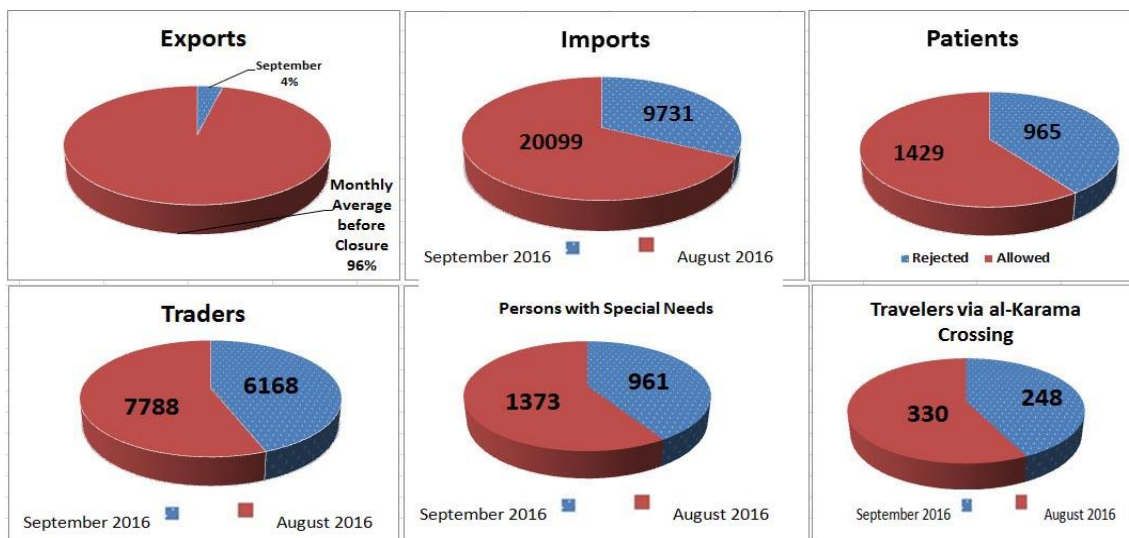


State of the Gaza Strip's border crossings 01– 31 October 2016

This report documents the conditions of the commercial border crossings related to the movement of persons during October 2016. This report emphasizes that Israeli closure imposed on the Gaza Strip has been intensified during the reporting period as the quantity of goods that were allowed to enter the Gaza Strip unprecedentedly declined. The imports in October constitute 58.3% of the total imports in August. Moreover, Gaza's exports do not exceed 3.1% of the total exports before imposing the closure in 2007. This report shows that sever restrictions imposed on the entry of about 400 types of goods to the Gaza Strip most of them are of the basic goods and raw materials. As for the construction materials required for the Gaza Reconstruction and civilians' daily needs, the Israeli authorities imposed restrictions on their entry. They allowed only the entry of 2.5% cement, 1.6% construction steel and 5.3% aggregate of the total needs for the reconstruction process. Moreover, the Israeli authorities continued to decrease the entry of cooking gas into the Gaza Strip as only 34.2% of the total needs of cooking gas was allowed. As for the movement of persons, the Israeli forces have imposed new restrictions on the residents of the Gaza Strip according to which they reduced the few numbers of the specific categories that were allowed to travel through Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing. Those restrictions affected civilians' movement as the rate of patients' permits rejected by the Israeli authorities increased. As a result, the number of patients allowed to travel through the abovementioned crossing showed 33.9% decline comparing with last September and 36.5% for the permits of patients' companion permits. Furthermore, the rate of business people allowed showed around 38.8% decline while the rate of people with special needs showed 54.3%. The Israeli authorities also decreased the number of prisoners' relatives allowed to visit their sons in the Israeli jails to 59.7% while the number of elderly people allowed to perform prayers in al-Aqsa Mosque decreased to 22%.



All of the above emphasized that the Israeli claims about easing the closure are deceptive and not applied on the ground. Moreover, the Israeli authorities aim at institutionalizing the closure and making it acceptable at the international level although it violates the international law, including the international humanitarian and human rights laws.

