

Shipping update on the events in the Middle East

Sue Kelly, Operations Director at [Publiship](#) and BIC Board Member provided the following update on the Middle East Crisis (17/03/26).

Issues affecting Book Shippers

Asia/EU Airfreight capacity reduced by 40%, may affect advances.

War Risk Surcharges, up to Thursday 5th March (latest update), are being quoted between USD75 and USD160.00 per cbm depending on carrier.

Dubai Ports are operational, but most services have been suspended routings being considered overland for Jeddah however services are limited.

Strait of Hormuz will not directly affect book shipping but will have ripple effects across the global market.

Road operations in the region are mostly operational; border crossings may take longer due to security checks.

Suez Canal services have again been suspended; Publiship had not started using them for books yet but there were a couple of operators that were starting to transit the canal.

Consequences

Cost Escalation - fuel

Capacity - vessels displaced

Longer Transits - due to rerouting

Congestion - port hubs e.g. Singapore, Columbo may experience congestion. Schedule unreliability and Port omissions

Enhanced Security - more information required on booking with detailed information for parties involved in the movement.

Force Majure - special circumstances, matters affecting performance. Exceptional circumstances mean that carriers can make decisions that may seem unfair. They can override contracts, change services and rates with little notice. They may choose to offload containers in a completely different place.

UK exports - advanced security filing for good to or transiting through UAE. Publiship have also been advised of PSS affecting goods travelling to Canada and USA from the UK, apart from Liverpool.

Main Book shipping routes affected

Dubai to ROW - severe disruptions, service suspensions.

Asia Europe - potential for significant disruptions

India Europe - potential for significant disruptions

Asia East Coast USA - will depend on the routing, potential for significant disruptions, goods transiting via Panama Canal low impact.

India East Coast USA - some impact

Asia/US West Coast - low impact

Asia/Australasia - low impact

Publishers are continuing to monitor the developing situation in the Middle East, which is beginning to have wider impacts across global shipping networks.

Several carriers have introduced temporary booking restrictions and operational changes on services connected to the Gulf region. While the current situation is not directly affecting our services, a prolonged disruption is likely to create knock-on effects on vessel schedules and equipment availability across wider trade lanes.

For cargo already in transit through the Middle East, carriers are implementing alternative routing or temporary storage solutions. As a result, an Emergency Freight surcharge has been introduced for containers affected by these changes, with indicative levels of USD 1,800 per 20' and USD 3,000 per 40'.

In addition, carriers have announced an Emergency Bunker Surcharge (EBS) to manage fuel distribution across the network. This will apply across all trade lanes, with levels currently ranging between USD 400–500 per 40' container, depending on the carrier. Implementation dates vary between 16 March and 25 March and are all subject to regulatory approval.