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THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

THEATER OF WAR



Directed by **Feurat Alani**
Produced by **Nova Production & ARTE France**

52'

A 33-kilometer strait which keeps the world standing—and can bring it to its knees.

For forty years, Iran has been learning how to turn this maritime corridor into a geopolitical weapon, provoking, testing, and refining the threat. The film follows this escalation, decade by decade, until its culmination: in early 2026, the Revolutionary Guards shut down the Strait of Hormuz, 20,000 sailors found themselves trapped on the front lines of a war of attrition, and the world paid the price.



SYNOPSIS

On February 28, 2026, U.S.-Israeli strikes killed Supreme Leader Khamenei. As a result, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps decided to close the Strait of Hormuz: a 33-kilometer stretch of water through which nearly one-third of the world's crude oil passes. Traffic collapsed. Oil prices skyrocketed. But the Strait of Hormuz isn't just about oil: aluminum, sulfur, helium, fertilizer—the world's industrial supply chains ground to a halt, from European gas stations to hospitals running out of helium for MRI scans. And in the midst of this chaos, 20,000 sailors found themselves trapped in a strait that had become a front line.

The documentary tells the story of how the Strait of Hormuz, a 33-kilometer-long maritime passage, has become one of Iran's main geopolitical levers. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Iranian regime has gradually expanded its use of the strait to exert pressure on the international stage. The film is organized into four chapters, spanning four decades, and highlights four ways in which this sea lane has been transformed into a conflict zone and a sphere of influence.

The second part of the film focuses on the current crisis, shown from the inside through the accounts of sailors: a WhatsApp voice message sent from an oil tanker anchored in the Gulf of Oman (“We have 167 metric tons of water left. We haven't heard from anyone in five days”), or a TikTok video filmed by a Greek sailor on the deck of his ship (“Right now, we're passing through the worst spot for a ship: off the coast of Iran”). These recordings, in several languages, form the main content of this final part. The film will finally show that the strait blockade is enough to weaken entire economies and describes the emergence of a new form of conflict: geoeconomic strangulation.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This documentary doesn't need to call upon imagination to provide images: they are here; they speak for themselves, and they have never been brought together in a single narrative. Because what this archival footage tells, when put together, is that this is an Iranian strategy that has been taking shape, refining itself, and intensifying for forty years, and that a strait, decade after decade, is closing in a little more on the world.

For the first time, the strait crisis is being documented in real time, from the inside, by those who are experiencing it. Presented in this order, the material tells the story of an escalation. Each period explains the next. Each archival piece sheds light on the one that follows. And the viewer comes to understand that the 2026 crisis is no accident—it is the final stage of a rocket that Iran has been building since 1984.

The film will incorporate five graphic animation sequences that will complement the narrative. They take place where the camera cannot go: in the long term, in invisible currents, and in the underwater geography of the strait. Together, they form a second narrative thread that parallels the archival footage and connects the various elements together.



PARTICIPANTS

Analysts

- **The Lloyd's broker:** War insurance underwriter, London.
- **The OSINT analyst:** Open-source intelligence researcher. Debunks the visual fabrications of both sides in real time, in front of his screens.
- **Azadeh Kian (or equivalent profile):** Franco-Iranian sociologist, Paris-Cité. Analyzes the regime's transformation into the "State of the Guardians."
- **Jean-Paul Burdy:** Historian, associate professor and researcher in the "Mediterranean-Middle East" master's program at Sciences Po Grenoble. Specialist in Iran and the Persian Gulf, author of several seminal articles on the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Niki Aloupi:** Professor of public international law at Paris Panthéon-Assas University, director of the Institute of Advanced International Studies. An expert on the law of the sea and international straits.
- **The French Navy officer:** Served in the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf region.
- **The strait's maritime pilot:** A specialist in navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. He knows the strait by heart and describes what it physically means to pass through it.

- **The commodities expert:** Geologist or economist (BRGM, IFRI). Traces the journey of the missing materials from the Gulf to everyday life in Europe.

Captive voices

- **The anonymous seafarers:** Filipinos, Indians, Egyptians, Greeks, Georgians
- **Mohamed Arrachedi:** ITF Coordinator for the Arab World and Iran. His phone is the only link between these men and the outside world.
- **The captain of the Sanmar Herald**

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