



State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings

1 – 31 August 2021

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 2021 the worst period over the years of closure.

As for commercial crossings, the occupation authorities maintain unprecedented restrictions on the import of thousands of goods into the Gaza Strip, 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. Moreover, IOF continued to impose tightened restrictions on the entry of 62 types classified as "dual-use items"¹ that include hundreds of major goods and essential materials, which are essential for the population. The ban on the entry exacerbates the Gaza Strip's crises across various sectors, including infrastructure, economic, health, and education.

At Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing, the Israeli occupation authorities decreased the number of persons allowed travel via the crossing of the already-limited groups that were allowed passage after a thorough security check. Even though the Israeli occupation authorities declared they will allow patients' travel, they refused to respond to dozens of permit requests applied by the Health Ministry's Coordination and Liaison Department on behalf of 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 15-year 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.² 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).

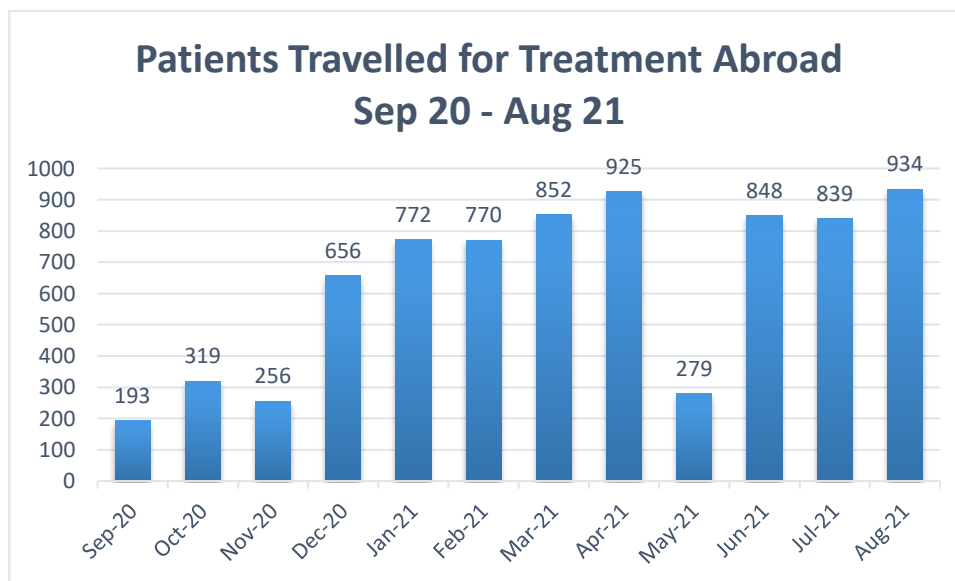
¹ Israeli authorities claim that these items, although used for civilian purposes, could be used to develop the combat capabilities of the Palestinian armed groups.

² Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Results on the Labor Force Survey, Second Quarter (April - June 2021) Round . 8/8/2021.



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. MOH only grants referrals to Israeli and West Bank hospitals for patients with serious conditions and whose treatment is unavailable in the Gaza Strip. According to GACA, 934 travelled, along with 709 companions, this month.



- 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, 839 in July, and 934 in August.
- 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.
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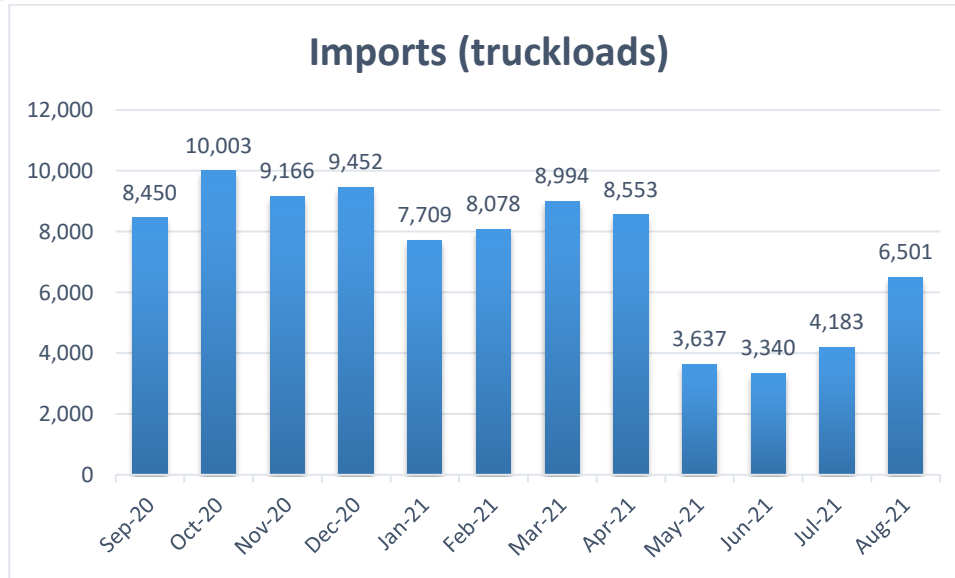
- According to GACA August data, Israeli authorities allowed 5,224 Palestinians to exit the Gaza Strip via “Erez” Crossing, including 306 for personal needs; 325 foreign international organizations’ staff; and 213 from Arabs holding Israeli ID cards. Meanwhile, 3,775 were allowed entry to the Gaza Strip, including 264 for personal needs, 364 foreign international organizations’ staff, 165 Jordan crossing, 166 Arabs holding Israeli ID cards, and 4 prisoners released from the Israeli jails.
- **Prisoners’ Visits:** In August, 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

