



State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings (01 June – 31 July 2021)

Israeli-Imposed Closure returns to Square One: the Gaza Strip is having Worst Period

The ongoing inhuman and illegal Israeli-imposed closure on the Gaza Strip entered its 15th consecutive year in light of unprecedented tightening of the restrictions on the Gaza Strip borders, making the period following the Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip in May 2021¹ (June and July) the worst period over the years of closure.

Before the beginning of the Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip, the Israeli authorities completely closed the one and only commercial crossing (Kerem Shalom) and banned the entry of the essential goods into the Strip. Moreover, they completely closed Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing and even humanitarian cases were not allowed, and completely closed the sea and banned fishing.

Following the end of the offensive and despite IOF's declaration to re-open "Kerm Shalom" crossing and allow the entry of goods, the field proved the opposite. The Israeli authorities imposed unprecedented restrictions on the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip via the crossing and only allowed the entry of limited quantities of food supplies, fuel and limited types of humanitarian aid for international organizations.

Unprecedentedly, they completely banned the entry of thousands of goods, including construction materials necessary for the reconstruction of what was destroyed by the latest Israeli offensive, and the equipment and materials needed to repair the massive damage caused to the water and sanitation facilities and electricity networks by the offensive. Additionally, they banned the entry of most types of raw materials necessary for boosting economy and industrial facilities, such as chemicals, steel, wood and cars. Moreover, IOF continued to impose tightened restrictions on the entry of 62 types classified as "dual-use items"² that include hundreds of major goods and essential materials. 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 reporting period witnessed a decrease in the number of trucks entering the Gaza Strip comparing to the last months, as the Israeli occupation authorities allowed the entry of 8,553 trucks in April, while in May 3,637 trucks were allowed, representing (42.5%). June exports were 3,340 trucks (39%), and only 4,183 trucks (48.9%) in July.



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Moreover, IOF reduced the exportation of the Gaza Strip's products to the lowest levels after it was allowed to export only very limited quantities; mostly agricultural products, before the latest offensive. As 124 trucks were exported in May, representing 35.3% of April exportations when 351 trucks were allowed for exportation, representing only 2.7% of the monthly exports before the closure in June 2007 when around 4,500 trucks were allowed for exportation monthly. While June exportations were only 7.6% comparing to April, and 0.5% of the monthly exportations before the closure, and 30.1% in July comparing to April and 2.3% of the monthly exportations before the closure.

Regarding Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing, although the Israeli occupation authorities declared they will only allow the travel of urgent "lifesaving" cases starting from 25 May 2021, they refused to respond to dozens of permit requests applied by the Health Ministry's Coordination and Liaison Department on behalf the persons wounded in the latest offensive and patients with serious diseases, whose treatment is not available at the Gaza hospitals, and referred abroad for treatment in the hospitals in Israel, the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, and abroad. The Israeli authorities allowed only the travel of 13 patients out of the 191 requests applied by the Coordination and Liaison Department to the Israeli authorities between 25 and 30 May 2021. Meanwhile, in May, the Israeli authorities allowed the travel of 279 patients, which means there is a 70% decline in the number of patients allowed to travel in April, where 925 patients travelled. 848 patients were allowed to travel in June, while 839 patients travelled in July.

The Israeli closure and repercussions of the offensive has negatively affected the provision of basic services to 2 million Palestinians living in dire living conditions in the Gaza Strip, which is classified as the most densely populated area in the world.

Also, the Israeli closure deepened the humanitarian and living crises in the Gaza Strip, as the Gaza unemployment rate is 45% (i.e. 217,100 are unemployed), 63% of which is among youth. Also, more than half of the Gaza population lives in poverty as the poverty rate reached 53% according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Meanwhile, more than 62.2% of the Gaza population who suffer from food insecurity according to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

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The electricity crisis has also aggravated during the offensive due to the Israeli authorities' ban on the entry of fuel necessary for the operation of the only power plant in the Gaza Strip and due to the widescale destruction in the electricity distribution network. The electricity reaches houses and public facilities in Gaza between 6-8 hours daily, which is not sufficient for vital facilities to provide basic services to residential neighborhoods and civilians.

