

# Mauritius After the Gulf Shock

Immediate mitigation measures for a small, open island economy facing Gulf disruption, renewed Red Sea insecurity, and possible Suez inoperability

March 2026



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For Mauritius, the consequences of a Gulf disruption do not arrive dramatically. They accumulate quietly, through lead times, freight adjustments, insurance repricing, and the simple but unforgiving arithmetic of imported dependence. The country does not experience the shock at its borders. It experiences it in its supply chain. That distinction matters. Mauritius is not exposed because it is geographically close to conflict. It is exposed because it sits at the end of long, tightly calibrated logistical and financial flows. When those flows are disturbed—even partially—the effects propagate quickly: shipments arrive later, financing becomes more cautious, inventories stretch, and confidence begins to adjust ahead of reality.

Recent developments suggest that this process is already underway. Disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, renewed insecurity in the Red Sea, and the progressive commercial avoidance of the Suez route are not isolated events. Taken together, they represent a shift in operating conditions for global shipping. The canal may remain open in a formal sense. That is not the relevant threshold. What matters is whether it remains commercially reliable.

There is a tendency, in such moments, to frame the issue in terms of fuel availability or price spikes. That is too narrow. The more immediate constraint is coordination: knowing what is in the country, what is on the water, what is contractually secured, and what remains exposed to disruption. Most shortages in small, import-dependent economies are administrative before they are physical. Mauritius is not entering this period without resources. Foreign exchange reserves remain substantial, institutions are functional, and key supply chains—particularly for fuel and staple goods—are already centralised. But these strengths are conditional. They only translate into resilience if they are actively organised.

The risk, therefore, is not the shock itself. It is delay. Delay in verifying stocks. Delay in securing replenishment. Delay in aligning financial and logistical decisions. In a system as exposed as Mauritius', those delays do not remain contained. They compound.

This paper does not attempt to predict the trajectory of the conflict. It assumes instead that disruption persists, in one form or another, over the coming months. The focus is therefore practical: what must be known, what must be secured, and what must be managed in order to maintain continuity under less reliable global conditions.

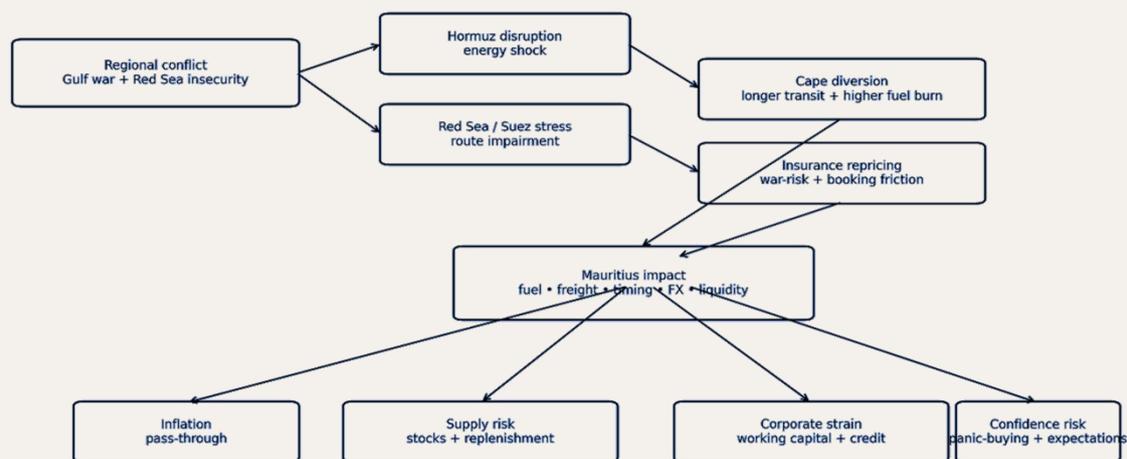
## Strategic context: why a Gulf war reaches Mauritius so quickly

Mauritius is not exposed because it sits on the edge of the Gulf, but because it sits at the edge of global logistics. The Strait of Hormuz carries roughly a fifth of global oil and gas flows. The Suez Canal and the Red Sea corridor are one of the principal conduits of world trade. IMF PortWatch and earlier IMF analysis showed that Red Sea attacks could cut Suez traffic by half and push Cape traffic sharply higher; current March 2026 carrier decisions show that those earlier “temporary” diversions have become operational doctrine again under renewed conflict. ([Reuters](#))

The first transmission channel is energy. A Hormuz disruption raises crude and refined product prices, but also disturbs availability, vessel scheduling, refinery runs, and bunker markets. Reuters notes that the Gulf war is already choking petrochemical supply and lifting plastics prices, while analysts quoted by Reuters warn that a Hormuz reopening effort would be materially harder than the failed attempt to secure Red Sea shipping because Iran’s capabilities exceed those of the Houthis. In plain terms, even a partial restoration of traffic may not restore commercial normality. ([Reuters](#))

The second channel is route geometry. Even when cargo still moves, Cape diversion lengthens voyage times, complicates rotations, increases fuel burn, ties up tonnage, and introduces chronic schedule unreliability. IMF analysis during the earlier Red Sea shock found that Cape detours added around 10 days or more on average. UNCTAD’s 2025 maritime review attributes freight spikes and schedule disruption directly to Red Sea rerouting. That matters to import-dependent islands because the cost is not merely higher freight; it is extra working capital locked up in transit and lower confidence in promised arrival dates. ([IMF](#))

The third channel is insurance and conduct risk. War-risk premiums, crew-safety concerns and carrier discretion do not affect all cargo equally. Essential bulk cargoes may still move; smaller commercial consignments, marginal routes and low-priority bookings may wait. For Mauritius, that means the issue is not only whether the country can buy fuel, rice, flour or medicines. It is whether replacement cargoes can be scheduled on time, on acceptable terms, with sufficient finance and enough confidence among suppliers, shipping agents and domestic distributors to keep the system orderly. ([Maersk](#))



## Why Mauritius is structurally exposed

Mauritius is a small, open economy with an entrenched merchandise trade deficit and heavy import dependence. In 2024, goods imports reached Rs314.1 billion, up 10.6 per cent, with China, the UAE and India the leading import markets. Petroleum oils alone accounted for Rs60.8 billion, or 19 per cent of import value; medicaments were the fourth-largest import category at Rs7.9 billion. The IMF's 2025 Article IV assessed the external current account deficit at 6.5 per cent of GDP in 2024, widened in part by higher imports and freight costs.

