



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings

01 – 28 February 2023

The Israeli occupation forces continue to impose an illegal and inhuman closure on the Gaza Strip for 16 years in a row and isolate more than 2.3 million Palestinians from the outside world through its control over the Gaza Strip's crossings¹, and restrictions on the movement of goods and individuals from and into the Gaza Strip. 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 47%², while more than half of the population lives in poverty as the poverty rate recorded 60%³ and more than 68.5% of the Gaza population suffers from food insecurity⁴. Additionally, 80% of the Gaza population relies on international aid⁵.

Despite its claims to ease the closure imposed on the Gaza Strip, Israel still imposes restrictions on the movement of individuals at the Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing, banning most of Gaza population travel via the crossing. Also, the Israeli occupation authorities continue to impose tightened restrictions on the entry of "dual-use items",* thereby banning the entry of 61 items⁶ that include hundreds of goods and commodities that are essential to the life of the population.

¹ Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing in the northern Gaza Strip is designated for the movement of individuals and controlled by Israel. The crossing operates during the day from Sunday to Thursday and on Fridays only for urgent cases and internationals. Meanwhile, Kerem Shalom crossing in the southern Gaza Strip is designated for the movement of goods.

² The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) announces the Results of the Labor Force Survey, for the third quarter of 2022", 08 November 2022: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4353>

³ The World Bank's Palestinian Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, 10 May 2022.

⁴ 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%20%284%29_0.pdf

⁵ 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.

⁶ A list of prohibited items: http://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/LegalDocuments/procedures/merchandise/170ar_full_list.pdf



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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). Similarly, 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) February 2023 data, Israeli authorities allowed 44,976 Palestinians to exit the Gaza Strip via "Erez" Crossing, while 42,958 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. Also, merchants and the holders of economic needs permits constitute 90% of the total number of travelers via the crossing in February, and most of them are daily workers. Additionally, the percentage of patients and their companions traveled via the crossing reached 6.47% of the total number of travelers.

Group	Exit	Entry
Merchants	39714	37803
Businesspersons	334	294
Personal needs	768	704
Patients	1598	1513
International organizations	498	515
Arab 1948	126	141
King Hussain Bridge Travel	401	337
Prisoners' visits	54	54
Security interviews	72	72



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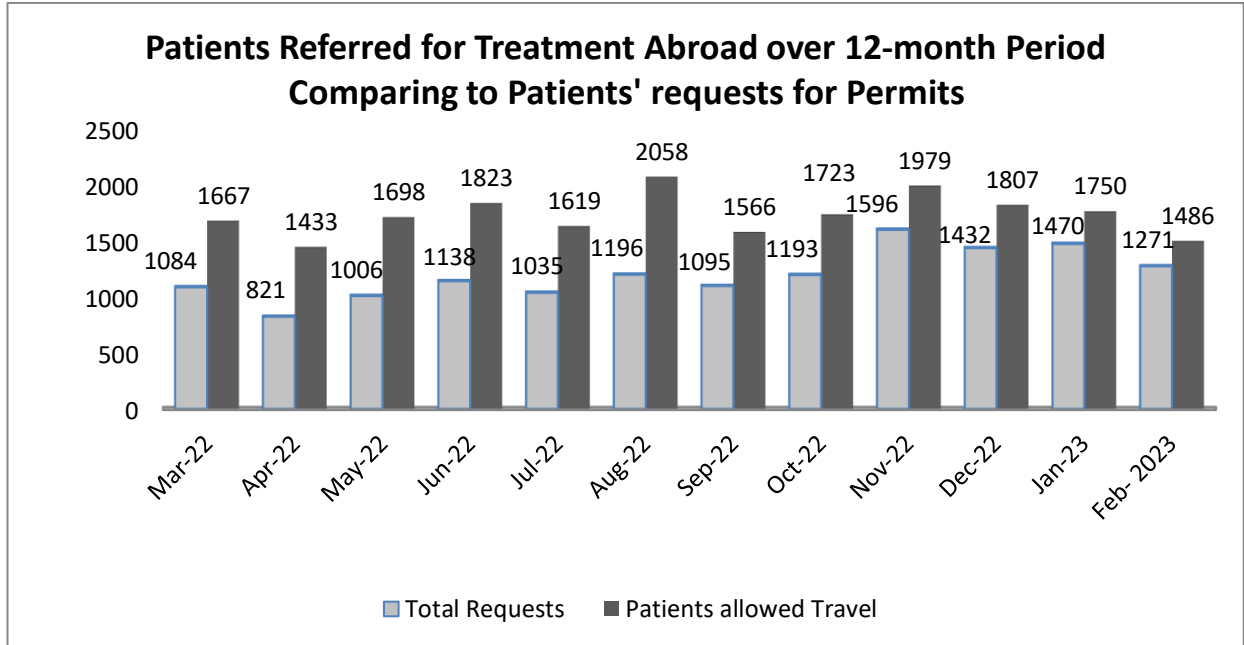
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Restrictions on patients' travel:

In February, the Israeli authorities obstructed the travel of 215 out of 1,486 patients who were referred for treatment in hospitals in Israel or the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, (i.e., 14.4% of the total permit applications), and allowed the travel of 1,271 patients. Although the Israeli authorities claim that they would allow patients' travel, they refused to respond to dozens of requests filed by the Coordination and Liaison Department at the Ministry of Health for patients with serious diseases and who were referred for treatment in hospitals in Israel or the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem. In February, the Israeli authorities rejected 64 permit requests for security reasons; did not reply to 32 requests; delayed replies (under study) to 85 permits, asked 26 patients to wait for a security interview, and obstructed the travel of 8 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 February 2023, GACA

Result	Number	Percentage
No reply	32	%2.15
Under study	85	%5.72
Approved	1271	%85.53
Rejected	64	%4.31
Waiting for interview	26	%1.75
Inappropriate	1	%0.07
Treatment available locally	1	%0.07
Hospital cancellation	6	%0.40
Total	1750	%100



Detainees' Visits

Out of 4,600 Palestinians detained in the Israeli prisons, about 190 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 jails. Also, the visitations program was suspended without giving reasons and for long periods. In February, the Israeli authorities allowed 54 family members of Palestinian detainees to visit 32 detainees. 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.



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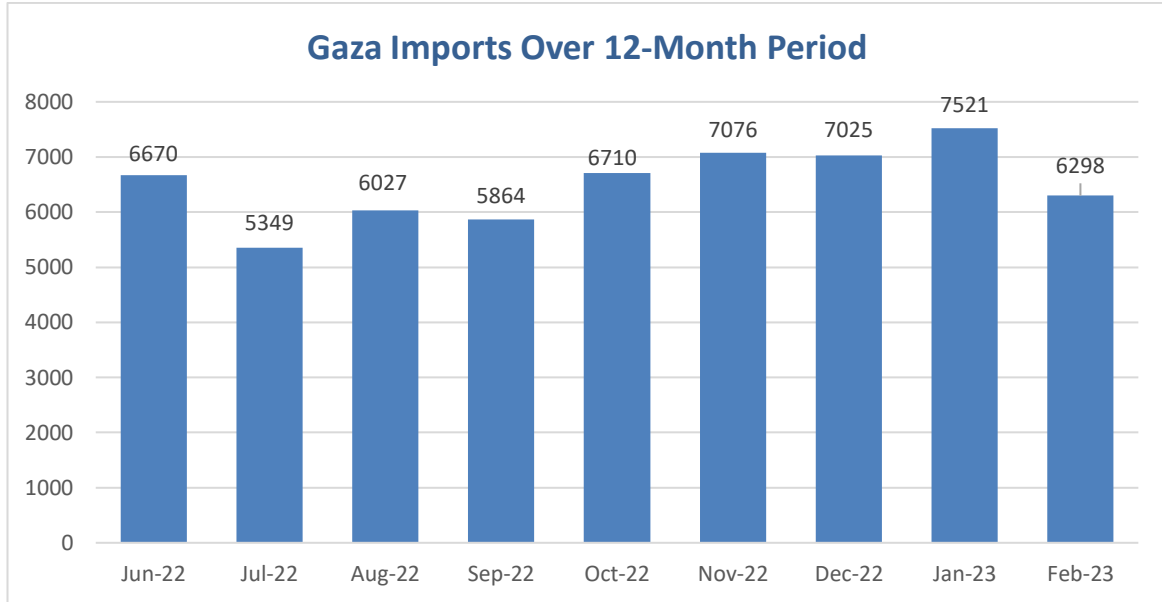
Restrictions on Movement of Goods

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 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.