Also, some neighborhoods in the Gaza Strip are suffering from lack of drinking water supply due to the power shortage and the water facilities which were destroyed due to the latest Israeli offensive and ban on the entry of the essential equipment and materials for the reconstruction.

Moreover, the ongoing Israeli closure and restrictions imposed on the entry of construction materials as well as not proceeding with the reconstruction process has worsened the suffering of the owners of houses that were destroyed during the latest Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip. 3,547 housing units were destroyed: 1,025 houses were completely destroyed and 2,522 sustained severe damage. The destroyed housing units sheltered 3,483 families, comprising of 17,826 individuals, including 8,302 children.

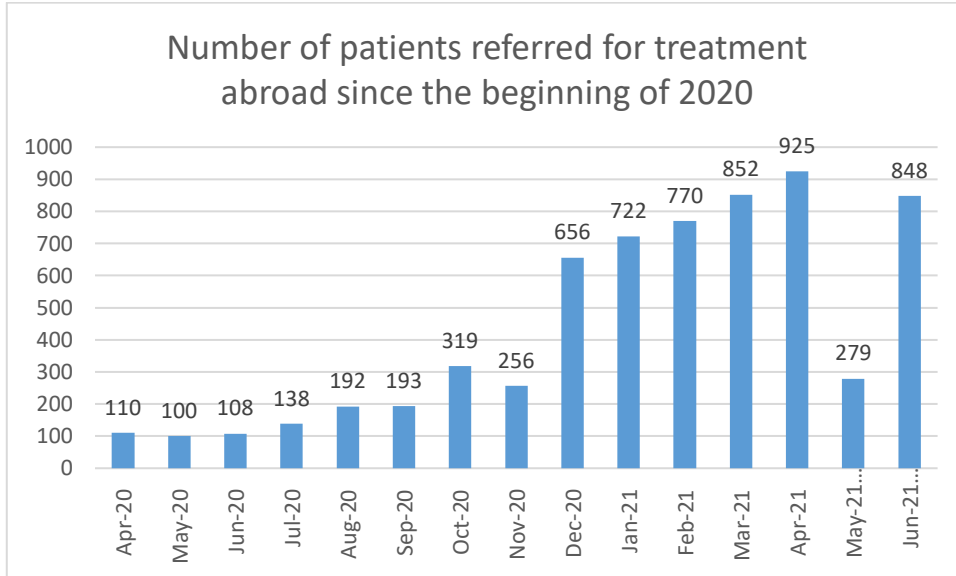
June 2021:

Restrictions on the Movement of Persons:

- **Patients:** the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH) reduced the number of patients referred for medical treatment in the hospitals in Israel or the West Bank to the maximum extent possible to curb the spread of Covid-19. MOH only grants referrals to persons wounded during the Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip and patients with serious conditions and whose treatment is unavailable in the Gaza Strip. Despite this, Israeli authorities obstructed the travel of 804 patients out of 1,256 patients (i.e. 32.4% of the total permit applications), who were referred for treatment in Israeli hospitals or in the West Bank hospitals, including occupied East Jerusalem. The Israeli authorities did not reply to 213 applications (16.9%); delayed replies (allegedly for security check) to 263 permits (14.1%); and 5 permits were cancelled by the hospital (0.4%)



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- Accordingly, the major decrease in the number of patients allowed to travel and reach hospitals is very clear as the Israeli authorities allowed 925 patients to travel in April while only 279 were allowed to travel in May (around 70% decline). While in June, 848 patients were allowed to travel (around 8.3% decline) comparing to April.
- 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 June data, Israeli authorities allowed 2,314 Palestinians to exit the Gaza Strip via “Erez” Crossing, including 77 for personal needs; 609 foreign international organizations’ staff; and 100 from Arabs holding Israeli ID cards. Meanwhile, 1,827 were allowed entry to the Gaza Strip, including 51 for personal needs, 586 foreign international organizations’ staff, 84 Jordan crossing, 99 Arabs holding Israeli ID cards, and 6 prisoners released from the Israeli jails.
- **Prisoners’ Visits:** In June, 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

- Despite the Israeli ongoing restrictions on the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip. In June, they allowed the entry of 3,340 truckloads via "Kerem Shalom" border crossing, including 573 humanitarian aid truckloads, 124 fuel trucks and 2,643 truckloads of goods for the

