

## State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings 01 - 31 December 2017

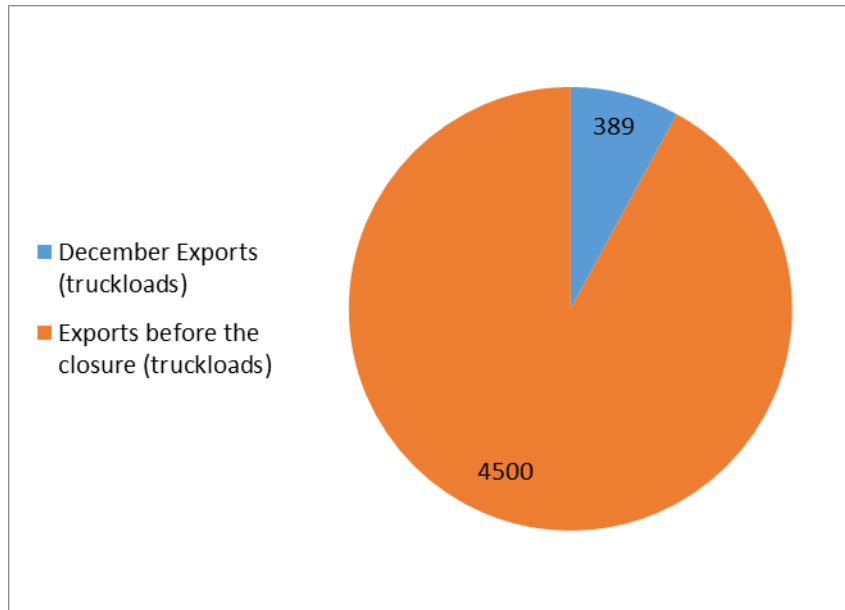
During 2017, the Israeli forces continued to impose the closure on the Gaza Strip for the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year and to tighten restrictions on the Gaza crossings for the movement of persons and goods. Regarding movement of persons, 2017 witnessed an increase in the the rate of rejectiing permits granted by the Israeli authorities for specific categories, by which they are allowed to travel via Beit Hanoun “Erez” Crossing. As a result, the number of patients allowed to travel via Erez crossing decreased as well as the number of their companions, traders, relatives of prisoners in the Israeli jails, international organizations’ workers, travelers via al-Karama (Allenby) crossing, persons with personal needs, elderly persons, who are allowed to perform prayers in al-Aqsa mosque, and Christians allowed to spend Christmas holidays in Bethlehem in the West Bank. Concerning goods movement, the Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports. However, in a limited exception, they allowed to export only very limited products; most of which are agricultural goods. The Israeli authorities also continued to impose tightened restrictions on the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip, claiming that they are "dual-use materials". The Israeli forces put 118 types of goods on the list of the "dual-use materials", which include hundreds of basic goods and commodities. Due to the policy of ongoing closure and social and economic strangulation, serious indications emerged at the level of people's humanitarian conditions. Moreover, the social and economic rights of the Gaza Strip population deteriorated due to the serious and long-term impacts of the Israeli policies that managed to undermine any real opportunity to revive and restore the Gaza Strip economy and its sectors.

**This report covers the state of the Gaza Strip crossings in December, during which crossings for the movement of persons and goods witnessed further restrictions, refuting the Israeli claims of easing the closure.**

