Chokepoints squeeze shipping

Conflict in the Red Sea, the closure of Hormuz and climate-driven draft limits at Panama are squeezing global shipping at once, leaving operators with few options for rerouting



SHIPPING ROUTES

Existing
- Through Suez Canal
- Through Panama Canal

New *(Year-round commercial shipping expected later this century)*
- Northwest passage
- Northeast passage

CHOKEPOINTS
- Under strain
- Not affected

Ice extent *(Sep 2025)*

Military bases
- U.S. and NATO
- New planned U.S. bases in Greenland
- Russian

PACIFIC OCEAN

25,600km

Shanghai
World's busiest container port with **55.06 million TEU*** *(2025)*

Malacca Strait
25% of seaborne trade

Bering Strait

ALASKA *(U.S.)*

ARCTIC CIRCLE

CHINA

U.S.

CANADA

ARCTIC OCEAN

North Pole

RUSSIA

16,100km

15,800km

Strait of Hormuz
20 million barrels a day (mb/d) or **25%** of world's seaborne oil trade *(2025)*
Severely disrupted by U.S.-Iran conflict

ATLANTIC OCEAN

GREENLAND *(Denmark)*

IRAN

19,550km

INDIAN OCEAN

Rotterdam: Europe's largest container port and among world's top **11**, with about **14.2 million TEU** *(2025)*

Red Sea

Suez Canal

Through Cape of Good Hope **25,600km**

Picture: Newscom

Panama Canal
Around **5%** of maritime trade
Disrupted from El Niño-related water shortages, with limits on vessel transits and draft causing delays and higher shipping costs

Bab al-Mandeb Strait
Around **12%** of global trade, including **11%** of maritime oil and **8%** of liquefied natural gas *(2023)*
Disrupted amid Houthi attacks

Disruption forces vessels to reroute around Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa, adding weeks and significant costs to journey

Through Cape of Good Hope

*Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit

Sources: Reuters, EIA, Port of Rotterdam, Panama Canal Authority, Container News, Arctic Portal, Government of Canada, IISS

© GRAPHIC NEWS