



Date: 16 February 2025

Key Notes

- An average of **~10 428 TEUs** was handled per day, with **~12 123 TEUs** projected for next week.
- Rail cargo handled out of Durban was reported at **2 795** containers, up **↑27%** from last week.
- Truck volumes through Lebombo are down at **1 358 HGVs/day** (**↓7%**), with an average queue of **4,4 km**.
- Cross-border queue: **↓0,1 hrs**; transit: **unchanged**; SA borders: **11,1 hrs** (**↓9%**); SADC: **4,5 hrs** (**↓22%**).
- Global bulk demand is predicted to grow by **↑3,2%**, influenced by geopolitical strains & GHG regulations.

i. Port operations - General

- In our container terminals, a decreased average of **10 428 TEUs** was handled per day, down from **10 938 TEUs** last week.
 - For the coming week, an increased average of **~12 123 TEUs** (**↑16%**) is predicted to be handled.
- Port operations were mainly constrained by adverse weather conditions, as well as equipment breakdowns and shortages.
 - The Port of Cape Town conceded more than 40 operational hours this week to adverse weather, while the main operational constraints in Durban proved to be adverse weather and continuous equipment breakdowns.
 - Inclement weather conditions mainly impacted operations at our Eastern Cape Ports, while minimal delays were reported at the Port of Richards Bay.
 - The latest reports from Maersk suggest that the Kalahari Express/250N will omit Cape Town and sail to Europe from Durban.
 - The Durban helicopter remained out of commission this week as the technical team is currently performing maintenance operations on the aircraft.
 - Additionally, minimal reports were received from TFR this week.
 - The latest reports from Maersk suggest that CTCT seemingly has 2-4 days' waiting time, while CTMPT recorded no waiting times.
 - PECT and Coega, once more, illustrated no waiting time, while the waiting times at Pier 1 and Pier 2 are currently less than a day.

ii. Port operations – Performance metrics

- CTCT stack occupancy for **GP containers was recorded at 35%, reefers at 73%, and empties at 57.**
 - Additionally, the terminal operated with **nine STS cranes, 23 RTGs, and 68 hauliers** towards the end of the week.
 - This marks the first time the terminal had all nine STS cranes operational.
 - Despite the improvement in equipment availability, the recent increase in container vessels waiting in the queue is a cause for concern.
 - On Monday evening, there were 11 container vessels outside at anchorage, with Cape Town appearing on the first page of Linerlytica's "*Port Congestion Watch*" for the first time since our records began.
 - The current queue-to-berth ratio is around **2,0**, with around **35 000 TEU** at anchorage.¹
- CTCT handled a very low average of **~809 TEUs** (**↓56%**, w/w) containers a day. An increased average of **~2 059** (**↑154%**) is projected this week.
- DCT Pier 1: Stack occupancy was **69%** for **GP containers**.

¹ Linerlytica. 16/02/2025. [Port Congestion Watch](#).



