



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان

PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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

During the reporting period (May), the Israeli authorities continued to impose their closure on the Gaza Strip for the 12th consecutive year. They 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 travel permits and tightened security measures while traveling through the crossing. During May, the Israeli authorities stationed at Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing obstructed the travel of 865 patients referred for treatment in the hospitals in Israel and the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem. The Israeli authorities rejected the travel of many patients 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.

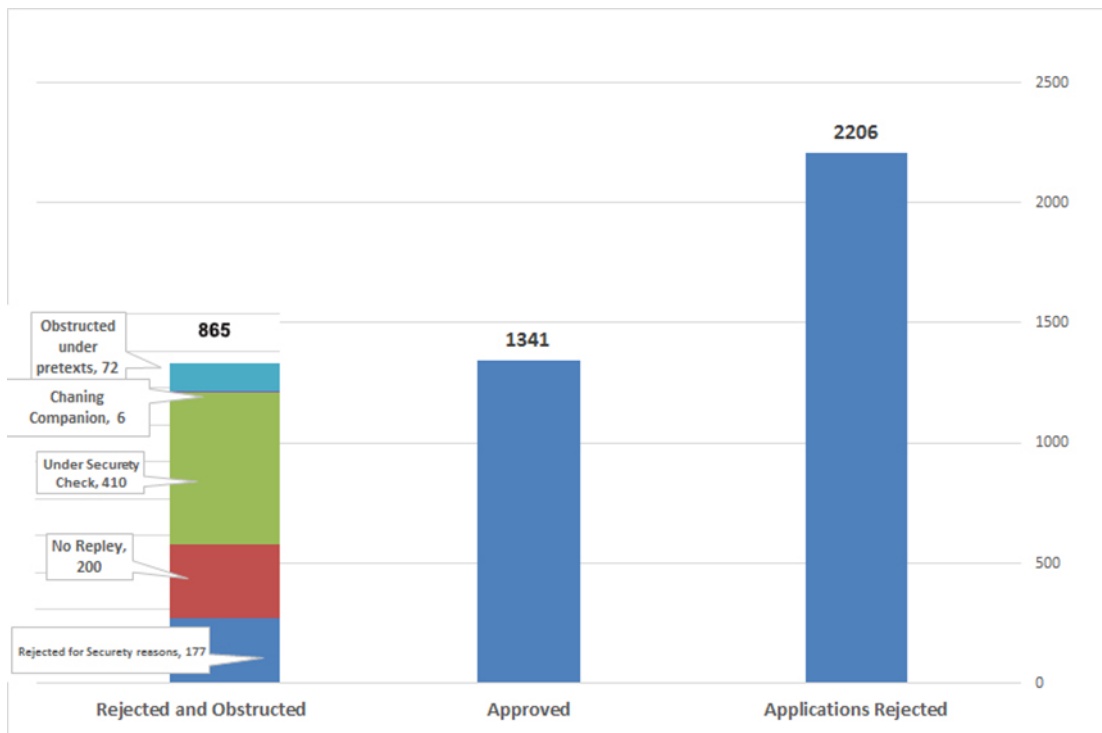
The Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports, except for very limited quantities; most of them were agricultural products. The rate of exports in May was 6.5% of the total monthly Gaza exports before the closure. The Israeli authorities also continued to impose restrictions on the 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 of serious conditions 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, delaying responses to the permits, waiting for a new appointment and asking the patient for a security interview. In May, Israel obstructed the travel of 865 patients of the total number of patients (2,206) who applied for travel permit for treatment (i.e. 39.2% of the total applied permits.) The Israeli authorities rejected 177 applications for security reasons (8%), did not reply to 200 applications (9%); delayed replies (claiming under security check) to 410 applications (18.5%); informed 6 patients to change their companions (0.2%); and delayed the travel of 72 patients (3.2%) under several pretexts.



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



- 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.



