



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings 01 – 31 December 2021

For 15 years, the Israeli occupation authorities continue to impose closure on the Gaza Strip, constituting a flagrant violation of the international humanitarian law, as Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits collective punishment against civilians. The Israeli closure deepened the humanitarian and living crises in the Gaza Strip, as the Gaza unemployment rate reached 45% (i.e. 217,100 are unemployed), 63% of which is among youth.¹ 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 suffer from food insecurity according to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA.)

As for commercial crossings, although 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 in May 2021, 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 items classified as "dual-use items"² 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.

As for individuals' movement, the Israeli occupation authorities continue to impose tight restrictions on 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.

Restrictions on the Movement of Persons:

- **Patients:** In December, the Palestinian Ministry of Health decreased the number of referred patients to the extent possible and only referred patients of serious cases. However, the Israeli authorities obstructed the travel of 606 patients out of 1,529 patients (i.e. 39.6% 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 rejected 10 applications for security reasons; did not reply to 18 applications; delayed replies (allegedly for security check) to 559 permits; asked one patient to change his companion; and asked 2 patients to book a new appointment in a new hospital.

¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Results on the Labor Force Survey, Second Quarter (April - June 2021) Round . 8/8/2021.

² Israeli authorities claim that these items, although used for civilian purposes, could be used to develop the combat capabilities of the Palestinian armed groups.



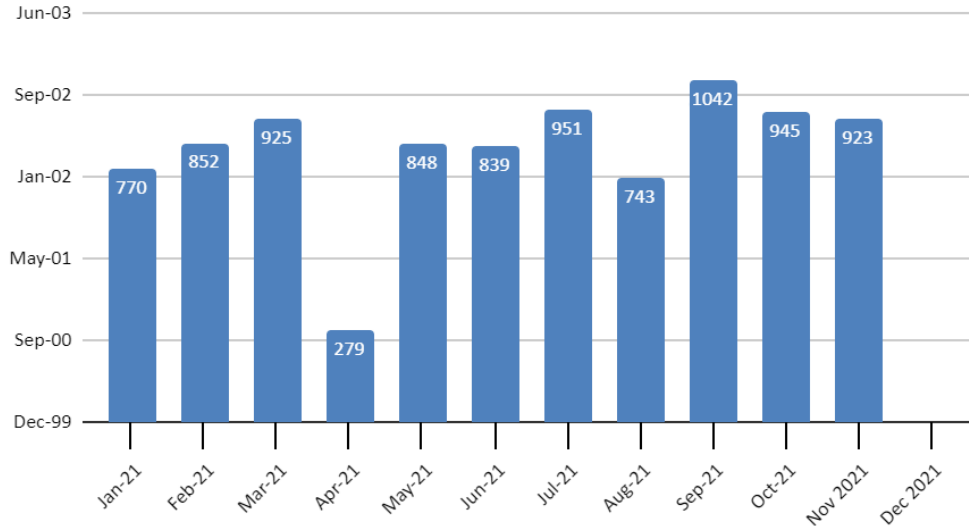
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Table no. (1): Statistics of the results of travel requests for treatment in Dec. 2021, the General Authority for Civil Affairs

No.	Result	Number	Percentage
1	No reply	18	1.18%
2	Under security check	559	36.56%
3	Approved	923	60.37%
4	Rejected	10	0.65%
5	Change the companion	2	0.13%
6	Relatives illegally living in Israel/West Bank	1	0.07%
7	Hospital cancelled the appointment	16	1.05%
	Total	1529	

Patinets Referred for Treatment Abroad 2021



- The Israeli authorities continued to 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 24,721 Palestinians to exit the Gaza Strip via “Erez” Crossing, including 923 patients and 681 for personal needs, 20,699 businesspeople, 305 businesspeople who hold “BMC” permits, 397 foreign international organizations’ staff; 145 from Arabs holding Israeli ID cards; 200 King Hussein Bridge, and 203 Christians for their holidays. Meanwhile, 24,547 were allowed entry to the Gaza Strip, including 626 patients and 626 persons for personal needs, 24,547 businesspeople, 268



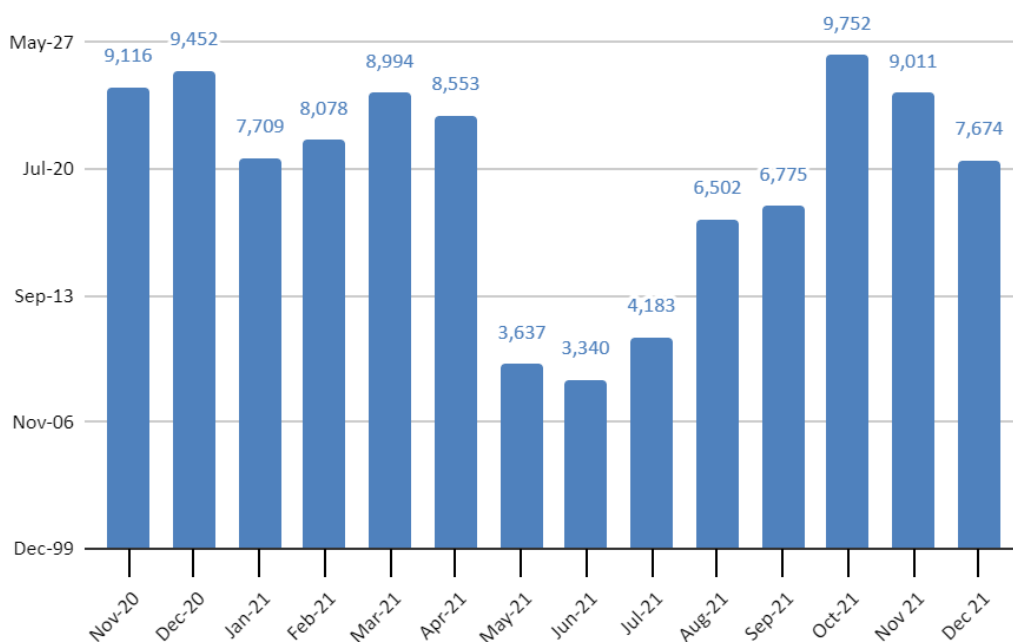
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businesspeople who hold “BMC” permits, 329 foreign international organizations’ staff, 202 King Hussein Bridge, 177 Arabs holding Israeli ID cards, and 3 released prisoners.