- The terminal operated with **five STS cranes and 12 RTGs** towards the end of the week.
- DCT Pier 1 handled **~2 262 TEUs (↑35%, w/w)** containers a day, with a reduced average of **~1 859 TEUs (↓18%)** projected this week.
 - The **average TTT** for the week was **~98 minutes (↑17%, w/w)** and an average **staging time** of **~99 minutes (↑94%)**.
- DCT Pier 2: Stack occupancy was at **48%** for **GP containers**.
 - The terminal operated with **ten gangs**.
 - The number of available straddle carriers fluctuated between **50** and **57** (out of a designed fleet complement of **88**) this week as the additional diesel-electric straddle carriers have been added to the fleet.
 - Thus, the availability figure sat roughly at **61%** during this period.
 - The most notable crane absentees towards the end of the week were Cranes 520, 522, and 531.
 - Crane 531 is still on course to return to operations around 16 February, while Crane 520 is expected to return to service around 28 February.
 - Crane 522 is anticipated to return to operations around 20 February.
- DCT Pier 2 handled another relatively high average of **~4 629 TEUs (↑5%, w/w)** containers a day, with an increased average of **~5 044 TEUs (↑9%)** projected this week.
 - For the last week, there was an **average TTT** of **~72 minutes (↓15%, w/w)** and a staging time of **~32 minutes (↓56%)**.
 - The queue of container vessels waiting outside Durban remains very low, as vessels are currently berthing on their CTOC arrangements.
 - On Monday evening (17 February), **zero** container vessels were waiting for Pier 1, **one** for Pier 2, and none for Point.
- South Africa's other container terminals produced the following results for the week:
 - Ngqura Container Terminal handled an average of **~1 793 TEUs (↑5%, w/w)** containers a day, with another high average of **~2 151 TEUs (↑20%)** projected this week.
 - Port Elizabeth Container Terminal handled an average of **~55 TEUs (↓80%, w/w)** containers a day, with an increased average of **~178 TEUs (↑224%)** projected this week.
 - Other terminals handled a combined average of **~1 351 TEUs (↑63%, w/w)**, with a significantly decreased average of **~832 TEUs (↓55%)** projected this week.
- At RBCT, the daily average for the week decreased significantly to around **103 000 tons (↓21%, w/w)**.
 - An average of **21 trains** (up by three from last week) were serviced on the landside, still slightly below the target of 22.
- In the last week (3 to 9 February), rail cargo out of Durban was reported at **2 795** containers, up **↑27%** from the previous week's **2 207** containers.

iii. Lebombo update

As of the week spanning 10 to 16 February, cargo flows relatively unabated across the N4 corridor, with only minor issues reported, including **(1)** officials requesting CN1 documents and **(2)** a broken-down truck and stop-and-go blockages. The following notes summarise the recent developments:

- Truck volumes are slightly down versus last week at **1 358 HGVs per day (↓7%, w/w)**, with an average queue of **4,4 km** and an average border time of around **4,5 hours** per crossing.
- Rail to Maputo has increased to **five trains a day** on average in the last week (however, reporting has been inconsistent).
- Sugar trains from Eswatini are constant at around **two trains a day** (reporting again inconsistent).



iv. Local and cross-border road:

- The median border crossing times at South African borders increased by **an hour and a half**, averaging **~11,1 hrs (↓9%, w/w)** for the week.
- In contrast, the greater SADC region (excluding South African controlled) remained unchanged from last week, averaging **~4,5 hrs (↓22%)**.

1. Malhampsen Road Blockage:

- a. Early in the week, trucks were stopped, and keys were taken. No violence was reported, as the road reopened at 16:00 on Monday, and all keys were returned the same day.

2. SARS EDI Delays:

- a. A backlog in EDI responses was reported on Monday due to an unusually high volume.
- In summary, cross-border queue time averaged **~4,9 hours** (down by **~0,1 hours** from the previous week's **~5,0 hours**), indirectly costing the transport industry an estimated **\$4,8 million (R89 million)**. Furthermore, the week's average cross-border transit times hovered around **~5,2 hours** (primarily unchanged from the **~5,2 hours** recorded in the previous report), at an indirect cost to the transport industry of **\$2,9 million (R56 million)**. As a result, the total indirect cost for the week amounts to an estimated **~\$7,7 million (R142 million)**, down by **~R8 million** or **↓18%** from **~R150 million** in the previous report.

