

Tankers

Iran re-closes Strait of Hormuz as Lebanon dispute threatens peace deal

Tehran declares shipping halt as vessel movements and enforcement remain unclear



Vessels at the Strait of Hormuz, as seen from Musandam, Oman. Photo: Scanpix

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Iran has again declared the Strait of Hormuz closed, blaming what it says are US and Israeli violations of a memorandum of understanding intended to end

hostilities.

The declaration raises fresh uncertainty for tanker, LNG and LPG operators trading through one of the world's most important energy chokepoints.

It remains unclear whether commercial shipping has been halted.



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According to Mehr News Agency on 20 June, Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters said Hormuz would be closed to vessel traffic.

It was claimed that the US had failed to uphold commitments under the Islamabad MoU signed between the US and Iran on 18 June.

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The military command described the closure as the “first step” in Tehran's response to what it called Washington's breach of the agreement and Israel's continued military actions in southern Lebanon.

Iranian officials argue that the first clause of the memorandum required an end to military operations across all fronts, including Lebanon.

Tehran says it has fulfilled its obligations, while the US failed to ensure Israel complied with the arrangement.

Foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei told Iranian media that violations of the agreement's first clause placed the entire memorandum in doubt, warning that failure to address the issue could create "serious problems" for the broader deal.

Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi separately said the Americans would bear responsibility for any violations of the memorandum and their consequences, according to a statement released by the foreign ministry on 19 June.

The most significant detail for shipping may be that maritime access through Hormuz appears to have been explicitly linked to the broader diplomatic package.

According to details published by Mehr News Agency, Washington had committed to gradually lifting restrictions affecting Iranian oil exports, banking, insurance, transport and maritime activity.

Iran pledged to facilitate secure commercial navigation through the Middle East Gulf and Strait of Hormuz.

That suggests it may now be using access to Hormuz as leverage in a dispute over implementation of the agreement rather than as a purely military measure.

The latest announcement came despite signs that diplomatic channels remained open, with US-Iran talks in Switzerland still under discussion after an earlier meeting was postponed.

Iran had dispatched a negotiating team to Switzerland for prospective talks, even as it announced the renewed closure of Hormuz, according to Iranian state TV cited by Bloomberg.

Bloomberg also cited US vice president JD Vance as saying Washington had not seen evidence that Iran was actively shutting down the waterway.

That apparent contradiction highlights the central question facing shipowners, charterers and insurers: whether Tehran's declaration will translate into operational restrictions on shipping.



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Iran moves to tighten control over Strait of Hormuz

Recent vessel movements indicate that traffic has continued to transit Hormuz using routes close to both the Iranian and Omani coasts, although security risks remain elevated.

Iran's military command warned that further measures could follow if what it described as enemy violations continue, raising concerns that additional restrictions affecting commercial shipping could still be introduced.

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