



Date: 11 January 2026

Key Notes

- An average of ~6 187¹ TEUs were handled per day, with ~6,840 TEUs projected for next week.
- TNPA Dec: TEUs: ↓4% (m/m), ↑9% (y/y) & ↑3,2% (YTD). Bulk: ↓2% (m/m), ↓2% (y/y) & ↑4,4% (YTD).
- Rail cargo handled out of Durban was reported at 3,872 containers, up by ↑63% from last week.
- Cross-border queue: **unchanged**; transit: ↓0,4 hrs; SA borders: ~8,4 hrs (↓33%); SADC: ~5,2 hrs (**unchanged**).
- IATA reports that global air cargo demand (CTKs) rose ↑5,5% (y/y) in November 2025.

i. Port operations - General

- At our container terminals, an average of 6,189 TEUs was handled daily, a decrease from 7,405 TEUs the previous week.
 - For the coming week, an increased average of ~ 6,840 TEUs (↑11%) is predicted to be handled.
- Port operations were significantly impacted by weather delays across the Eastern and Western Regions, with the KwaZulu-Natal receiving the knock-on effect of their scheduled vessels being delayed at other ports.
- In contrast, most terminals reported a steady rate of equipment availability throughout the first two weeks of the year, with one or two non-operational cranes, in some instances on empty berths.
- In addition, the Durban Auto Terminal announced that they had reached their budgeted volumes well before the financial year end, and continues to outperform their targeted volumes frequently.

ii. TNPA: November update

TNPA has released consolidated port statistics for December, with the full year-to-date figures showing that:

- Container throughput in 2025 totalled 4,473 million TEUs, which is up by ↑3,2% (y/y) on 2024.
- Total bulk cargo in 2025 totalled 221 million tonnes, which is up by ↑4,4% (y/y) on 2024.
- Vehicle throughput in 2025 totalled 899,094 units, which is up by ↑15% (y/y) on 2024.

Considering the specific figures for December, the headline figures indicate that:

- Container throughput in December decreased by ↓4% (m/m), but increased annually by ↑9% (y/y).
- Total bulk cargo decreased monthly by ↓1% (m/m) and annually by ↓2% (y/y).
- Vehicles decreased monthly by ↓10% (m/m), but increased annually by ↑19% (y/y).
- Transnet Port Terminals handled 350 thousand containers and 15 million metric tonnes of bulk cargo during December, which is significantly below the record throughput of last month.
- Vehicle throughput also decreased, coming in at 84,443 units.
- Ultimately, as illustrated, the final figure of 4,473 million TEUs shows that the system has improved in recent years, with the main drivers being (1) new equipment, (2) improved processes across the marine, the quayside, and the landside, and (3) improved collaboration across the industry.

iii. Post operations – Performance Metrics

- CTCT handled an average of ~1 739 TEUs (↑44%, w/w) containers a day, with an average of ~1 910 (↑10%) projected this week.
- DCT Pier 1 had between four and five (out of seven) STS cranes available for the most significant part of the week.

¹ Figures for this week onward exclude volumes handled by DGT, as the data was not available at the time of reporting.



