

## MSC buys all four of Safetrans' ships

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Safetrans Line, the China-based Russia-focused liner operator, has cashed out on all four container ships.

The Panamax vessels, SFT Egypt, SFT China, SFT Saudi and SFT Turkey, have all been sold to the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), which continues to build its lead over its peers.

The sales price of the ships was not disclosed, although Linerlytica stated in its report this week that Safetrans will realise a profit of US\$20 million on each vessel.

MSC has taken delivery of SFT Egypt and SFT China this month and has renamed the ships MSC Banjul IV and MSC Tia V, respectively. SFT Saudi and SFT Turkey will be handed over to MSC in September. The Swiss-Italian top-ranked liner operator now has an active fleet of more than 6 million TEU and is widening its lead over its peers as it prepares to become a solo player in 2025 when it dissolves its 2M alliance with Maersk Line.

Safetrans is opting to charter in smaller Chinese-owned ships to continue its liner services between China, Russia and the Red Sea.

The opportunistic Safetrans emerged in the market in 2022, first plugging the vacuum left by mainline operators that halted calls to Russia in the wake of international sanctions, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

This year, another start-up line, the Singapore-incorporated Sea Legend Shipping, started services to the Red Sea, also filling the gap created after many mainline operators stopped transiting the region due to Houthi attacks. Sea Legend used the SFT-prefixed ships for the service, prompting speculation that it is affiliated with Safetrans.

Linerlytica's latest report stated that this month, Safetrans received the 2,838 TEU Hua Da 610 from Xiamen Xinhuada and the 2,070 TEU Xin Yong Chang 19 from Shishi Yongyi Shipping, with both ships formerly operating in the Chinese domestic trades.

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Martina Li

Asia Correspondent