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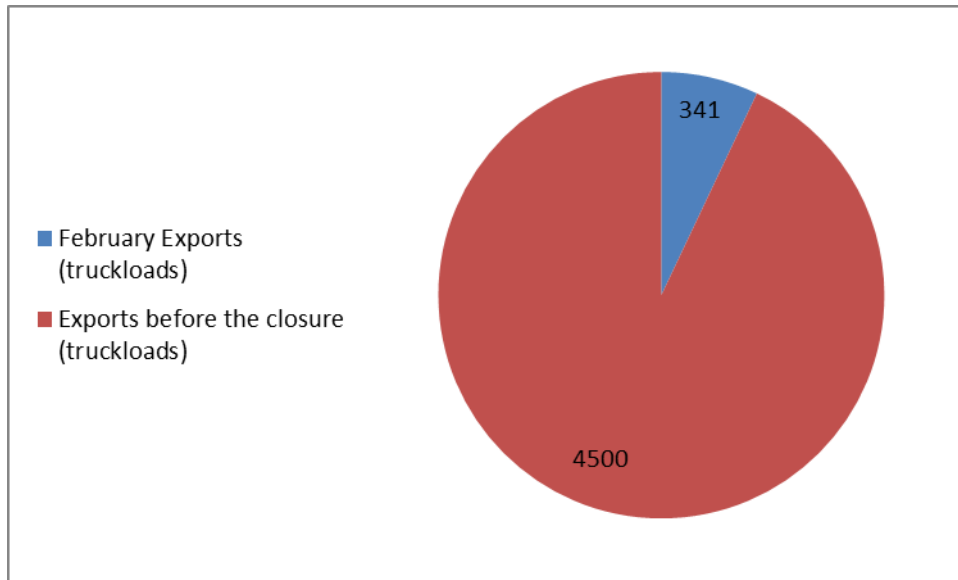
## State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings 01 - 28 February 2018

The Israeli closure imposed on the Gaza Strip continues for the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. This report covers the state of the Gaza Strip crossings in February, during which crossings for the movement of persons and goods witnessed further restrictions, refuting the Israeli claims of easing the closure. As for the commercial crossings, the Israeli authorities continue to impose tightened restrictions on the entry of goods classified as "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. Moreover, the Israeli authorities continued to ban the exportation of Gaza products, making an exception for very limited quantities that do not exceed 7.5% of the monthly exports before the closure imposed in June 2007. As for the Crossings for the movement of persons, the Israeli authorities continue to impose tightened restrictions on the movement of the Gaza Strip residents through Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing, narrowly allowing the travel of limited categories. As part of imposing further restrictions on the travel of these categories, the Israeli authorities lately forced some of these categories, particularly directly students studying abroad and travelers through al-Karamah crossing, to travel in buses that carry them from Beit Hanoun Crossing to al-Karamah crossing within "shuttle service", exaggerating the suffering of these categories and imposing complicated restrictions on their movement.

