



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان

PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings 01 – 30 November 2020

As the coronavirus continues to spread in the Gaza Strip with dozens of deaths and hundreds of cases recorded each passing day, the Israeli authorities continue to impose harsher restrictions under its illegal and inhuman 14-year long closure of the Gaza Strip. The tightened closure restrictions led to a catastrophic deterioration in humanitarian conditions, exhausted the health system, and weakened Gaza's economic structures. All of these factors negatively reflected on the provision of basic services for at least 2 million Palestinians who live in poor living conditions in the Gaza Strip, which is classified as the most overpopulated area in the whole world.

Gaza remains on the brink of a true catastrophe which shall deepen its humanitarian crises especially with the skyrocketing unemployment, poverty and food insecurity rates. The Gaza unemployment rate is 46% (i.e. 211,300 are unemployed), 63% of which is among youth. Also, 53% of the Gaza population lives in poverty while more than 62.2% suffer from food insecurity

Restrictions on the Movement of Persons:

- In November, Israeli authorities maintained tightened restrictions on the movement of the Gaza Strip population through Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing; the restrictions were intensified in early March due to measures imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities and the Palestinian Authority to combat the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19). Israeli authorities also banned the movement for all, even the limited categories it previously allowed entry, which include: patients with 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

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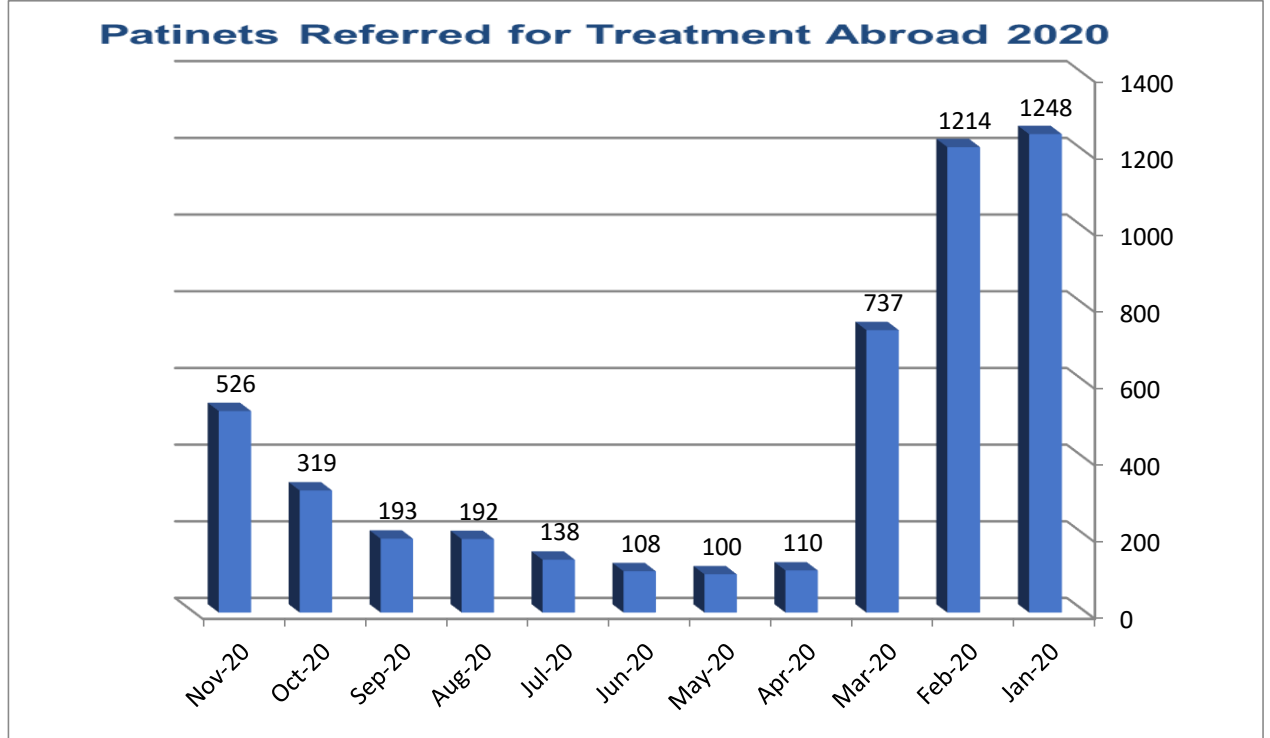
travelling via the King Hussein Bridge. On the other hand, Israeli authorities allowed the entry of several humanitarian cases within the narrowest scope, mainly critically ill patients whose treatment is unavailable in the Gaza Strip.