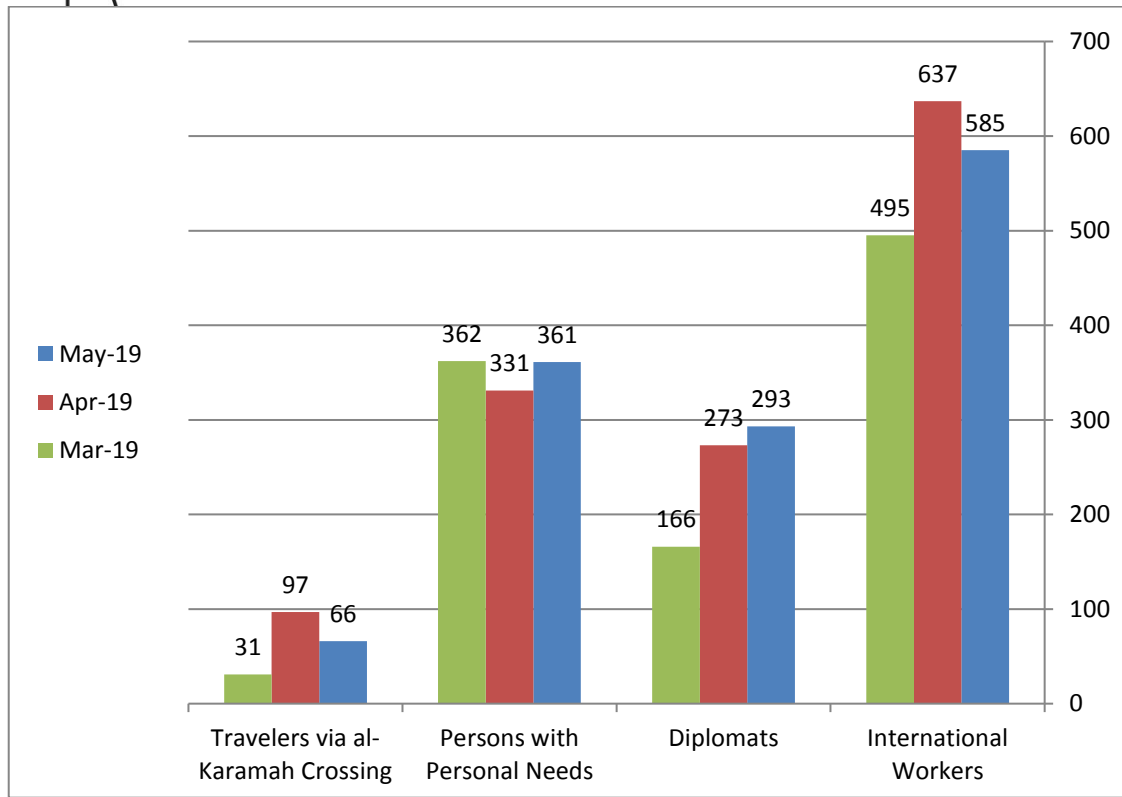
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- **Prisoners' Visits:** In May, the Israeli authorities allowed 43 family members, including 18 children, to visit 33 of their sons in the Israeli prisons according to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) in Gaza. The number of family visits to prisoners in the Israeli jails during May was very limited comparing with the number of visits reached in the agreement between the Israeli authorities and prisoners in May 2012. 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 May, they allowed 7,889 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 May, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 585 international workers; 66 diplomats; 361 persons with personal needs; 293 travelers via al-Karama (Allenby) crossing; and 193 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

