
Global Air Cargo Declines Amid Middle East Disruptions



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The International Air Transport Association (IATA) reported a 4.8 percent year-on-year decline in global air cargo demand in March, largely driven by disruptions at major Gulf hubs amid ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Despite the decline, IATA noted that underlying demand trends remain positive. Updated

projections from global institutions continue to forecast growth in trade and GDP through 2026, supporting a cautiously optimistic outlook for the sector.

The Middle East recorded the steepest drop, with air cargo demand falling by 54.3 percent year-on-year, marking the weakest regional performance.

IATA emphasized that air cargo networks remain essential to global supply chains, providing flexibility as industries respond to geopolitical tensions, tariff pressures, and operational challenges.

However, rising fuel costs pose a significant concern. Director General Willie Walsh warned that fuel supply and pricing will test the industry's resilience in the coming months.

According to IATA, jet fuel prices surged by 106.6 percent year-on-year in March, alongside a 43.1 percent rise in crude oil prices and a 320 percent increase in refining margins, adding further pressure on the aviation sector.