

The Return to Certainty: Why Global Trade is Flowing Back to the Suez Canal

A Data-Driven Analysis of a Restored Global Artery | December 2025

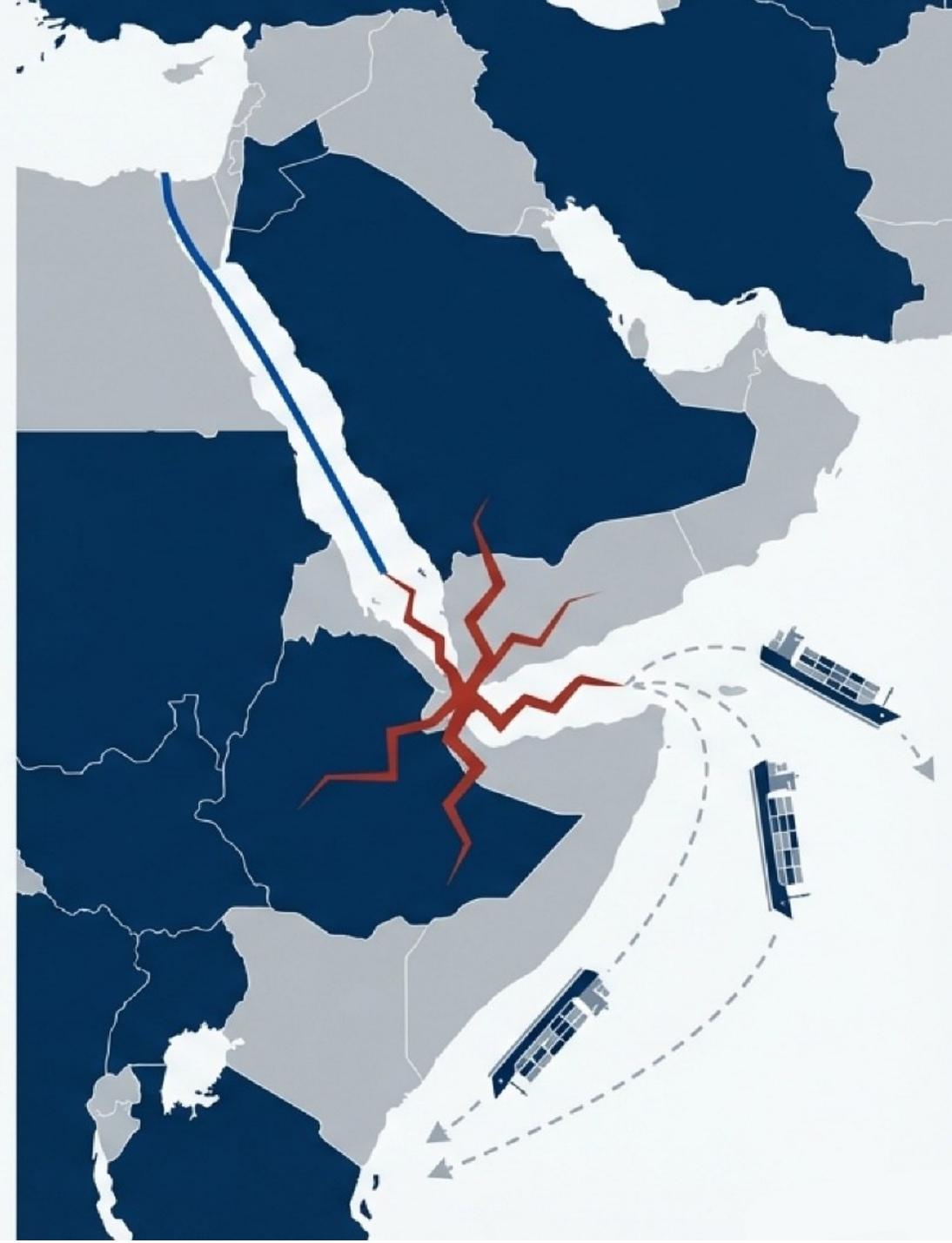


The Red Sea Crisis Caused an Unprecedented Disruption to Global Maritime Trade

66.6%

Decrease in tonnage transiting the Suez Canal in 2024, as Houthi attacks forced shipping lines to seek alternative routes.

This crisis starkly highlighted the strategic importance of the Suez Canal, revealing the profound impact of its disruption on the maritime transport market, international trade, and global supply chains.



The Shockwaves Were Felt Across the Global Economy and Environment



Skyrocketing Costs

+255% increase in container freight rates to Northwest Europe. **+146%** increase on the Far East-Mediterranean route.



Operational Delays

+10 to 14 days added to voyage durations via the Cape of Good Hope.



Surging Emissions & Fuel Burn

~38% increase in CO₂ emissions and a **40%** increase in average fuel costs per voyage.



Rising Inflation & Insurance

War risk insurance premiums surged to **~2%** of a ship's value
The crisis contributed to a global inflation rate of **5.8%** in 2024.

The Cape of Good Hope: An Unsustainable and Operationally Challenging Alternative



The Cape route is practically **difficult to adopt** as a permanent option, requiring massive, unrealistic investments in ports, supply chains, and new vessel designs.



Significant Cost Increases: Due to longer durations and higher fuel consumption.



Limited Port Coverage: Negatively impacting the reach of global supply chains.