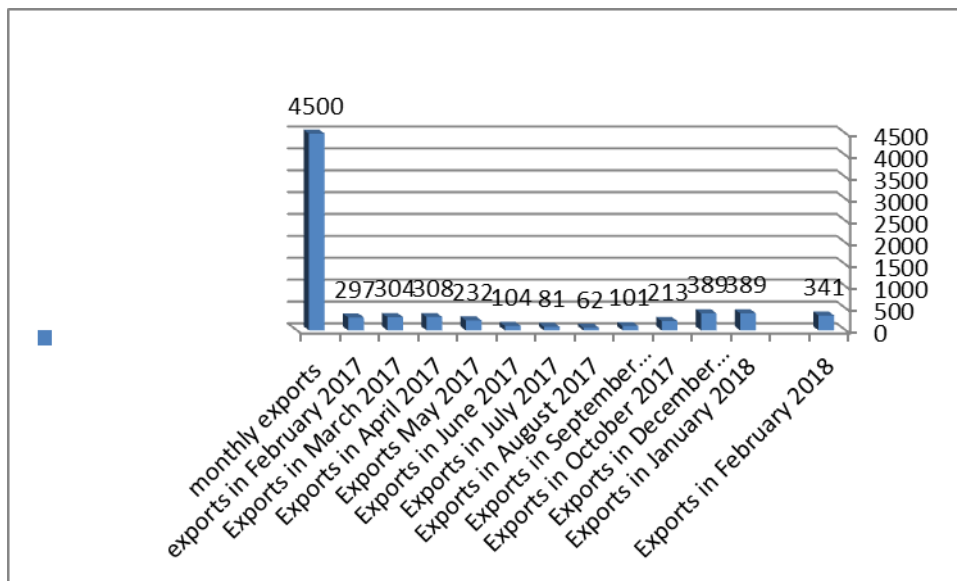
- **Restrictions on Goods Movement**

- **Continued ban on exports:**

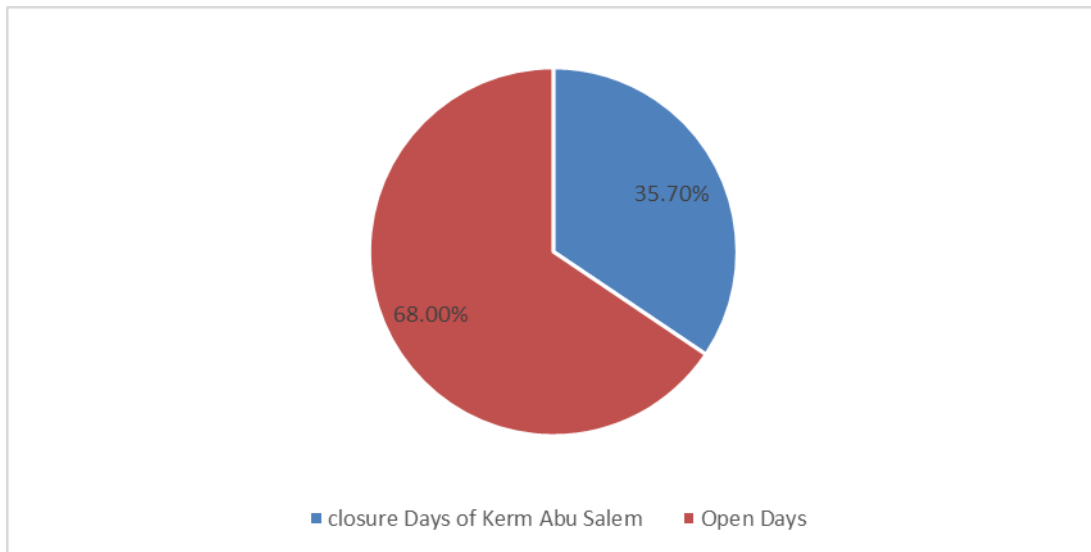
- The Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports. In a limited exception, they allowed the exportation of limited amounts of goods; most of which are exported to the West Bank and little amounts are exported to Israel and other countries. In February, the Israeli authorities allowed the exportation of 341 truckloads (258 of which were to the West Bank), most of which are agricultural, fish, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, and clothes.



