



Date: 4 October 2024

Key Notes

- An average of **~7 384 containers** was handled per day, with **~7 913 containers** projected for next week.
 - Rail cargo handled out of Durban was reported at **3 147** containers, up **↑12%** from last week.
 - Cross-border queue: **↓0,1 hrs**; transit: **↑0,6 hrs**; SA borders: **10,0 hrs (↓32%)**; SADC: **2,9 hrs (↓41%)**.
 - SARS August trade stats – exports: **↓5,0%** (m/m); imports **↑1,8%**; YTD trade surplus: **R89 billion**.
- i. Port operations - General**
- Port operations this week were mainly constrained by inclement weather conditions, equipment breakdowns and shortages.
 - Strong winds, high swells, and vessel ranges represented the main operational constraints at the Port of Cape Town.
 - At the same time, adverse weather and equipment breakdowns ensured operational delays in Durban this week.
 - Our Eastern Cape Ports lost around 50 operational hours due to strong winds, while around 33 operational hours were conceded at the Port of Richards Bay this week due to challenges associated with the marine service.
 - Earlier this week, TNPA initiated a Request for Information (RFI) process for a Multi-Purpose Terminal (MPT) at the Port of Mossel Bay's Quay 4 precinct.
 - Additionally, the latest reports suggest that COSATU has informed NEDLAC of their planned national strike on Monday, 7 October, which may impact port operations.
- ii. Port operations – Performance metrics**
- CTCT stack occupancy for GP containers was recorded at **29%**, reefers at **20%**, and empties at **22%**.
 - The terminal operated with **eight STS cranes, 25 RTGs, and 55 hauliers** towards the end of the week.
 - At midday on Friday, there was **one container** vessel at inner anchorage in Cape Town (and several at outside anchorage).
 - CTCT handled an impressive **~1 159 (↓28%, w/w)** containers a day. An increased average of **~1 423** is projected this week.
 - DCT Pier 1: Stack occupancy was **30%** for GP containers and **remained undisclosed** for reefers.
 - The terminal had **five STS cranes** and an **14 RTGs** in service towards the end of the week.
 - DCT Pier 1 handled **~1 290 (↓12%, w/w)** containers a day, with an increased average of **~1 544** projected this week.
 - Average TTT for DCT Pier 1 this week: **100 minutes (↑20%, w/w)**, with staging time also increasing – to **77 minutes (↑57%, w/w)**.
 - DCT Pier 2: Stack occupancy was at **60%** for GP containers **undisclosed** for reefers.
 - The terminal operated with **11 gangs** on the waterside.
 - The number of available straddle carriers fluctuated widely between **53** and **58** this week.
 - Pier 2 has procured 20 new straddle carriers, with the first batch of four arriving in December 2024 and the rest delivered by May 2025.
 - DCT Pier 2 handled a slightly decreased average of **~3 107 (↑2%, w/w)** containers a day, with a similar average of **~3 206** projected this week.



- Average TTT for DCT Pier 2 this week: **83 minutes** (↓17%, w/w), with staging time of **116 minutes** (↓3%, w/w).
- At midday on Friday, **five** vessels were waiting for Pier 2, **two** for Pier 1, and **three** for Point terminal, with a current estimation of **at least seven additional days added to the schedules** (similar to last week).
- In the last week (28 September to 4 October), rail cargo handled out of Durban was reported at **3 147** containers, up by **↑12%** from the previous week's **2 812** containers.

iii. SARS merchandise trade stats: August:

- SARS released its latest "Merchandise Trade Statistics" for August¹, with the headline showing a preliminary monthly trade surplus of **R5,6 billion**.
- Monthly trade shows that exports decreased by **↓5,0%** from July (m/m), while imports increased by **↑1,8%** (m/m).
- The YTD figures show a trade surplus of **R89,0 billion**, doubling from the **R44,8 billion** trade surplus recorded in 2023.
- Annually, export flows for August 2024 were **R165,6 billion** and **↓8,2%** (y/y) lower compared to August 2023, while import flows were **↓3,1%** lower compared to 2023, having decreased from **R165,1 billion** to **R159,9 billion** in the current period.

iv. Local and cross-border road:

- The median border crossing times at South African borders decreased by nearly **five hours**, averaging **10,0 hrs** (↓32%, w/w) for the week.
- In contrast, the greater SADC region (excluding South African controlled) decreased by around **two hours** and averaged **~2,9 hrs** (↓41%, w/w).
- **Beitbridge operations:**
 - Complaints have increased about drivers being made to wait for over a day due to delays in verifying vehicle contents.
 - Additionally, operations are ending at 8 PM, despite being advertised as 24-hour. However, it's important to note that while the border itself is operational around the clock, customs agents do not work 24/7.
- **Zimbabwe transit fuel duties:**
 - Duties on transit fuels have been reinstated, now covering all three major National Oil Infrastructure Company of Zimbabwe (NOIC) depots after initial rejection.
- **Skilpadshek border post delays:**
 - Queues extended to 13 km on Thursday last week.
- **DRC Customs:**
 - Temporary suspension of access to customs servers from 10 PM on 4 October to 6 October.
 - Operators have been requested to make arrangements in advance.
- **FESARTA partners with North Star Alliance:**
 - FESARTA has partnered with North Star Alliance to offer members medical, breakdown, police, financial, accommodation, and network services in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda.

¹ SARS. 30/09/2024. [Trade Statistics: August 2024](#).



- North Star Alliance is a pioneer in last-mile health for mobile populations and the communities they interact with.²
- In summary, cross-border queue time averaged **~8,7 hours** (down by **~0,1 hours** from the previous week's **~8,7 hours**), indirectly costing the transport industry an estimated **\$13,0 million (R228 million)**. Furthermore, the week's average cross-border transit times hovered around **~6,5 hours** (up by **~0,6 hours** from the **~5,9 hours** recorded in the previous report), at an indirect cost to the transport industry of **\$4,8 million (R84 million)**. As a result, the total indirect cost for the week amounts to an estimated **~\$17,8 million (R311 million)**, up by **~R10 million** or **↑3,6%** from **~R301 million** in the previous report.

v. Global shipping industry

- The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) strike, which began on October 1, 2024, at the US East Coast and Gulf ports, has caused significant disruption across the global container shipping industry.
 - This industrial action, the first on the East Coast since 1977, was triggered after last-minute negotiations failed between the ILA and the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX).
- The strike has severe implications for global shipping schedules and capacity.
 - The delay of vessels on the US East Coast is expected to result in a significant capacity loss, initially estimated at around **774 865 TEU** or **2,5% of the global container fleet** during the first week alone.
- The longer the strike continues, the more significant the backlog of ships waiting to dock at the ports, with potentially **~7%** of the global container fleet tied up if the strike lasts four weeks.³
- The timing of the strike coincided with China's Golden Week holidays, adding further complexity to an already strained global logistics network.
- Freight rates, which had been depressed in recent months, are expected to rebound sharply, especially if the strike continues for over two weeks.
- In terms of operational impacts, more than **60 deep-sea services** from Asia, Europe, and South America are at risk, with many vessels forced to anchor outside East Coast ports or divert to other locations such as the West Coast or Canadian ports.⁴
- According to *Sea Intelligence*, global schedule reliability improved by **↑0,7%** (m/m) to **52,8%** in August 2024, but it remains very low compared to recent years (except for the pandemic highs of 2021-2022).⁵
 - Consequently, schedule reliability remained consistent with the year's trends, ranging between **50%-55%** and **↓10,2%** lower year-on-year.
 - The average delay for late vessel arrivals slightly increased (by **0,03 days**, m/m) to **5,28 days**, which is only surpassed by the pandemic highs of 2021-2022.
 - On an annual basis, the August 2024 figure was **0,62 days** higher.
 - Maersk was the most reliable carrier at **54,7%**, while PIL was the least reliable at **37,2%**.
- Scheduling remains volatile, as Drewry's "*Cancelled Sailings Tracker*" registered a high **13% cancellation rate**.⁶
- Global congestion has slightly improved to around **2,8 million TEU**, accounting for **9% of the global fleet**; however, the aftermath of the US strike is set to impact global fluidity.⁷

² [North Star Alliance](#).

³ Murphy, A. 02/10/2024. [Impact on Capacity due to Strike at USEC Ports](#).

⁴ Van Marle, G. 03/10/2024. [Port strike will see 60 more ships at anchor this week and rates rising](#).

⁵ Murphy, A. 30/09/2024. [Global schedule reliability remains stable at 50%-55% in 2024](#).