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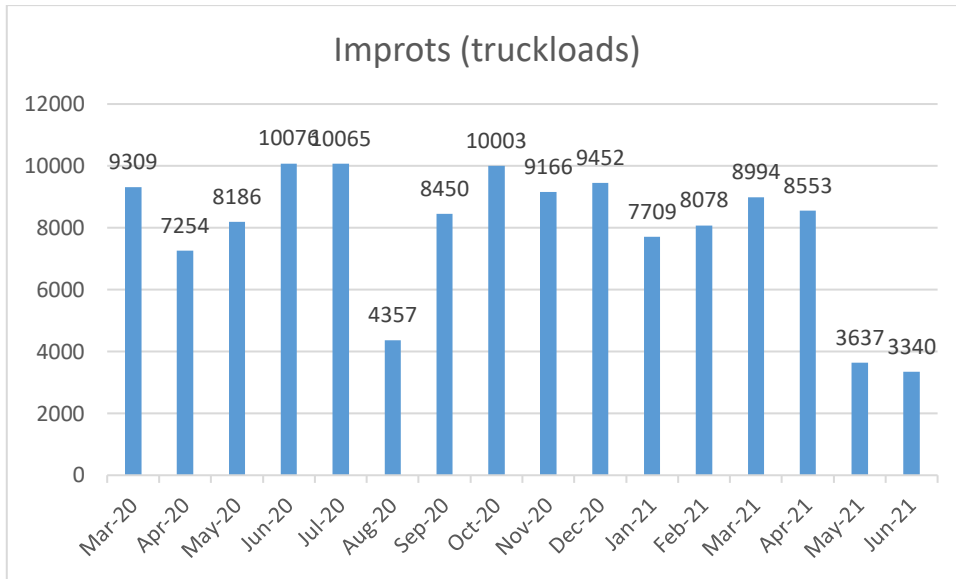
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private sector. June witnessed a decrease of 61% in the number of trucks entering the Gaza Strip comparing to last April before the latest Israeli offensive, as the Israeli occupation authorities allowed the entry of 8,553 trucks.

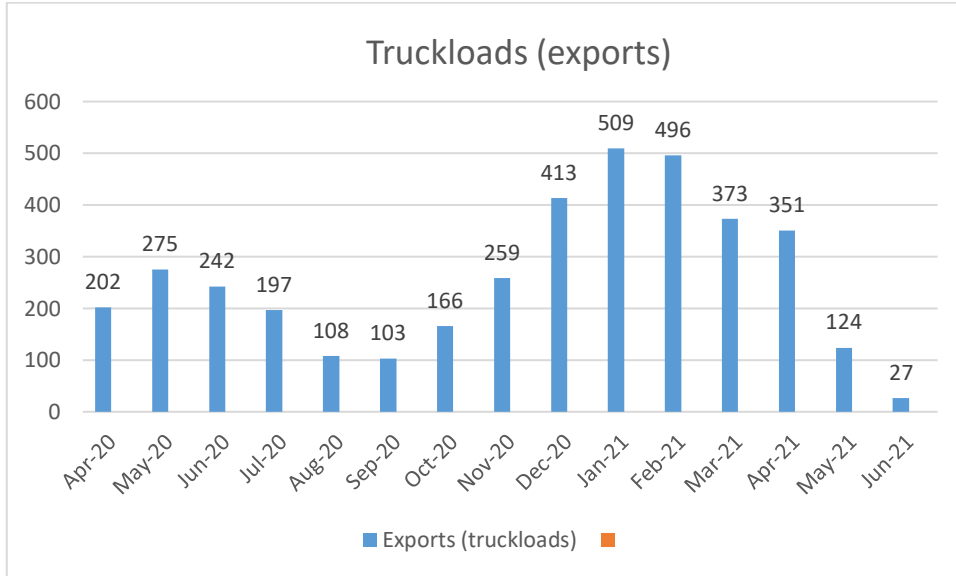
- During the reporting period, 2,716 truckloads entered via Rafah Crossing, including 725 fuel truckloads and 1991 truckloads of goods for the private sector, most of which were food supplies.