- **Restrictions on Goods Movement**

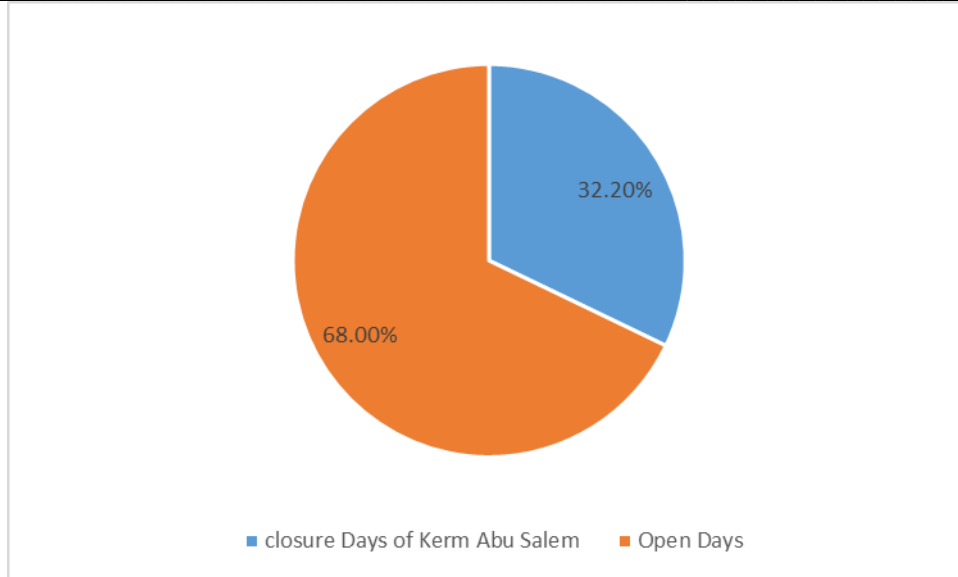
- **Continued ban on exports:**

- The Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports. In a limited exception, they allowed the exportation of limited amounts of goods; most of which are exported to the West Bank and little amounts are exported to Israel and other counties. In December, the Israeli authorities allowed the exportation of 389 truckloads, most of which are agricultural, fish, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, and clothes.



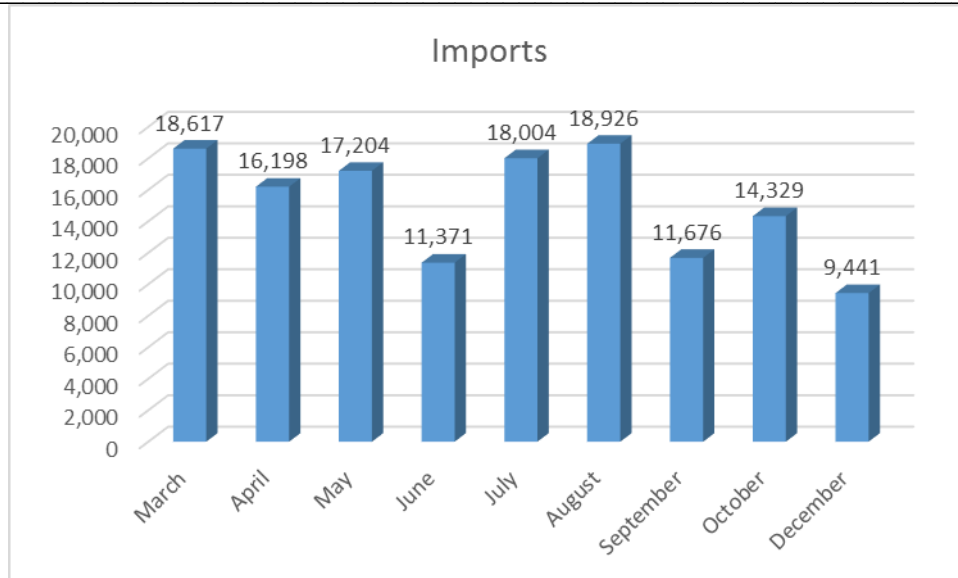
The exports rate in December amounted to 8.6% of the monthly exports before June 2007. The lowest exports rate was reported in August as 62 truckloads were exported. However, the exports in December were the highest rate as 389 truckloads were exported.

- During the reporting period, Israel closed Karm Abu Salem, which is the sole commercial crossing, for 10 days (32.2 % of the total period). During the days it was open, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 9.441 truckloads; an average of 304 truckloads daily.



