



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings

01 – 31 May 2023

The Israeli occupation authorities continue to impose an illegal and inhuman closure on the Gaza Strip for 16 consecutive years, inflicting repercussions on the humanitarian conditions of the Gaza Strip population. During the reporting period, the Gaza Strip went through an Israeli aggression that started on 09 May 2023 killing 33 Palestinians, including 6 children and 4 women, and wounding 147 others¹. During the Israeli aggression that lasted for 5 days, the Israeli authorities closed the border crossings with the Gaza Strip and prevented the movement of individuals and entry of goods and basic commodities.

The closure of Beit Hanoun “Erez” crossing, designated for the movement of individuals, denied hundreds of Gaza Strip patients’ access to their treatment at the hospitals in the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, or Israel, as their health conditions deteriorated, putting their lives in danger².

The closure of Kerem Shalom commercial crossing during the Israeli aggression on Gaza also threatened the operation of vital sectors, most notably the power plant due to the exhaustion of fuel supplies necessary for its operation. This policy constitutes a form of collective punishment against the Palestinian civilians, in blatant violation of international law, especially Article (33) of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, that have prohibited collective punishment and Article 50 of the 1907 Hague Convention.

The ongoing Israeli-closure has deteriorated the economic and social rights of the Gaza population and worsened their living and humanitarian conditions. The unemployment rate reached 46%: 68% among youth, and 66.3% among women³, while more than half of the population lives in poverty as the poverty rate recorded 60%⁴ and more than 68.5% of the

¹ PCHR’s press release: Israeli Aggression on Gaza Strip, May 2023: <https://pchgaza.org/en/israeli-aggression-on-gaza-strip-may-2023-daily-update-13-may-2023-2-palestinians-killed-and-10-houses-and-1-apartment-bombed-in-israeli-airstrikes-on-gaza-strip-death-toll-rises-to-33-includi/>.

² PCHR's press release: Ongoing Closure of Gaza Crossings Impairs Health System and Threatens Hundreds of Patients’ Lives: <https://pchgaza.org/en/ongoing-closure-of-gaza-crossings-impairs-health-system-and-threatens-hundreds-of-patients-lives/>

³ The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) presents the Main Findings of Labour Force Survey, First Quarter 2023, 10 May 2023: <https://pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4505>.

⁴ The World Bank’s Palestinian Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, 10 May 2022: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/westbankandgaza/publication/economic-monitoring-report-to-the-ad-hoc-liaison-committee-may-2022>



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Gaza population suffers from food insecurity⁵. Additionally, 80% of the Gaza population relies on international aid⁶.

Also, the Israeli occupation authorities continue to impose tightened restrictions on the entry of so-called “dual-use items*”, which are about 61 essential items⁷, including hundreds of goods and commodities.

Restrictions on Individuals’ Movement:

The Israeli occupation authorities continue to impose tight restrictions at Beit Hanoun “Erez” Crossing, denying most of the Gaza Strip population to travel and allowing only limited categories after going through security checks. These restrictions include all groups whose passage is allowed within a very narrow range; patients referred for treatment abroad, Palestinian citizens holding Israeli citizenship, foreign journalists, international humanitarian organizations’ staff, merchants, businessmen and workers, families of detainees in Israeli prisons and those who traveled via Karama crossing. This deprives citizens of their right to movement guaranteed by Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Also, the Israeli restrictions on items that can be carried by travelers via Erez remained in place; primarily no electronic and electric devices, food, and cosmetics are allowed, as well as wheeled luggage.

According to the General Authority for Civil Affairs’ (GACA) May 2023 data, Israeli authorities allowed 41,577 Palestinians to exit the Gaza Strip via “Erez” Crossing, while 40,893 were allowed reentry. It should be noted that these statistics do not represent the number of persons allowed to travel via the crossing as the permit holders are far less than the passing times, but the permits holders can travel several times via the crossing in one month. It should be noted that citizens who obtain travel permits via Beit Hanoun “Erez” crossing only constitute 1% of the total Gaza’s population, while merchants and the holders of economic needs permits constitute 89% of the total number of travelers via the crossing in May, and most of them are daily workers. Additionally, the percentage of

⁵ Fact Sheet on Food and Nutrition in Palestine, Published in November 2022:

https://palestine.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/UNCT%20-%20Fact%20sheet%20Food%20284%29_0.pdf

⁶ Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 08 August 2022: https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdbex72d2_en.pdf

* Israeli occupation authorities claim that although these materials are used for civilian purposes, they can be used to advance combat capabilities of Palestinian armed groups.