Commercial Crossings During September

Karm Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) Crossing

In light of their plan to strangle the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces continued to impose severe restrictions on the entry of a large number of goods and basic commodities for the Gaza Strip population, particularly the materials needed for the infrastructure projects and those needed for manufacturing and production. In return, the almost total ban continued on the exports from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank, Israel and abroad, including industrial and agricultural exports. In addition, various obstacles were imposed on the movement of commodities from and to the Gaza Strip, including the complete closure of the Karm Abu Salem crossing during the reporting period for 14 days and partialy for 2 days (51.6% of the total period).

- **Exports**

Israeli forces continued to impose a ban on the Gaza Strip exports to the West Bank, Israel and abroad with exception of limited quantities. During the reporting period, 141 truckloads were allowed for exportation to the West Bank, most of which were agricultural. The rate of the Gaza Strip exports in October constituted only 3.1% of the exports before June 2007. In the same context, Banning the exportation of the Gaza Strip products lead to the deterioration of economic conditions and closure of hundreds of factories, including dozens of knitwear factories and dozens of house and office furniture factories known for its high quality; and to the suspension of thousands of workers. all of that amounted the poverty rate to unprecedented rates.

- **Imports**

On the days it was open, Israel allowed the entry of 8,383 truckloads, an average of 270 truckloads daily¹. During the reporting period, the amount of imports decreased comparing with last September, when 9,731 truckloads were allowed (a decline of 1,348 truckloads i.e. 13.8%.) Meanwhile, the imports showed a significant decline comparing with the August's imports that were around 20,099 turckloads.

¹ According to the Ministry of National Economy in Gaza

In light of the abovementioned, it is notable that the imports, particularly the basic commodities, still do not meet the needs of the Gaza Strip population. This resulted in shortage of dozens of goods in September, particularly those materials needed for infrastructure projects and for manufacturing and production such as the construction materials, all types of fuel, cooking gas, industrial equipment machines and production lines, iron pipes in all sizes, welding machines, smelting rods used in welding, different types of wood, UPSes, X-ray machines, truck mounted cranes and heavy equipment, types of batteries and several types of fertilizers.

