

FUEL

Fuel prices rise again amidst Middle East crisis

Petrol at leading dealers hit Shs5,400 a litre while diesel reached Shs5,350 - up Shs320 and Shs400, respectively.

Fuel.

DOROTHY NAKAWEESI

Pump prices in Uganda have risen sharply over the past six weeks as renewed tensions in the Middle East disrupt global oil flows, leaving consumers to absorb the shock at the pump, industrial experts say.

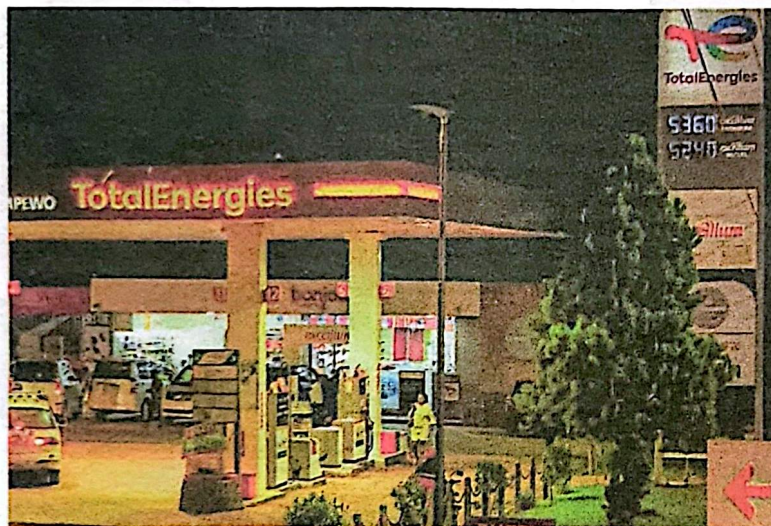
For more than a year, prices at major Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) held relatively steady, with petrol averaging Shs5,080 per litre and diesel at Shs4,950. That stability has broken.

As of Monday, petrol at leading dealers hit Shs5,400 a litre while diesel reached Shs5,350 - up Shs320 and Shs400, respectively, since mid-February.

Strait of Hormuz risks drive hikes

Industry analysts link the spike to uncertainty around the Strait of Hormuz, the chokepoint for nearly 20 percent of global oil.

"The US-Israel posture and wider regional friction have pushed up shipping risks and insurance premiums," said Mr Peter Ochieng, a fuel marketing expert with a vast knowledge of the East African region.



Cars at a fuel station in Kampala. Fuel prices are influenced by global market dynamics, including the conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran. PHOTO/ IBRAHIM KAVUMA

"When that route looks unsafe, crude markets react fast. OMCs are passing that volatility to the pump, sometimes preemptively, and consumers are left at their mercy," Ochieng says.

A logistics expert who preferred anonymity when interviewed for this article added that East Africa-bound car-

go now faces longer transit times and higher freight costs.

"Even when barrels are available, getting them here is less predictable. Those costs land in Jinja and Mbarara."

Dr Patricia Litho, director of public and communication at the Energy Ministry, said while OMCs have continued

supplying the requested volumes on time, the ministry still urges them not to exploit consumers.

"There are other market dynamics like the dollar rate, currently at 3,720/3,730. But they should not skyrocket pump prices to the detriment of motorists and consumers," Litho said.

On pump prices, officials noted that rates are influenced by global market dynamics, including the dollar rate and the conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran.

"These external factors continue to impact international oil prices," the update said. "However, measures are in place to ensure that fuel prices remain within reasonable levels."

The public was urged to remain calm and avoid panic buying, with assurances that supply is steady and sufficient. UNOC maintains that recent OMC hikes are not justified by current landed costs.

Multinationals Shell and Total are currently Shs150 above Stabex and City Oil on petrol.

Government assures the public that petroleum supply remains "stable."

It confirmed another fuel vessel carrying 119 million litres of petrol is expected at Mombasa Port today

Key figures

20%

Industry analysts link the spike to uncertainty around the Strait of Hormuz, the chokepoint for nearly 20 percent of global oil.

(Wednesday, 15th April 2026).

Government, through the Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC) and the Energy Ministry said it continues to actively manage supply chains and maintain adequate stock levels to meet national demand.

Transport operators say margins are thinning fast. "We raised fares last week. But passengers are pushing back," a taxi driver at the Old Taxi Park said. "Another diesel hike and we're stuck."

If tensions persist around the Strait of Hormuz, East Africa could see more spikes before June.

For now, Uganda faces a familiar squeeze: global shocks, local price jumps, and government assurances that reserves will hold.