



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان

PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings 01 - 31 December 2018

The Israeli closure imposed on the Gaza Strip continues for the 12th consecutive year. As for the movement of persons, since the beginning of this years, the percentage of refusing permits granted by the Israeli authorities to categories allowed to travel via Beit Hanoun (Erez) Crossing, has increased. As a result, the number of patients allowed to travel via the crossing was decreased. Moreover, the number of patients' companions, businesspeople, relatives of prisoners in the Israeli jails, workers of international humanitarian organizations, persons travelling via al-Karama crossing, people with special needs, and elderly persons allowed to perform prayers in al-Aqsa mosque, were decreased as well.

Concerning goods movement in 2018, the Israeli authorities imposed more restrictions on the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip and issued successive decisions to tight the closure on the Gaza Strip. The Israeli authorities completely closed Kerm Abu Salem Crossing, the sole commercial crossing in the Gaza Strip, and banned the entry of fuel, gas, goods and basic needs for the Gaza Strip population, in response to flying kites and firing balloons by Hamas towards the buffer zone along the Gaza strip.

During the reporting period (December), the Israeli authorities intensified the restrictions on the commercial crossings as they imposed restrictions on the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip and banned the exportation of all goods from the Gaza Strip, except for very limited items and quantities.

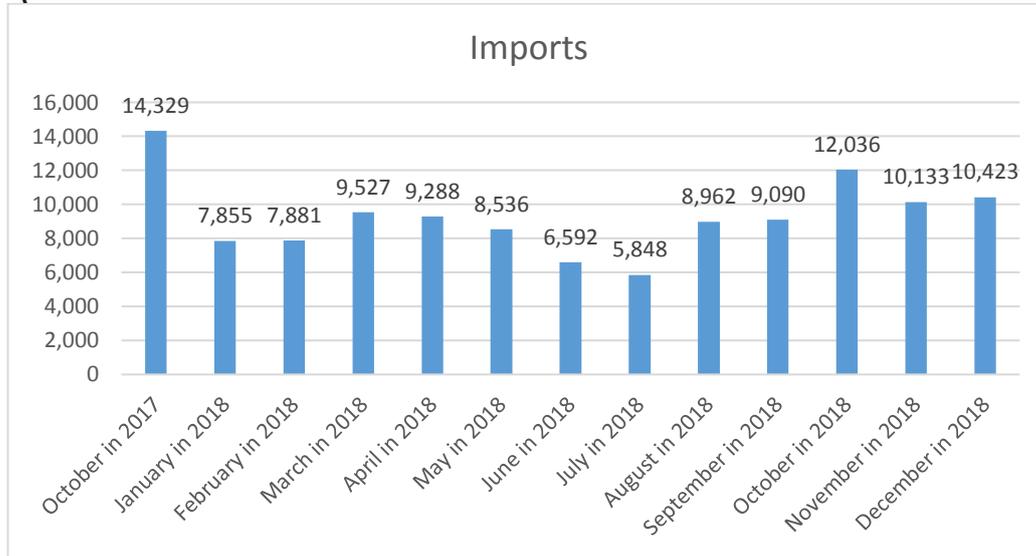
As for the Crossings for the movement of persons, the Israeli authorities continue to impose tight restrictions on the movement of the Gaza Strip residents through Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing, narrowly allowing the travel of limited categories such as patients and their companions, Arabs holding Israeli ID cards, international journalists, workers of international humanitarian organizations, businesspeople, relatives of prisoners in the Israeli jails, and persons travelling via al-Karama crossing.

Restrictions on Goods Movement

Although, the tightening restrictions on imports into the Gaza Strip continued, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 10.423 truckloads. In December, the imports decreased to 13.4%, while the imports in October were 12.036 truckloads.