▪ **Ongoing Restrictions on imports:**

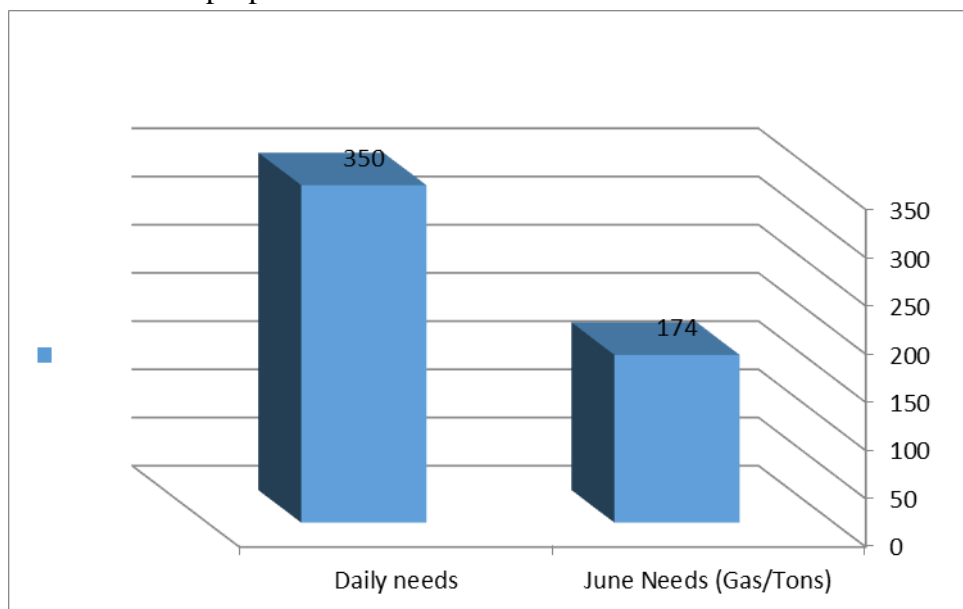
The Israeli authorities continued to impose tightened restrictions on the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip, claiming that they are "dual-use materials". The Israeli forces put 118 types of goods on the list of the "dual-use materials". The Israeli authorities officially put 118 types on the dual-use materials list, and these types include hundreds of basic goods. For example, the communication equipments alone includes dozens of goods.



- The items on the "dual-use goods" list are essential to the life of the population, so imposing restrictions on importing them contribute to the deterioration of infrastructure and the deterioration of economic, health and education conditions. These items include communications equipment, pumps, large generators, iron bars, iron pipes in all diameters, welding equipment and welding rods used in welding, various types of wood, UPS devices that protect the electric devices from breaking down when the electricity suddenly cuts off, X-ray machines, cranes and heavy vehicles, types of batteries and several types of fertilizers.
- The process of submitting applications by the Gaza Strip population to enter goods classified by the Israeli authorities as dual-use goods is very complex and ambiguous. Those residing the Gaza Strip should send a request to the Palestinian Coordination Committee for the Entry of Goods that refers the request to the Israeli Coordination and Liaison Office at "Erez" crossing. After that, the goods will be classified and sent to the competent Israeli officer to check it. Moreover, the Palestinian trader should close the transaction with the Israeli seller or broker and pay for it to submit the request. If the response was positive, the coordination for the entry of goods will be allowed through the Karm Abu Salem (Kerem Shaloum) crossing. A number of traders and contractors said to PCHR that the abovementioned measures are very complicated as the Israeli authorities deliberately delay responses to applications for months. Additionally, in many cases, the Israeli authorities stationed at (Kerem Shaloum) crossing return the goods that had been already approved on to enter. This inflicts heavy losses on

