



State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings 01 -31 March 2019

During the reporting period (March), the Israeli authorities continued to impose tightened restrictions on the movement of the Gaza Strip population as most of them are not allowed to leave or return to the Gaza Strip via the Beit Hanoun Crossing "Erez." However, the Israeli authorities narrowly allow some categories such as patients of urgent cases and their companions who undergo a very long and complicated process in order to get the travel permit and tightened security measures while traveling through the crossing. During March, the Israeli authorities stationed at Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing obstructed the travel of 711 patients out of the total 2002 permit applications (i.e. 35.5%) referred for treatment in the hospitals in Israel and West Bank. The Israeli authorities rejected those applications under several pretexts, including security reasons, changing the companions, delaying responses to the permits and asking for new appointments and asking patients for security interviews.

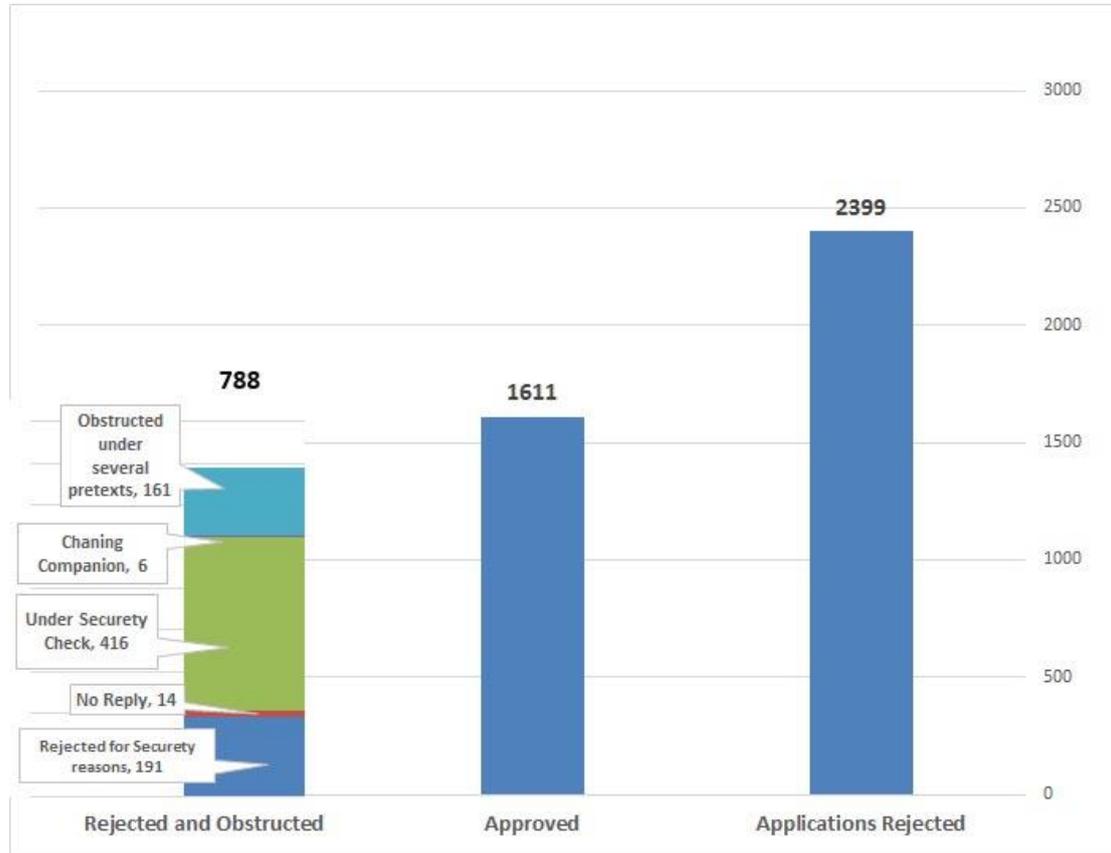
The Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports for the 12th consecutive year, except for very limited quantities; most of them were agricultural products. The Israeli authorities also continued to impose restrictions on the entry of goods classified as "dual-use materials", which are around 118 types and include hundreds of basic goods and commodities.