This matters because a country can tolerate high import dependence when shipping is routine, freight is predictable, and the domestic financial system has time to intermediate shocks. It becomes fragile when the same import basket must be financed through a weaker external position and under more volatile routing conditions. Mauritius is not beginning from collapse. The Bank of Mauritius reported gross official international reserves at a record US\$9.7 billion in June 2025, equivalent to roughly 13.1–13.3 months of import cover, and said reserve adequacy benchmarks were met. The banking system was described as resilient. But reserve adequacy is a buffer, not a substitute for logistics discipline; and a country can have sound reserves while still suffering from stockouts, payment delays and pass-through inflation.

There is also a concentration problem hidden inside the import picture. The State Trading Corporation is not simply another public body. It is the purchasing arm for all petroleum products and LPG traded in Mauritius, and it also supplies rice and flour. In effect, several politically and socially sensitive supply chains already sit inside one institutional gateway. That can be an advantage in a crisis because it provides a natural command node. It can also become a bottleneck if information, contracting authority, treasury support and physical dispatch rules are not aligned around it. ([STC](#))

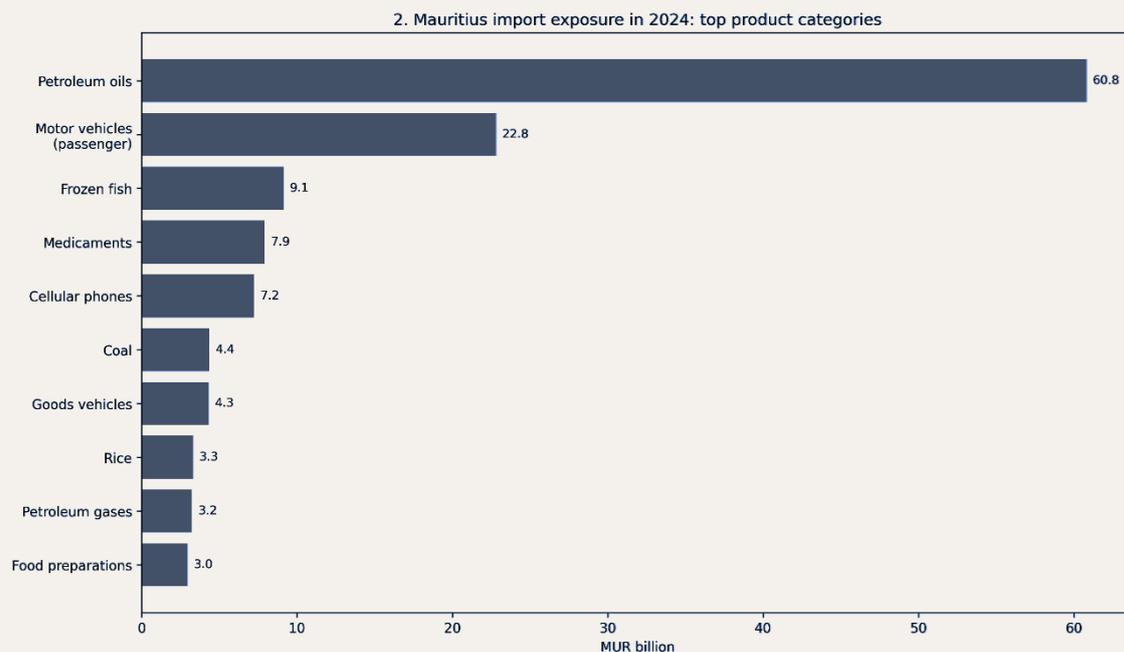
Food dependence remains more extensive than domestic political language sometimes admits. Mauritius imports wheat, edible oils, feed inputs, dairy products, pulses, fruits and a wide range of food preparations. The U.S. commercial guide for Mauritius notes that in 2024 the country imported 154,111 metric tons of wheat, mainly from France and Australia, and 100 per cent of its edible oil requirements. That does not mean a Gulf war immediately creates a food crisis. It does mean that any maritime disruption which lifts freight, stretches lead times or unsettles supplier credit will show up quickly in shelf economics and, if mishandled, in public psychology. ([Trade.gov](#))

## How the shock transmits through the economy

The first-round effect is fuel. Mauritius has already moved from theory to pass-through. On 24 March the Petroleum Pricing Committee increased diesel from Rs58.95 to Rs64.80 per litre. The underlying cost increase was far larger than the retail move: the reference price and exchange-rate calculation implied a 40.7 per cent increase in gas oil retail price, but regulations limited the increase to 10 per cent. In other words, a portion of the shock has been absorbed rather than passed through. That may be politically convenient in the short term, but it does not make the cost disappear. It transfers it to the stabilisation mechanism, public finance, or future pricing decisions. ([STC](#))

The second-round effect is broader inflation. Diesel is an economy-wide input. Once it rises, the increase

leaks into road transport, distribution, utilities logistics, construction supply, hotel procurement, fisheries, agriculture and retail. Mauritius entered the shock with comparatively moderate inflation—3.5 per cent year-on-year in February 2026 by official statistics as reproduced by data aggregators, while the Bank of Mauritius kept its key rate at 4.5 per cent. That moderation is helpful, but it also means the public is less psychologically prepared for renewed price pressure. A fresh imported inflation shock after a period of relative calm tends to destabilise expectations more abruptly than one during an already inflationary period. ([Trading Economics](#))