After the May 2021 IOF aggression on Gaza, and despite IOF allegation that it reopened Karm Abu Salem crossing and that goods would be allowed entry into Gaza, field observation proved the opposite. IOF imposed unprecedented restrictions on import of goods, and only allowed, gradually, the entry of limited food items, petrol, and goods directed for international organizations.

Despite the Israeli ongoing restrictions on the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip. In August, they allowed the entry of 6,502 truckloads via "Karm Abu Salem" border crossing, including 573 humanitarian aid truckloads, 305 fuel trucks and 2,029 truckloads of goods for the private sector. August witnessed a decrease of 23.9% 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, 1,872 truckloads entered via Rafah Crossing, including 471 fuel truckloads and 1401 truckloads of goods for the private sector, most of which were food supplies.



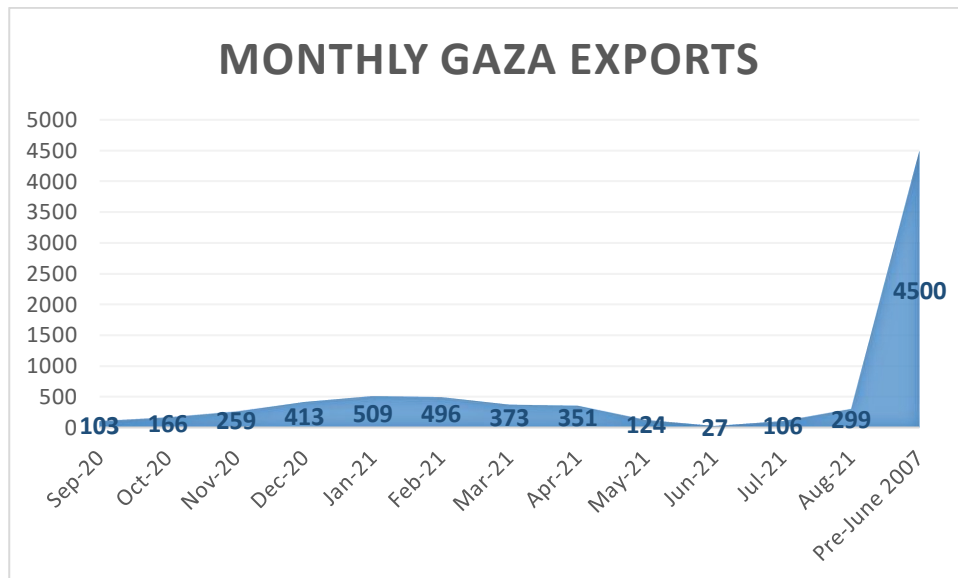
- Israel continues to hinder the entry of thousands of items, including construction materials necessary for the reconstruction of what was destroyed by the latest Israeli offensive, and the equipment and materials needed to repair the massive damage caused to the water and sanitation facilities and electricity networks by the offensive. Import of raw materials for manufacturing is also banned, including chemicals, minerals, wood, and cars.
- 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 crossing. A number of merchants and contractors said to PCHR that the abovementioned measures are very



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complicated as the Israeli authorities deliberately delay responses to applications for months. Additionally, in many cases, the Israeli forces stationed at (Karm Abu Salem 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.
- **Ongoing ban on Gaza Strip exports:** Israeli authorities continued to ban the Gaza Strip exports with a limited exception allowing the export of limited quantities of certain goods, mostly to the West Bank, some to Israel and abroad. In August, the Israeli authorities allowed the export of 299 truckloads (102 to the West Bank and 179 to Israel). Those truckloads included agricultural products, fish, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, clothes, and furniture. July exports is only 85.1.1% 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).



Israeli occupation authorities also sharply decreased export of Gaza products to the lowest amounts in recent months, as limited quantities of mostly produce were allowed export pre-May 2021; in May only 124 truckloads were exported, only 35.3% of April's exports at 315 truckloads. These numbers are also insignificant when compared to Gaza exports before the Israeli closure policy was imposed on in June 2007, as the exports averaged at 4,500 truckloads per month.



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Here is a comparison in percentage between exports pre-May 2021, and pre-June 2007:

Month	Pre-May 2021	Pre-June 2007
June	7.6%	0.5%
July	30.1%	2.3%
August	85.1%	6.6%

Movement at Rafah Border Crossing:

According to the Crossing and Borders Authority in Gaza, in August, 12,004 persons traveled from the Gaza Strip while 10,370 persons returned to the Strip. Moreover, the Egyptian authorities denied travel of 333 persons. Travelers returning to the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing suffer from prolonged, recurrent, and unjustified searches.