- **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 June, the Israeli authorities allowed the exportation of 27 truckloads (9 to the West Bank and 18 to Israel). Those truckloads included agricultural products, fish, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, clothes, and furniture. June exports constitute only 7.6% of April's exports, as 351 trucks were allowed for exportation, representing only 0.5% of the monthly exports before the closure was imposed in June 2007 (4500 truckloads/month).



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- **Movement at Rafah Border Crossing:** according to the Crossing and Borders Authority in Gaza, in June, 8,735 persons traveled from the Gaza Strip while 8,608 persons returned to the Strip. Moreover, the Egyptian authorities denied travel of 519 persons. Travelers returning to the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing suffer from prolonged, recurrent and unjustified searches.

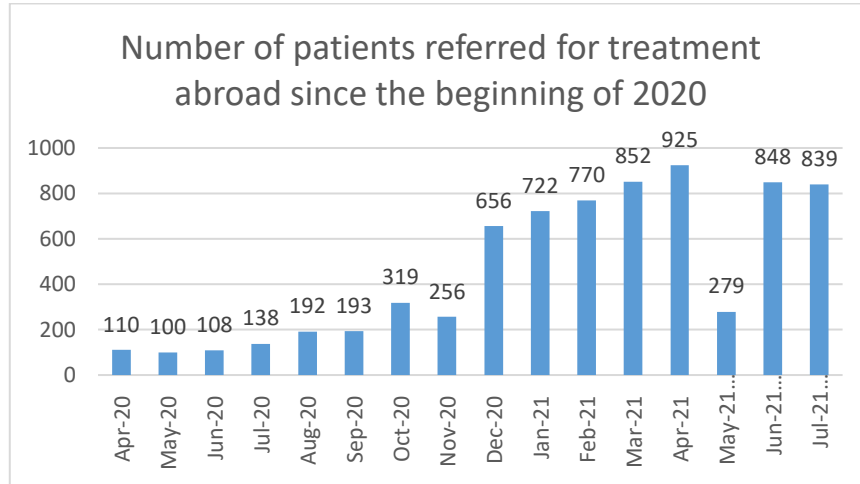
July 2021:

Restrictions on the Movement of Persons:

- **Patients:** the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH) reduced the number of patients referred for medical treatment in the hospitals in Israel or the West Bank to the maximum extent possible. The Israeli authorities obstructed the travel of 298 patients out of 1,137 patients (i.e. 26.2% of the total permit applications), who were referred for treatment in Israeli hospitals or in the West Bank hospitals, including occupied East Jerusalem. The Israeli authorities did not reply to 24 applications (2.1%); delayed replies (allegedly for security check) to 250 permits (21.9%); and 10 permits were cancelled by the hospital (0.8%)



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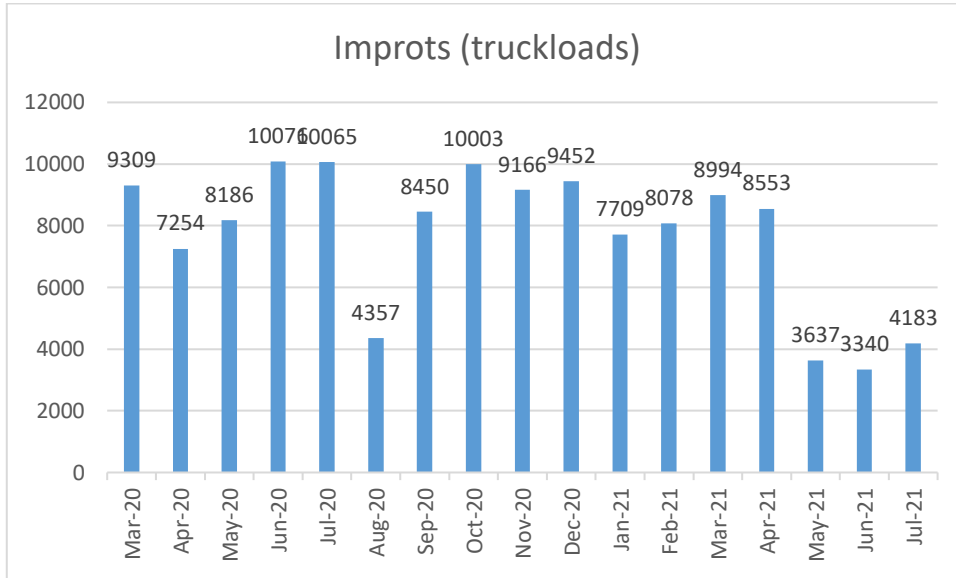
- According to GACA July data, Israeli authorities allowed 2,257 Palestinians to exit the Gaza Strip via “Erez” Crossing, including 75 for personal needs; 329 foreign international organizations’ staff; and 119 from Arabs holding Israeli ID cards. Meanwhile, 2,397 were allowed entry to the Gaza Strip, including 79 for personal needs, 317 foreign international organizations’ staff, 159 Jordan crossing, 213 Arabs holding Israeli ID cards, and 10 prisoners released from the Israeli jails.
- **Prisoners’ Visits:** In July, 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