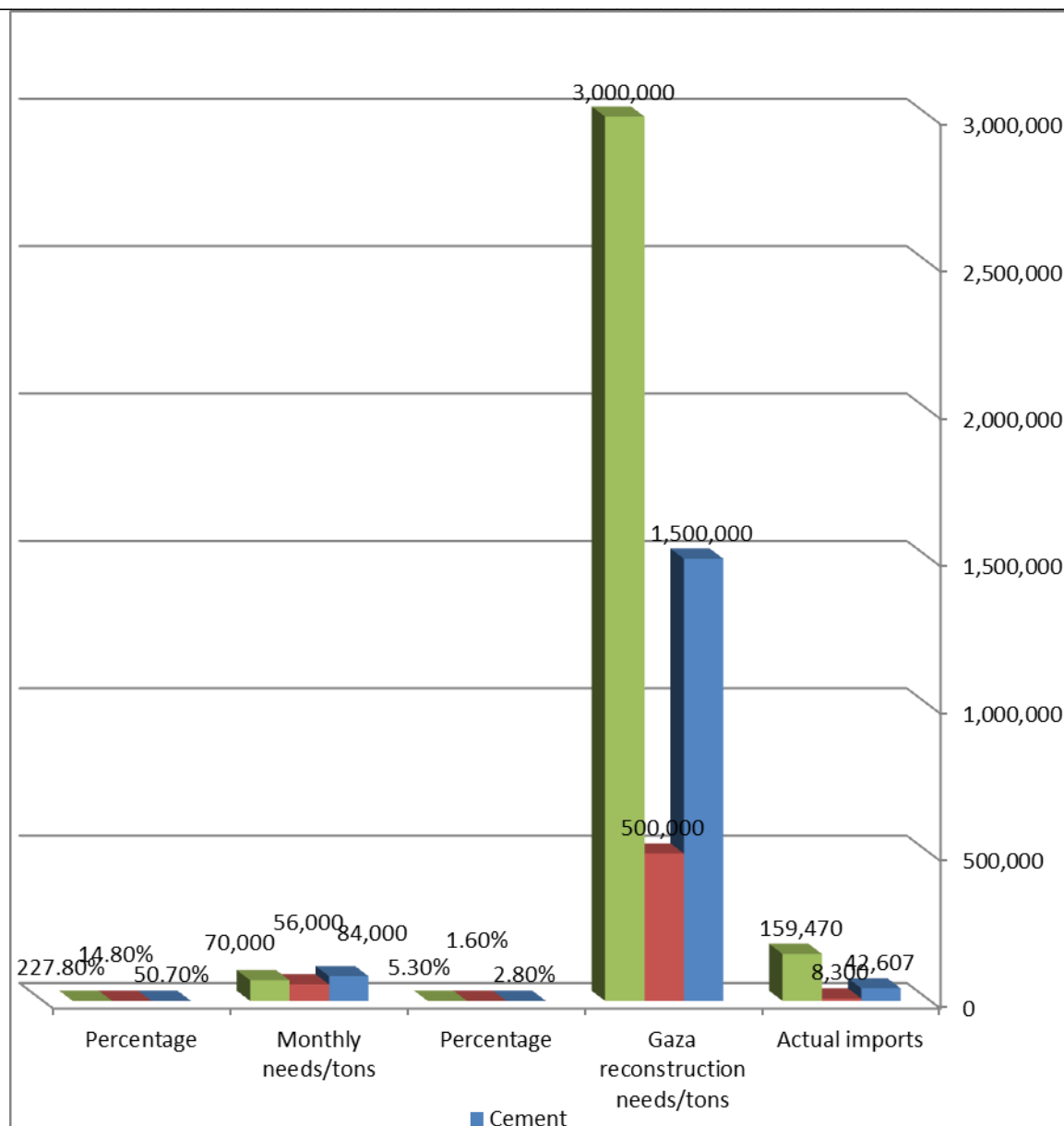
- Construction Materials

During October, the imports of the construction materials were extremely limited and do not meet the minimum actual needs of the Gaza Strip. According to the National Ministry of Economy, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 42,607 tons of cement, 8,300 tons of construction steel and 159,470 tons of aggregate that constitutes less than 2.8%, 1.6% and 5.3% of the monthly needs. The majority of these quantities were entered for international organizations or Palestinian companies under strict monitoring mechanism under which Gaza reconstruction can be impossible. This data stresses the failure of the UN Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism to fulfill the minimum basic needs for the Reconstruction after two years of application.

Table comparing the quantities of construction materials allowed into the Gaza Strip in October 2016, the actual needs and the Gaza Reconstruction Needs

Description	Actual imports	Gaza reconstruction needs/tons	Percentage	Monthly needs/tons	Percentage
Cement	42,607	1,500,000	2.8%	84,000	50.7%
Steel	8,300	500,000	1.6%	56,000	14.8%
Aggregate	159,470	3,000,000	5.3%	70,000	227.8%

Source: Ministry of National Economy in the Gaza Strip.