- DCT Pier 1 handled **~1 730 TEUs** (↓13%, w/w) containers a day, with an average of **~1 645** (↓5%) projected this week.
 - The **TTT** for the week averaged **~40 minutes** (↓38%, w/w), and the average **staging time** was **~21 minutes** (↓16%).
- The 25-year Transnet–ICTSI joint venture to operate and further develop Durban Container Terminal Pier Two commenced this week, marking a significant milestone in South Africa’s port reform agenda and Transnet’s strategy to crowd in private sector participation in strategic operations.
 - The partnership is expected to raise DCT2’s container handling capacity from **2,0 to 2,8 million TEUs** through new equipment and advanced technology, while materially improving operational performance, including crane productivity and ship working hours.
- The terminal has shown little to no vessels at anchorage, with an average of two to three vessels on berth, and a complement of around 10 out of 15 cranes available throughout the past week.
 - The **TTT** for the week averaged **~67 minutes** (↓8%, w/w), and the average **staging time** was **~51 minutes** (↑59%).
- The queue of container vessels waiting outside Durban decreased this week.
 - On Monday evening (12 January), **no** container vessels were waiting outside at anchorage for either Pier 1, Pier 2, or Point.
 - The queue of dry (**two**), liquid (**two**), and breakbulk (**two**) vessels, on the other hand, was stable compared to last week.
- South Africa’s other container terminals produced the following results for the week at all other terminals:
 - Ngqura Container Terminal handled an average of **~1 995 TEUs** (↓33%, w/w) containers a day, with an average of **~1 922 TEUs** (↓4%) projected this week.
 - Port Elizabeth Container Terminal handled an average of **~124 TEUs** (↓82%) containers a day, with an average of **~366 TEUs** (↑195%, w/w) projected this week.
 - Other terminals handled a combined average of **~601 TEUs** (↑6%, w/w), with an average of **~997 TEUs** (↑66%) projected this week.
- At RBCT, the daily average coal throughput for the week decreased significantly (far a great end of/start to the year) and averaged around **127,000 tons** (↓42%, w/w) a day.
 - An average of **24 trains** was serviced on the landside (up by **two** from last week), and slightly above the target (of 22 trains).
- In the last week (*5 to 11 January*), rail cargo on the ConCor line out of Durban was reported at **3,872** containers, up by **↑63%** from the previous week’s **2,380** containers.
- At the start of 2026, South Africa welcomed the approval of the AGOA Extension Bill by the US House of Representatives, which proposes a three-year reauthorisation of AGOA until 2028 and now proceeds to the Senate, offering short-term relief and renewed certainty for firms amid heightened US tariff pressures.
 - The decision reinforces the strategic SA–US trade relationship—worth **\$15 billion in 2024**, with South Africa running a surplus—and underpins continued engagement on reciprocal tariff arrangements to address trade barriers and deepen investment ties.

iv. Lebombo border post update

In the last week (*5 to 11 January*), movements increased substantially for road transport – recovering from the Festive Season, while reporting for rail transport was sparse.

- Truck volumes through the border post increased to around **1,300 HGVs per day** (↑20%, w/w).



- Queue times were stable at an average of **~2,8 hours** at the border.
- The average processing time decreased to an average of **~2,5 hours** per crossing.

v. SADC cross-border road freight update

- Overall, the average queue time was unchanged from last week, while transit time decreased by about **20 minutes**.
- The median border crossing times at South African borders decreased by more than **four hours**, averaging **~8,4 hrs (↓33%)** for the week.
- In contrast, the greater SADC region (excluding South African-controlled) was essentially unchanged, averaging **~5,2 hrs**.

1. Zambia — toll fee increases and new toll infrastructure:

- a. The **National Road Fund Agency (NRFA) in Zambia** has **increased toll fees** on all NRFA toll plazas, as well as on the Tre toll plaza on the **Lusaka–Ndola road**.
- b. The toll increases **apply to Medium, Heavy, and Abnormal Goods Vehicles** only, indicating a targeted policy affecting commercial freight operations.
- c. Figures indicate toll fees have risen from **\$60 to \$90** for the affected categories.
- d. A **new toll gate is planned near Mazabuka**, though details on timing, design or tariff structure are pending further notification.
- e. Stakeholder engagement is in motion, led by FESARTA, with the stated intention to **intervene on behalf of transporters** regarding the fee increase.

2. Botswana/South Africa border — Groblersbrug planning:

- a. **Botswana Motorists' Association (BMA)** reports **plans to relocate the Groblersbrug border facility** in response to heightened traffic volumes.
 - b. The increased traffic is attributed to transporters **preferring the Botswana route**, likely in pursuit of operational efficiencies or congestion avoidance on alternative corridors.
 - c. As part of this strategic adjustment, a **new freight-dedicated bridge** is proposed to mitigate congestion; however, specifics on **location, timeline, and implementation strategy** remain undefined at this stage.
- In summary, cross-border queue time averaged **~5,2 hours** (unchanged from the previous week's **~5,2 hours**), indirectly costing the transport industry an estimated **\$15,3 million (R252 million)**. Furthermore, the week's average cross-border transit times also hovered around **~5,6 hours** (down by **~0,4 hours** from the **~6,1 hours** recorded in the previous report), at an indirect cost to the transport industry of **\$8,6 million (R141 million)**. The total indirect cost for the week amounts to an estimated **~\$23,8 million (R392 million)**, down by **↓2,7%** from the **~R403 million** in the previous report.

vi. Global trade

- Global trade and economic activity enter 2026 against a backdrop of slower growth, policy uncertainty, and structural realignment.
 - According to UNCTAD's *Global Trade Update*, the trade momentum that delivered a strong performance in 2025 is expected to moderate in 2026 as headwinds from slowing global growth, geopolitical fragmentation, and tighter national regulations take effect.
 - Global output is projected to grow at around **2,6–2,7% in 2026**, marginally below 2025 and below the pre-pandemic trend, with investment remaining subdued across most regions.