The third effect is on the external account and the currency. Mauritius already carries a structural merchandise deficit and the IMF judged its external position at end-2024 weaker than implied by fundamentals, even if reserves remained above the lower bound of advisable adequacy. A renewed rise in the fuel bill, freight charges and essential import costs would widen the trade deficit, raise demand for foreign currency and increase the domestic cost of maintaining supply continuity. The rupee's March indicative range—around Rs46 to Rs47 per US dollar on the Bank of Mauritius page—does not yet spell crisis, but it is one of the variables that should

now be watched daily rather than decoratively. ([IMF](#))

Then comes the balance-sheet effect. Longer transit times mean more cash tied up in inventory. Higher insurance and freight increase landed cost. Banks become more cautious on short-term trade lines if they perceive volatility in documentation, shipment timing or collateral values. Importers that are perfectly solvent on paper can suddenly become illiquid in practice. The early pain, therefore, will often be timing risk rather than insolvency risk. Mauritius would be wise not to wait until defaults appear before recognising that the pressure point lies in working capital. ([Maersk](#))

## What matters most in the first 90 days

In the first 30 days, the issue is visibility. No government should speak confidently about “adequate stocks” unless it has verified them product by product, holder by holder, and in days-of-cover rather than in anecdote. Mauritius has indicated that national fuel stocks were adequate and that contingency measures were under way, with a crisis meeting convened in early March. That is sensible as a first response. It is not sufficient unless the same discipline is extended beyond fuel to LPG, flour, rice, selected pharmaceuticals, animal feed, hospital consumables, water-treatment chemicals, industrial gases where relevant, and key spare parts for power,

port and telecom operations. ([Republic of Mauritius](#))

In the 30- to 60-day window, the problem becomes replenishment and finance. Existing inventories mask fragility. The real test is whether replacement cargoes can be contracted, shipped, insured, financed and cleared with acceptable regularity. This is where Mauritius needs a rolling dashboard: not a ceremonial spreadsheet, but a live instrument tracking order dates, confirmed shipment dates, route, vessel status, revised ETA, war-risk cost, freight change, and financing condition for a narrow

universe of critical imports. If that sounds prosaic, good. Prosaic is how states avoid queueing behaviour. ([Maersk](#))

By 60 to 90 days, if the Gulf and Red Sea situation remains impaired, the economy begins to feel the cumulative drag. Diesel pass-through starts to work through the supply chain; tourism and aviation feel the cost of longer routings and higher fuel bills;

importers become selective in stocking; retailers shorten promotions; construction and manufacturing face sporadic shortages; and consumers begin to form expectations around future scarcity. At that stage, the country is not dealing merely with costs. It is dealing with confidence. That is when bad communication can do more damage than the initial freight surge. ([STC](#))



## Immediate remedial actions Mauritius should take

There is no single intervention that resolves this situation. The response is cumulative and, above all, operational. It depends less on policy announcements than on the quality of execution over the next 30 to 90 days.

The first requirement is to establish a single operational picture of the country's exposure. This goes beyond convening committees. Mauritius already has the institutional components—STC, Bank of Mauritius, Ministry of Finance, port authorities, major importers—but they do not naturally operate as a unified system. A standing coordination cell, with daily visibility and decision authority, is therefore essential. Without it, information will remain fragmented, and decisions will lag behind events.

Stock verification follows immediately. Public assurances of “adequate supply” are of limited value unless they are grounded in verified data. What matters is not aggregate volume, but days of cover—product by product, holder by holder. Fuel is only one part of the picture. LPG, flour, rice, selected pharmaceuticals, animal feed, and critical industrial inputs must be treated with the same discipline. In practice, this exercise is less about control than about clarity. States rarely lose control of supply overnight. They lose visibility first.

At the same time, attention must shift from what is in the country to what is coming. Inbound logistics will become the primary constraint if disruption persists. Mauritius therefore needs a rolling, continuously updated view of critical imports: what

has been ordered, what has been loaded, what is delayed, and what is at risk due to routing, insurance, or financing conditions. Inventory without replenishment is a temporary comfort.

Fuel continuity requires particular attention, but it should be approached pragmatically. The island cannot reconfigure its energy system in the middle of a logistics shock. What it can do is secure supply windows, diversify procurement where feasible, and define clear prioritisation rules in the event of constraint. The existing cooperation framework with India is useful in this regard, but it should be treated as an operational instrument, not a diplomatic signal.

The financial dimension should not be underestimated. Longer transit times and higher freight costs translate directly into working capital pressure. This is where stress is likely to surface first—not as insolvency, but as liquidity strain among otherwise viable importers. A narrowly targeted trade-finance or guarantee facility for critical goods should therefore be prepared in advance. It may not need to be deployed immediately, but waiting until stress is visible would be unnecessarily expensive.

Price management requires similar discipline. Attempting to suppress the full impact of higher fuel costs through broad subsidies would offer short-term relief at the expense of fiscal stability and supply signals. A more effective approach is selective cushioning—focused on transport, essential distribution chains, and critical services—while

allowing some degree of pass-through to preserve economic coherence.

Market conduct must be enforced, but with precision. Hoarding and opportunistic pricing can destabilise supply, particularly in smaller markets. However, overly aggressive intervention risks discouraging imports at the very moment they are most needed. The objective is to stabilise behaviour, not to disrupt replenishment.