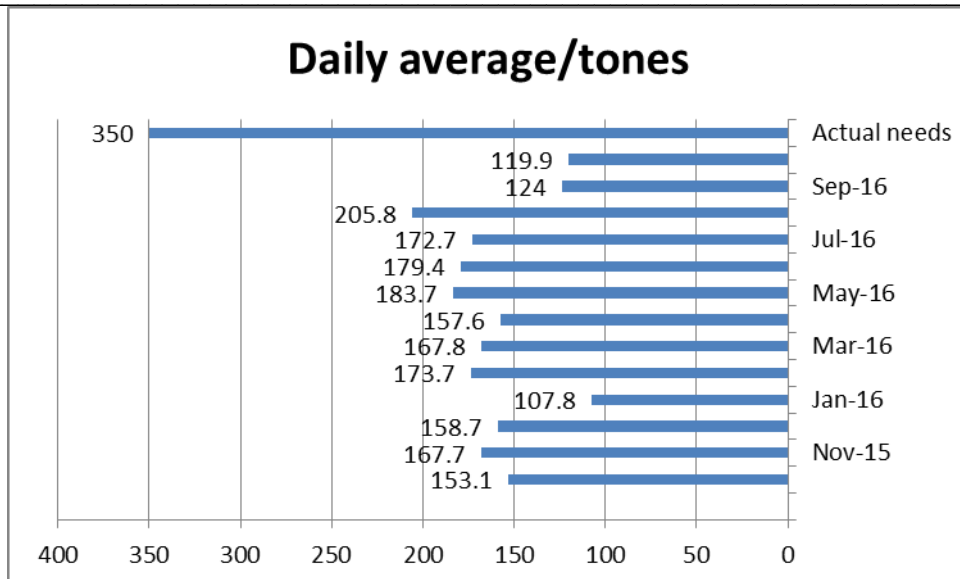
• Fuel

During the reporting period, Israel allowed the entry of 12,413,033 liters of diesel; 4,439,033 liters of benzene and 6,196,822 liters of industrial fuel to operate the power plant in the Gaza Strip. During the reporting period, Israeli forces prevented the entry of cooking gas for 16 days. During the days the crossing was open, Israeli forces allowed the entry of only 3,719 tons of cooking gas; a daily average of 119.9 tons. This amount represents 34.2% of the actual daily needs of the population, which is 350 tons according to General Petro3.leum Corporation in Gaza (EGPC). It should be mentioned that the amount of imports for this month was 119.9 tons daily, showing 3.3% decline as 124 tons were daily allowed. As a result, people were forced to wait for a long time to fill half of a gas cylinder due to the shortage of cooking gas quantities.

Quantities of gas allowed during the last year compared with the actual needs of the population of the Gaza Strip

Month	Daily average/tones	Percentage of needs met
October 2015	153.1	43.7%
November 2015	167.7	47.9%
December 2015	158.7	45.3%
January 2016	107.8	35.9%
February 2016	173.7	49.6%
March 2016	167.8	47.9%
April 2016	157.6	45%
May 2016	183.7	61.2%
June 2016	179.4	51.2%
July 2016	172.7	49%
August 2015	205.8	58.8%
September 2016	124	35.4%
October 2016	119.9	34.2%
Actual needs	350	100%

Source: EGPC.



Crossings Designated to the Movement of Persons

• Beit Hanoun (Erez) Crossing

Israel has closed the Beit Hanoun crossing to the movement of Palestinian civilians, with the exception of limited categories: patients suffering from serious illnesses and their companions; Arabs holding Israeli IDs; international journalists; workers of international humanitarian organizations; business people; and persons travelling via al-Karama crossing. These categories are allowed to travel through the crossing under very complicated procedures. According to the Civil Liaison Office at the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Israel closed the crossing completely for 20 days (11 days were partially opened only for urgent cases) during the reporting period.

Moreover, in a serious development at the level of individuals, Israeli forces imposed severe restrictions on the Gaza Strip population in which they reduced the few numbers of limited categories, who were allowed to pass via Beit Hanoun" Erez" crossing. These new restriction reflected on the movement of individuals, in which the rate of rejected permits for patients have risen resulted in declining the number of patients allowed to pass via the crossing to 8% compared with August. Additionally, the number of patients companions decreased to 7.3%; traders to 20%; persons for personal needs to 30% and travelers via al-Karama (Allenby) crossing to 25%.

Patients

During the reporting period, Israel closed Beit Hanoun crossing for patients, who were referred to hospital in the West Bank or Israel, for 20 days (11 days were partially opened only for urgent cases). In October, Israeli authorities allowed the travel of 804 patients and 730 companions. This constituted a significant decrease in comparison with September when 1217 patients and 1150 companions were allowed. During the reporting period, Israeli forces obstructed the travel of dozens of other patients under various pretexts, including security reasons, changing the companions, waiting for a new appointment and awaiting an Israeli reply following security interviews.

Prisoners' Visits

In October, Israeli authorities allowed 87 family members of prisoners divided into 2 groups to visit 56 of their relatives in Israeli prisons. October witnessed a serious decline in the number prisoners' relatives allowed to visit their arrested sons comparing to last month, when 216 family members were allowed to visit 125 relatives in the Israeli jails divided into 5 groups.

Family visits to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons in September 2016

Day	Number of visitors	Number of children	Number of visited prisoners	Prison
10 October 2016	47	11	28	Nafha prison
31 October 2016	40	9	28	Ramon prison

Source: Media statements by the Spokesperson of the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) in Gaza

The above table shows that the number of visitors is limited compared with the number of visits allowed under the prisoners' deal. According to the agreement, each prisoner has the right to two family visits a month. With 350 prisoners in Israeli prisons, the number of visits should reach 700 monthly. However, the Israeli forces only allowed 56 visits (8%) in October. The same applies to the number of family members who are allowed to visit their relatives; the number of these members mounted to 216 in September whereas, the number should include 1,400 persons in case each prisoner is visited by 2 members of his family twice a month (6.2%).

