

# China shrugs off US sanctions on Iranian crude

‘Washington’s unilateral bans breach int’l law, norms’

## Economy Desk

China will not comply with US sanctions against five firms targeted for purchasing Iranian oil, Beijing’s Commerce Ministry said on Saturday.

China’s Ministry of Commerce on Saturday issued a ban prohibiting any recognition, enforcement or compliance with US sanctions imposed on five Chinese companies on the grounds of their alleged involvement in Iranian petroleum transactions, Xinhua reported.

China is a key customer for Iranian oil, mainly through independent “teapot” refineries that rely on discounted crude from the Islamic Republic.

The United States, seeking to choke off revenue to Tehran, has ramped up sanctions on such refineries, according to channelnewsasia.com.

The ministry’s injunction, relating to sanctions announced separately since last year, states that the US measures “shall not be recognized, implemented, or complied with.”

The sanctions “improperly prohibit or restrict Chinese enterprises from conducting normal economic, trade and



Shandong teapot refiner  
Oilprice.com

related activities with third countries ... and violate international law and the

basic norms governing international relations,” the ministry said in a state-

ment.

“The Chinese government has consis-

tently opposed unilateral sanctions lacking UN authorization and a basis in international law.”

The injunction applies to three companies in Shandong Province - Shandong Jincheng Petrochemical Group, Shandong Shouguang Luqing Petrochemical and Shandong Shengxing Chemical - and two others based elsewhere in China, Hengli Petrochemical (Dalian) Refinery and Hebei Xinhai Chemical Group. Washington imposed on Friday sanctions on yet another Chinese firm which it said had imported “tens of millions of barrels” of Iranian crude oil, generating billions of dollars in revenue for Tehran.

The firm, Qingdao Haiye Oil Terminal, was not mentioned in the commerce ministry’s injunction.

The latest sanctions come as Washington and Tehran have been locked in a diplomatic standstill, with no permanent resolution in sight for the conflict that erupted with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February.

US President Donald Trump is due to visit China for talks with leader Xi Jinping later this month.

## Scores of ships brave US blockade in Strait of Hormuz, data shows

### Economy Desk

Data analysis shows that 81 vessels crossed the Strait of Hormuz in violation of a US blockade imposed on April 13, Qatar-based Al Jazeera reported, citing maritime tracking data.

IRNA, citing Al Jazeera, reported that a total of 145 ships transited the Strait of Hormuz between April 13 and April 30, with 81 vessels — or 56% — deemed to have breached the US blockade.

Analysis of MarineTraffic data indicated that 53 of the vessels that defied the blockade were either coming from Iranian ports, heading toward them, or sailing under the Iranian flag. Eleven of those ships were also listed under US sanctions.

A further 28 vessels, also under sanctions but not directly linked to Iranian ports, crossed the strait during the same period. The data also showed that 11 ships operated by companies based in China, India, Pakistan and Turkey



IRNA

were unable to transit the waterway.

The analysis was based on tracking ships that kept their transponders active while passing through the Strait of Hormuz. It noted that some vessels switched off their transmitters before transit, suggesting the actual number of crossings could be significantly higher.

This comes as US Central Command (CENTCOM) had said the blockade would target vessels traveling to or from Iranian ports.

According to the report, the United States deployed at least 15 vessels to the Middle East, including an aircraft carrier and 11 destroyers. However, tracking data from the first 24 hours

after the blockade was imposed showed that five Iranian-flagged ships crossed the strait, along with six other vessels linked to Iranian ports.

While CENTCOM said 39 ships had altered course due to the blockade, tracking data showed that 50 vessels connected to Iranian ports still transited the strait.

Cargoes carried by ships that breached the blockade varied, including 36 cargo and container vessels, 11 bulk carriers and six oil tankers.

The highest number of such crossings was recorded on April 28, when 10 vessels passed through the strait in both directions, indicating increased Iranian-linked

traffic despite heightened US threats.

Separately, Bloomberg columnist Javier Blas said satellite imagery showed Iran continuing to load oil tankers at Kharg Island, including a very large crude carrier (VLCC), with no signs that storage capacity had been exhausted, contrary to claims by the White House. Oil prices on Thursday jumped to their highest level since 2022 after a report that the US military is set to brief President Trump on new plans for potential action in the war against Iran. Brent crude rose by nearly 7% to more than \$126 a barrel at one point before retreating. Around 20% of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas passes through the Strait of Hormuz, and the conflict has driven global energy prices higher.