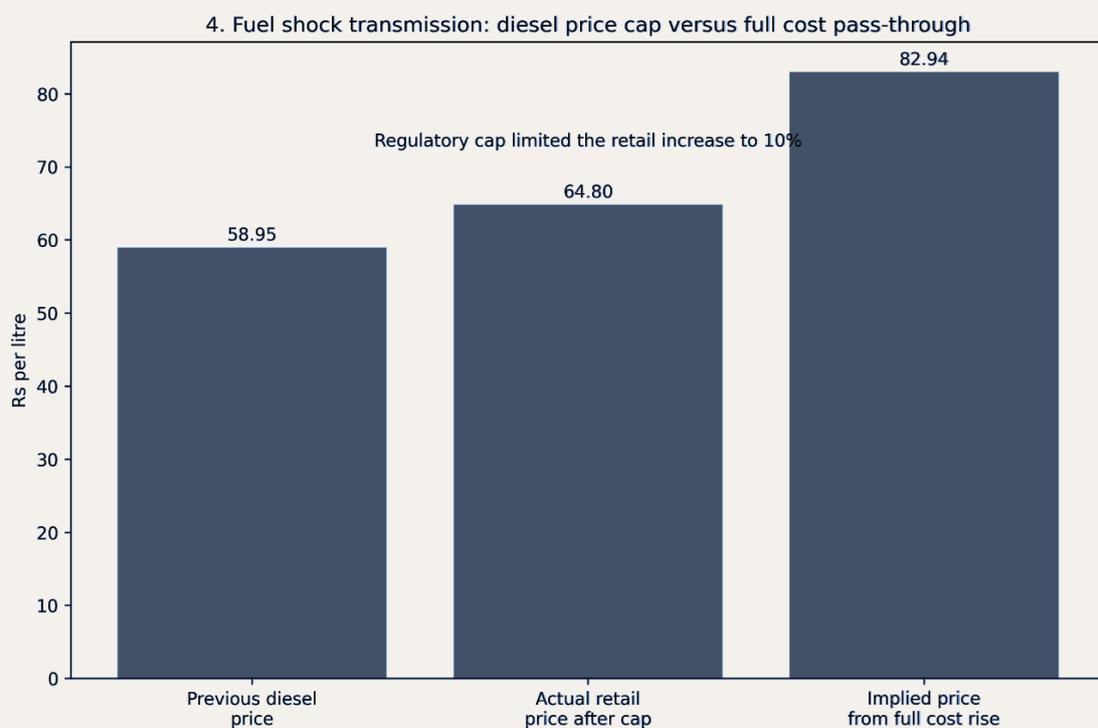
Communication, finally, is not ancillary. It is part of the supply system. In conditions of uncertainty, households and businesses will act on expectations as much as on facts. A calm, regular, data-driven briefing—neither reassuring nor alarmist—can prevent demand distortions that would otherwise accelerate shortages.

None of these measures is individually complex. Their effectiveness depends on sequencing and consistency. In a system under stress, competence is cumulative. So is error.

## Energy security: what Mauritius can and cannot do quickly

Mauritius can diversify contracts, stage cargoes more carefully, coordinate more tightly with India and other suppliers, define emergency allocation, and reduce non-essential demand at the margin. It cannot, in the middle of a Gulf war, create strategic autonomy by slogan. It remains dependent on imported petroleum, and STC remains the principal purchasing mechanism. Serious policy therefore lies in stockholding discipline, supplier optionality, logistics visibility and targeted demand management—not in pretending the island can improvise a new energy model in six weeks. ([STC](#))

The useful question is not whether Mauritius has “enough” fuel today. It is whether it has enough verified inventory, enough inbound cover, enough procurement flexibility, and enough financial room to withstand several successive cargo dislocations. Government statements indicating around 45 days of supply and at least one shipment en route may be reassuring as an opening position, but such comfort can fade rapidly if replenishment intervals lengthen. What matters now is the rolling profile, not the snapshot. ([Facebook](#))



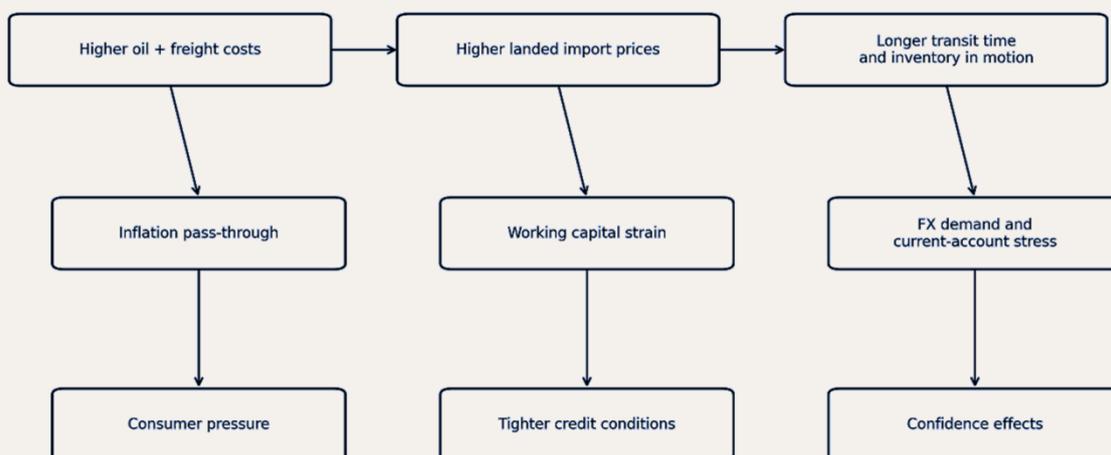
## Food, medicines and essential goods: the behavioural economy of shortage

Food shocks in import-dependent islands are often half logistics, half psychology. Mauritius should therefore avoid the two usual errors: assuming that markets will self-correct under stress, and overreacting with sweeping controls that freeze replenishment. The right approach is narrower. Verify stocks. Prioritise a defined basket. Watch order pipelines. Intervene only where shelf behaviour or inventory hoarding threatens continuity. ([Trade.gov](#))

Rice and flour deserve special attention because STC already sits inside those markets and because

