affecting nearly a quarter of the population.

A UN-backed global food security assessment warned on Wednesday that around 1.2 million people could face high levels of acute hunger between now and August. The World Food Programme said it is scaling up assistance, stressing that "behind every number are families struggling to meet their food needs."

Gulf Condemns Cyberattacks

ITU Strengthens Infrastructure Protection Role

A council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) adopted by consensus a UN-backed resolution submitted by the Gulf Group and Jordan. The resolution condemned "illegal and deliberate" Iranian attack on civilian information and communications technology infrastructure in Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain and Jordan.

The resolution, described as a "global precedent," marked the first known case of the intentional targeting of civilian cloud computing infrastructure. It also condemned broader attacks on critical communications services and what it called coordinated cyber operations by Iran-linked groups against digital infrastructure in the region.

Kuwait's Permanent Rep-

resentative to the UN and other international organisations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain, welcomed the adoption of the resolution, praising member states for their support and Iran's "clear violation" of the ITU constitution. He expressed hope for de-escalation and regional stability.

Al-Hain also reiterated Kuwait's rejection of threats to cut internet cables in maritime routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, warning of severe economic and social consequences and calling such actions a breach of international law and human rights frameworks.

He further criticised a separate Iranian proposal that failed to gain support, describing it as

"unbalanced," and warned the Iranian delegate against what he termed "misleading and unprofessional" statements about Gulf states.

The resolution stressed respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, including maritime domains. It called for strengthened international cooperation to protect critical communications infrastructure, which it identified as a global security priority.



UAE Rejects Iran

The United Arab Emirates categorically rejected Iran's election as Vice-President of the Eleventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), during the conference's general debate.

The UAE said elevating Iran to such a position is "completely rejected," citing concerns over Tehran's compliance with its safeguards obligations under the NPT. It accused Iran of undermining



the International Atomic Energy Agency's authority, carrying out unlawful actions against neighbouring states, destabilising the region, and threatening international waterways.

Reaffirming the NPT's importance as a cornerstone of global

non-proliferation efforts, the UAE stressed that the peaceful use of nuclear energy is a right of all member states. It added that its own nuclear programme is being developed responsibly and transparently, consistent with international obligations.

Saudi Forces Assessment

The Chief of Staff of the Saudi Land Forces, Lieutenant General Fahd Al-Jahni, conducted an inspection visit to the Western Region Command, where he reviewed the readiness level and operational capabilities of military units, according

to the Ministry of Defense (Saudi Arabia).

During the visit, Lt. Gen. Al-Jahni assessed combat preparedness and operational efficiency across various units as part of ongoing efforts to maintain high readiness standards within the armed forces.



Qatar Presents Credentials

President Carlos Vila Nova of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe has received the credentials of Yusuf bin Mohammed Al-Hilal, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar, who is non-resident to the country.

During the ceremony, the Qatari envoy conveyed greetings from Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, along with wishes for the President's good health and for continued progress and prosperity for the people of São Tomé and Príncipe.

President Vila Nova, in turn, sent his greetings to the Amir of Qatar, wishing him good



health and further development and prosperity for the State of Qatar.

UAE Azerbaijan Defence

Senior UAE military commanders received His Excellency Aqil Gurbanov, Deputy Minister of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Director General, during his official visit to the UAE Ministry of Defence.

He was received separately by Major General Staff Hamid Mohammed Al Rumaithi, Commander of the UAE Naval Forces; Major General Staff Rashid Mohammed Al Shamsi, Commander of the Air Force and Air Defence; Major General Staff Yousef Abdullah Al Kaabi, Commander of Joint Avi-



ation; and Major General Staff Awad Saeed bin Mulseh Al Ahabbi, Commander of Joint Operations.

The meetings discussed ways to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation and reviewed several issues of mutual interest.

During the visit, Gur-

banov was also briefed on the UAE's defence industrial ecosystem and military production capabilities, including advancements in manufacturing and modern technologies, reflecting a high level of readiness and operational efficiency.

US Navy Replenishment at Sea



USNS Wally Schirra (T-AKE 8) replenishes the guided-missile destroyer USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119) while at sea. Underway replenishments allow U.S. Navy ships to receive fuel, food, munitions, and essential supplies.