Brent crude touched \$126.31 per barrel earlier in the session — its highest since Russia’s full-scale war in Ukraine — before falling back to around \$114 later in the day, partly due to the expiry of futures contracts.

## Industry sector pins blame on speculators for car market volatility

### Economy Desk

Iran’s Industry, Mine and Trade Ministry spokesperson Ezzatollah Zarei said speculators were driving volatility in the country’s car market, adding that supply and import policies remained unchanged. Zarei said 160,000 tons of steel sheets had been offered to automakers, of which 70,000 tons had been purchased by applicants.

“There is turbulence in the car market caused by artificially amplifying certain issues, behind which lies profiteering,” he said. “We have no problems in the auto sector. Imports and production will continue.”

He added that last year’s import policy remained in place with no bans, and said a number of vehicles currently held at customs would be cleared and delivered by importers within a short period.

Industry Minister Mohammad Atabak also said on Saturday that automakers should refrain from unjustified price increases, noting there were no supply constraints in steel sheets and no obstacles to reducing production. He added that issues related to import order registration had been resolved and imports were continuing.

In recent weeks, some traders in the open market have raised prices of steel-related products, including automobiles, citing alleged shortages following damage to Mobarakeh Steel’s infrastructure during the US-Israeli conflict. The car prices have surged over the past weeks, with sellers



attributing the increases to a lack of steel sheets.

According to Mehr news agency, Iran’s steel industry has been moving toward recovery two weeks after a 40-day war, with producers maintaining at least baseline output through crisis management and domestic capabilities.

Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC), based in the central province of Isfahan is working to restore stable production after parts of its lines were damaged during the hostilities.

Western sanctions on Iran, along with damage from recent military attacks on production infrastructure, have further intensified challenges facing the sector.

According to the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, Mobarakeh Steel Company has also been tasked with supplying steel sheets to downstream and affiliated companies through imports at prices approved by the Organization for Supporting Consumers and Producers. The ministry is also pursuing the approach of increasing steel production capacity in the country.

## Ministry seeks overseas legal experts for post-war transport, housing sectors

### Economy Desk

Iran’s Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh Malvajerd announced Saturday that her organization is recruiting Iranian lawyers and legal scholars based overseas, as well as international legal advocates who have spoken against injustices faced by Iranians, to support specialized sectors including aviation, ports, roads, rail and housing.

Speaking on the sidelines of a consultative meeting with the presidential deputy for legal affairs, Sadegh Malvajerd said the legal affairs deputy of the presidency had played an effective

role in addressing shifts in the legal framework governing the Strait of Hormuz and other issues linked to the country’s wartime conditions.

Iran has tightened its control over the strategic Strait of Hormuz by collecting transit fees from vessels and depositing the revenue into the Central Bank of Iran, according to official statements. Abbas Papizadeh, a member of parliament’s board, said in late April that the first revenues from ship transit fees in the strait had been transferred to the state treasury.

The country remains under wartime conditions. Tehran and Washington reached a temporary ceasefire on

April 8 through Pakistani mediation, though tensions remain high. The United States imposed a blockade on April 13 on vessels entering or leaving Iranian coastal waters to pressure Iran into a peace agreement following a 40-day conflict. The measure was later expanded to all Iranian-flagged vessels on the high seas.

Under new conditions set by Tehran, only pre-authorized commercial vessels may transit the Strait of Hormuz, while ships linked to the United States, Israel and other states designated as hostile are barred from passage.

“We intend to make use of these individuals in the specialized areas of the

Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, including air, port, road and rail transport, as well as housing,” she said.

Speaking on the sidelines of a consultative meeting with the vice president for legal affairs, she said the Ministry is also looking to engage non-Iranian legal professionals who have spoken out against injustices faced by the Iranian people, to contribute in the same fields.

“We intend to make use of these individuals in the specialized areas of the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, including air, port, road, rail transport and housing,” she said.



Farzaneh Sadegh Malvajerd  
jamaran.ir

Sadegh Malvajerd added that the vice presidency for legal affairs had played an effective role in addressing changes to the legal regime of the Strait of Hormuz and other issues related to the effects and consequences of the war.