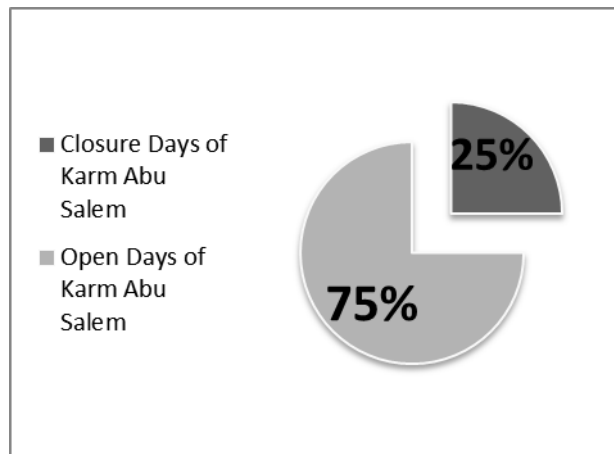


State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings 01-28 February 2017

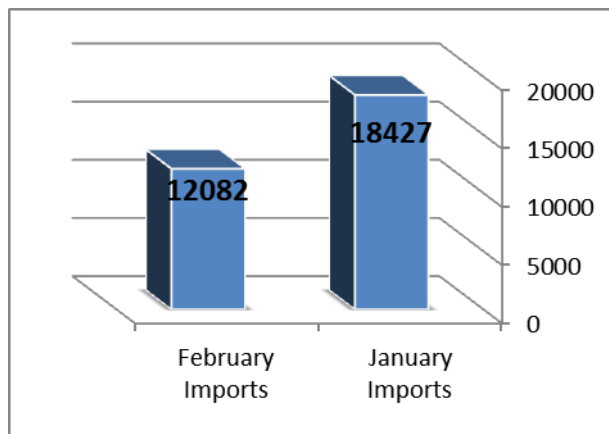
The Israeli closure imposed on the Gaza Strip for the 10th consecutive year continues, and in February the crossings surrounding the Gaza Strip witnessed further restrictions, refuting the Israeli claims of easing the closure.

• Restrictions on Goods Movement

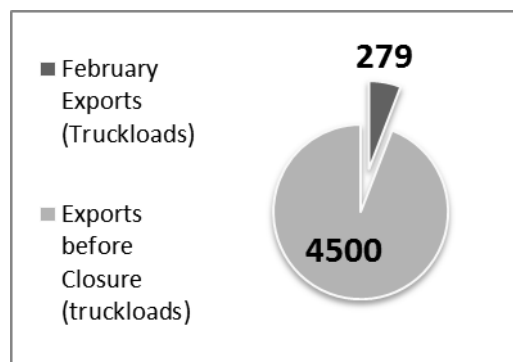
Closure of the sole commercial crossing: the Israeli authorities continued to impose tightened restrictions on the entry of 400 types of goods into the Gaza Strip, most of them are of basic goods and raw materials. The movement of goods from and into the Gaza Strip faced many obstacles, including closure of the sole commercial crossing for 7 days (25% of the total period).



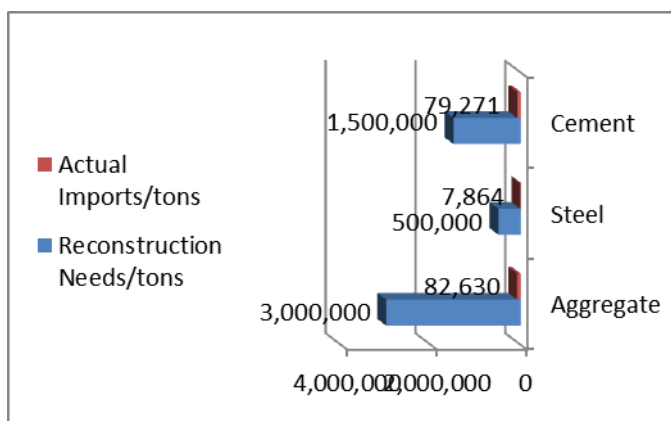
Decrease in imports: During the days the crossing was open, 431 truckloads were allowed to enter daily. This constituted a decrease of 34.4% comparing with last January when the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 18,427 truckloads; an average of 594 truckloads daily.



Continued ban on exports: the Israeli authorities continued to impose a ban on the Gaza exports. In a limited exception, they allowed 297 truckloads for exportation in February; most of which were agricultural. They allowed 273 agricultural truckloads and 24 truckloads of fish, furniture, aluminum scrap, steel, clothes and spices. The rate of Gaza Strip exports in February constituted only 6.6% of the exports before June 2007.

