

CRISIS ADVISORY

Middle East Escalation – Updated Impact on Global Logistics Operations

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Executive Summary

Geopolitical tensions linked to the ongoing escalation between Israel, Iran, the United States and regional actors remain high. However, on April 7–8, 2026, a temporary ceasefire agreement was announced between key actors, introducing an initial phase of cautious de-escalation while the operational environment remains unstable.

Military exchanges, missile interceptions and infrastructure attacks continue across the region, with no confirmed ceasefire agreement and increasing involvement of additional actors. The operational environment remains highly volatile and unpredictable.

Airspace restrictions across the Middle East remain widespread, and several airlines continue to suspend or reduce services. A renewed wave of flight cancellations occurred in early April following updated risk assessments and airspace closures.

On the maritime side, security concerns in the Strait of Hormuz and Red Sea have escalated, with several carriers maintaining rerouting policies via the Cape of Good Hope. In some trade lanes, the Strait of Hormuz is effectively operating under controlled transit conditions with heightened security monitoring.

Global logistics networks remain functional but under sustained operational stress. The situation shows early signs of temporary de-escalation following the ceasefire announcement, but disruption levels remain elevated and the operational outlook continues to be dynamic and uncertain.

Current Conflict Status (Operational Perspective)

Conflict phase: Active escalation

Operational risk level: HIGH

Trend direction: Unstable / tentative de-escalation

Key operational indicators:

- Continued missile exchanges and military strikes across multiple countries
- Ongoing airspace restrictions and route suspensions
- Increased maritime security controls in strategic corridors
- Rising freight rate volatility and capacity constraints

- No confirmed de-escalation timeline

Air Freight – Updated Situation

Air cargo operations across the Middle East remain significantly disrupted due to continued military activity and aviation risk management measures.

Airspace closures and restrictions have been extended across multiple Flight Information Regions (FIRs), with frequent updates issued by aviation authorities.

Current Airspace Status

Status	Countries / Areas
Full closure / active military risk	Iran, Israel
Severe operational restrictions	Iraq, Syria
Restricted operations	Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain
Structured routing corridors	United Arab Emirates
Operational but monitored	Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Cyprus

Recent operational developments include:

- Additional flight cancellations recorded during the first week of April
- Continued rerouting of Europe–Asia air corridors via northern and southern alternatives
- Increased congestion and handling delays at major European hubs
- Airlines maintaining precautionary network reductions

Airline Operational Measures (Latest Available)

Common measures currently implemented by global carriers include:

- Flight suspensions to multiple Middle East destinations
- Booking restrictions for high-risk locations
- Extended transit times due to rerouting
- Capacity reductions on long-haul routes

Operational recovery remains gradual and fully dependent on security developments.

Impact on European Cargo Hubs – Updated Assessment

Major European logistics hubs continue to experience operational pressure linked to reduced Middle East connectivity and flight rerouting.

Current Operational Impact

Airport	Country	Current Situation
Milan Malpensa (MXP)	Italy	Cargo backlog and schedule volatility
Rome Fiumicino (FCO)	Italy	Reduced Middle East connectivity
Frankfurt (FRA)	Germany	Rerouting adjustments and capacity shifts
Paris CDG	France	Increased cargo redistribution
Amsterdam Schiphol	Netherlands	Congestion risk on Asia routes

Handling times and warehouse dwell times remain above normal levels.

Ocean Freight – Updated Situation

Maritime logistics operations across the Middle East and Red Sea region remain under elevated security risk conditions.

Shipping lines continue to apply precautionary routing strategies, and several trade lanes remain affected by longer sailing distances and schedule instability.

Strategic Maritime Corridor Status

Corridor	Operational Status
Red Sea	Elevated security risk – rerouting still widely applied
Suez Canal	Operational but reduced traffic volumes
Gulf of Aden	Heightened monitoring and naval security presence
Strait of Hormuz	Reopened under temporary ceasefire conditions – high security monitoring remains in place

Key developments observed during early April:

- Continued vessel rerouting around Africa on selected services
- Increased insurance and security requirements for vessels
- Higher fuel consumption and operating costs across major shipping networks
- Greater reliance on alternative transshipment hubs

Market Impact – Freight and Supply Chain Conditions

The current disruption environment is producing measurable operational and financial impacts across global logistics networks.

Air Freight Market Effects

- Reduced cargo capacity on Middle East routes
- Increased flight times due to extended routing
- Limited booking availability for certain destinations
- Increased handling delays at transit hubs
- Volatility in spot freight rates

Ocean Freight Market Effects

- Extended transit times on Asia–Europe routes
- Reduced schedule reliability
- Increased operational costs for carriers
- Temporary equipment imbalances in some regions
- Higher freight rates on selected trade lanes

Recent market signals indicate renewed rate increases in some export markets following additional routing adjustments implemented in early April.

Risk Outlook (Short-Term)

The short-term logistics outlook remains unstable, with a high probability of continued disruption.

Expected Developments

- Ongoing schedule volatility in both air and ocean freight
- Continued capacity constraints across affected trade lanes
- Persistent rerouting of flights and vessels
- Potential further escalation of regional security risks
- Continued freight rate instability

No reliable timeline for normalization of logistics operations is currently available.

Recommended Actions for Shippers and Logistics Operators

Organizations operating international supply chains should maintain proactive risk management measures and operational flexibility.

Immediate Operational Recommendations

- Plan shipments with extended lead times
- Confirm bookings as early as possible
- Maintain alternative routing strategies



- Monitor daily operational updates
- Adjust inventory planning to account for delays
- Maintain flexible delivery commitments where possible

Strategic Planning Recommendations

- Review supply chain resilience and contingency plans
- Diversify routing and transportation options
- Evaluate multimodal logistics solutions
- Monitor geopolitical developments closely

Operational Conclusion

The Middle East crisis continues to represent a structural disruption to global logistics networks rather than a short-term operational disturbance.

At the current stage, logistics systems remain functional but under sustained pressure, with elevated operational risk expected to persist in the near term.

Continuous monitoring and adaptive planning remain essential for maintaining supply chain continuity.