



# المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان

## PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

### State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings

01 – 31 August 2023

The Israeli occupation authorities continue to impose an illegal and inhuman closure on the Gaza Strip for 17 consecutive years, isolating more than 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza from the world through its full control over the Gaza Strip's crossings<sup>1</sup> 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 46%: 68% among youth<sup>2</sup>, while more than half of the population lives in poverty as the poverty rate recorded 60%<sup>3</sup>, and more than 68.5% of the Gaza population suffers from food insecurity<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, 80% of the Gaza population relies on international aid.<sup>5</sup>

Despite claims of easing 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's travel via the crossing. The Israeli occupation authorities also continue to impose tightened restrictions on the entry of so-called "dual-use items\*" which are about 61 essential items<sup>6</sup>, including hundreds of goods and commodities necessary for the population's lives.

<sup>1</sup> Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing in the northern Gaza Strip is designated for the movement of individuals and is under Israeli control. It 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.

<sup>2</sup> The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) presents the Main Findings of Labour Force Survey, Second Quarter 2023, April-June 2023: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4559>

<sup>3</sup> The World Bank's Palestinian Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, 10 May 2022: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/westbankandgaza/publication/economic-monitoring-report-to-the-ad-hoc-liaison-committee-may-2022>

<sup>4</sup> 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](https://palestine.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/UNCT%20-%20Fact%20sheet%20Food%20%284%29_0.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 08 August 2022, Paragraph 46: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdbex72d2\\_en.pdf](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.

<sup>6</sup> A list of prohibited items:

[https://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/LegalDocuments/procedures/merchandise/170ar\\_full\\_list.pdf](https://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/LegalDocuments/procedures/merchandise/170ar_full_list.pdf)



# المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان

## PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

### 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 from travelling and allowing only limited categories after going through security checks. These restrictions include all categories allowed to travel at a very narrow range: patients referred for treatment abroad, Palestinians holding Israeli citizenship, international journalists, international humanitarian organizations' staff, merchants, businessmen and workers, families of detainees in Israeli prisons and travelers via King Hussein Bridge. Such restrictions deprive the Gaza Strip population 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) August data, Israeli authorities allowed 58,397 Palestinians to exit the Gaza Strip via "Erez" Crossing, while 61,926 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. It should be noted that citizens who obtain travel permits via Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing only constitute 1% of the total Gaza's population, while merchants, the holders of economic needs permits, and workers constituted 91.4% of the total number of travelers via the crossing in August, and most of them are daily workers. Additionally, the percentage of patients and their companions traveled via the crossing reached (i.e., 6.2%) of the total number of travelers.

| Group                       | Exit  | Entry |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|
| Merchants                   | 13242 | 13791 |
| Economic needs              | 32397 | 35060 |
| Worker/ Employer            | 4173  | 4182  |
| Businesspersons             | 538   | 377   |
| Personal needs              | 1059  | 723   |
| Patients                    | 1985  | 1949  |
| International organizations | 430   | 1218  |
| Arab 1948                   | 343   | 316   |
| King Hussain Bridge Travel  | 662   | 835   |



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|                     |    |    |
|---------------------|----|----|
| Prisoners' visits   | 44 | 44 |
| Security interviews | 71 | 77 |

