

Tankers

# ‘Still risky’: New body to control rush for Strait of Hormuz exit

Shipping organisations have been drawing up plans to coordinate an expected surge in shipping traffic



Jakob P Larsen Photo: Bimco

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A new navigation body will coordinate the surge of shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz after the signing of an interim US-Iran peace deal.

Senior shipping figures said an announcement was imminent about the launch of a new body that will ensure a safe and orderly exodus to prevent collisions.



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Shipowner organisation Bimco warned of the dangers of an “uncoordinated mass transit” both in and out of the Middle East Gulf. It urged vessels to wait until measures were put in place.

The measures have been coordinated by the International Maritime Organization with details expected to be released in the coming hours.

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IMO secretary general Arsenio Dominguez has said that the first priority was to relieve thousands of seafarers.

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Transits have remained more than 90% down on pre-war levels but ships have gathered in the Gulf of Oman to take potential advantage of the unblocking of oil flows from the region.

The IMO has been working on an evacuation corridor plan since the start of the war, but the scheme has been unworkable while fighting continued and US and Iran vied for control of the strait.

Shipping organisations warned of continuing significant safety and security risks, with key questions remaining unanswered in the memorandum of understanding signed by the two countries.

The central part of the strait is mined and cannot be passed.

The only traffic zones close to Oman and Iran are reportedly free of mines, said Bimco's chief security officer, Jakob Larsen.

The peace deal memo does not offer sufficient information for key aspects of the plan, including the order of ships leaving the Gulf and procedures for naval protection.

The deal obliges the two rivals to gradually lift their blockades in the Strait of Hormuz and the Arabian Sea within 30 days.

“Due to the risk of congestion and navigational incidents in the inshore traffic zones, we still consider it risky for ships to commence transits at this point,” said Larsen.

“To avoid serious risks associated with an uncoordinated mass transit through the narrow inshore traffic zones, we encourage shipowners to consider waiting for further clarification and direction from the international coordination body.”

Tanker owner and operator organisation Intertanko drew up plans in concert with other shipping organisations last month to limit the risks of casualties as stressed and fatigued crews leave the conflict zone.

It said risk of jamming and spoofing may require vessels to navigate using charts rather than rely on electronic systems, adding to the potential risks during the operation.

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