v. Global shipping industry

- At a webinar last week, Drewry Maritime Consultants' "*Dry Bulk Shipping Outlook*" provided an in-depth analysis of the market.
- In a base case scenario, global economic growth is expected to be near **↑3%** for 2025 and 2026, with a recovery in industrial activity supported by lower borrowing costs.
 - However, uncertainty remains despite peace agreements in the Red Sea, and vessels continue rerouting via the Cape of Good Hope.
- Drewry projects a **↑3,2%** growth in shipping demand in 2025, influenced by geopolitical tensions and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) regulations, which extend voyage durations via COGH.
- India's crude steel production is set to expand at a CAGR of **↑7,2%**, benefiting demand for iron ore and coking coal.
 - However, China's iron ore imports remain uncertain, reflecting subdued domestic steel demand since 2023.
- Despite persistent geopolitical disruptions and the sharp decline in freight rates, the container market is receiving some respite from ongoing vessel diversions away from the Red Sea and escalating port congestion across Europe.
 - These factors are expected to drive a rate recovery on European routes in March, with freight futures shifting back into contango as forward rates over the next six months trend above current levels.²
- Global port congestion was similar to last week, as some **2,65 million TEU** (around **8% of the global fleet**) is stuck in the system.
- Scheduling has finally settled, as the shipping season is set to pick up after the LNY. Drewry's "*Cancelled Sailings Tracker*" registered a much-reduced **7% cancellation rate** of Pro-forma scheduling (17 February to 23 March).³

² Linerlytica. 17/02/2025. [Market Pulse – Week 7](#).

³ Drewry. 14/02/2024. [Cancelled Sailings Tracker](#).



- Global container spot rates have dropped for a fifth week in a row, as rates dropped by **↓5,4%** this week to **\$3 095 per 40-ft container⁴**, according to Drewry's "World Container Index".
 - Spot rates are **↓17%** less than this time last year (but still **↑118%** above the average pre-pandemic level of **\$1 420** in 2019).
 - All eight routes have dropped or remained stable since last week.
- Meanwhile, charter rates have remained stable (but still elevated), as the *Harper Petersen Index* (Harpex) traded around **2 063 points (↑84%, y/y)** on Friday.
- Labour strikes in the Port of Rotterdam delays operations there.

vi. South African air industry

- The daily average of air cargo handled at ORTIA in the previous week amounted to **564 670 kg** inbound (**↑11%, w/w**) and a more typical **334 530 kg** outbound (**↓39%**) after the elevated throughput last week.
- Cargo is still above the average levels of 2024 (**↑11%, y/y**) and also above the pre-pandemic levels of 2020 (**↑5%**).
- In other domestic aviation news, the ongoing fuel supply remains a cause for concern.
- In early January 2025, a fire at the Natref refinery, which supplies approximately **72%** of OR Tambo International Airport's jet fuel, led to significant concerns about fuel shortages.
- By late January, industry stakeholders secured **121,1 million litres** of jet fuel to sustain operations until the refinery's anticipated reopening at the end of February.⁵

vii. International air industry

- In the high-frequency metrics, air cargo tonnages rebounded slightly (**↑3%**) in week 6 as global air cargo rates dropped by **↓5%** to **\$2,30 per kilogram**, bringing average prices **↓3%** below last year's level.
- However, the later Lunar New Year (LNY) in 2024 distorts comparisons. The decline was primarily driven by an 11% drop in Asia Pacific rates, where spot prices fell **↓8%** to **\$3,56/kg** but remained **↑7%** higher year-on-year.
- A focus remains on the US, as China-US cargo saw a **↓41%** year-on-year drop, worsened by customs disruptions from the temporary revocation of Section 321 de minimis import processing (despite the U-turn amid the confusion⁶).
 - In addition to the confusion surrounding the recent suspension of the de minimis exemption from China, experts predict that US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will require more than the 30-day pause to adequately prepare for the increased processing demands.
 - Some suggest that significant system upgrades are necessary for CBP to effectively handle the anticipated surge in parcel volumes.
- In other air cargo news, e-commerce platforms are reducing flights and capacity as airfreight rates decline, with Chinese shippers shifting from contracts to spot rates.

⁴ Drewry. 13/02/2025. [World Container Index](#).

⁵ SA Gov. 26/01/2025. [Transport on jet fuel secured for OR Tambo International Airport](#).

⁶ Lennane, A. 10/02/2025. [U-turn on de minimis ban, following 'processing issues', as trade war heats up](#).