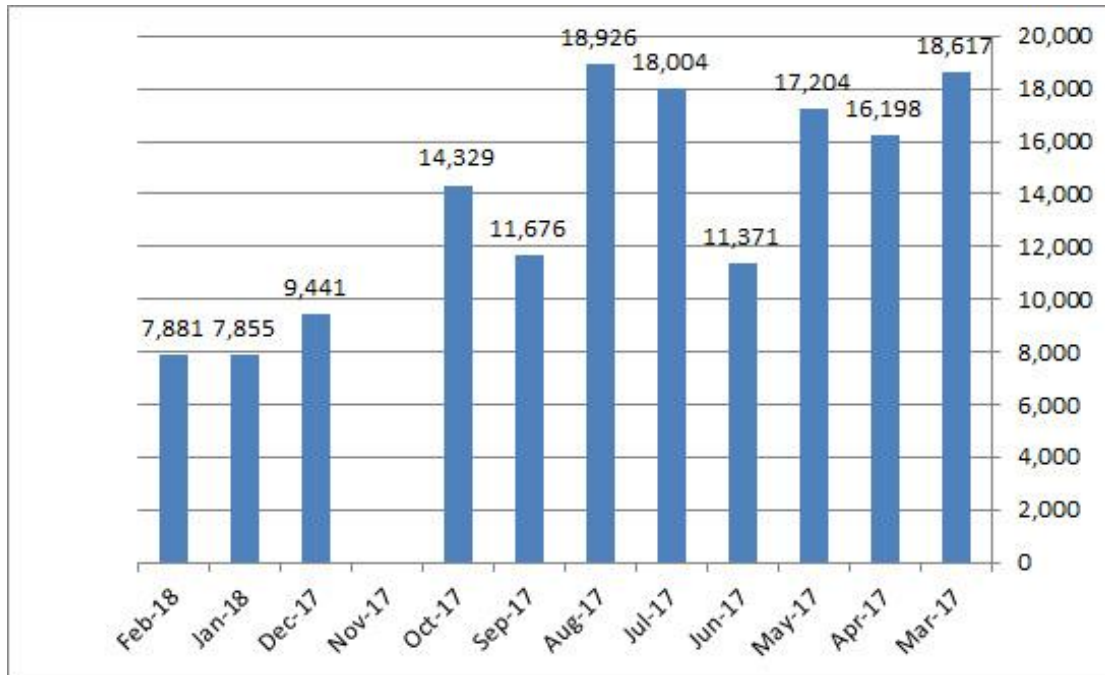
- The exports rate in February was 7.5% of the monthly exports before June 2007 (4500 truckloads monthly). The lowest exports rate was reported in August as 62 truckloads were exported. However, the exports in January were the highest as 389 truckloads were exported.



- During the reporting period, Israel closed Karm Abu Salem, which is the sole commercial crossing, for 10 days (35.7 % of the total period). During the days it was open, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 7,881 truckloads; an average of 281 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 equipment alone includes dozens of goods.



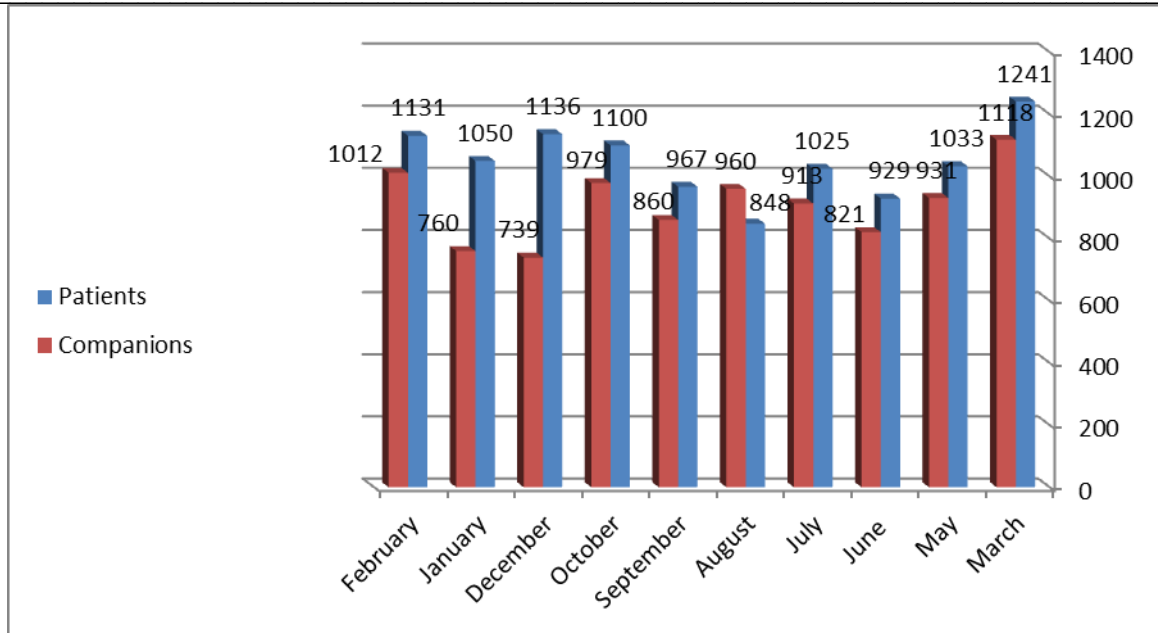
- The items on the "dual-use goods" list are essential to the life of the population, so imposing restrictions on them contribute to the deterioration of infrastructure and the deterioration of economic, health and education conditions. These items include communications equipment, pumps, large generators, 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 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.
- The 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.
- The Israeli authorities also imposed new restrictions on the items which the traveler is allowed to carry when traveling through Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing. These restrictions include preventing acquisition of electronic and electric devices, cosmetics, and foodstuffs; and preventing travelers from putting their belongings in wheel bags.