- **Prisoners’ Visits:** In December, 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, under which Article 116 says 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

- 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, 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.
- Israel maintained tightened restrictions on the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip. In December, they allowed the entry of 7,674 truckloads via “Karem Shalom” border crossing, including 323 humanitarian aid truckloads, 383 fuel trucks and 6968 truckloads of goods for the private sector as reported by the Ministry of National Economy in Gaza.
- During the reporting period, 1937 truckloads entered via Rafah Crossing, including 454 fuel truckloads and 1483 truckloads of goods for the private sector.

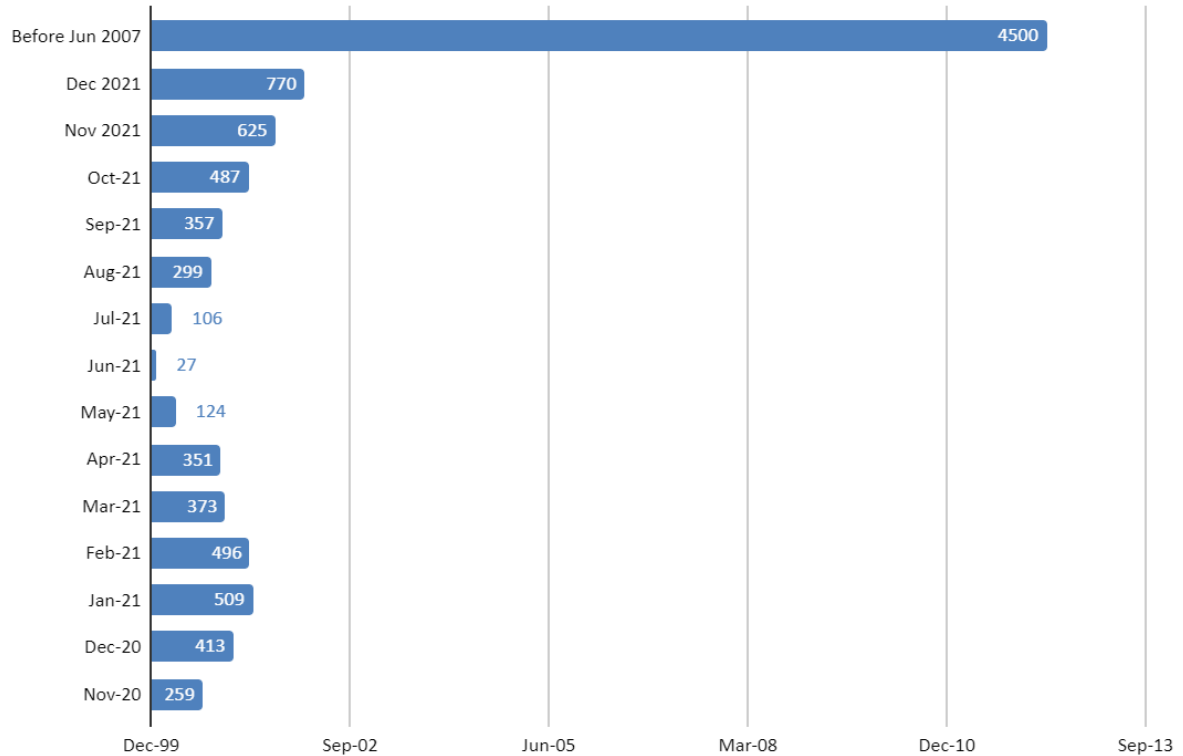




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- The process of submitting applications by the Gaza Strip residents to import goods classified by the Israeli authorities as “dual-use items” is very complex and ambiguous. A person from the Gaza Strip should send a request to the Palestinian Coordination 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 Imports (truckloads) 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.
- **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 December, the Israeli authorities allowed the export of 770 truckloads (536 to the West Bank, 207 to Israel, and 27 truckloads abroad) according to the Ministry of National Economy. Those truckloads included agricultural products, fish, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, clothes, and furniture. The exports during the reporting period constitute only 17.1% of Gaza’s total monthly exports before closure was imposed in June 2007 (4500 truckloads/month).

Gaza Exports vs 2007



- Movement at Rafah Border Crossing:** According to the Crossing and Borders Authority in Gaza, in November, 11249 persons traveled from the Gaza Strip while 9155 persons returned to the Strip. Moreover, the Egyptian authorities denied travel of 591 persons. Travelers returning to the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing suffer from prolonged, recurrent, and unjustified searches.

Table No. (2): individuals' movement at Rafah Crossing in December 2021, the Crossing and Borders Authority

Type	Departures	Arrivals	Denied Travel
Egyptian nationals	521	401	36
Visas	635	303	40
Residence permits	1845	1268	61
Students	312	291	19
Patients	3063	2539	231
Visitors	4755	4251	204
Foreigners	118	102	0
Total	11249	9155	591