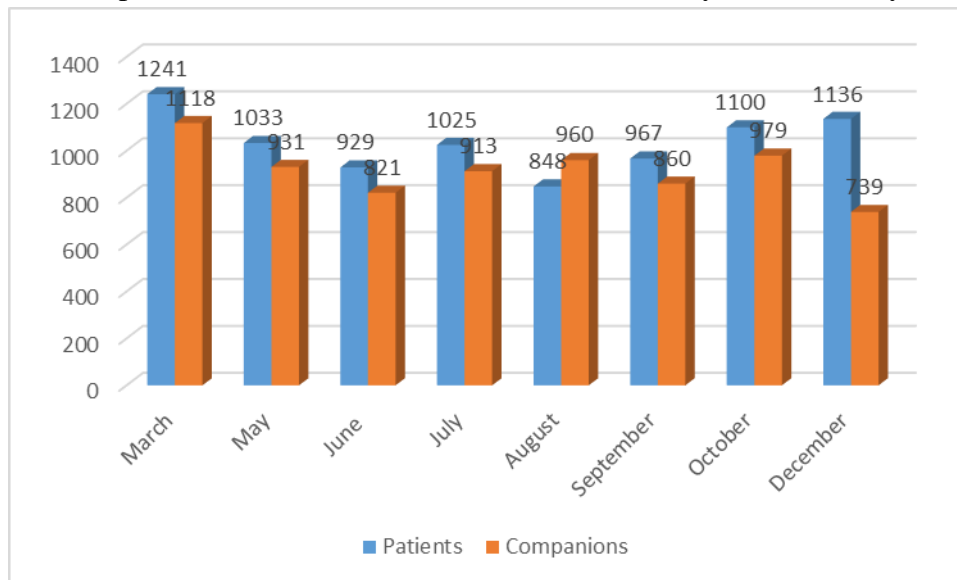
traders who pay large amount of money for the storage and demurrage charges and to contractors who undertake to deliver their projects on time.

- **Restrictions on the entry of construction materials:** the Israeli authorities continued to impose restrictions on the entry of construction materials, claiming that they are "dual-use materials". According to the Ministry of National Economy in Gaza, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 1007 tons of cement; 2,830 tons of construction steel; and 245 tons of construction aggregates. The Gaza Strip population's needs of cement are met with the quantities supplied by Egypt. The deterioration of the economic situation has also contributed to reducing the demand for construction materials.
- **Ongoing crisis of cooking gas:** the Israeli authorities continued to decrease the entry of cooking gas into the Gaza Strip as only 5,396 tons of cooking gas were allowed; a daily average of 174 tons. According to the General Petroleum Corporation in Gaza (EGPC), this amount represents 49.7% of the actual daily needs of the population, which is 350 tons. This resulted in shortage in the cooking gas quantities. **Moreover**, cars' owners were prevented from operating their cars on gas to avoid the aggravation of the crisis in addition to limiting the use of it for domestic purposes.



▪ **Restrictions on the Movement of Persons:**

- The Israeli authorities continued to impose tight restrictions on the movement of the Gaza Strip population through Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing. However, they allowed limited categories to travel via Beit Hanoun crossing: patients and their companions, Arabs holding Israeli ID cards, international journalists, workers of international humanitarian organizations, businesspeople, relatives of prisoners in the Israeli jails, elderly persons to perform prayers in al-Aqsa mosque, and persons travelling via al-Karama crossing.
- Israeli authorities imposed new restrictions on the departure of those limited categories, who are allowed to travel via Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing. These restrictions include extending the time required to handle the applications of Gaza exit-permits from 24 days to 70 days for those requesting the permit for studying, trade, and travelling abroad; 50 days for visiting a sick relative, attending conferences, appointments in Embassies and Consulates in the West Bank or Israel; and 23 days for non-urgent medical referrals applications. It should be noted that this period does not include the weekend on Fridays and Saturdays.



- **Patients:** During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities stationed at Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing obstructed the travel of 1,034 of patients referred for medical treatment in the Israeli hospitals or the West Bank under various pretexts, including security reasons, changing the companions, waiting for a new appointment and awaiting an Israeli reply following security interviews. In December, Israel allowed the entry of 1,136 patients. It should be mentioned



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that the number of patients allowed traveling monthly via Beit Hanoun Crossing represents around 52.3% the number of patients who applied for permits to travel via the Crossing.

