

Kpler Media Briefing

Middle East Energy and Maritime Disruptions

Flow data as of Tuesday, 20 October 2026 (T-2, to reduce day-to-day revision noise)

Prepared Thursday, 22 October 2026. Kpler Insight and Kpler platform data only

1. Executive summary and key price drivers

Oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz remain below pre-war levels, and the latest daily readings are preliminary floors. Total Hormuz clearance ranged from 3,101 kbd on 20 October to 24,590 kbd on 18 October. The 7-day average of 13,047 kbd sits at about 76% of the pre-war baseline of 17,147 kbd. The Kpler Cross Commodity Weekly published on 20 October shows WTI up 10.4% and Brent up 4.9% on the week. Kpler Insight puts ICE Brent futures at around \$110/bbl, with record freight rates holding delivered crude costs high. The East-West Pipeline has been operational since at least 22 September, and satellite imagery shows loadings continuing on both Saudi coasts.

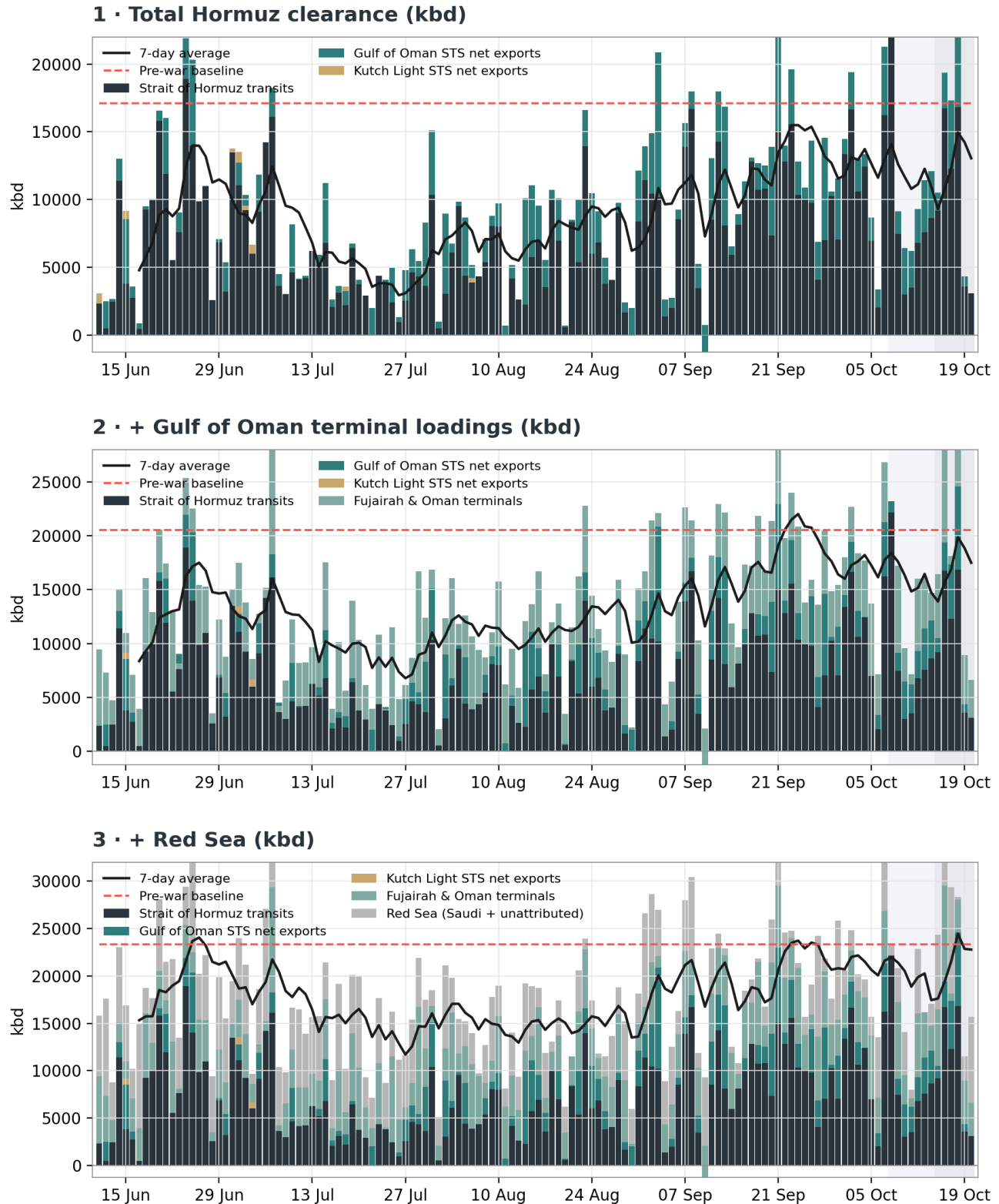
Explore these flows in the new [Middle East Flows dashboard](#) in the Kpler terminal. It brings Strait of Hormuz transits, Gulf of Oman ship-to-ship net exports and Red Sea exports together in one view.