- **Patients:** the Palestinian Ministry of Health reduced the number of patients referred for medical treatment in the hospitals in Israel or the West Bank to the maximum extent possible. MOH only grants referrals to patients with serious conditions and whose treatment is unavailable in the Gaza Strip. According to the General Authority of Civil Affairs, 526 patients accompanied by 399 companions, were able to travel for treatment in Israeli hospitals or in West Bank hospitals, including occupied East Jerusalem. As MOH's Coordination and Liaison Office maintained the suspension of coordination procedures for the travel of Gazan patients referred for treatment in West Bank hospitals and Israeli hospitals during the reporting period until 24 November 2020, PCHR researchers were unable to obtain data on the number of patients who were denied travel and exit permits by the Israeli



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authorities.



- On 24 November 2020, MOH's Coordination and Liaison Department resumed its coordination services for Gazan patients referred for treatment in Israeli or West Bank hospitals following PA's announcement to resume coordination with the Israeli Government after it was suspended by the Palestinian President Mahmoud 'Abbas on 20 May 2020. As a result, the World Health Organization office (WHO) facilitation of the exit of patients has been terminated; WHO had substituted this role since 06 September 2020.
- The Israeli authorities also impose restrictions on items that can be carried by travelers via Erez, primarily no electronic and electric devices, food, and cosmetics are allowed, as well as wheeled luggage.
- According to GACA November data, Israeli authorities allowed 1037 Palestinians to exit the Gaza Strip via "Erez" Crossing, including 23 for personal needs; 526 patients; 399 patient-companions; 73 international organizations employees; and 8 from Arabs holding

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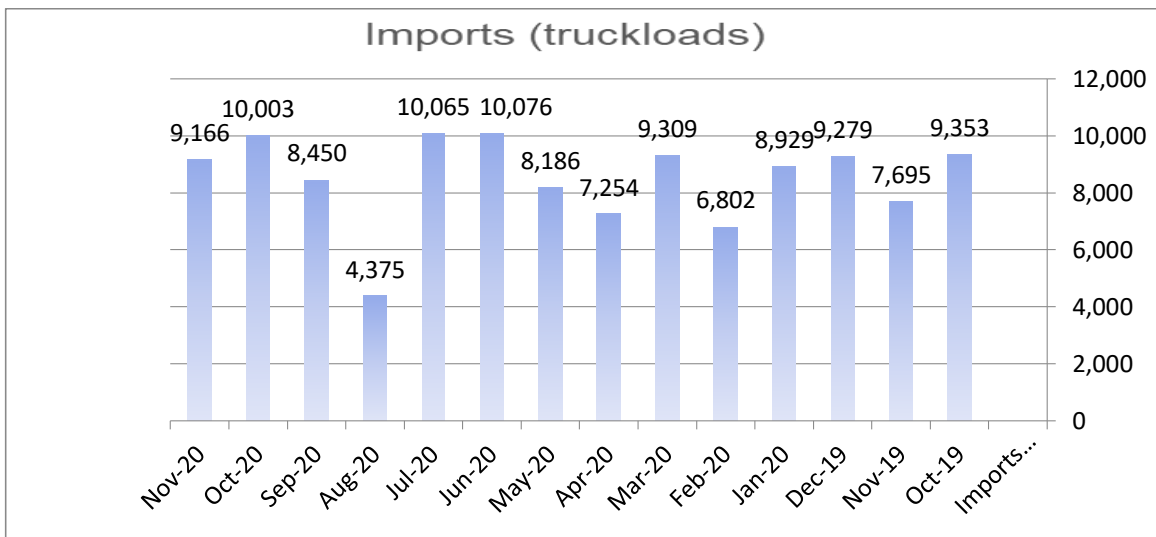
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Israeli ID cards. Meanwhile, 1072 were allowed entry to the Gaza Strip, including 479 patients, 350 patient-companions, 29 for personal needs, 69 foreign international organizations' staff, 39 Arabs holding Israeli ID cards, and 14 released prisoners.

- **Prisoners' Visits:** In November, the Israeli authorities banned family visits to Palestinians in Israeli prisons. This violates the right of detainees to be in contact with their families through family visits, which is a fundamental right under international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Restrictions on Movement of Goods