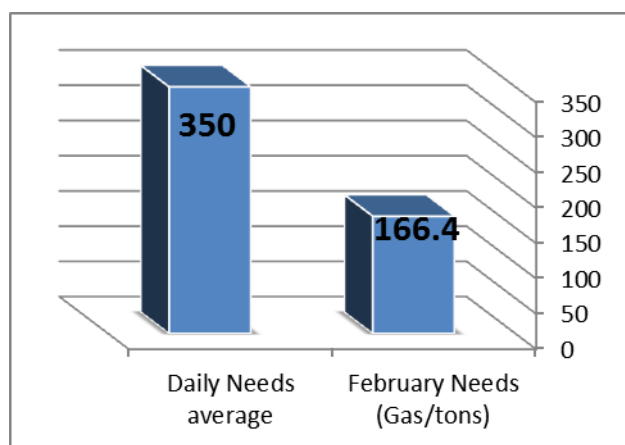


Restrictions on the entry of construction materials: the Israeli authorities continued to impose restrictions on the entry of construction materials. According to the Ministry of National Economy in Gaza, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 79,271 tons of cement;



7,846 construction steel; and 82,630 construction aggregates (consecutively constituting 5.2%; 1.5% and 2.7% of the total needs for the Gaza reconstruction.)

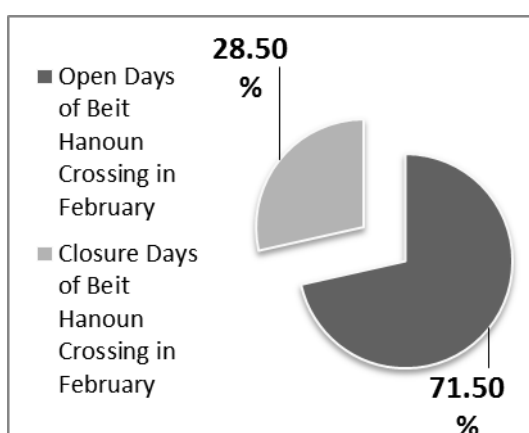
Ongoing crisis of cooking gas: the Israeli authorities continued to decrease the entry of cooking gas into the Gaza Strip as only 4,660 tons of cooking gas were allowed; a daily average of 166.4 tons. According to the General Petroleum Corporation in Gaza (EGPC),



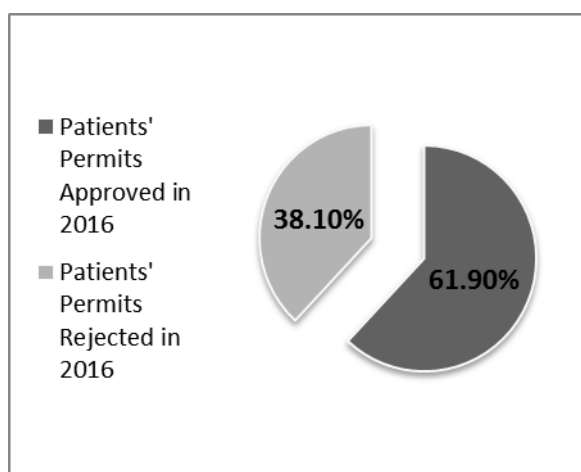
this amount represents 47.5% of the actual daily needs of the population, which is 350 tons. As a result, people were forced to wait for a long time, exceeding 3 months, to fill half of a gas cylinder.

• Restrictions on the Movement of Persons:

The Israeli authorities continued to impose restrictions on the Gaza population; quantitatively and qualitatively affecting the movement of persons. The rate of rejected permits increased, so the limited categories that were allowed to travel through the crossing decreased. In February, 8,094 persons were allowed to travel; (59.8% of the monthly average in 2016.) Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing was closed for 8 days (4 days of which were partially open only for urgent cases); constituting 28.5% of the month.



Patients: During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities stationed at Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing obstructed the travel of dozens 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 February, Israel allowed the entry of 1,357 patients and 1,203 companions according to the Civil Affairs in Gaza. It should be mentioned that the number of patients allowed traveling monthly via Beit Hanoun Crossing represents only half of 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 2016 was 26,280 applications; 16,277 were approved (61.84% of the total applications.)