Middle East Regional Flows (kbd)

Middle East Regional Flows (kbd)	20 Oct	19 Oct	18 Oct	17 Oct	7-day MA	Pre-War Baseline
Strait of Hormuz Transits	3,101	3,567	16,835	12,261	10,043	17,147
Gulf of Oman STS Net Exports	0	764	7,756	5,074	3,004	0
Kutch Light STS Net Exports	0	0	0	0	0	0
1. Total Hormuz Clearance	3,101	4,331	24,590	17,335	13,047	17,147
Crude	3,101	2,001	23,258	15,938	11,611	13,499
Products	0	2,330	1,332	1,397	1,436	3,592
Fujairah & Oman Terminals	3,519	4,593	3,429	786	4,440	3,416
2. + Gulf of Oman Terminals	6,620	8,924	28,020	18,121	17,488	20,508
Crude	6,620	6,130	25,543	16,259	15,227	15,674
Products	0	2,794	2,476	1,862	2,261	4,834
Red Sea (Saudi + Unattributed)	9,096	2,561	345	11,238	5,295	2,804
3. + Red Sea	15,716	11,485	28,365	29,359	22,783	23,311
Crude	14,620	7,430	25,543	26,807	19,644	17,013
Products	1,096	4,055	2,822	2,553	3,139	6,298
Strait of Hormuz Tanker Crossings	3	8	17	12	14	50
Enter MEG	1	3	6	4	6	25
Exit MEG	2	5	11	8	8	25

Three cumulative measures of confirmed clearance move outward from the strait itself (1) to Gulf of Oman and Fujairah/Oman terminal loadings (2) and then Red Sea volumes (3). Iranian-origin transits are excluded throughout. Figures are oil only, covering Crude/Co, CPP, DPP and Chem/Bio and excluding NGLs and LNG. Source, Kpler.

Middle East Regional Flows, daily series from 11 June to 20 October



Stacked bars are the confirmed components of each cumulative measure; the solid line is the 7-day average and the dashed line the pre-war baseline. Shaded bands mark the provisional (8 to 14 days) and preliminary (last 7 days) recency tiers, which have typically settled 1.5 to 2 times higher as later confirmations land. The late-June peak reflects the evacuation of cargoes stranded by the outbreak of the war. Source, Kpler.

Table and chart methodology and caveats

- Every figure is a confirmed floor and can revise upward at any horizon. The recency tiers mark where revisions concentrate, not where they stop.
- Reported figures are older than 14 days, provisional figures are 8 to 14 days old, and preliminary figures cover the last 7 days. Preliminary figures have typically settled 1.5 to 2 times higher once confirmations land.
- Gulf of Oman, Kutch Light and Red Sea volumes with no confirmed load terminal capture ship-to-ship cargo net of unmatched arrivals, and they carry no origin attribution. The Iranian-origin exclusion therefore applies to strait transits only.
- Pre-war baselines are averages over March 2025 to February 2026 on the same definitions and product-bucket selection.
- Strait crossings are dated by transit, unattributed ship-to-ship cargo by the date it surfaces or departs, and berth loadings by loading date. Daily totals therefore mix event timings, and the 7-day averages absorb most of that noise.