⁷ A list of prohibited

items: http://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/LegalDocuments/procedures/merchandise/170ar_full_list.pdf



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patients and their companions who traveled via the crossing reached 7.6% of the total number of travelers.

Group	Exit	Entry
Merchants	34986	35321
Businesspersons	1325	308
Personal needs	804	859
Patients	1717	1606
International organizations	360	474
Arab 1948	207	140
King Hussain Bridge Travel	439	403
Prisoners' visits	78	78
Security interviews	61	61

Restrictions on patients' travel:

During the aggression on the Gaza, which lasted for 5 days, The Israeli occupation authorities prevented the travel of all Gaza Strip patients referred for treatment abroad and denied them access to their treatment at hospitals in the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, or in Israel. This exacerbated their health conditions and put their lives in grave danger. On the first day of Beit Hanoun "Erez crossing closure, 142 cancer patients, including 5 serious and life-saving cases, could not travel to receive or complete their treatment⁸. In May, the Israeli authorities obstructed the travel of 405 out of 1,828 patients who were referred for treatment at hospitals in Israel or the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, (i.e., 22.15% of the total permit applications), and allowed the travel of 1,423 patients.

⁸ Ibid "2"



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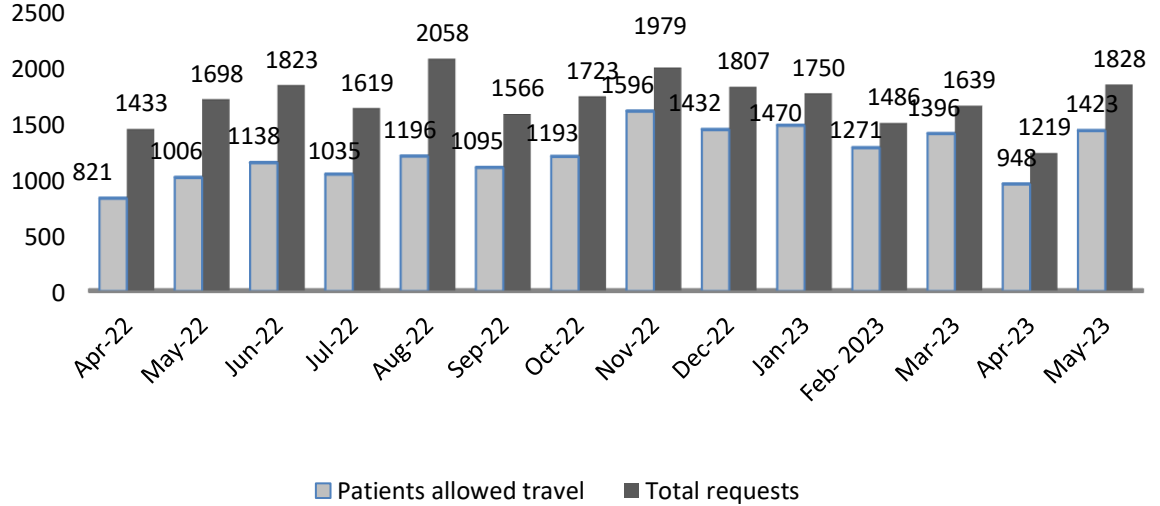
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In May, the Israeli authorities rejected 10 requests for security reasons; did not reply to 227 requests; delayed replies (claiming under study) to 134 permits, asked 21 patients to wait for a security interview, and obstructed the travel of 13 patients under various pretexts. These resections deprive patients of enjoying their right to the highest attainable standard of health that is guaranteed under Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights.