- Despite the Israeli ongoing restrictions on the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip. In July, they allowed the entry of 4,183 truckloads via "Kerem Shalom" border crossing, including 436 humanitarian aid truckloads, 345 fuel trucks and 3,402 truckloads of goods for the private sector. July witnessed a decrease of 51.1% in the number of trucks entering the Gaza Strip comparing to last April before the latest Israeli offensive, as the Israeli occupation authorities allowed the entry of 8,553 trucks.
- During the reporting period, 1,689 truckloads entered via Rafah Crossing, including 463 fuel truckloads and 1226 truckloads of goods for the private sector.



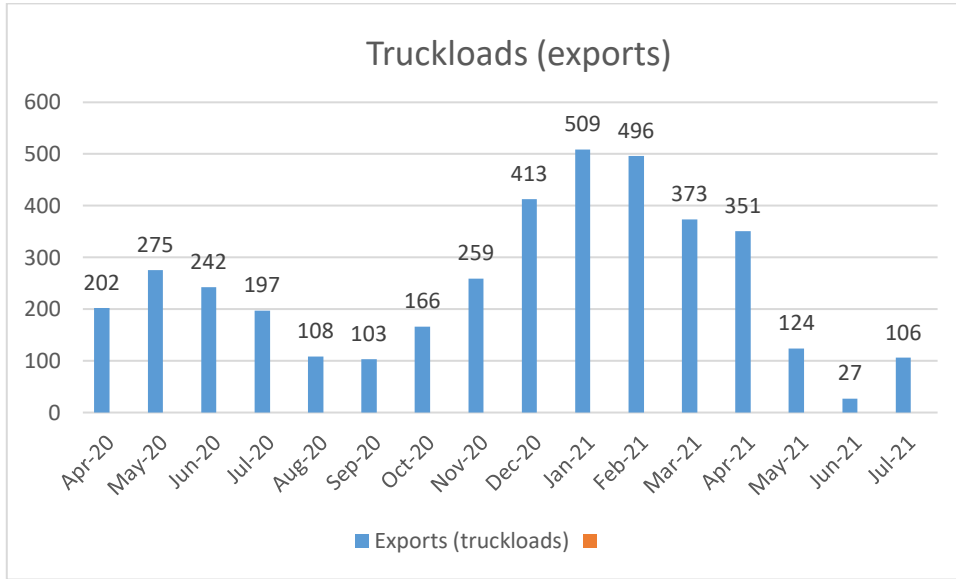
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- **Ongoing ban on Gaza Strip exports:** Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports. However, in July, the Israeli authorities allowed the export of 106 truckloads (93 to the West Bank, 10 to Israel and 3 abroad). Those truckloads included agricultural products, fish, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, clothes, and furniture. July exports is only 30.1% of April's exports, as 351 trucks were allowed for exportation, representing only 0.5% of the monthly exports before the closure was imposed in June 2007 (4500 truckloads/month).



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- 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 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.

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- 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:** according to the Crossing and Borders Authority in Gaza, in July, 1,171 persons traveled from the Gaza Strip while 14,558 persons returned to the Strip. Moreover, the Egyptian authorities denied travel of 417 persons. Travelers returning to the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing suffer from prolonged, recurrent and unjustified searches.

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