Primary drivers

- Clearance through the strait remains below the pre-war baseline, while bypass terminals carry a larger share of exports. Section 2 sets out the detail.
- Attacks on commercial vessels and Saudi sites keep a risk premium in freight and crude prices. Section 3 covers maritime risk and section 4 covers Saudi export routes.
- Record freight, rather than a shortage of cargo, now dominates delivered crude costs. Section 3 gives the freight readings.
- Recovering Middle East supply is weighing on Dubai structure and spot differentials as producers compete for buyers. Section 2 covers the supply picture.
- Refined product benchmarks moved in different directions last week, with gasoil and gasoline lower and Singapore fuel oil higher. Section 5 gives the benchmark moves.

2. Chokepoint and transit metrics

A. Strait of Hormuz

Total Hormuz clearance ranged from 3,101 kbd on 20 October to 24,590 kbd on 18 October. Strait transits excluding Iranian-origin vessels ranged from 3,101 to 16,835 kbd over the same 4 days. Gulf of Oman ship-to-ship net exports ranged from 0 to 7,756 kbd. The 19 and 20 October readings are preliminary floors, and such readings have typically settled 1.5 to 2 times higher as confirmations land. Tanker crossings were 3 on 20 October and averaged 14 over 7 days, against a pre-war level of 50.

Bypass routes continue to offset part of the loss. Fujairah and Oman terminal loadings averaged 4,440 kbd over 7 days, about 30% above the pre-war baseline of 3,416 kbd. Kpler Insight reports that at least 10.73 mbd of Persian Gulf crude passed through the strait in October to date, marginally above the 10.66 mbd recorded in September. Total non-Iranian Middle East crude supply to international markets averaged 16.8 mbd, above the 2025 average of 16.3 mbd. Crude production remains about 2.7 mbd below pre-war levels.

That supply is feeding a price war among producers. Kpler Insight notes that Iraq's state marketer SOMO reportedly offered December Basrah cargoes at about \$28/bbl below the official selling price (OSP). Saudi Aramco is also selling spot volumes at steep discounts. China's imports from the region are on track to exceed 5 mbd in October, against 3.5 mbd in September.

B. Bab el-Mandeb and Red Sea

Red Sea volumes ranged from 345 kbd on 18 October to 11,238 kbd on 17 October. The 7-day average of 5,295 kbd sits about 89% above the pre-war baseline of 2,804 kbd. The Red Sea series covers Saudi cargoes and unattributed ship-to-ship volumes with no confirmed load terminal. Daily readings swing widely because ship-to-ship cargo is dated by the day it surfaces or departs.

3. Maritime risk and fleet status

Kpler Insight reports that Iran intensified strikes on commercial vessels around the Strait of Hormuz last week. Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia opened a second front. Freight is now the main channel through which the disruption reaches buyers. Gulf of Oman to North-East Asia freight reached about \$22/bbl, from under \$10/bbl a month earlier. Kpler Insight describes tanker rates as near record highs across vessel classes and regions. The vessel sample below shows crude exits from Iraqi, Kuwaiti and Saudi terminals, products and chemicals cargoes, and a tanker entering in ballast.

Illustrative Mideast Gulf tanker crossings, 17 to 20 October

Date	Vessel	Type	Direction / state	Cargo	Volume (kb)	Load port	Discharge / next port
20 Oct	VADIN	VLCC	MEG exit, laden	Crude/Co	2,062	Al Basrah, Iraq	Not reported
20 Oct	SONANGOL NAMIBE	LR2/Suezmax	MEG exit, laden	Crude/Co	1,040	Mina Al-Ahmadi, Kuwait	Not reported
19 Oct	MAISTROS	MR	MEG exit, laden	CPP	501	Mideast Gulf	Huizhou, China
19 Oct	SINBAD	LR2/Suezmax	MEG exit, laden	DPP	595	Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia	Fujairah, UAE
19 Oct	BERNICE	MR	MEG exit, laden	Chemicals	156	Jubail Industrial Port, Saudi Arabia	Karachi, Pakistan
19 Oct	SERENO	MR	MEG entry, ballast	None		Fujairah, UAE	Jubail Industrial Port, Saudi Arabia
18 Oct	ENNIE	VLCC	MEG exit, laden	Crude/Co	1,903	Al Basrah, Iraq	Sohar, Oman
17 Oct	PERU PROSPERITY	VLCC	MEG exit, laden	Crude/Co	2,000	Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia	Vadinar, India

