

## **Piracy fears mount as ships take long way around Africa to avoid blocked Suez Canal**

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The Ever Given, one of the largest container ships ever built, has been stuck in the canal since Tuesday, creating an increasingly expensive traffic jam on both sides of the waterway. Some tankers have already opted to travel around the southern tip of Africa instead, adding weeks to their journeys, through a region known for piracy.

“It just shows you how vulnerable our supply-chain lines are,” said Guy Platten, secretary general for the U.K.-based International Chamber of Shipping.

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Detouring around Africa is likely to add a week or two to most itineraries. It will also mean hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional fuel costs. With more ships potentially being diverted to the Cape of Good Hope, piracy could increase. Pirates have long preyed on ships moving in the waters off the Horn of Africa, and the seas off oil-rich West Africa are now considered among the world’s most dangerous for shipping.

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“There is a risk there, and it’s probably another reason why the ocean carriers will think twice before they actually go around the Horn,” said Genevieve Giuliano, a professor at the University of Southern California’s Sol Price School of Public Policy.

The Ever Given, which is operated by Taiwan-based Evergreen Marine Corp., was headed to the Netherlands on Tuesday when it ran aground in the 120-mile-long passage from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean during a dust storm. Exactly how the stranding occurred remains unclear, but experts have speculated that the containers stacked atop the ship could have acted like a massive sail propelling the boat forward in high winds.