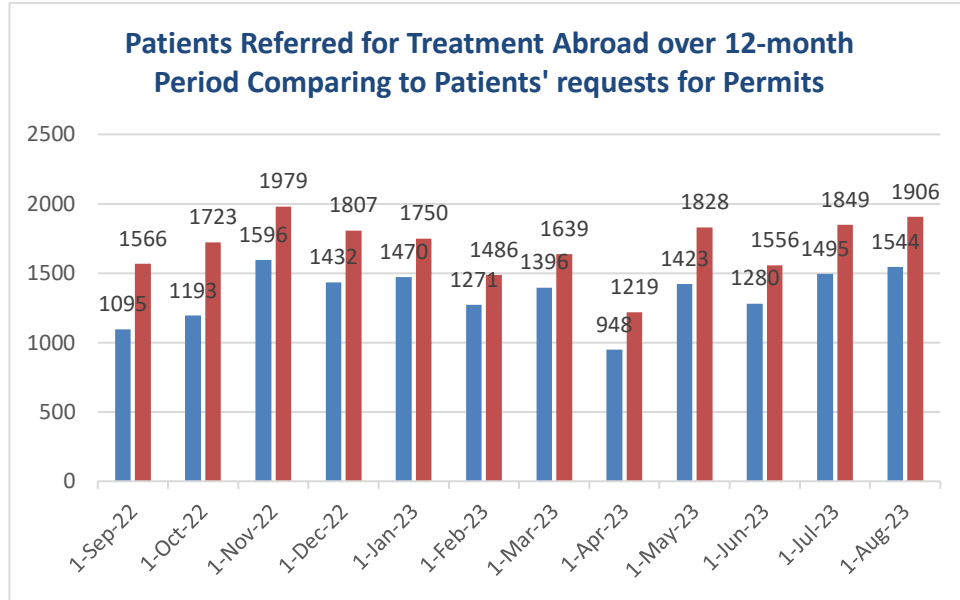
### Restrictions on patients' travel:

In August, the Israeli authorities obstructed the travel of 362 out of 1,906 patients referred for treatment in hospitals in Israel or the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, (i.e., 18.99% of the total permit applications), and allowed the travel of 1,544 patients.

Although the Israeli authorities claim that they allow patients' travel, they have 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 August, the Israeli authorities rejected 5 permit requests for security reasons; did not reply to 123 requests; delayed replies (under study) to 181 permits, asked 40 patients to wait for a security interview. Additionally, the Israeli authorities obstructed the travel of 13 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 August 2023, the General Authority for Civil Affairs**

| Result                      | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|--------|------------|
| No reply                    | 123    | %6.45      |
| Under study                 | 181    | %9.50      |
| Approved                    | 1544   | %81.01     |
| Rejected                    | 5      | %0.26      |
| Waiting for an interview    | 40     | %2.10      |
| New appointment             | 1      | %0.05      |
| Treatment available locally | 8      | %0.42      |
| Hospital cancellation       | 2      | %0.10      |
| Incompliant                 | 1      | %0.05      |
| Died                        | 1      | %0.05      |
| Total                       | 1906   | % 100      |



### Detainees' Visits:

Out of 4,600 Palestinians detained in the Israeli prisons, about 190 are from the Gaza Strip; 25 of them are sentenced to life imprisonment. The Israeli authorities prevent the families of detainees from the Gaza Strip from visiting their sons in the Israeli prisons as the visitation program is unjustifiably suspended for long periods. In August, the Israeli authorities allowed 44 family members of Palestinian detainees to visit 26 of them. 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.

### Restrictions on Movement of Goods

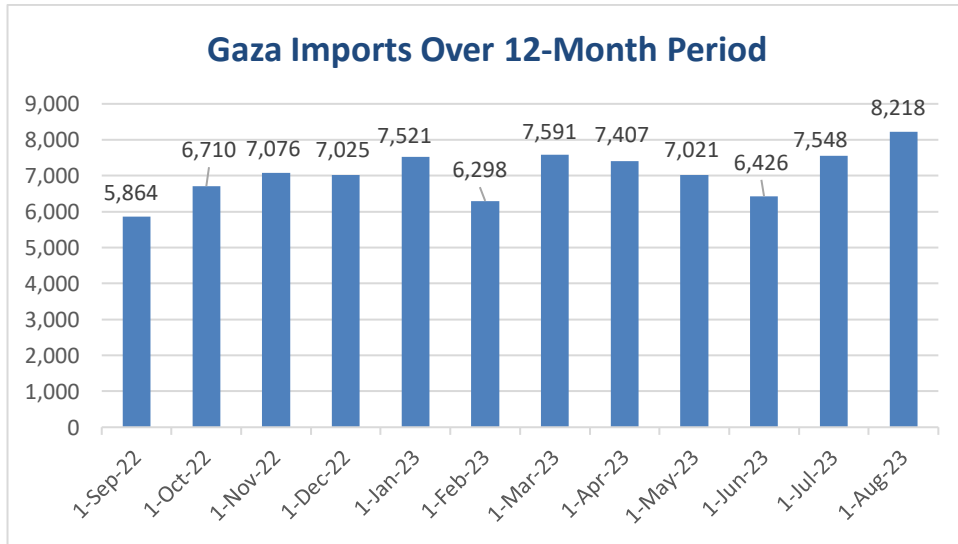
The Israeli authorities continue to impose tightened restrictions on the movement of goods and commodities entering and exiting the Gaza Strip, jeopardizing the Gaza population's economic rights, exacerbating poverty, increasing the rates of unemployment and food insecurity, and undermining opportunities 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.