Illustrative sample, not the full crossing log. Source, Kpler, Strait of Hormuz Tanker Crossings dashboard.

Where AIS coverage lapses, Kpler applies a dark-transit methodology, cross-referencing satellite imagery and human intelligence against a binary confirmation standard before attributing a movement. See the full methodology note at the end of this briefing.

4. Critical infrastructure status

Saudi infrastructure, Petrolina and Yanbu

Kpler Insight reports that a drone attack in the second week of September severely damaged at least one pumping station on the East-West Pipeline. Loadings from the Saudi west coast restarted on 17 September. Kpler analysis shows the pipeline was operational by at least 22 September. Confirmed west coast crude loadings reached 42 mb between 17 September and 4 October. Radar imagery from 4 October showed 2 tankers at Yanbu and all 3 berths occupied at Muajjiz. Saudi military statements cited by Kpler confirmed the interception of 6 ballistic missiles aimed at Taif and Yanbu. On the east coast, radar imagery showed 4 VLCCs at the Juaymah moorings on each of 10 and 12 October.

Indicator	Latest reading
Trigger event	A drone attack on the East-West Pipeline in the second week of September, reportedly originating from Iraq. At least one pumping station was severely damaged, while the line itself sustained little damage.
Pipeline status	Operational by at least 22 September, according to Kpler analysis. Confirmed west coast crude loadings reached 42 mb between 17 September and 4 October.
Restoration timeline	On 14 September Kpler Insight expected pumping station repairs to take 4 to 6 weeks. Loadings restarted on 17 September.
Estimated export exposure	Pre-attack throughput was estimated at 5.4 to 5.5 mbd on a nominal capacity of 7 mbd. On 14 September the Kpler base case of half throughput implied a Yanbu export loss of 2.5 to 2.7 mbd.
Yanbu terminal inventories	Crude inventories at the Yanbu terminals fell to 8.99 mb on 10 September, the lowest level since 2018. They reached 16.17 mb on 4 October.
Grade mix effect	The pipeline feeds about 1.5 mbd of mainly Arab Light and Arab Heavy to western refineries. The barrels at risk were Dubai basket medium sour crude.
East coast pivot	Ras Tanura loadings rose to 2.46 mbd in the first 2 weeks of September. Radar imagery showed 4 VLCCs at the Juaymah moorings on each of 10 and 12 October.

Sources, Kpler Insight articles published on 11 September, 14 September, 5 October and 12 October 2026.

5. Refined products and bunker fuel impact

Kpler Insight reports that refined products lagged crude last week, compressing refining margins. ICE gasoil fell 4.7% as Western diesel supply prospects improved. Washington eased sanctions on Russian diesel, and European governments announced reserve releases. RBOB gasoline fell 1.8% on seasonal weakness. US Gulf Coast gasoline cracks dropped \$13.2/bbl on the week, and Singapore gasoline cracks fell \$13/bbl. Singapore fuel oil rose 6.4%, the clear outlier, as Middle Eastern and Russian residue supply tightened. Kpler Insight sees further gasoline crack compression, while low ARA and US stocks cap the downside. Trend-following commodity trading advisers (CTAs) returned to 100% long ULSD in the 6 to 13 October reporting week, which adds reversal risk.