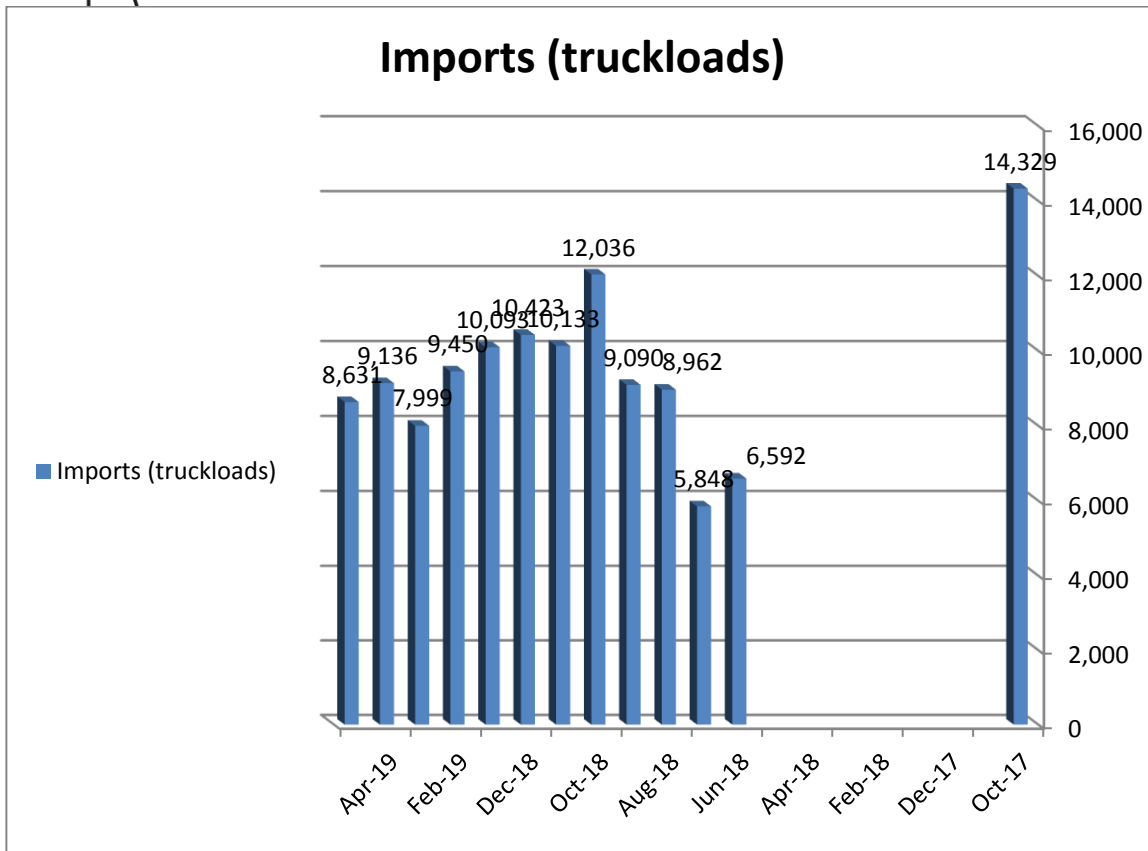


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Restrictions on Goods Movement

Although the tightening restrictions on imports into the Gaza Strip continued, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 8,631 truckloads. In May, the imports recorded a decreasing rate of 28.2%, comparing with October 2018 when 12,036 truckloads entered. During May, the crossing was closed for 14 days (i.e. 45.1% of the total days in the reporting period).

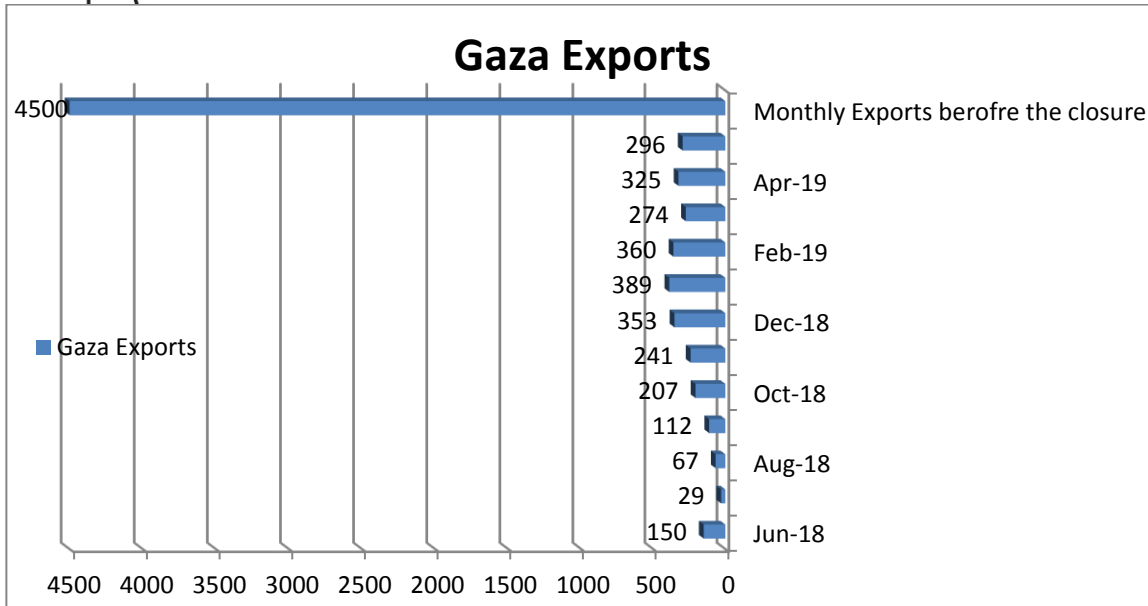


- **Ongoing ban on Gaza Strip exports:** The Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports. However, in a limited exception, they allowed the exportation of very limited types of goods; most of which are exported to the West Bank and only the other very small quantities are exported to Israel and other countries. In May, the Israeli authorities allowed the exportation of 296 truckloads (216 were exported to the West Bank, 54 to Israel and 26 abroad.) Those truckloads included agricultural products, fish, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, and clothes. The exports during the reporting period only constitutes 6.5% of the total monthly exports before the closure was imposed in June 2007 when 4500 truckloads used to be exported.



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- 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 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.

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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 humaneruan cases to leave and those outside the Gaza Strip to return. The crossing was closed for 18 days on holidays and weekends. During the reporting period, 5,259 persons were allowed to leave the Gaza Strip while 6,947 persons returned to the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the Israeli authorties returned 530 persons and banned their travel without clarifying the reason. Further, thousands of Palestinians resgistering for travel at the Ministry of Inteior are unable to travel according to the Crossing and Borders Authority in Gaza.



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