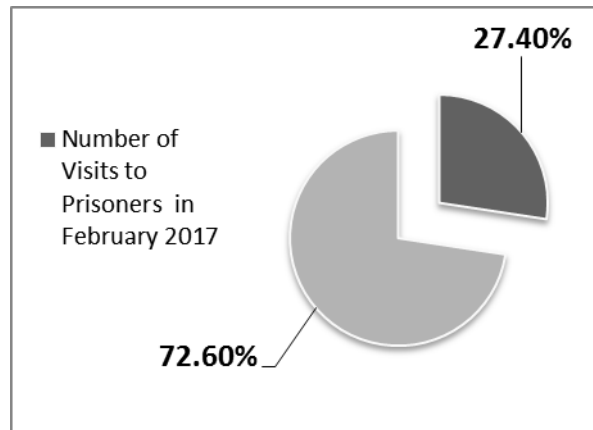
▪ Prisoners' Visits:

The Israeli authorities allowed 171 family members of prisoners divided into 4 groups to visit 96 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 prisons in February 2017

Day	Number of visitors	Number of children	Number of visited prisoners	Prison
06 February 2017	49	15	27	Ramon
13 February 2017	65	15	37	Nafha
20 February 2017	27	5	14	Eshel
27 February 2017	30	4	18	Ramon

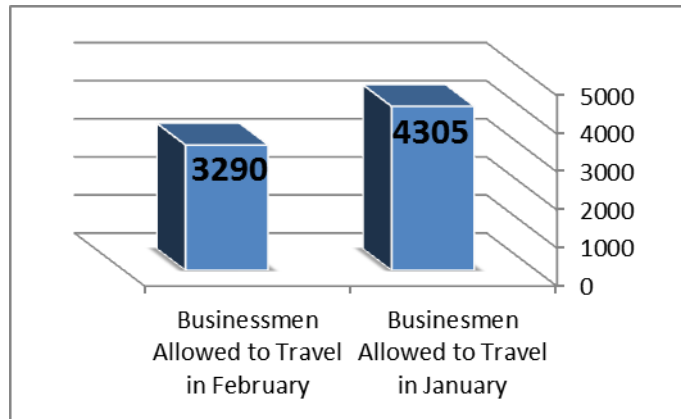
The above table shows that the number of visitors is limited compared to the number of visits allowed under the prisoners' deal. According to the agreement, each prisoner has the right to two family visits a month. With 350 prisoners in Israeli prisons, the number of visits should reach 700 monthly.



However, the Israeli forces only allowed 96 visits (27.4%) in September. The same applies to the number of family members who are allowed to visit their relatives; the number of these members mounted to 171 in February whereas the number should include 1,400 persons in case each prisoner is visited by 2 members of his family twice a month (12.2%). The families were subjected to arbitrary practices, obstacles and immoral and degrading treatment.

- **The Israeli authorities continued to prevent worshippers from performing prayers in al-Aqsa Mosque:** for the third month consecutively, Gaza elderly people were prevented from performing prayers in al-Aqsa Mosque.

Number of businessmen who are allowed to travel declined: the Israeli authorities allowed 3,290 businessmen to travel via Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing in February. The number in February decreased from last month with a rate of 23.5% as 4,304 businessmen were allowed in January.



- **Other categories:** According to the General Authority of Civil Affair, Israel allowed the entry of 630 international workers; 884 persons with personal needs and 214 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.
- **Israeli forces arrest Director of an international organization at Beit Hanoun Crossing:** the Israeli forces arrested Director of TIKA Agency at Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing. At approximately 11:00 on Monday, 13 February 2017, Israeli forces stationed at Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing, arrested Mohamed Farouq Sha'ban Murtaja (37), from al-Fayrouz towers in al-Nasir neighborhood, north of Gaza City. Mohamed, Director of Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency "TIKA" in Gaza, was heading to Erez crossing to travel to Turkey via Jordan. Mohamed's father said to PCHR's fieldworker that at approximately 10:00, his son headed to the Erez crossing to travel to Turkey as his colleague the Director of TIKA Agency in the West Bank was waiting for him on the other side to travel together to Turkey. However, his son did not get out of the crossing. At approximately 09:00 on Tuesday, 14 February 2017, Mohamed's father received a call from al-Majdal police station informing him that his son is under investigation. When Mohamed's father asked the caller about how long the investigations would take, he answered it is none of his business.



- **Rafah International Crossing Point:**

During the reporting period, Rafah International Crossing Point was closed for 24 days as a result of the Egyptian internal situation and the deteriorating security situation in north Sinai. Exceptionally, the crossing point was opened for only 3 days on varying periods. During the days it was open, 1,527 Palestinians travelled abroad while 113 returned to the Gaza Strip. Moreover, 2,624 were returned by the Egyptian authorities. This unveiled the reality of the situation 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. Thousands of Palestinians, who registered for traveling via the crossing, are waiting for their turn to travel according to the Ministry of Interior in Gaza.