Table (2): Statistics of the results of travel requests for treatment in May 2023, GACA

Result	Number	Percentage
No reply	227	%12.42
Under study	134	%7.33
Approved	1423	%77.84
Rejected	10	%0.55
After the interview	21	%1.15
Inappropriate	2	%0.11
Treatment available locally	10	%0.55
New request	1	%0.05
Total	1828	%100

Patients Referred for Treatment Abroad over 12-month Period Comparing to Patients' requests for Permits



Detainees' Visits:

Out of 4,600 Palestinians detained in the Israeli prisons, about 199 are from the Gaza Strip, are detained in the Israeli prisons; 25 of them are sentenced to life imprisonment. The Israeli authorities prevent the families of detainees from Gaza Strip from visiting their sons in the Israeli prisons. Also, the visitation program was suspended without giving reasons and for long periods. In May, the Israeli authorities allowed 78 family members of Palestinian detainees to visit 46 of them. This violates the right of detainees to be in contact with their families through family visits that is a guaranteed under international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, particularly Article 116 which provides that every internee shall be allowed to receive visitors, especially near relatives, at regular intervals and as frequently as possible, particularly in cases of death or serious illness of relatives.

Restrictions on Movement of Goods



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The Israeli authorities closed the Kerem Shalom commercial crossing during the 5-day aggression on the Gaza Strip, banning movement of exports and imports to and from the Strip, and threatening the operation of vital sectors, most notably the power plant due to the exhaustion of fuel supplies necessary for its operation.

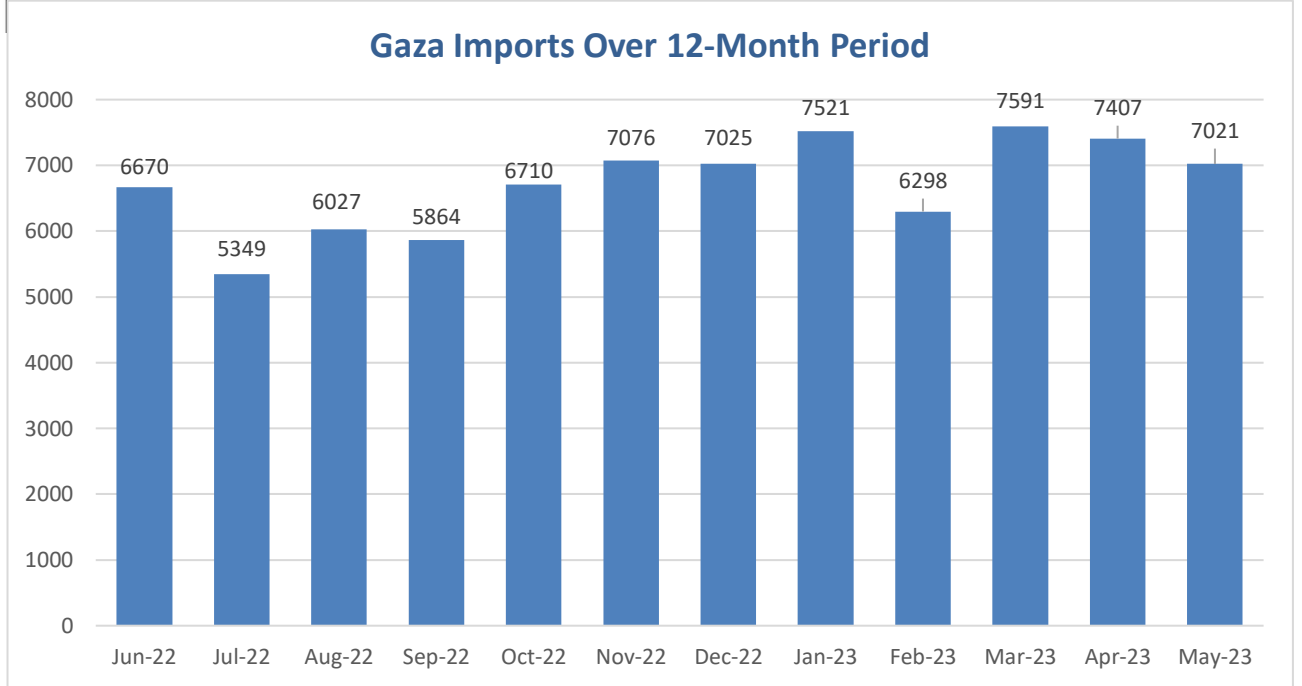
The Israeli authorities continue to impose tightened restrictions on the movement of goods and commodities entering and exiting the Gaza Strip, causing a deterioration in the Gaza population's economic rights, exacerbating poverty, increasing the rates of unemployment and food insecurity, and undermining opportunities for investment and development of the Gaza Strip economy. This constitutes as a violation of international law, which obliges the occupying power under Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention to ensure, to the fullest extent of the means available to it, the food and medical supplies of the population; it should, in particular, bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles if the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate.