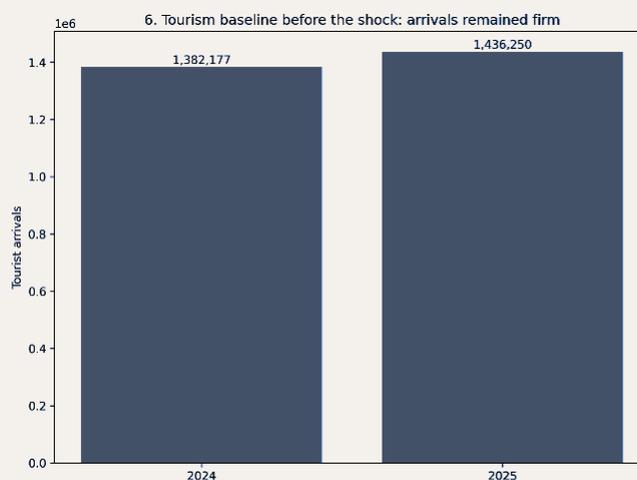
they carry social significance beyond their import value. Edible oils and selected pharmaceuticals should sit in the same watchlist, even if they are not politically as visible. Medicaments were worth nearly Rs8 billion in 2024 imports, and Mauritius remains dependent on external supply for much of its pharmaceutical availability. Hospitals should therefore not rely on general national averages; they should have protected procurement and minimum stock protocols for essential therapeutic categories and consumables.

### 5. Macroeconomic transmission: from shipping shock to domestic strain



## Tourism, aviation and services: proportion, not panic

The immediate risk to tourism is not collapse. It is friction. Mauritius closed 2025 with 1,436,250 tourist arrivals, up 3.9 per cent, and expected tourism earnings above Rs100 billion. Air Mauritius stated on 1 March that its approved routes to and from Europe remained fully operational, though multiple airspace restrictions were already in place and alternative contingency routings were ready if needed. That suggests the first-order risk is cost inflation and booking hesitation rather than a sudden severing of access. ([GIS Mauritius](#))



Still, tourism is a sentiment business. If Middle East escalation raises fuel surcharges, complicates insurance, lengthens some air routings or darkens long-haul sentiment, the impact will show first in margins, then in booking cadence, not necessarily in dramatic cancellations. Hotels and destination operators should therefore prepare around liquidity and procurement rather than assume traffic disappears overnight. The sector's main vulnerability in the first instance is higher operating cost, especially transport and imported food inputs, not instant demand destruction.

## Financial system, FX and liquidity

The current shock should not be misread as a banking problem. It is not, at least at this stage. The Mauritian banking system enters this period with adequate capital buffers, sound liquidity metrics, and a level of foreign exchange reserves that provides room for management. That baseline matters. It allows the country to absorb pressure without immediate systemic stress.

But it would be a mistake to draw comfort from that alone.

What is unfolding is not a balance-sheet crisis. It is a timing and transmission problem. Costs are rising, transit times are lengthening, and uncertainty is increasing. These factors do not initially impair solvency. They strain liquidity—first at the level of importers, then across the wider system if not managed carefully.

The most immediate pressure point lies in foreign exchange demand linked to essential imports. As fuel, freight and insurance costs adjust upward, the call on foreign currency becomes both larger and more volatile. This does not necessarily threaten reserves in the short term. It does, however, change the rhythm of the market. Demand becomes less predictable. Settlement cycles stretch. Banks, in turn, become more cautious in extending short-term trade lines, particularly where shipment timing or collateral values appear uncertain.

In such conditions, liquidity does not disappear. It fragments.

Importers who are fundamentally sound may find themselves under strain simply because goods take longer to arrive and cost more to finance in transit. Cash becomes tied up in inventory that is physically distant and commercially exposed. The result is a subtle but important shift: the system moves from a question of creditworthiness to a question of cash flow.

This is where early attention is required. Waiting for visible distress—missed payments, defaults, or abrupt tightening of credit—would be to intervene too late. The more relevant indicators are quieter and should be monitored with greater frequency than is customary.

At a minimum, the authorities should maintain a near-daily view of:

- the rupee's movement against the US dollar, not as a headline metric but as a reflection of underlying demand pressure;
- aggregate bank demand for foreign exchange linked to essential imports;
- utilisation and tenor changes in trade-finance facilities;
- delays in settlement attributable to shipping or documentation disruptions;
- emerging liquidity strain among critical importers.

Weekly monitoring should extend further, incorporating reserve trajectory, import cover dynamics, and the fiscal implications of any cushioning measures already in place. In a logistics-driven shock, monthly visibility is insufficient. By the time trends are visible at that horizon, the system has already adjusted—often in ways that are difficult to reverse.

Policy response, at this stage, should remain measured but prepared.

There is no case for broad intervention in the foreign exchange market purely on the basis of volatility. Nor is there a case for generalised liquidity support. Such measures would risk distorting signals without addressing the underlying issue. The objective is not to suppress adjustment. It is to ensure that adjustment remains orderly.

Targeted tools are more appropriate. A temporary, clearly defined liquidity backstop for critical

importers—potentially guarantee-based rather than balance-sheet intensive—would help maintain the flow of essential goods without encouraging indiscriminate risk-taking. The emphasis should be on duration and specificity: short-term support, tied to clearly identified supply chains, with explicit exit conditions.

Equally important is the preservation of prioritisation within the foreign exchange system. In periods of stress, not all demand carries equal weight. Ensuring that essential imports retain access to foreign currency—without formal rationing—requires coordination between the central bank, commercial banks, and key market participants. This is less a matter of regulation than of alignment.

Confidence, finally, should be treated as a variable in its own right.