- It should be mentioned that according to the Coordination and Liaison Department in the Ministry of Health, the number of patients who applied for permits to travel via Beit Hanoun Crossing in 2017 was 25,796 applications; 13,803 were approved (53.5% of the total applications.) It should be noted that the filed applications requesting permits were for patients who are only emergency cases according to the classification of the Israeli authorities (i.e. suffering from life threatening diseases). The Israeli authorities also deprive patients with non-life-threatening diseases, such as blindness and amputation, of traveling for treatment, claiming that their cases are not that urgent and does not require saving a life.

- **Prisoners' Visits:**

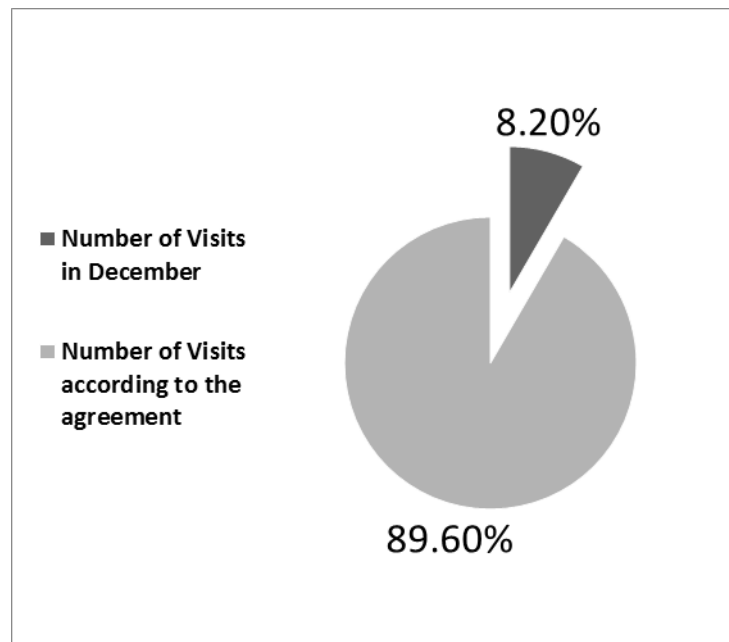
In December, the Israeli authorities allowed 101 family members of prisoners divided into 4 groups to visit 58 of their relatives in the Israeli prisons according to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) in Gaza.

### Family Visits to Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Jails in December 2017

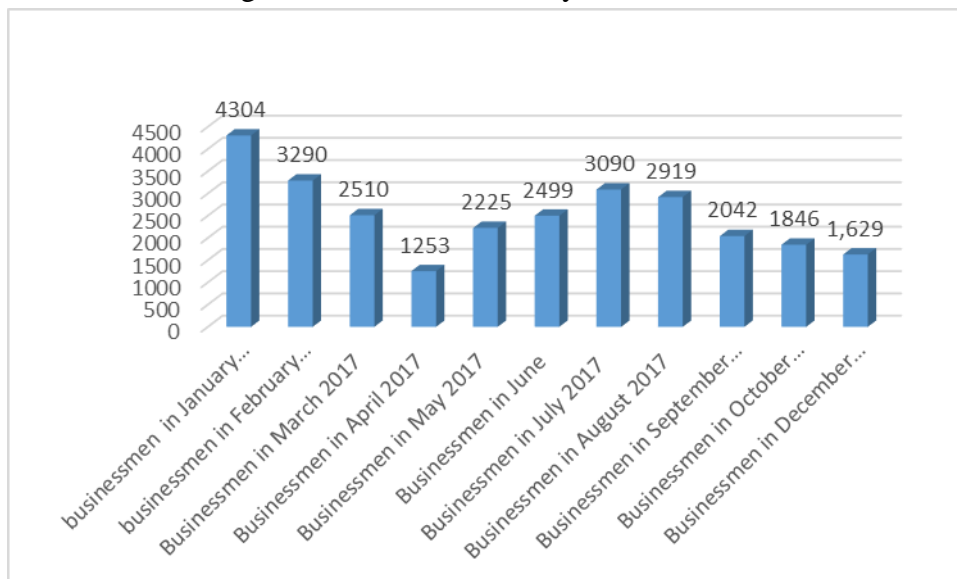
Day	Number of visitors	Number of children	Number of visited prisoners	Prison
04 December 2017	45	9	30	Nafha
11 December 2017	3	-	3	Eshel
18 December 2017	31	11	18	Nafha
22 December 2017	22	4	14	Rimon