Restrictions on the Movement of Persons:

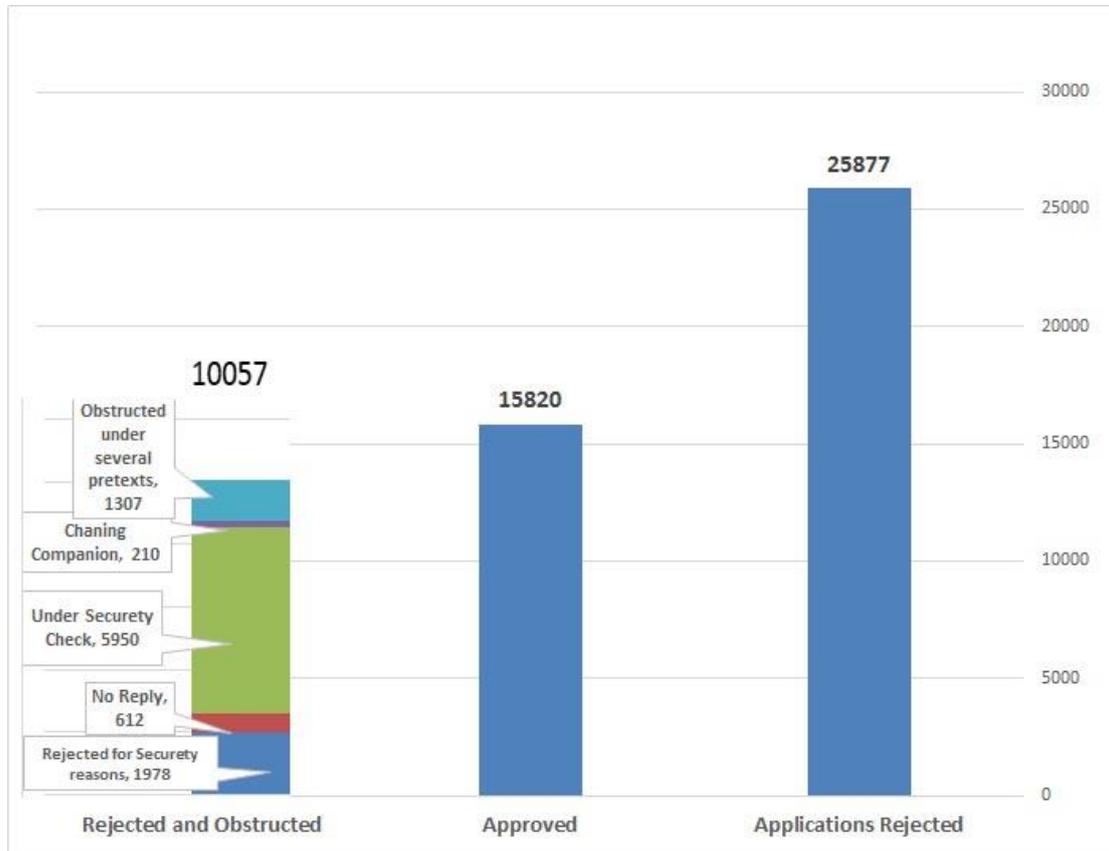
- The Israeli authorities continued to impose tightened restrictions on the movement of the Gaza Strip population through Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing and allow limited categories to travel via Beit Hanoun crossing: patients and their companions, Arabs holding Israeli ID cards, international journalists, workers of international humanitarian organizations, businesspeople, relatives of prisoners in the Israeli jails, and persons travelling via al-Karama crossing.
- **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 hospitals in Israel or the West Bank under various pretexts, including security reasons, changing the companions, waiting for a new appointment and asking the patient for a security interview. In March, Israel obstructed the travel of 711 patients of the total number of patients (2002) who applied for travel permit for treatment (i.e. 35.5% of the total applied permits.) The Israeli authorities rejected 74 applications for security reasons (3.7%), did not reply to 20 applications (1%); delayed replies (claiming under security check) of 533 applications (26.6%); informed 3 patients to change their companions (0.15%); and delayed the travel of 81 patients (32.9%) under several pretexts.



Israeli authorities' replies to Patients' travel applications via Beit Hanoun Crossing in March 2019



- In 2018, out of 25,877 permit applications for treatment, the Israeli authorities obstructed the travel of 10,057 patients of the total number of Gaza Strip patients referred for treatment in the hospitals in Israel and the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, (i.e. 38.8% of the total number of the applications.) The Israeli authorities attributed the rejection of 1,978 patients to security reasons (7.6%), while they did not reply to 612 applications (2.3%). Moreover, they delayed the replies to 5,950 patients' applications (22.9%), claiming under security check. Meanwhile, the Israeli authorities asked 210 patients to change their companions (0.8%) and delayed the travel of 1,307 patients (5.1%) for various pretexts.



