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# Vessel arrivals in the Strait of Hormuz: who is transporting Iraq's oil?

20-03-2026

## Authors

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**Summary :** Iran is allowing vessels not considered to belong to “enemies” to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, as traffic through the waterway has dropped to its lowest daily level in five years. A total of 111 vessels have passed during the current period of war, including 40 oil tankers.

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Among oil-producing and exporting countries, Iraq is one of the most affected by the disruption. The number of vessels transporting Iraqi oil from the ports of Basra and Umm Qasr through the Strait has fallen to about one-third of normal levels - a decline previously seen only during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Vessel arrivals through Iraq's ports**

According to data from the International Monetary Fund and Oxford's PortWatch platform, which tracks daily activity at Umm Qasr and Basra, the number of vessels transporting oil and goods to and from Iraq fell to 77 by March 22, 2026.

Of those, 40 vessels carried oil and petroleum products, while 37 transported other goods, including chemicals, food, and commodities, primarily for import into Iraq.

Before the war, in February 2026, a total of 220 vessels operated through Iraqi ports - 112 carrying oil and petroleum products and 108 importing goods. Nearly 99 percent of Iraq's exports consist of oil and petroleum products.

During the current conflict, vessel traffic has fallen to levels comparable to late 2019 and early 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted global shipping. In March 2020, for example, Iraqi ports recorded 78 vessel arrivals, including 33 oil tankers and 45 carrying other goods.

In terms of tonnage, vessels departing Iraqi ports during the war carried a total of 852,899 metric tons, of which 510,000 metric tons were oil. Meanwhile, incoming vessels transported 513,918 metric tons, including 72,000 metric tons of petroleum products.

### **Iraq's oil exports and Hormuz risks**

Since mid-2023, vessel traffic from Iraq has doubled, driven largely by increased oil tanker activity. In June 2023, there were 194 vessels - 93 oil tankers and 101 carrying other goods - rising to 301 vessels by mid-2024, including 195 oil tankers.

Iraq typically exports oil through the Strait of Hormuz using between 85 and 104 vessels per month, accounting for around 95 percent of its total oil exports. Disruptions now threaten daily exports of between 3.2 and 3.4 million barrels.

**Table 1: Iraqi Oil Export since June 2025 to February 2026**

**SOMO Iraq Oil Exports – Vessel Database & Ownership Summary**

June 2025 – Feb 2026 | Basrah Medium, Basrah Heavy, Kirkuk/Ceyhan Crude

Monthly Export Volumes (BBL)						
Month	Basrah Medium	Basrah Heavy	Kirkuk/Ceyhan	Total (BBL)	Avg BM (KBPD)	Avg BH (KBPD)
Jun-2025	63,427,540	34,291,864	0	97,719,404	2,114	1,143
Jul-2025	66,227,958	38,027,185	0	104,255,143	2,136	1,227
Aug-2025	66,168,850	37,726,856	0	103,895,706	2,134	1,217
Sep-2025	64,939,444	37,210,918	0	102,150,362	2,165	1,240
Oct-2025	66,078,192	38,737,914	5,834,864	110,650,970	2,132	1,250
Nov-2025	61,469,294	37,240,501	7,583,733	106,293,528	2,049	1,241
Dec-2025	62,893,443	37,526,605	5,997,527	106,417,575	2,029	1,211
Jan-2026	63,529,651	37,630,699	6,455,871	107,616,221	2,049	1,214
Feb-2026	59,328,884	34,020,596	5,551,610	98,901,090	2,119	1,215
<b>TOTAL (8 Months)</b>	<b>574,063,256</b>	<b>332,413,138</b>	<b>31,423,605</b>	<b>937,899,999</b>	<b>18,927</b>	<b>10,958</b>

| Sources: SOMO Reports + Maritime Databases

## Which countries transport Iraq's oil?

Over eight months, companies and countries transported 574 million barrels of Basra Medium crude, 332 million barrels of Basra Heavy crude, and 31 million barrels from fields in the Kurdistan Region.

Only three vessels involved in these shipments were linked to US entities, owned by the international company Seaway.

Most vessels transporting Iraqi oil sailed under flags from other countries. The largest share operated under the Marshall Islands flag (15.6 percent), followed by Liberia (9.6 percent), Greece (9.3 percent), India (8.3 percent), and Hong Kong (6.3 percent).

By March 20, more than 3,000 vessels were gathered near the Strait of Hormuz, unable to pass due to the closure. From March 1 to March 22, only 111 vessels transited the Strait, including 40 oil tankers - significantly lower than February levels, when daily traffic was much higher.

**Table 2: Vessels of the countries that have transported Iraqi oil from June 2025 to February 2026.**

Flag / Vessel Month	Jun-2025	Jul-2025	Aug-2025	Sep-2025	Oct-2025	Nov-2025	Dec-2025	Jan-2026	Feb-2026	Overall %
Marshall Islands	12.5%	13.2%	20.8%	21.4%	18.3%	12.2%	10.3%	10.6%	18.5%	15.6%
Liberia	5.1%	11.2%	4.3%	8.7%	13.2%	5.0%	9.2%	16.2%	10.7%	9.6%
Greece	8.4%	10.2%	9.3%	11.3%	6.7%	8.8%	8.8%	10.2%	8.1%	9.3%
India	8.9%	9.2%	4.4%	8.8%	8.9%	9.4%	5.7%	8.9%	13.7%	8.3%
Hong Kong	4.9%	7.2%	7.3%	5.8%	3.7%	5.0%	2.9%	3.2%	17.8%	6.3%
Panama	8.0%	3.7%	2.0%	1.9%	3.7%	5.6%	3.6%	2.7%	12.2%	4.8%
China	4.0%	5.0%	5.1%	0.7%	8.0%	0.0%	3.9%	2.7%	4.2%	3.7%
Singapore	2.0%	0.0%	8.1%	3.1%	1.8%	1.8%	2.9%	1.4%	3.8%	2.8%
Japan	2.0%	1.7%	1.2%	1.9%	3.6%	1.8%	1.9%	1.7%	0.0%	1.8%
Malaysia	2.2%	1.8%	1.0%	8.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	1.0%	8.9%
Malta	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%	3.5%	0.8%
Taiwan	0.5%	1.4%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	1.8%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
Indonesia	0.8%	0.4%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.8%
Cambodia	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	1.0%	0.2%
Turkiye	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.2%
Portugal	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.1%
Oman	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.1%
Belgium	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.1%
Turkiye	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Bahamas	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Libya	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Other / Unverified	46.7%	32.7%	34.2%	38.7%	34.1%	43.2%	43.6%	33.0%	0.0%	34.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Although Iraq has reduced production by 3.2 million barrels per day, and the remaining production of above 1 million is being used domestically, the reopening of the Strait would allow dozens of tankers currently waiting off Basra and Umm Qasr to resume exports.

If Iran allows more vessels to pass in the coming days, Iraq could resume exporting up to 70 percent of its oil to Asian markets, as most tankers transporting Iraqi crude are not affiliated with the United States or Israel.