⁶ Drewry. 04/10/2024. [Cancelled Sailings Tracker](#).

⁷ Linerlytica. 30/09/2024. [Market Pulse – Week 38](#).



- In South Africa, port congestion at the Port of Durban improved slightly this week, as Durban recently registered decent throughput numbers.
- Some **19 500 TEU** is currently outside at anchorage. As such, the queue-to-berth ratio at Durban was **0,61**⁸.
- Drewry's "*World Container Index*" recorded another similar drop this week, as the composite index is down by **↓5,5%** (or **\$202**), trading at **\$3 489 per 40-ft container**.⁹
 - Compared to just two months ago, the average spot prices are now down by over **\$2 150**.
- Meanwhile, charter rates have finally started to follow suit, as the *Harper Petersen Index* (Harpex) traded around **1 943 points** (**↓1%**, w/w) on Friday.
- Other developments included Deutsche Bahn supervisory board approving DSV bid for DB Schenker.

vi. International air industry – South Africa

- The daily average of air cargo handled at ORTIA in the previous week amounted to **591 565 kg** inbound (**↑5%**, w/w) and **452 816 kg** outbound (**↑3%**), resulting in an average of **1 044 381 kg**.
- This week's increase again sees the average cargo breaching a ton a day, with comparative figures significantly up versus prior years, as the industry is around **↑33%** versus September 2023 and still up again versus pre-pandemic levels (**↑16%** versus September 2019).
- Consolidated domestic air freight volumes for our three primary airports are collectively down versus the same time last month (**↓17%**, m/m) and last year (**↓49%**, y/y).
- Individually, the following movements have been observed for August:
 - Johannesburg cargo decreased monthly by **↓28%** (m/m) and annually by a massive **↓58%** (y/y).
 - Cape Town cargo increased monthly by **↑2%** (m/m) but decreased and annually by **↓28%** (y/y).
 - Durban cargo decreased monthly by **↓8%** (m/m) and annually by a significant **↓60%** (y/y).

vii. International air industry

- IATA released its latest "*Air Cargo Market Analysis*" for August, with a ninth consecutive double-digit increase for air cargo and the second straight month with record year-to-date demand levels.¹⁰
- Global cargo tonne-kilometres (CTK) increased by **↑11,4%** (y/y) in August, as international CTKs added **↑12,4%** (y/y) relative to last year, driven by growth in all regions and major trade lanes.
- Global air cargo capacity, measured in available cargo tonne-kilometres (ACTK), saw **↑6,2%** (y/y) growth in August, seeing slower growth than in the months prior but at the same time delivering record capacity levels.
- In August 2024, African carriers recorded a **↑7,5%** (y/y) increase in international CTKs, reflecting the region's resilience in the global air cargo market despite broader challenges.
 - Notably, trade lanes between Africa and Asia experienced a significant **↑21,1%** annual surge, partly driven by base effects from the previous year.
 - This route has consistently seen double-digit growth since the second half of 2023, with e-commerce growth being a strong driver.
- In the more frequent metrics, global air cargo tonnage rebounded by **↑2%** in week 39 of 2024 (23-29 September), after a **↓2%** contraction the previous week due to holidays in China, South Korea, and Chile.

⁸ Linerlytica. 04/10/2024. [Port Congestion Watch](#).

⁹ Drewry. 03/10/2024. [World Container Index](#).

¹⁰ IATA. 01/10/2024. [Air Cargo Market Analysis – August 2024](#).



- Worldwide tonnages were up **↑10%** (y/y), driven by recovery from the Asia Pacific (**↑6%**) and Central and South America (**↑4%**) regions.
 - Notable increases were observed in cargoes from China, South Korea, and Taiwan to Europe.
- Strong rate trends, especially from the Asia Pacific, Middle East, and South Asia (MESA) regions, continue due to the e-commerce boom and regional tensions.
 - Rates from Africa rose by **↑4%**, with a **↑17%** increase in spot rates to **\$2,18 per kilogram**, the largest weekly rise globally.
- Average global rates increased by **↑1%** (w/w) to **\$2,61 per kilogram**, with spot rates seeing a **↑4%** (w/w) rise to **\$2,86/kg**.
 - North America and Europe experienced the most significant week-on-week rate increases (**↑6%** and **↑5%**, respectively).