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



- **Ongoing ban on Gaza Strip exports:**

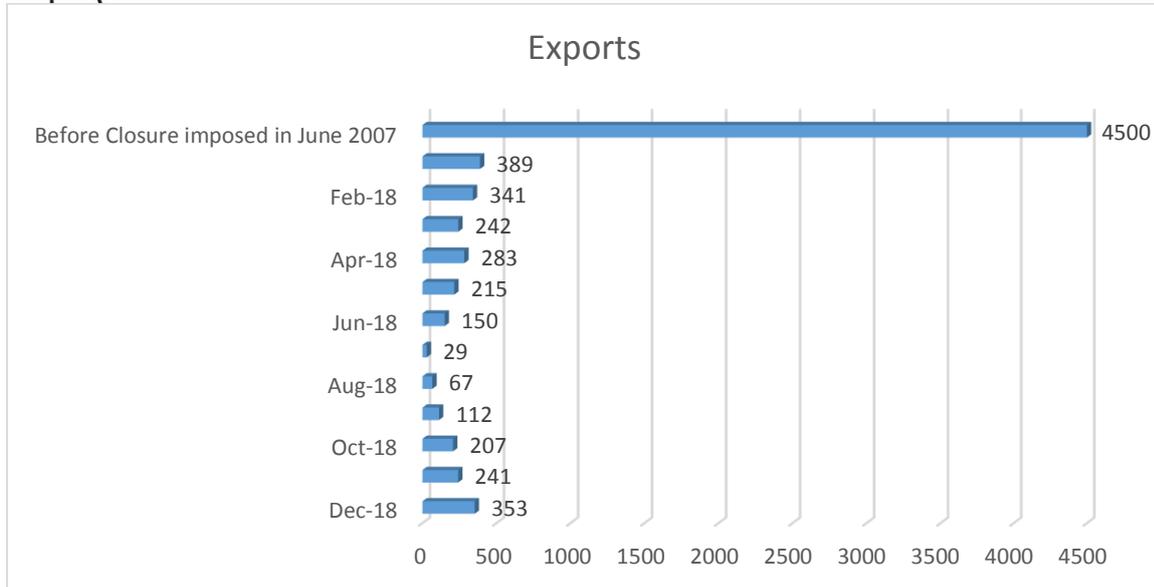
The Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports. In a limited exception, they allowed the exportation of very limited types of goods; most of which are exported to the West Bank and only little quantities are exported to Israel and other countries. In December, the Israeli authorities allowed the exportation of 353 truckloads (299 of which were to the West Bank). Those truckloads were agricultural products, fish, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, and clothes.

- The exports rate in December was 7.8% of the monthly exports before June 2007 (4500 truckloads monthly). The lowest exports rate was reported in last July as only 29 truckloads were exported. However, the exports in January were the highest as 389 truckloads were exported.



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان

PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



- The Israeli authorities continue to impose tightened restrictions on the goods classified as "dual-use materials", which are around 118 types and include hundreds of basic goods and commodities. The dual-use materials are essential to the life of the population, so imposing restrictions on them contribute to the deterioration of infrastructure and 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, elevators, 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 relevant Israeli officer to check it. Moreover, the Palestinian trader should close the transaction with the Israeli seller or broker and pay for it to be able 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 forces stationed

غزة - شارع جمال عبد الناصر "الثلاثيني" - مجمع الرويا - الطابق 12 - مقابل جامعة الأزهر ويجوار الهلال الأحمر - د. حيد عبد الشافي
ص. ب 1328 تليفون 2825893 / 08 2824776 فاكس 2835288

Gaza- Jamal 'Abdel Nasser "al-Thalathini" Street - Al-Roya Building- Floor 12 - Opposite to al-Azhar University - Near
Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) -Dr. Haidar 'Abdel Shafi
PO Box 1328 Tel/: 08 - 2824776 / 2825893 Fax 2835288 E-mail: pchr@pchrgaza.org - Web page: www.pchrgaza.org



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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 and allow 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, 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 travelers' needs 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 hundreds 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 travel of 1,540 patients and 1,334 companions. The number of those patients allowed to travel is less than half of the number of patients who applied for travel permits via the crossing.