**vii. Global shipping industry**

- The latest container throughput figures from *Container Trade Statistics* (CTS) show that container volume increased slightly in November, but is significantly up versus the corresponding period last year.
 - Consequently, in brief, the peak season did not materialise (as expected), although throughput for the year exceeded expectations.
 - The total throughput is up by **↑0,9%** monthly and up by **↑7,2%** (y/y) annually.
- Regionally, it was a mix, as some trade lanes experienced increases in November, notably Sub-Saharan imports at **↑8,4%** and European imports at **↑7,0%**, respectively.
 - On the other hand, the most significant decreases were with Sub-Saharan exports – down by **↓6,9%** versus October.
- Throughput in October reached **16,6 million TEUs** – some **220 thousand containers** below the record level achieved last in August this year.
- SSA imports and exports went in divergent directions in November. Annually, SSA imports remain significantly up (**↑25%**, y/y) – with exports up by **↑5,3%** (y/y).
- The global container shipping industry in early 2026 continues to navigate a complex mix of supply–demand imbalances, route shifts, and rate volatility.
- Spot freight rates have shown a pre-Chinese New Year bounce on major ex-Asia trades, though carriers and shippers remain cautious amid weak overall demand.
- Structural overcapacity persists, with fleet growth outpacing projected cargo growth and exerting downward pressure on rates, particularly across Asia–Europe and transpacific corridors.
- Global freight rates increased significantly over the Festive Period, with the “*World Container Index*” (WCI) up by **↑17,2%** (or **\$375**) between the last measurement of 2025 and the first of 2026. Therefore, the index is now trading at **\$2 557 per 40-ft container**.
- Elsewhere, the charter market remains stable, with the *Harpex Index* trading at **2,182 points**.

viii. South African air cargo industry

- International air cargo to South Africa was significantly reduced this week. The daily average of air cargo handled amounted to **~294,381 kg** inbound (**↓33%**, w/w) and **~230,406 kg** outbound (**↓20%**).
 - Consequently, because of the reduction, the current levels are significantly below last year’s level (**~↓37%**) and the comparative levels of pre-pandemic 2019 (**~↓35%**), as volumes across the New Year period in January typically reduce significantly.
- Despite the slowdown towards the end of the year, total air freight to and from ORTIA in 2025 totalled **350 million kilograms**, which is up by **↑0,7%** (y/y) on the 2024 total year-to-date air freight.

ix. International air industry

- The latest IATA “*Air Cargo Market Analysis*” for November reports that global air cargo demand, measured in Cargo Tonne-Kilometres (CTKs), rose **↑5,5%** (y/y) in November 2025, driven by strong activity in emerging markets and peak-season shipments, with **international CTKs up about ↑6,9%**.
- Available capacity (ACTK) expanded by **↑4,7%** (y/y), resulting in a modestly improved **cargo load factor (~49,1%)**, indicating demand slightly outpaced capacity growth.
- According to high-frequency metrics from World ACD, worldwide air cargo volumes remained resilient into late December and early January, with December closing at **↑7%** (y/y) growth in chargeable weight, lifting full-year 2025 tonnages to a new record despite softer pricing conditions.



- Growth persisted into November at **↑5%** (y/y), although Week 48 softened slightly (**↓3%**, w/w) due to the North American holiday effect.
- Regional performance was uneven, led by substantial gains in **Africa and Asia-Pacific**, while North and Latin America lagged. Rates continued to firm, reflecting improving demand fundamentals.
- In other aviation news, severe winter weather across parts of Europe disrupted air cargo operations over the year-end period, with snow and ice causing airport closures, flight cancellations, and knock-on delays across major hubs.