Gaza Strip Imports:

The Israeli authorities continued to impose tightened restrictions on the list of items classified as "dual-use." The dual-use items include 61 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, iron bars, iron pipes in all diameters, welding equipment and welding rods, various types of wood, UPS devices that protect the electric devices from breaking down when the electricity suddenly cuts

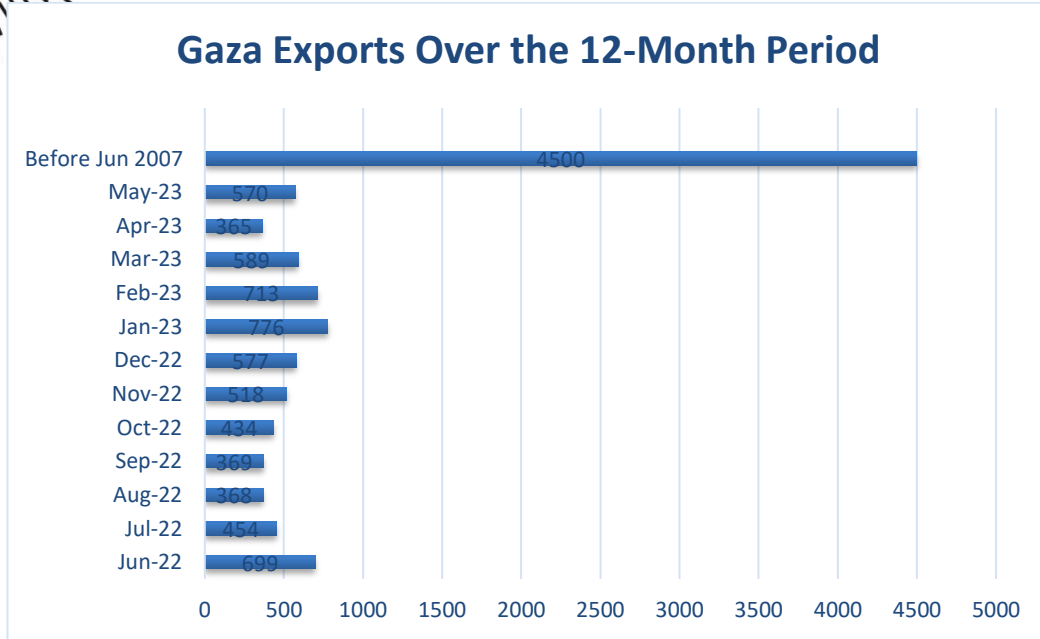
off, X-ray machines, cranes and heavy vehicles, elevators, types of batteries and several types of fertilizers.

During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 7,021 truckloads via Kerem Shalom crossing, while 4,199 entered via Rafah crossing; these trucks include food and non-food items, construction and commercial materials, and fuel, according to the Ministry of National Economy in Gaza.



Gaza Strip exports:

The Israeli authorities impose tightened restrictions on the exports of the Gaza Strip to the West Bank, including Jerusalem, or Israel and the outside world. In May, the Israeli authorities allowed the export of 570 truckloads. Those truckloads included agricultural products, furniture, damaged batteries, aluminum scrap, clothes, and chips. The exports during the reporting period constitute only 12.6% of Gaza's total monthly exports before closure was imposed in June 2007 (4500 truckloads/month).



Movement at Rafah Border Crossing:

According to the Crossing and Borders Authority in Gaza, in May, 14,855 persons traveled from the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing while 10,441 persons returned to the Strip. Moreover, the Egyptian authorities denied travel of 364 persons. Travelers returning to the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing suffer from prolonged, recurrent, and unjustified searches.