- **Patients:** During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities stationed at Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing obstructed the travel of 671 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 1,131 patients and 1,012 companions. It should be mentioned that the number of patients allowed traveling monthly via Beit Hanoun Crossing represents around 50% 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 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.

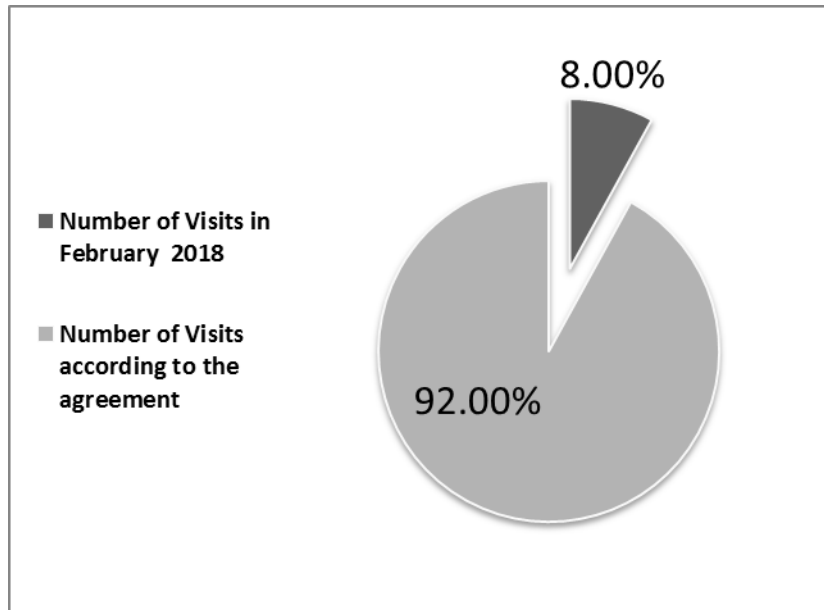
▪ **Prisoners' Visits:**

In February, the Israeli authorities allowed 112 family members of prisoners divided into 3 groups to visit 63 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 February 2018**

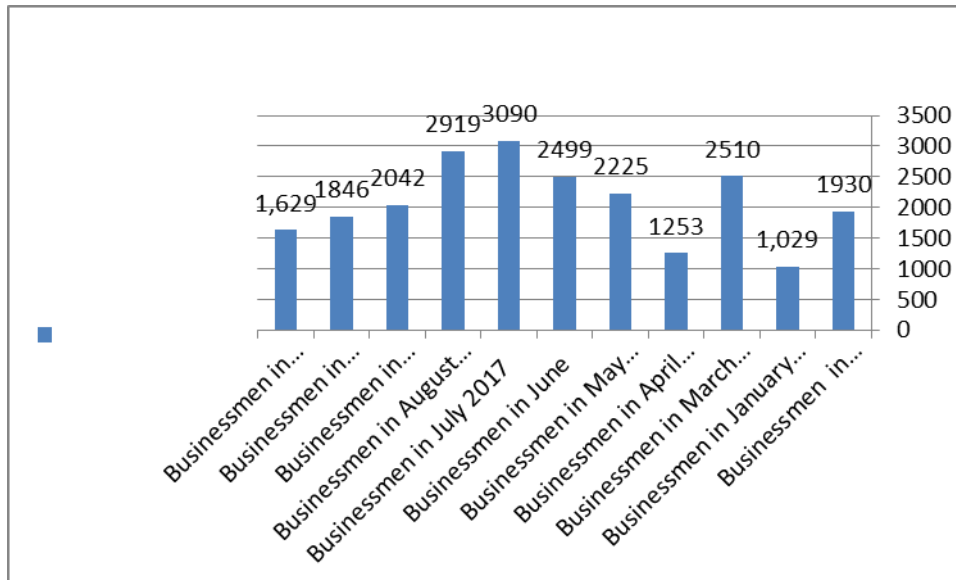
Day	Number of visitors	Number of children	Number of visited prisoners	Prison
05 February 2018	43	7	17	Nafha
19 February 2018	26	10	15	Rimon
26 February 2018	43	16	21	Nafha

