
Tankers

Iran threatens ships using ‘dangerous’ new IMO Strait of Hormuz route

Navy says passage only possible on routes it authorises



An Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps speedboat approaches the cargo ship Epaminondas during what state media described as the seizure of one of two vessels accused of violations in the Strait of Hormuz in April. Photo: Scanpix

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Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has warned vessels against using routes laid out in a new Middle East Gulf exit plan by the International

Maritime Organization.

The navy said safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz is possible only on Iranian terms, the Tasnim news agency reports.



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“Hours ago, some authorities announced a new route for vessel traffic in the Strait of Hormuz without informing or coordinating with the Islamic Republic of Iran. This route is unacceptable and completely dangerous,” a statement added.

“We inform all parties that the only authorised routes for crossing the Strait of Hormuz are the routes announced by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Vessel traffic outside these routes is highly dangerous and prohibited, and we warn against any movement outside the declared corridors.”

The IRGC said coordination with the navy via “Channel 16” is mandatory, and “vessels violating the regulations will be dealt with”, the statement concluded.

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The IMO’s queuing systems means ships will be placed in different groups and assigned a day to leave via a temporary maritime corridor close to the Oman coastline, according to a 16-point plan for the exodus.

The plan said a “gradual and controlled” evacuation is required because of the risk of collision.

The IMO estimates that up to 600 ships and 11,000 seafarers are looking to leave the region in the aftermath of an interim peace deal struck by Iran and the US.

When ships arrive at the waiting area, they will be asked which of two corridors they want to use.

The route outlined by the Oman advisory is one, with the second passing close to the Iranian side of the strait.

An IMO spokesperson told Reuters ships had started using the scheme.

“Ships have already begun to pass under the plan,” the source said, without providing details.

LSEG tracking data showed at least two bulkers and a cargo vessel had exited the Gulf under the plan on Wednesday.

Three tankers carrying 5m barrels of crude were also leaving, but it was not clear if they used the IMO routes.



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At least 35 vessels, mostly dry bulk and container units, were preparing to exit via the scheme.

“The (IMO) framework was developed due to the continued degradation of navigational safety within the strait and concerns over elevated collision risks,”

maritime security company Vanguard said.

“Shipowners and masters remain responsible for conducting independent voyage risk assessments prior to participation. Vessel movements may be suspended at any time for safety, security, or naval deconfliction purposes.”

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