

Tankers

‘Do not cross’: US warns Hormuz blockade still very much in effect

Threat level ‘severe’ until deal is signed on Friday, military says



US President Donald Trump has agreed a peace deal with Iran. Photo: Scanpix

Gary Dixon

TradeWinds correspondent | London

The US military has warned vessels not to attempt Strait of Hormuz crossings until a peace deal is signed with Iran on Friday.

The Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC), part of Combined Maritime Forces, the US-led coalition that safeguards maritime security in the region, said the threat level remained severe on Monday, despite the two sides agreeing on a deal to reopen the strait, ending restrictions imposed by Iran and the US blockade of Iranian shipments.

“Mariners should expect increased naval presence, enhanced force protection postures, potential VHF hailing and congestion near anchorage areas,” the JMIC added.



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“Do not attempt to cross until explicit direction is given.”

Jyske Bank analyst Haider Anjum said in a note that initial reactions in the shipping industry have been muted.

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AIS data showed no wave of ships heading towards Hormuz on Monday, the analyst added.

“The shipping companies probably want to wait until it is clear that the agreement holds, as we have already had Hormuz ‘open’ for a very short time

twice before,” he said.

The US blockade of Iranian ports remains in effect, restricting all traffic inbound and outbound, the JMIC stressed.

Ships aiding vessels violating the blockade by conducting ship-to-ship transfers are subject to boarding.

“Enforcement actions include disabling and destructive fires upon vessels who do not demonstrate immediate compliance with blockading forces and/or boarding directions,” the centre said.

The JMIC said the blockade is being enforced strictly and rapidly.

“While the maritime warning zone is not intended to impede neutral or merchant shipping, vessels should make their intentions clear, particularly demonstrating that they are not intending to visit/depart from an Iranian port,” it said.

Vessels continuing to transit the areas should maintain a stand-off of 30 nautical miles (56 km) from US units to reduce the risk of being mistaken as a threat, it warned.

Stena Bulk chief executive Erik Hanell told TradeWinds his company is taking a cautious approach.



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“We have to wait and see what this means in reality when an agreement is signed, and after that, follow as then agreed,” he told TradeWinds.

South Korea’s HMM, which has had four vessels stranded in the Middle East Gulf since the conflict began, and another targeted, said it is continuing to assess the

situation before making any decisions.

“We are still in the process of verifying the specific transit procedures and security protocols before making any concrete plans,” a spokesperson told TradeWinds.

“As always, the safety of our crew and vessels remains our absolute top priority.”

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