In February, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 6298 truckloads, including 99 humanitarian aid truckloads, 446 fuel trucks and 5753 truckloads of goods for the private sector as reported by the Ministry of National Economy in Gaza. During the reporting period, 3840 truckloads entered via Rafah Crossing, including 505 fuel truckloads and 3335 truckloads of goods for the private sector.

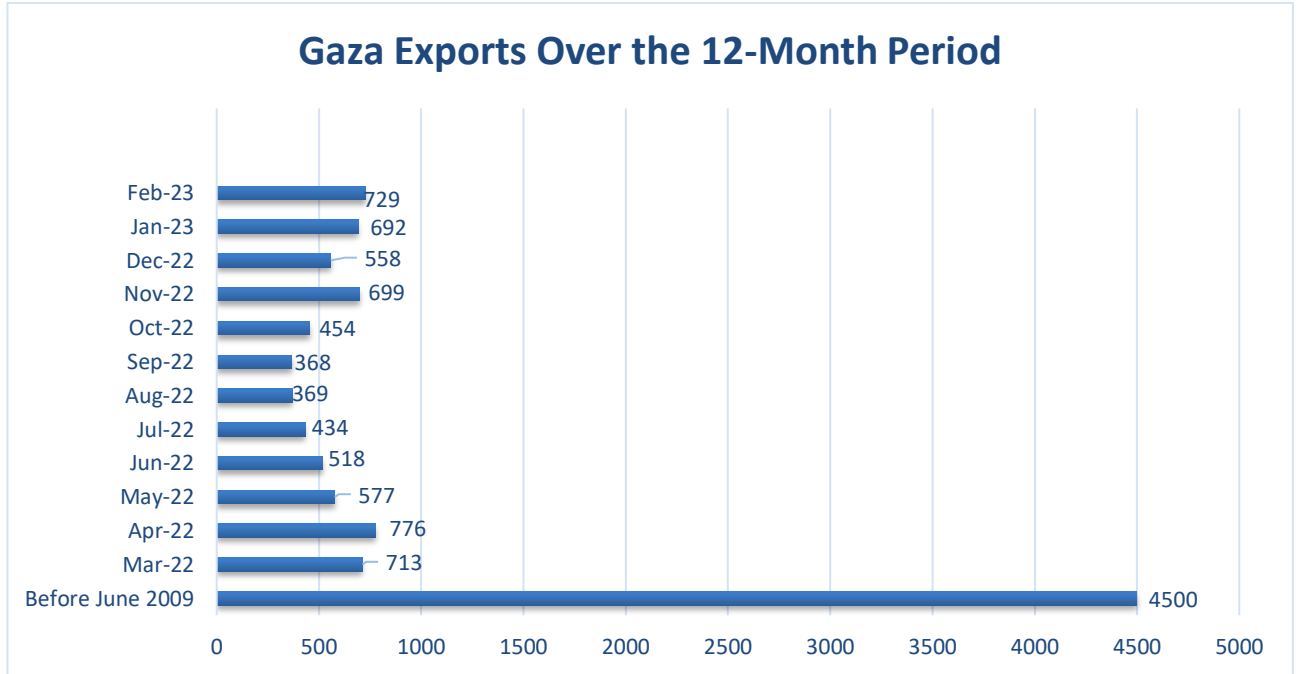


Gaza Strip exports: IOF impose tightened restrictions on the exports of the Gaza Strip to the West Bank, including Jerusalem, or Israel and the outside world. In February, the Israeli authorities allowed the export of 713 truckloads (526 to the West Bank, 181 to Israel, and 6 to outside world) according to the Ministry of National Economy. Those truckloads included agricultural products, furniture, animal skin, aluminum scrap, clothes, and furniture. The exports during the reporting period constitute only 15.3% of Gaza's total monthly exports before 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 February, 12,902 persons traveled from the Gaza Strip while 12,247 persons returned to the Strip. Moreover, the Egyptian authorities denied travel of 355 persons. Travelers returning to the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing suffer from prolonged, recurrent, and unjustified searches.

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