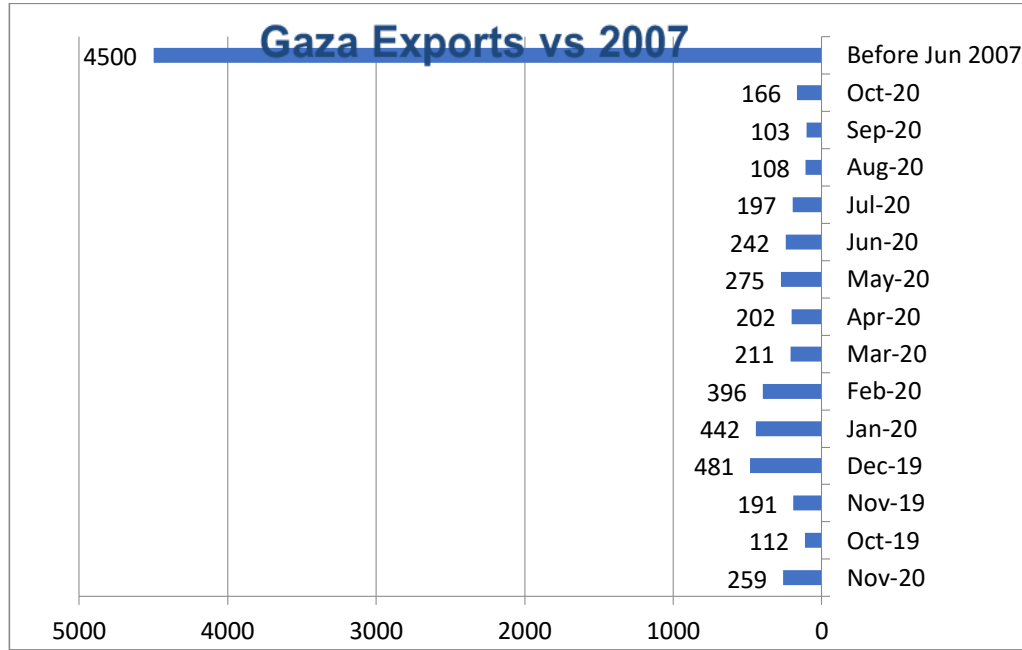
- Israel maintained tightened restrictions on the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip. In November, Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 9166 truckloads; including 414 truckloads of fuel and 502 truckloads of aid, and 8,250 truckloads for the private sector. The border closed for 8 days during November which constitute 26.6% of the reporting period.
- 1,510 truckloads entered the Gaza Strip via Rafah crossing, including 530 truckloads of fuels, and 980 truckloads for the private sector.





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- **Ongoing ban on Gaza Strip exports:** Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports. However, in a limited exception, they allowed the export of very limited types of goods; most of which are exported to the West Bank and the rest are exported to Israel and other countries. In November, the Israeli authorities allowed the export of 259 truckloads (163 to the West Bank, 95 to Israel and other countries). Those truckloads included agricultural products, fish, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, clothes, and furniture. The exports during the reporting period constitute only 5.7% of Gaza's total monthly exports before closure was imposed in June 2007 (4500 truckloads/month).



- The Israeli authorities continued to impose tightened restrictions on the list of items classified as "dual-use." The dual-use items include 62 types and hundreds of goods and commodities that are essential to the life of the population. Imposing these restrictions caused infrastructure, economy, healthcare, and education to deteriorate severely. These items include communications equipment, pumps, big generators,

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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 import goods classified by the Israeli authorities as “dual-use items” is very complex and ambiguous. A person from the Gaza Strip should send a request to the Palestinian Coordination Committee for the Entry of Goods, which refers the request to the Israeli Coordination and Liaison Office at “Erez” Crossing. Afterwards, the goods are classified and sent to the relevant Israeli officer to examine it. Moreover, the Palestinian merchant must complete the transaction with the Israeli seller or broker and pay for it in full as a first step towards submitting a request for import. If the response is positive, the coordination for the entry of goods is allowed through the Karm Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) crossing. A number of merchants 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 Shalom) crossing return the goods that had been already approved entry. This inflicts heavy losses on merchants who pay large sums of money for the storage and demurrage charges and to contractors who are legally obliged to deliver their orders on time.

Movement at Rafah Border Crossing:

- Rafah Border Crossing continued to be closed due to the state of emergency declared in the Gaza Strip to curb the spread of coronavirus. The Crossing was opened exceptionally for 3 days for humanitarian cases. During the reporting period, 5859 persons were allowed to leave the Gaza Strip while 127 persons were allowed to enter the Gaza Strip, in addition to 356 persons who were banned travel and returned to Gaza by the Egyptian authorities for no clear reasons. Furthermore, thousands of Palestinians registered for travel at the Ministry of Interior were unable to travel according to the Crossing and Borders Authority in Gaza.

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- Travelers returning to the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing suffer from prolonged, recurrent and unjustified searches, extending the return journey from Cairo to Rafah Crossing for several days where travelers sleep in cars and restaurants despite the fact that the same journey used to last less than 6 hours via car.

هذا المشروع بدعم من



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