

[Africa](#) [Containers](#) [Dry Cargo](#)

Chronic congestion building along the east coast of South Africa



Sam Chambers • November 21, 2023 1 432 1 minute read



Massive ship queues are forming off the east coast of South Africa where dire handling capabilities at the ports of Durban and Richards Bay are causing consternation.

At Durban, which ranks among the poorest boxports productivity-wise in the world, there are 63 ships backed up with Transnet, the country's port operator, warning it could take up to February to clear the backlog.

Liners have instituted congestion surcharges as well as announcing some dropped calls to South Africa in the wake of the growing queues which sees more than 70,000 containers stranded off Durban.

"The problem of port congestion is a complex one and it is something that was due to happen at some point, as a result of many years of underinvestment in equipment and its maintenance," said Transnet chairperson, Andile Sangqu. "We need to caution that this is going to take some time as the lead times for some of the equipment is anything from 12 to 18 months."

Transnet group CEO Michelle Phillips described the ongoing crisis at the port of Durban as "Rome is burning". She said a damaging combination of a lack of maintenance and inadequate investment in infrastructure meant the old equipment simply could not withstand the weather.

At Richards Bay, meanwhile, a key dry bulk export terminal, Transnet is holding an emergency meeting today with port officials and the industry to work on a plan to address the port's many problems.

The country's Road Freight Association said this week the truck congestion at Richards Bay was a consequence of the country's failed rail system, which should be used to transport goods.

This comes after Transnet suspended the receiving of goods at the port from trucks due to heavy traffic on the roads.



#South Africa

Comments



Arnold Muscat

November 21, 2023 at 5:33 pm

I live in Durban South Africa and the "running" party has destroyed everything that worked. They are hiring external engineers to try and find a quick fix. Affirmative Action has finally caught up with them.

Africa's biggest harbour will be partly owned and operated by the Philippines' International Container Terminal Services Inc., a first for South Africa's national ports company. It is a start

<https://dailyinvestor.com/south-africa/23985/durban-port-partially-privatised/>

Reply