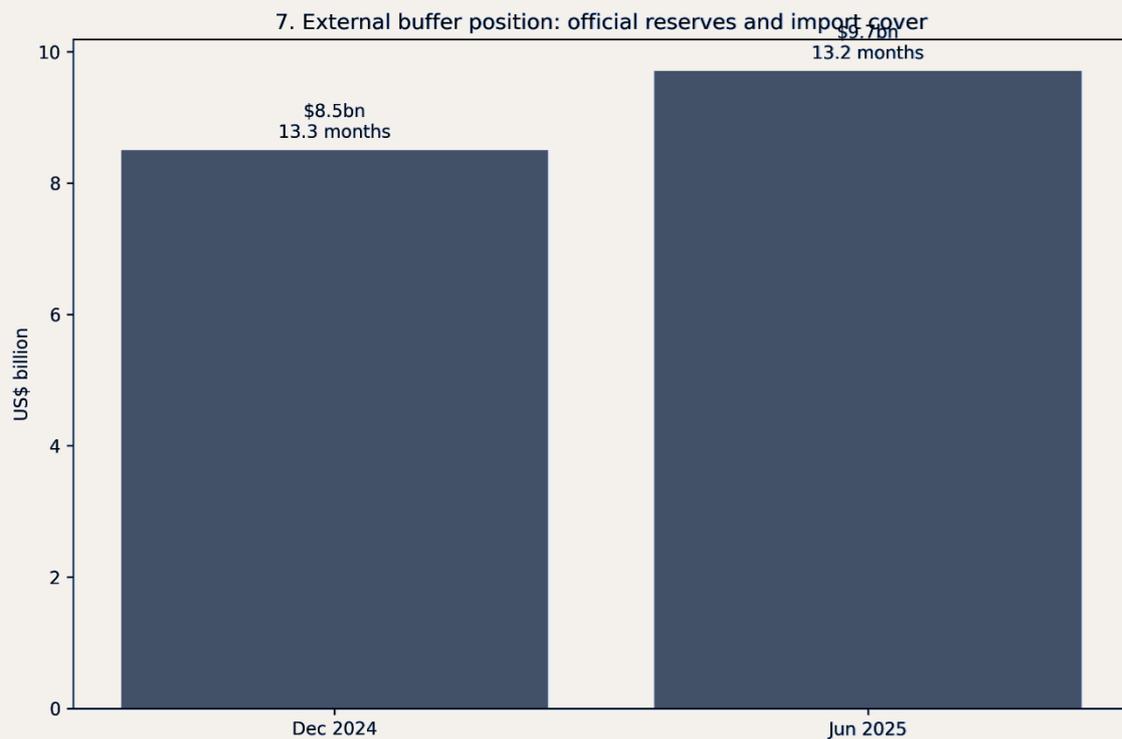
Foreign exchange markets in small economies are not purely mechanical. They are influenced by expectations—of price, of availability, of policy

direction. If those expectations become unstable, behaviour adjusts in advance of necessity. Importers may front-load demand. Households may shift preferences. Liquidity conditions can tighten for reasons that are psychological as much as financial.

This is why communication matters here as much as intervention. The authorities do not need to reassure excessively, nor to signal concern prematurely. They do need to demonstrate that the system is being watched closely, that priority uses of foreign exchange are understood, and that tools exist—if required—to maintain continuity.

The financial system, in short, is not the source of risk in this episode. It is the channel through which external disruption becomes domestic pressure. Managed carefully, it will absorb that pressure. Managed passively, it may begin to amplify it.

The distinction will not be decided by headline indicators. It will be decided in the daily management of liquidity, timing, and expectations.



## Scenario analysis

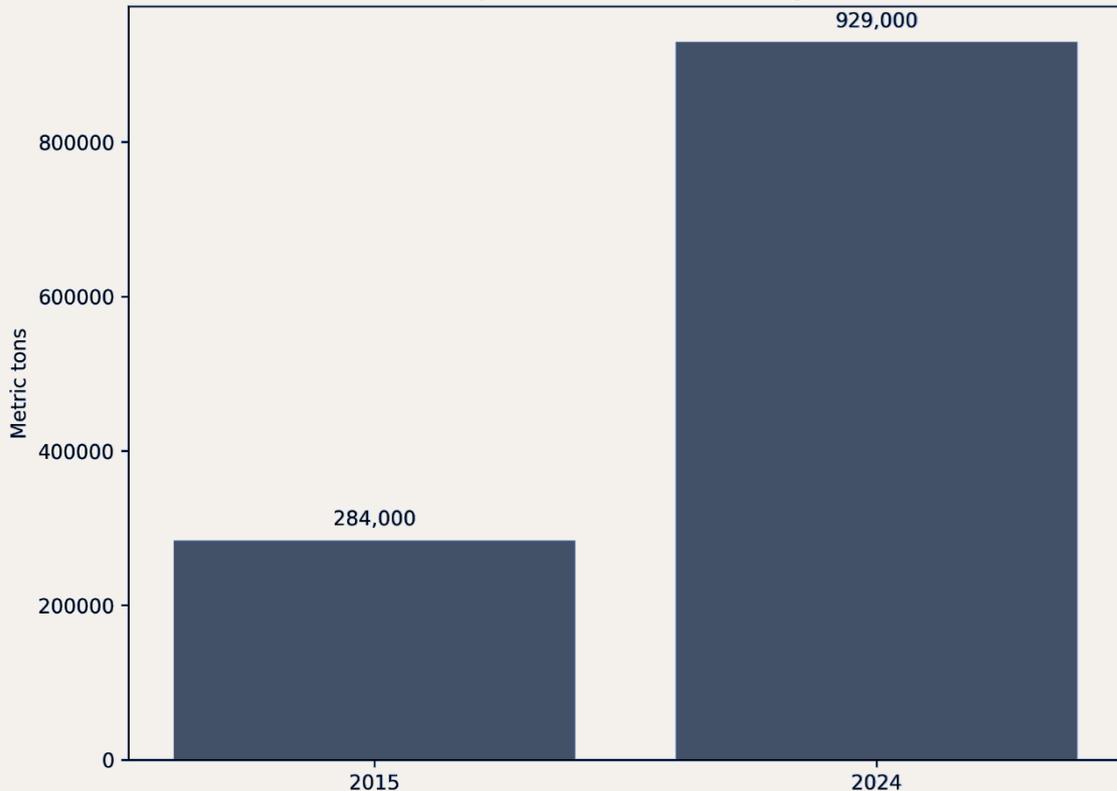
### Scenario A: contained conflict, continued stress, no full closure

