



## AS IT IS

# World Trade Affected by Container Ship Blocking Suez Canal

March 25, 2021

A very large container ship struck land and is blocking Egypt's Suez Canal waterway. At least 150 other ships cannot pass it, officials said.

The ship, called the Ever Given, is registered in Panama. It usually carries **cargo** between Asia and Europe. It **ran aground** Tuesday in the manmade waterway that connects the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. Efforts to free the ship using heavy equipment have not been successful. Billions of dollars of products and supplies cannot pass through the canal as a result.

The ship's Japanese owner offered a written apology Thursday for the incident.

"We are determined to keep on working hard to **resolve** this situation as soon as possible," Shoen Kisen Kaisha Ltd. said, adding "we would like to apologize."

Officials began work again to free the ship Thursday morning after stopping for the night, an Egyptian canal official said. The official said workers hoped they would not have to unload the ship in an effort to free it because that would extend the closure. The official did not want to be identified because the person did not have permission to talk to reporters.

Workers using heavy equipment have tried to clear dirt around the large ship. Other boats have tried to push it, but satellite pictures show it is still in the same place.

A team from Boskalis, a Dutch company that specializes in such problems, arrived at the canal on Thursday. One of the company's top officials said moving the ship could take "days to weeks."

Boskalis chairman Peter Berdowski told a Dutch news program Wednesday night, “The ship, with the weight it now has, can’t really be pulled free. You can forget it.”

Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement is the company that supervises the Ever Given. It said the ship’s 25-member crew is safe. Shoei Kisen Kaisha said all the crew came from India.

Two pilots from Egypt’s canal organization were on the ship to guide it when it struck land early Tuesday morning, Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement said.

Canal services company Leth Agencies said at least 150 ships were waiting for the Ever Given to be moved. Cargo ships already behind the Ever Given in the canal will be forced to move back to Port Suez to free the **channel**, Leth Agencies said. Officials hope to do the same to the Ever Given when they can free it.

Evergreen Marine Corp. is the large Taiwan-based shipping company that operates the ship. It said the Ever Given had been affected by strong winds as it entered the canal, something Egyptian officials also said earlier.

Bernhard Schulte said there was no mechanical or engine failure.

The British publication Lloyd’s List estimates each day that the Suez Canal is closed effects over \$9 billion worth of trade that should be passing through it. Nearly 25 percent of the ship traffic that passes through the Suez Canal is container ships like the Ever Given, it said.

I’m Susan Shand.

*The Associated Press reported this story. Susan Shand adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.*

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## Words in This Story

**cargo** *-n.* something that is carried from one place to another

**run aground** *-v. (navigation)* when a ship strikes land and cannot travel

**resolve** -*v.* to find an answer to a problem

**channel** -*n.* the deep part of a river, harbor, or canal where ships can travel safely

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