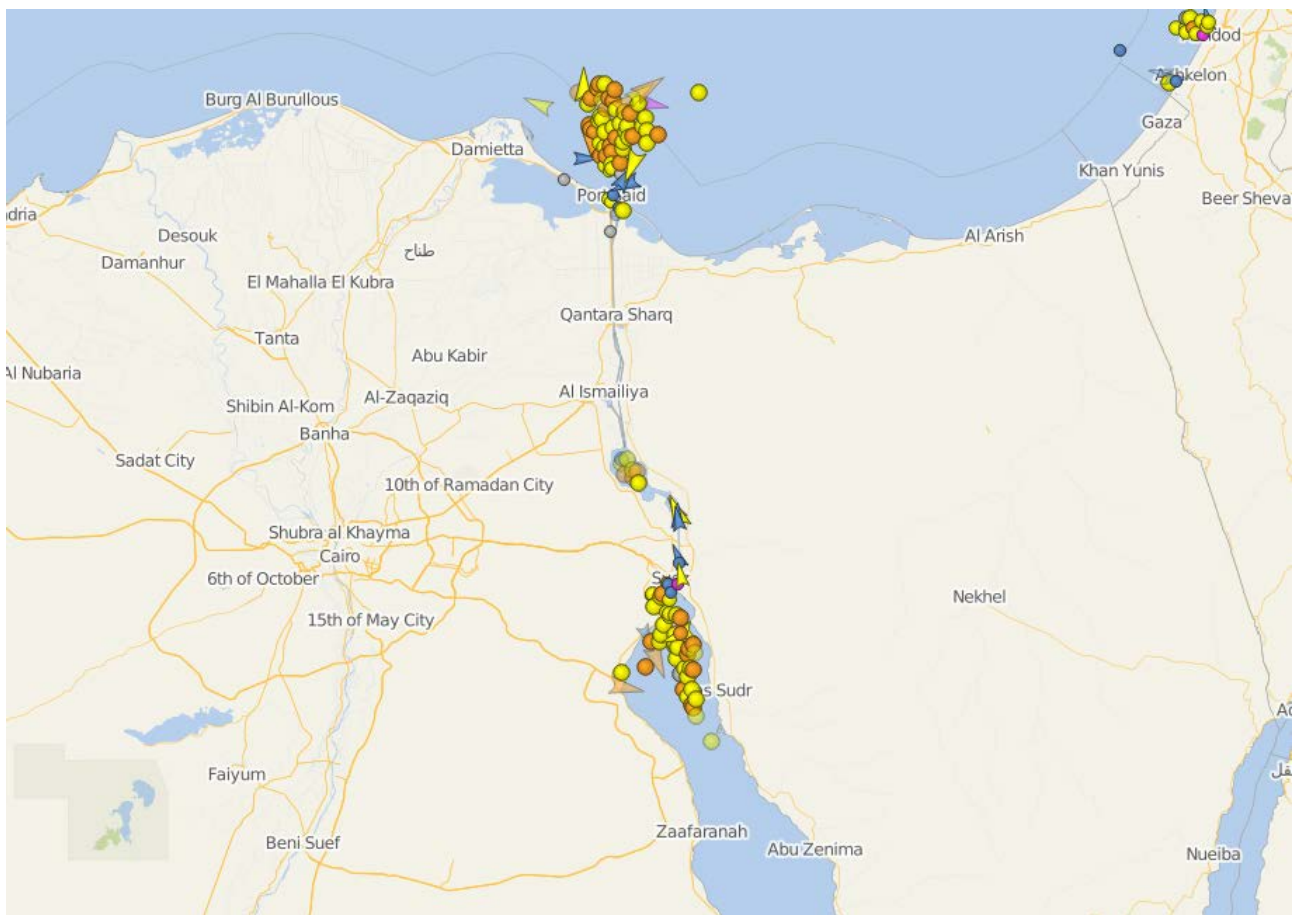


Suez containership freed but supply chain delays to continue

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By Damian Brett



The huge containership that has been blocking the Suez Canal for more than a week has now been freed.

The vessel, which blocked the shipping artery for more than a week, has been towed to a lake further along the canal where it will undergo checks.

However, it was not immediately clear when other vessels could begin transiting the waterway.

[One report suggested that the vessel will need to undergo an inspection](#) while the canal will also need to be checked to make sure it is safe for other vessels to pass.

As many as 370 vessels are now waiting to pass along the canal, with an estimated \$9.6bn worth of goods being held up each day.

And the incident could have an ongoing impact on the already strained container shipping sector for weeks and months.

In a LinkedIn post, Lars Jensen, chief executive at SeaIntelligence Consulting, said: "It will take a while before the queues are cleared and the canal is back to normal flow of operations.

"We will continue to see the unfolding of congestion issues in Europe as the cargo arrives, blank sailings resulting from the severe delay of many vessels as well as a deterioration of the equipment situation. These ripple effects will take several months to be fully worked through."

It has also been suggested that this incident, as well as a year of Covid-19 related supply chain chaos, could cause companies to question the validity of operation just-in-time supply chains that are particularly susceptible to shutdowns.

Alex Veitch, general manager for public policy at Logistics UK, said: "With more than 300 ships stuck behind the ship waiting to travel through the canal, the impact of the incident will continue to be felt around the world for some weeks.

"Any delay to deliveries from the Far East will mean delays in picking up goods from UK ports for export, as well as slowing down deliveries into the UK's supply chain. Goods affected by the delays will include seasonal stock for UK retailers, so gaps may start to appear unless the situation is resolved quickly.

"It is now vitally important to clear the 'traffic jam' of ships delayed in the Canal as quickly as possible, to restart the supply chain and minimise any disruption. However, the clearance of so many ships at one time could cause congestion at ports along the supply chain, with a resultant slowdown in port productivity."