Benchmark	Weekly move	Note
ICE gasoil	Down 4.7%	Western diesel supply prospects improved after Washington eased sanctions on Russian diesel and European governments announced reserve releases.
RBOB gasoline	Down 1.8%	Seasonal weakness and CTA selling favour further crack compression. Low ARA and US stocks cap the downside.
Singapore fuel oil	Up 6.4%	The clear outlier, as Middle Eastern and Russian residue supply has tightened, mirroring the crude disruption.
US Gulf Coast gasoline cracks	Down \$13.2/bbl	Week on week fall. Kpler Insight expects further gasoline crack compression.
Singapore gasoline cracks	Down \$13/bbl	Week on week fall, in line with the US Gulf Coast move.

Source, Kpler Insight, Cross Commodity Weekly, published 20 October 2026.

6. Sources and notes

This briefing draws exclusively on Kpler Insight research and Kpler platform data. No external or third-party sources were used.

Kpler Insight citations

- Muyu Xu, “Stubbornly high freight rates fuel an early price war among oil producers”, Market Pulse, published 21 October 2026. <https://terminal.kpler.com/insight/research/research-updates/stubbornly-high-freight-rates-fuel-an-early-price-war-among-oil-producers>
- Alexandre Andlauer, “Silver trades like a chip stock”, Cross Commodity Weekly, published 20 October 2026. <https://terminal.kpler.com/insight/research/reports/silver-trades-like-a-chip-stock>
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- Yui Torikata, Ying Cong Loh and Nhway Khin Soe, “Pipeline Strike Threatens Red Sea Bypass as Saudi Loadings Pivot to Ras Tanura”, News, published 14 September 2026. <https://terminal.kpler.com/insight/news/pipeline-strike-threatens-red-sea-bypass-as-saudi-loadings-pivot-to-ras-tanura>
- Homayoun Falakshahi, “Saudi Arabia’s last exit narrows, reported Petroline strike meets Houthi control of Bab el-Mandeb”, Market Pulse, published 11 September 2026. <https://terminal.kpler.com/insight/research/research-updates/saudi-arabia-s-last-exit-narrows-reported-petroline-strike-meets-houthi-control-of-bab-el-mandeb>

Kpler platform data

- Kpler Insight search API (reports and short-form content), published-by-date range from 20 October 2026 to 22 October 2026. Uses a 48-hour rolling window on Wednesday to Friday editions, extended back to the prior Friday on Monday and Tuesday editions to include weekend publications.
- Kpler internal flow-tracking data, “Middle East Regional Flows” measures (Total Hormuz Clearance and Strait of Hormuz Tanker Crossings panel), flow data to 20 October 2026, compiled by the Insight team.
- Kpler, Strait of Hormuz Tanker Crossings dashboard, illustrative vessel sample, 17 to 20 October 2026.

Standing methodology note, vessel and cargo tracking

Kpler compiles vessel and cargo tracking data from 3 complementary sources. Automatic Identification System (AIS) signals form the backbone, providing real-time position data whenever a vessel's transponder is active. A gap in that signal is informative but not conclusive on its own. Satellite imagery, both optical and synthetic aperture radar (SAR), corroborates vessel presence and laden state at terminals and along transit routes. SAR can see through cloud cover where optical imagery cannot. These streams are supplemented by human intelligence, meaning market sources reporting loading events, ship-to-ship transfer scheduling and port call activity. This intelligence often flags a movement before satellite imagery can confirm it.

The 3 streams are cross-referenced against a binary confirmation standard. An event is recorded only when consistent evidence from more than one source supports it, not through probabilistic attribution or a single source.

Where AIS coverage lapses, such as during a dark transit, analysts look for satellite imagery placing a vessel inside a region on one date and outside it on another. They also draw on human intelligence and discharge-side confirmation that corroborates timing and cargo grade. Volumes that cannot be independently verified this way are classified as unknown origin rather than attributed by inference, a deliberately conservative approach that favours accuracy over completeness.

Source, *Middle East and Gulf of Oman dark crude exports methodology*, Kpler Help Centre. <https://help.kpler.com/en/articles/15462913-middle-east-and-gulf-of-oman-dark-crude-exports-methodology>