- The above table shows that the number of visitors is limited compared with the number of visits allowed under the prisoners' deal. According to the agreement, each prisoner has the right to two family visits a month. With 350 prisoners in Israeli prisons, the number of visits should reach 700 monthly. However, the Israeli forces only allowed 58 visits (8.2%). The same applies to the number of family members who are allowed to visit their relatives; the number of these members mounted to 101 in December whereas the number should be 1,400 persons in case each prisoner is visited by 2 members of his family twice a month (7.2%). The families were subjected to arbitrary practices, obstacles and immoral and degrading treatment.

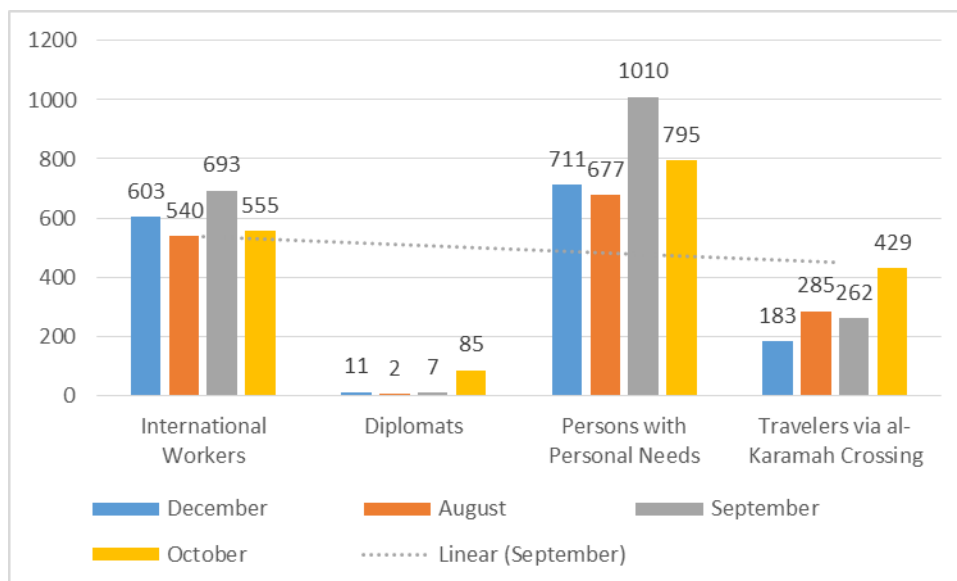




- **Number of businessmen who are allowed to travel declined:** the Israeli authorities allowed 1,629 businessmen to travel via Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing in December. This number represents a decrease of 62.1% comparing with January, in which 4,304 traders were allowed to travel according to the General Authority for Civil Affairs.



- **Other categories:** According to GACA, Israel allowed the entry of 555 international workers; 85 diplomats; 795 persons with personal needs; 429 travelers via al-Karama (Allenby) crossing. It should be mentioned that these statistics do not represent the number of persons allowed to enter as the permit holders are far less than the passing times due to passing many times via the crossing with the same permit in one month.



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▪ **Rafah International Crossing Point:**

During the reporting period, Rafah International Crossing Point was closed during December for the 27 days as a result of the Egyptian internal situation and the deteriorating security situation in Northern Sinai. According to the Ministry of Interior in Gaza, Rafah Crossing was open for 4 days; during which 2,536 persons travelled from the Gaza Strip and 957 persons returned in addition to 338 persons were returned by the Egyptian authorities. The number of civilians registering to travel is 30,000 according to the Gaza Crossings and Border Authority. This situation unveiled the real circumstances in the Gaza Strip in light of the collective punishment policy and Israeli closure imposed on all the surrounding border crossings, especially Beit Hanoun Crossing, which is totally under the Israeli control.