In this case, Hormuz and Red Sea conditions remain hazardous, carriers continue selective avoidance, insurance stays high, and some Trans-Suez traffic remains commercially unattractive. For Mauritius, the main transmission channels are still higher diesel and freight costs, intermittent schedule disruption, and working-capital strain. The measures that remain valid are the coordination cell, stock verification, rolling import dashboard, targeted liquidity planning, and disciplined public communication. No dramatic rationing is required; competence is. ([Maersk](#))

### Scenario B: prolonged disruption with sustained Cape rerouting

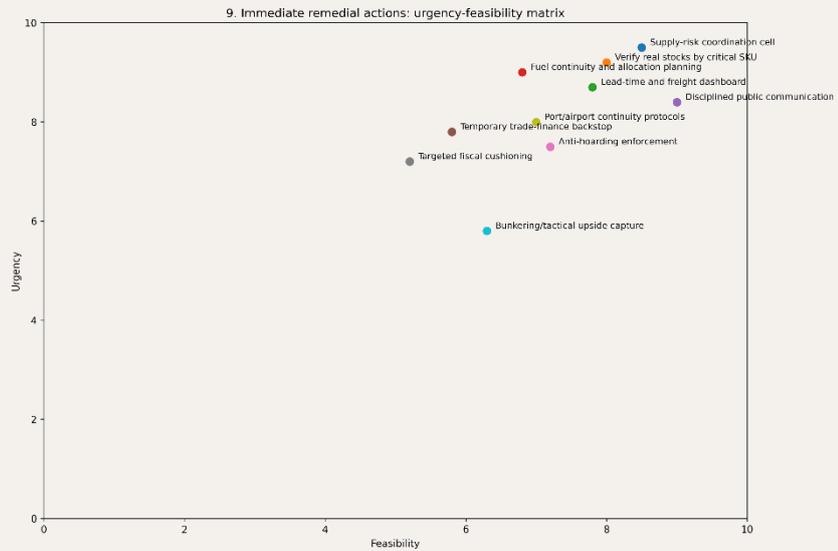
Here the pain comes from accumulation. Longer voyages become the norm, shipping space tightens, bunker costs stay firm, supplier terms harden, and inventory buffers thin out over several replenishment cycles. Mauritius would then need to activate temporary trade-finance support for critical importers, strengthen priority cargo handling at port and customs, and consider narrowly targeted fiscal cushions where second-round inflation threatens social stability. This is also the scenario in which bunkering and selected port services may provide some offsetting upside, though never enough to cancel the macro drag. ([Reuters](#))

8. Tactical upside: Port Louis bunkering volumes

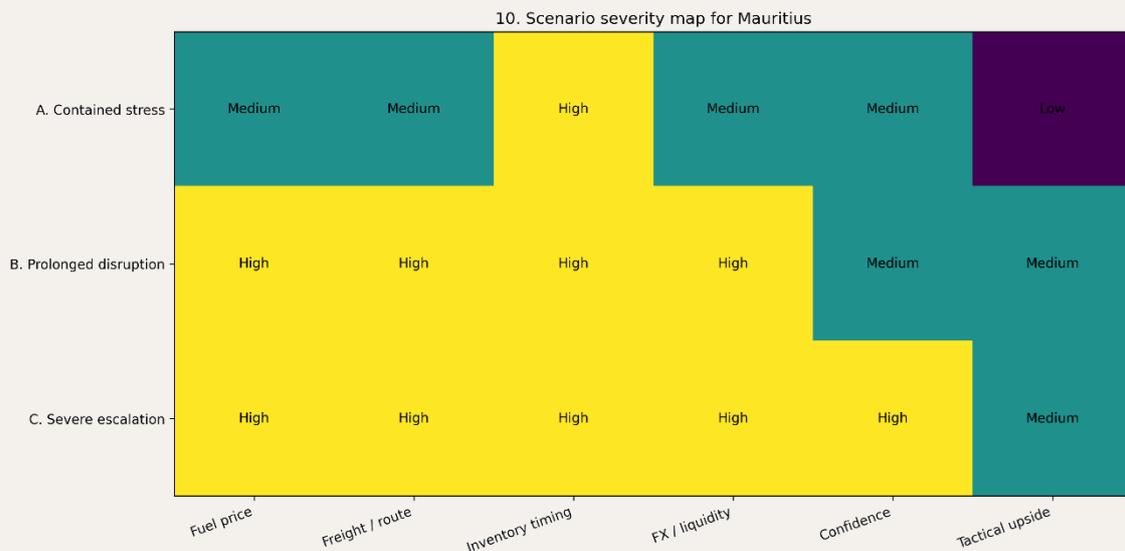


► Scenario C: severe escalation, effective closure or near-inoperability of Hormuz and/or Suez-linked corridors

This is the hard case. Oil and refined-product availability becomes the central problem; freight markets seize; replenishment timing becomes uncertain; and the country may need emergency allocation rules for fuel and other essentials. Measures held quietly in reserve for this scenario should include formal fuel-priority protocols, emergency procurement authorisations, temporary



restrictions on non-essential public fuel consumption, pre-cleared financing arrangements for exceptional import costs, and a more forceful market-conduct posture against hoarding. This is also the point at which transparency must be managed carefully: enough truth to maintain trust, not so much noise that households become their own enemy. (Reuters)



