

# Maersk expects to halt all Iran business

*Carrier set to wind down all Iranian activities and services in the coming months after initially ceasing acceptance of commodities banned under new US sanctions*

18 May 2018 **NEWS**

By **Will Waters**

Line to terminate slot purchase agreements and remove Iran as a destination

---



MAERSK WILL STOP OPERATIONS IN IRAN.

MAERSK Line, the world's largest container shipping company, expects to halt all its business with Iran in the coming months. It believes it will be impossible for

companies that have significant business in the US to do business in the Islamic Republic once new US sanctions take full effect.

The US decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal — the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — and to reimpose tighter sanctions comes with a wind-down period of between 90-180 days before the new sanctions take effect.

Maersk has already ceased acceptance of commodities under one specific category group within the US's list of soon-to-be prohibited items, under [JCPOA FAQ 1.2. iii](#), which lists “graphite, raw or semi-finished metals such as aluminium and steel, coal, and software for integrating industrial processes”.

A source close to Maersk has confirmed to Lloyd's List that the line expects, over the coming months, to shut down all its activities in Iran.

This would mean terminating the slot purchase agreements it has with third-party vessels from Jebel Ali to Bandar Abbas and Bushehr; ceasing to offer Iran as a destination in its network; and closing its offices in Tehran, Bandar Abbas and Bushehr.

The source noted that the timeline of Maersk's withdrawal from Iran had yet to be determined, and the company would be monitoring and informing customers when it makes changes.

The confirmation followed comments by Maersk chief executive Søren Skou that sanctions would make it impossible for the company to do business with Iran.

In official statements about its plans, Maersk said: “Our presence in Iran is limited. Maersk Line is serving its customers on the Iranian market via a feeder service using third-party vessels (slot purchase agreements) from Jebel Ali

(UAE) to Bandar Abbas and Bushehr. Maersk Line has offices in Tehran, Bandar Abbas and Bushehr, employing a staff of 12.”

Maersk’s conclusion that it will be forced by the new US sanctions to halt all of its business with Iran in the coming months are broadly similar to those of 2M partner Mediterranean Shipping Co. MSC has [confirmed](#) that it has ceased Iranian services following the US decision to withdraw from the international nuclear agreement with Iran.

MSC had serviced Iran via third-party feeder ships from transshipment hubs in Jebel Ali in the UAE. Like many other shipping lines, MSC had put its Iran business under review following the decision by the US to reimpose sanctions on Tehran.