Increased Transshipment: Leading to cargo delays and severe port congestion.



Crew Welfare Strain: Resulting from prolonged and arduous sea voyages.



Lack of Services: The route lacks the robust maritime services and infrastructure

A Guardian, Not a Victim: The SCA's Proactive Efforts Throughout the Crisis

Unwavering Client Support



Emergency repair and maintenance services.



Maritime and ambulance services.



Marine salvage and pollution control.



Crew change and full logistical services.

Enhancing Waterway Efficiency



Modernizing the dredging and tugboat fleets.



Completing the Southern Section Development Project Feb 2025.



Developing the pilotage system for enhanced safety and efficiency.



"Global shipping lines affirmed the Cape of Good Hope is not a viable alternative and expressed their desire to resume Suez transit once security conditions stabilized."



Building Confidence with Strategic, Flexible, and Supportive Pricing Policies



15% Discount

A circular was issued granting a significant discount for giant container ships



2025 Transit Tolls Frozen

Providing cost certainty and stability for partners planning their return.



Rebates Extended

Validity of rebate circulars for all vessel types extended until the end of June 2026.



Continuous Flexibility

A stated commitment to ongoing flexible marketing policies to support the industry's recovery.

The Tides of Certainty Are Turning: A New Era of Stability in the Region



October 2025

Egypt hosts the **Global Peace Conference** in Sharm El-Sheikh, leading to a signed agreement to end the war in Gaza.

Post-Agreement: Houthis announce the suspension of attacks on Israel and commercial vessels in the Red Sea.

Future Outlook

Egypt to host an international conference for Gaza's reconstruction, signaling de-escalation. Talks of a 'Peace Council' to manage the political situation by early 2026.

The First Wave: Navigation Movement is Showing Gradual and Consistent Improvement



Lloyd's List Report

Experts recorded a gradual improvement... rising to over **220-250 transits per week** by November 2025.

+23%

Increase in traffic through Bab el-Mandeb in November 2025 post-agreement.



The return includes all major ship types. Crucially, tankers carrying hazardous cargo (LNG, Chemicals, LPG) have resumed transit after a near-total halt.

Titans of Trade Lead the Way: CMA CGM Re-establishes Key Suez Services

Case Study 1: Major Vessels Return

In November 2025, CMA CGM diverted two 17,859 TEU ships back to the Suez Canal:

- CMA CGM BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
- CMA CGM ZHENG HE

In Addition to

- CMA CGM JULES VERNE
- CMA CGM HELIUM

These were the largest container ships to transit the canal in two years.

Case Study 2: Full Service Restoration

The INDAMEX service (Asia - US East Coast) was restored, becoming the first full service to transit Suez since the crisis began.



The Momentum is Building Across All Segments

The Return of Giant Car Carriers (RO-RO)

BYD 'XI AN'
(9,200 CEU) transited
in October 2025.



ANJI PROSPERITY
(9,500 CEU) transited
in November 2025.

The Largest Container Ship Since the Crisis



Crowning the return, CMA CGM
transit of the **CMA CGM JACQUES SAADE**

(~24,000 TEU)

25 of December 2025.

A Landmark Agreement with Maersk Signals a New Era of Partnership and Trust

During the crisis, Maersk routed vessels via Suez but cautiously avoided Bab el-Mandeb.

December 2025: Maersk Line and the Suez Canal Authority signed a **Strategic Partnership Agreement**.



This agreement is considered a fundamental step toward Maersk resuming full and normal transit through Bab el-Mandeb.



With industry leaders like CMA CGM and Maersk making firm commitments, other major lines are expected to follow suit rapidly.

For the first time in two years



The Suez Canal witnesses the transit of the mega container ship **CMA CGM JACQUES SAADE**, one of the largest container ships in the world, signaling the full capacity return of the French Group's vessels.



The container ship **MAERSK SEBAROK** also transited through the Canal as part of the northbound convoy after transiting through Bab el-Mandab strait.

The Compelling Economics of Returning to the Canal



Plummeting Risk & Insurance Costs

War Risk Insurance premiums have dropped to **0.2% of hull value**, their lowest levels since November 2023.



Normalizing Freight Rates

Spot rates have dropped from a peak of **~\$5,000/TEU** to **nearly \$1,500**, approaching pre-crisis levels and restoring the Suez route's competitiveness.



Overcoming Operational Chaos

- **Solving Structural Imbalances:** Returning to Suez corrects the weekly schedule misses on the Far East-Europe trade.
- **Easing Port Congestion:** The shorter Suez route helps operators compensate for waiting times at European ports that exceeded **10 days**.

Recognized Resilience: A Restored Artery for Global Trade

International Praise

Offshore Energy: Praised the Canal's resilience, citing a European study confirming it as the "shortest, fastest, and most sustainable route."

India Shipping News: Highlighted the Canal's "operational flexibility and central role."

TradeWinds: Commended SCA efforts to increase traffic despite challenges.

Global Recognition of Leadership



In December 2025, Admiral Osama Rabie, Chairman of the SCA, was named one of the Top 100 for leading an intensive campaign to restore confidence and accelerate the return of global shipping lines.



With global confidence restored and traffic steadily increasing, the Suez Canal is poised to return to its normal, vital role at the heart of international commerce.