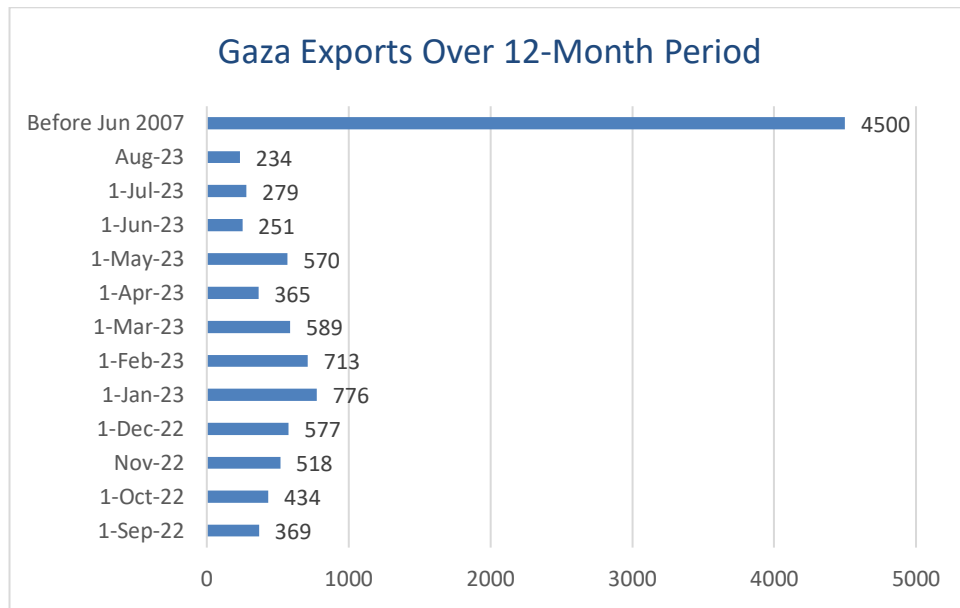
In August, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 8,218 truckloads, including 300 humanitarian aid truckloads, 644 fuel trucks and 7274 truckloads of goods for the private sector as reported by the Ministry of National Economy in Gaza. During the reporting period, 5,024 truckloads entered via Rafah Crossing, including 541 fuel truckloads and 4483 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 August, in a limited exception, the Israeli authorities allowed the export of 234 truckloads via Kerem Shalom crossing (114 to the West Bank, 120 to Israel, and no trucks were exported abroad) according to the Ministry of National Economy. Those truckloads included agricultural products, scrap, clothes, fish, and chips. Also, 158 scraps truckloads were exported through Rafah crossing. The exports during the reporting period constitute only 5.2% of Gaza's total monthly exports before closure was imposed in June 2007 (4500 truckloads/month).



## Movement at Rafah Border Crossing

According to the Crossing and Borders Authority in Gaza, in August, 19,608 persons traveled from the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing while 14,418 persons returned to the Strip. Moreover, the Egyptian authorities denied travel of 314 persons. Travelers returning to the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing suffer from prolonged, recurrent, and unjustified searches.



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