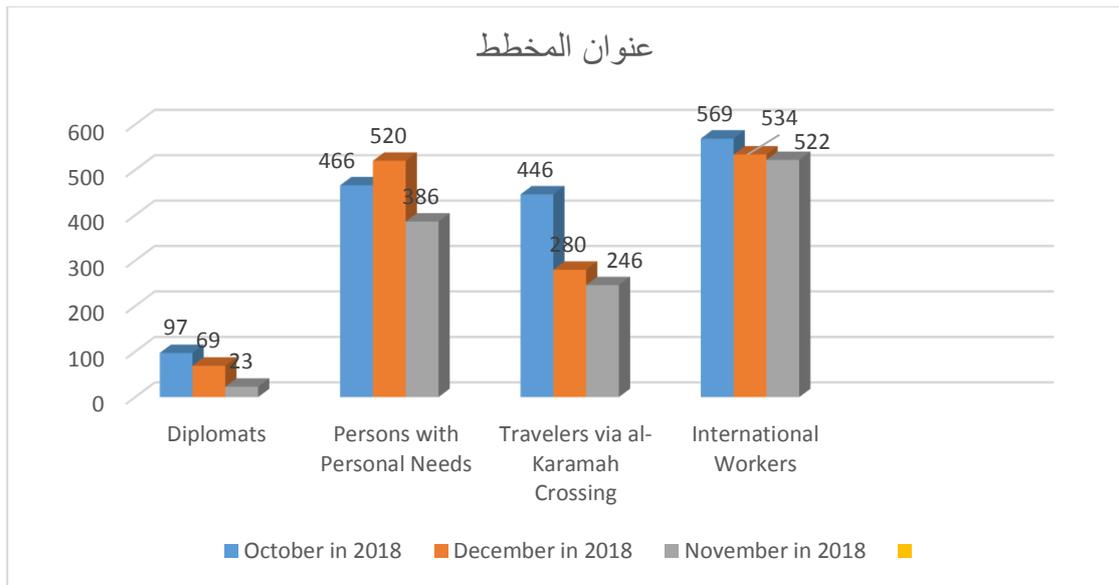
▪ **Prisoners' Visits:**

In December, the Israeli authorities allowed 106 family members of prisoners visit 59 of their relatives in the Israeli prisons according to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) in Gaza. The number of Families' visits to prisoners in the Israeli jails during December was very limited comparing with the number of visits reached in the agreement between the Israeli authorities and prisoners in May 2012. The families of prisoners were subjected to arbitrary practices, obstacles and degrading and immoral searches during their visit.



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

- **Businessmen:** the Israeli authorities continued to impose restrictions on the movement of businessmen via Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing. In December, they allowed 7.461 businessmen to travel via Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing, according to the General Authority for Civil Affairs. The Israeli authorities still ban the travelling of hundred businessmen without any reasons.
- **Other categories:** According to GACA, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 534 international workers; 69 diplomats; 520 persons with personal needs; 280 travelers via al-Karama (Allenby) crossing; 122 Arabs in Israel, and 336 Christians. On the same time, the Israeli authorities denied the elderlies' access to al-Aqsa Mosque to perform prayers. 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:

The Egyptian authorities continued to open the Rafah Crossing, the only outlet for Gaza residents to the outside world, so that the humanitarian cases could travel or return to the Gaza Strip. During the reporting period, 4.896 managed to leave while 2.718 returned to the Strip in addition to 693 who were returned by the Egyptian authorities and banned from travelling for no reason. According to the Gaza Crossings and Border Authority, thousands of civilians registering to travel at the Ministry of Interior are unable to travel.

غزة - شارع جمال عبد الناصر "الثلاثيني" - مجمع الرويا - الطابق 12 - مقابل جامعة الأزهر ويجوار الهلال الأحمر - د. حيد عبد الشافي
ص . ب 1328 تليفون 2825893 / 08 2824776 فاكس 2835288

Gaza- Jamal 'Abdel Nasser "al-Thalathini" Street - Al-Roya Building- Floor 12 - Opposite to al-Azhar University - Near
Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) -Dr. Haidar 'Abdel Shafi
PO Box 1328 Tel/: 08 - 2824776 / 2825893 Fax 2835288 E-mail: pchr@pchrgaza.org – Web page: www.pchrgaza.org