- The Israeli authorities continued to impose restrictions on the travel of the very limited categories, who are allowed to travel via Beit Hanoun “Erez” Crossing. These restrictions include extending the time required to check the applications of Gaza exit-permits from 24 to 70 days for those requesting permits 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 weekends: Fridays and Saturdays.
- The Israeli authorities also imposed new restrictions on the travelers' needs, which they are allowed to have while 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.
- **Prisoners’ Visits:** In March, the Israeli authorities allowed 38 family members, including 11 children, to visit 23 of their sons in the Israeli prisons according to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) in Gaza. The number of family visits to prisoners in the Israeli jails during March was very limited comparing with the number of visits reached in the agreement between the Israeli authorities and prisoners in May 2012. Further, on 25 March 2019, the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) canceled the family visits to the Israeli prisons and returned a bus carrying 23 family members of the prisoners as they were on their way to visit.

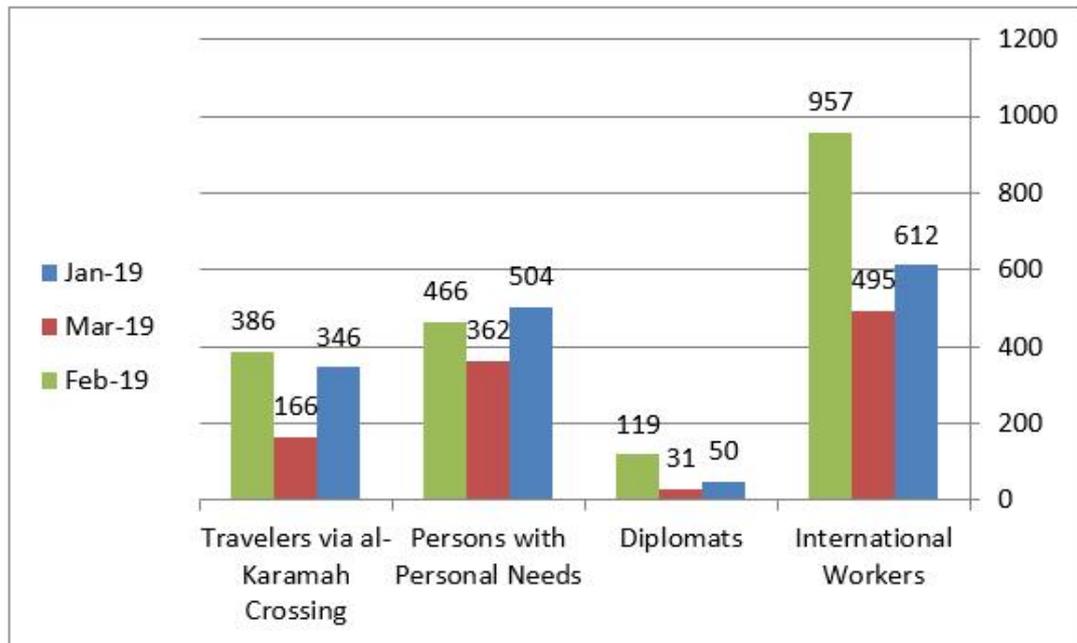


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their sons in Eshel Prison after Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing was closed in response to a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip to Tel Aviv. Moreover, the families of prisoners are usually subject to arbitrary practices, obstacles and degrading and immoral searches during their visit.

- **Businessmen:** the Israeli authorities continued to impose restrictions on the movement of businessmen via Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing. In February, they allowed 5,720 businessmen to travel via Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing, according to the General Authority for Civil Affairs (GACA). The Israeli authorities still ban the travel of hundreds of businessmen without any reasons.
- **Other categories:** According to GACA, in March, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 495 international workers; 119 diplomats; 31 diplomatesses; 362 persons with personal needs; 166 travelers via al-Karama (Allenby) crossing; 147 Arabs in Israel. During the same period, the Israeli authorities continued to deny the Gaza elderlies' access to al-Aqsa Mosque to perform prayers. It should be mentioned that these statistics do not represent the real number of persons allowed to enter as the permit holders are far less than the passing times and can cross via the crossing many times with the same permit in one month.