The families were subjected to arbitrary practices, obstacles and immoral and degrading treatment. They also suffered from the Israeli provocative measures and the continuous threats to cancel their visits in the future if they did not obey Israeli orders.

It should be noted that the Israeli authorities determine a visitor who is allowed to visit a prisoner, and those authorized visitors are limited to the prisoners' father, mother or wife and

one or two of them only. Furthermore, in case either one is incapable of visiting (due to sickness, old age or death), the Israeli authorities do not allow the change of the visitors' names; thus, the prisoner loses the right to his visit. Moreover, Israeli authorities continue to deprive children from visiting their fathers in Israeli prisons. Prisoners' families are not allowed to bring with them personal items, including clothes and food.

- **Other categories**

During the reporting period, Israel allowed the entry of 3,772 traders while 6,168 were allowed in September (38.8% decline). However, 7,788 traders were allowed in August (51.5% decline). The Israeli authorities also allowed 439 persons with special needs while 961 (54.3% decline) in September. During the reporting period, 271 travelers were allowed to travel via al-Karama Crossing while 248 travelers in September and 330 in August. In October, 887 elderly people were allowed to perform prayers in al-Aqsa mosque, but 1,137 were in September. Moreover, 128 Arabs holding Israeli ID cards, under some complicated security conditions, were allowed comparing with 356 persons in last September according to the General Authority of Civil Affairs. 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.

- **Rafah International Crossing Point**

During the reporting period, Rafah International Crossing Point was closed during October for 24 days. The crossing was opened only for 7 days during which, 4,526 persons were allowed to leave the Gaza Strip, including a delegation to Ein al-Sokhna Conference, while 2,117 returned. The Egyptian authorities returned 306 persons. This unveiled the reality of the real situation in the Gaza Strip in light of the collective punishment policy and the Israeli closure imposed on all border crossings, especially Beit Hanoun crossing. There are still thousands of Palestinians, who registered for traveling via the crossing waiting for their turn to travel, including patients, in addition to thousands of Palestinians who want to travel but did not register for traveling according to the Ministry of Interior in Gaza.

Recommendations

PCHR calls upon the international community, particularly the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, to:

- Exert effective pressure on Israel to compel it to open all of Gaza's crossings, both those used for commercial purposes and those used for the movement of civilians, to allow the civilian population of the Gaza Strip to reconstruct civilian property destroyed during Israel's latest offensive on Gaza and to enable them to enjoy their fundamental civil and political rights, as well as their economic, social and cultural rights;
- Promptly and urgently intervene to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to put an end to the deterioration of living conditions across the Gaza Strip;
- Compel Israel to put an end to measures of collective punishment against the civilian population of the Gaza Strip, including the tightening of the closure of Gaza's border crossings;
- Cancel the UN Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, as it failed to alleviate the suffering of those affected by the Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip, especially owners of houses and property that were completely destroyed, who have not received any compensations or construction materials to rebuild their destroyed houses and property;
- Remind the State of Israel, the Occupying Power, of its obligations towards the civilians of the Gaza Strip, under Article 55 of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, which stipulates that: "To the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring 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. The Occupying Power may not requisition foodstuffs, articles or medical supplies available in the occupied territory, and then only if the requirements of the civilian population have been taken into account." The High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention must fulfill their obligation under Article 1 of the Convention by ensuring the implementation of the Convention's provisions by the State of Israel, in order to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip; and
- Call on the Egyptian authorities to take more measures to facilitate movement at the Rafah International Crossing Point, in particular by increasing the number of travelers and opening hours, and to find a solution for the thousands of Palestinians wishing to travel via the crossing, particularly during the summer when the number of travellers doubles.
- Reminds that the Israeli-imposed closure on the Gaza Strip is one of the gravest violations and collective punishments committed by Israeli forces against Palestinians in the Israeli occupation history. This inhumane and illegal closure constitutes a man-made disaster and is a part of an ongoing war crime against the Palestinian civilians.