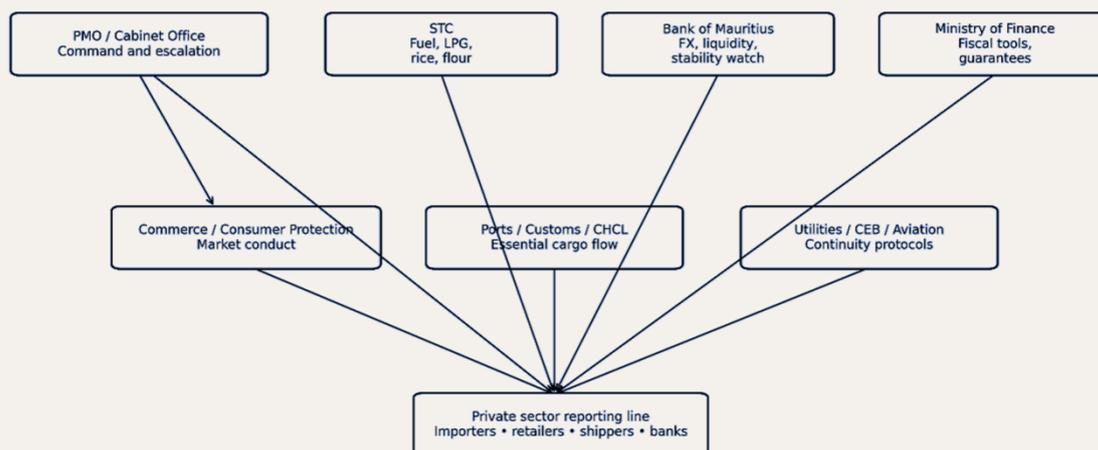
## Governance, ownership and execution

Mauritius should be careful not to write this shock as though “Government” were a unitary actor. It is not. STC owns procurement execution in key commodities. The Bank of Mauritius owns reserves management, financial stability surveillance and, in practice, the tone of FX management. The Ministry of Finance owns the fiscal envelope and any

guarantee or liquidity-backstop design. The Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection owns market conduct and essential-goods oversight. The PMO or Cabinet Office should own cross-ministerial direction because the problem sits precisely in the seams between these mandates. (STC)

The likely failure modes are familiar. Committees meet without common data definitions. Stock numbers are reported in incompatible formats. One ministry announces reassurance while another prepares emergency measures. Treasury resists contingent support until import stress is already visible in shelves and prices. Enforcement bodies frighten suppliers more than they deter profiteers.

Public statements become optimistic before the replenishment pipeline is secured. None of this would be exotic. It is what small-state crises usually look like when coordination is announced rather than engineered. The remedy is simple and unfashionable: one dashboard, one operating rhythm, one lead authority, and clear escalation rights. ([PMO Mauritius](#))



## Capital logic and fiscal realism

Some of the best immediate measures are cheap and coordination-heavy: stock verification, lead-time monitoring, priority-cargo protocols, and disciplined communication. Others are fiscally meaningful: fuel cushioning, reserve-buffering interventions, emergency procurement premia, and trade-finance support. Mauritius should therefore distinguish between measures that need money and measures that need seriousness. Not everything requires spending; some things require only that the State notices the right variables in time. ([STC](#))

Blanket subsidy would be the wrong instinct. The IMF has already called for rebuilding fiscal space, and public debt remains high. Broad suppression of prices would quickly become expensive while also blurring scarcity signals. Better to use temporary, tightly targeted support where the transmission to social stability is strongest, and to prefer guarantees or short-duration liquidity tools over open-ended budget absorption where possible. In a shock of this kind, liquidity support is often more efficient than price denial. ([IMF](#))

## Distinguishing remedial action from theatre

Mauritius should be ruthless in separating the serious from the performative.

A crisis committee without a live stock and shipment dashboard is theatre.

Claims of “sufficient reserves” without days-of-cover by product are theatre.

Patriotic calls for self-reliance in the middle of an imported fuel shock are theatre.

Blanket subsidies with no exit logic are theatre.

Price enforcement that ignores replenishment

economics is theatre.

So, for that matter, is any invocation of “strategic autonomy” unsupported by actual procurement, storage, shipping and balance-sheet capacity. ([STC](#))

The more mature approach is less glamorous. It consists of knowing precisely what is critical, financing it before stress compounds, protecting the channels that move it, and speaking to the public in a tone that reduces fear rather than flatters it.

## Conclusion

Mauritius is not without options in the face of a Gulf-related disruption. It retains foreign exchange buffers, functioning institutions, and a degree of centralisation in key supply chains that many economies lack. These are not trivial advantages.

They are also not sufficient on their own.

What will determine the outcome over the coming months is less the severity of the external shock than the quality of internal coordination. Small, open economies are rarely undone by a single event. They are weakened by a sequence: incomplete information, delayed decisions, misaligned incentives, and, eventually, a loss of confidence that amplifies otherwise manageable constraints.

The distinction between a manageable disruption and a destabilising one is therefore administrative rather than structural. It lies in whether Mauritius can maintain visibility over its supply position, secure replenishment ahead of stress, and align financial and logistical responses in real time.

There is a tendency to search for large solutions in moments of uncertainty—strategic autonomy, rapid diversification, structural transformation. These may be valid in the longer term. They are not the immediate task. The immediate task is narrower and less visible: to ensure that essential goods continue to move, that financing remains available, and that behaviour—public and commercial—remains orderly.

The country still has room to act. That room will not remain open indefinitely. As disruptions compound, the margin for error narrows and the cost of correction increases.

In that sense, the central risk is straightforward. It is not that Mauritius lacks resources or institutional capacity. It is that it responds too slowly, or with insufficient coherence, to a problem that rewards speed and precision.

This is not a rhetorical challenge. It is an operational one.

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