Categories Allowed to Travel Via Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing



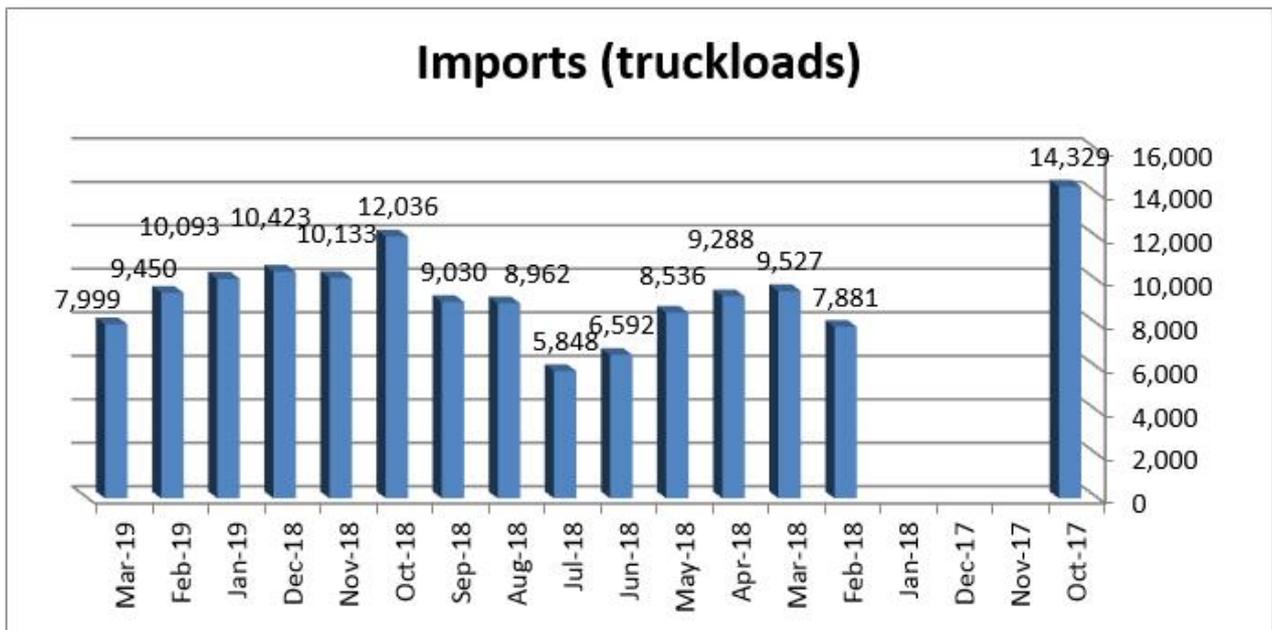


▪ **Palestinian Arrested at Beit Hanoun Erez Crossing**

at approximately 21:30 on Tuesday, 19 March 2019, the Israeli forces stationed at Beit Hanoun Erez Crossing in the northern Gaza Strip arrested Anas Ayman Salem Dohal (22) from Gaza City. Dohal had applied for a permit via the Israeli Liaison, so the Israeli Intelligence called him for an interview. At approximately 11:00 on Tuesday, 19 March 2019, he went to the crossing and in the afternoon the Israeli Liaison informed his family that he was arrested. It should be mentioned that Dohal holds Nablus ID and his parents are separated. Thus, due to a dispute occurred between him and his father, he wanted to go back to live with his mother in Nablus.

Restrictions on Goods Movement

Although the tightening restrictions on imports into the Gaza Strip continued, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 7,999 truckloads. In March, the imports recorded a decreasing rate of 15.3%, comparing with last month (February) and an increase of 21.4% comparing with the imports in October 2018 when 12,036 truckloads entered. During March, the crossing was closed for 14 days (i.e. 45.1% of the total days in the reporting period).





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- Ongoing ban on Gaza Strip exports:** The Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports. However, 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 the other very small quantities are exported to Israel and other countries. In March, the Israeli authorities allowed the exportation of 274 truckloads (226 were exported to the West Bank, 30 to Israel and 18 abroad.) Those truckloads included agricultural products, fish, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, and clothes. The expoers during the reporting period only consitiutes 6% of the total monthly exports before the closure was imposed in June 2007 when 4500 truckloads used to be exported.



- The Israeli authorities continued 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, big 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 residents to enter goods classified by the Israeli authorities as dual-use goods is very complex and ambiguous. These 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



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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 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.

▪ **Movement at Rafah Border Crossing:**

The Israeli authorities continued to open Rafah Border Crossing, which is the only outlet for the Gaza Strip residents to the world, and allow the humanitarian cases to leave and those outside the Gaza Strip to return. The crossing was closed for 12 days on holidays and weekends. During the reporting period, 6,956 persons were allowed to leave the Gaza Strip while 5132 persons returned to the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the Israeli authorities returned dozens of persons and banned their travel for no reason. Further, thousands of Palestinians registering for travel at the Ministry of Interior are unable to travel according to the Crossing and Borders Authority in Gaza.



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