- 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 52 visits (7.4%). The same applies to the number of family members who are allowed to visit their relatives; the number of these members mounted to 112 in February whereas the number should be 1,400 persons in case each prisoner is visited by 2 members of his family twice a month (8%). The families were subjected to arbitrary practices, obstacles and immoral and degrading treatment.

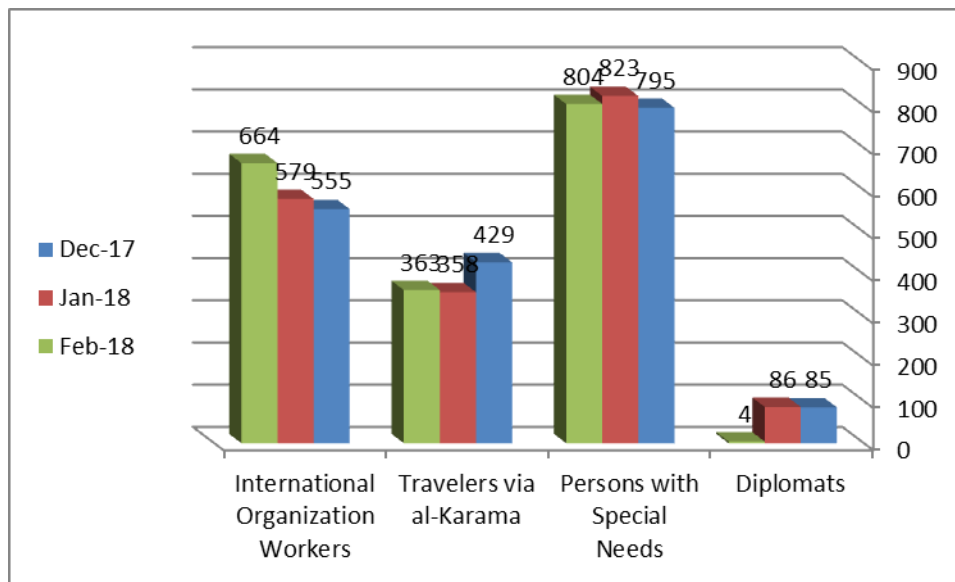


- **Number of businessmen who are allowed to travel increased:** the Israeli authorities continued to impose restrictions on the movement of traders and businessmen via Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing. In February, they allowed 1,930 businessmen to travel via Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing. The number increased with a rate of 87% comparing to January when 1,029 businessmen were allowed to travel. However, the number is still limited in analogy to the number last year as in February 2017, 3,290 businessmen were allowed to travel, according to the General Authority for Civil Affairs.





- **Other categories:** According to GACA, Israel allowed the entry of 664 international workers; 4 diplomats; 804 persons with personal needs; 363 travelers via al-Karama (Allenby) crossing; 213 Arabs in Israel; 209 persons to attend meetings and training courses; and 74 elderly persons to perform prayers in al-Aqsa Mosque. 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.



### ▪ Rafah International Crossing Point:

During the reporting period, Rafah International Crossing Point was closed during February for 25 days as a result of the Egyptian internal situation and the deteriorating security situation in Northern Sinai. The crossing was open only for 3 days for the travel of humanitarian cases as 1,555 managed to leave the Gaza Strip while 1,008 civilians returned to the Strip and the Egyptian authorities returned 190 civilians, banning them from travel without any reason. 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.

2017 is considered the worst regarding the number of days Rafah Crossing was open since the 2005 Agreement entered into force. The Egyptian authorities opened the crossing for 29 days during the last year and closed it for 336. During the days it was open, 11,000 persons were allowed to travel. However, in 2016, the crossing was open for 41 days and closed for 324 days during which 26,431 persons were allowed to travel.