



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

State of the Gaza Strip Border Crossings

01 – 31 July 2023

The Gaza Strip has been under an illegal and inhuman closure imposed by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) on the Gaza Strip for the 17th consecutive year. As a result, Israeli authorities isolate more than 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza from the world with their full control over the Gaza Strip's crossing¹, and restrictions on the movement of goods and individuals from and into the Gaza Strip.

Also, Israel continues to restrict the movement of individuals at the Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing and violates the Gaza population's right to movement, in blatant breach of international humanitarian law that obliges the occupying power to respect the rights of the occupied territory population, including their right to freedom of movement. Moreover, the Israeli authorities continue to impose tightened restrictions on the entry of so-called "dual-use items," * which are about 61 essential items², including hundreds of goods and commodities necessary for the population's lives.

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%: 70% among youth³, while more than half of the population lives in poverty as the poverty rate recorded 60%⁴, and more than 68.5% of the Gaza population

¹ Beit Hanoun "Erez" Crossing in the northern Gaza Strip is designated for the movement of individuals and is under the 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.

* 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.

² A list of prohibited items:

https://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/LegalDocuments/procedures/merchandise/170ar_full_list.pdf

³ 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>

⁴ 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>



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suffers from food insecurity⁵. Additionally, 80% of the Gaza population relies on international aid⁶.

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 only allowing 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) July data, Israeli authorities allowed 67,609 Palestinians to exit the Gaza Strip via "Erez" Crossing, while 50,492 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 and the holders of economic needs permits constituted 91.9 % of the total number of travelers via the crossing in July, and most of them are daily workers. Additionally, the percentage of patients and their companions traveled via the crossing reached (i.e., 5.4%) of the total number of travelers.

Group	Exit	Entry
Merchants	60246	43408

⁵ 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

⁶ 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



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Businesspersons	538	377
Personal needs	1394	1404
Patients	1972	1725
International organizations	388	528
Arab 1948	367	435
King Hussain Bridge Travel	662	655
Prisoners' visits	82	82
Security interviews	87	91

Restrictions on patients' travel:

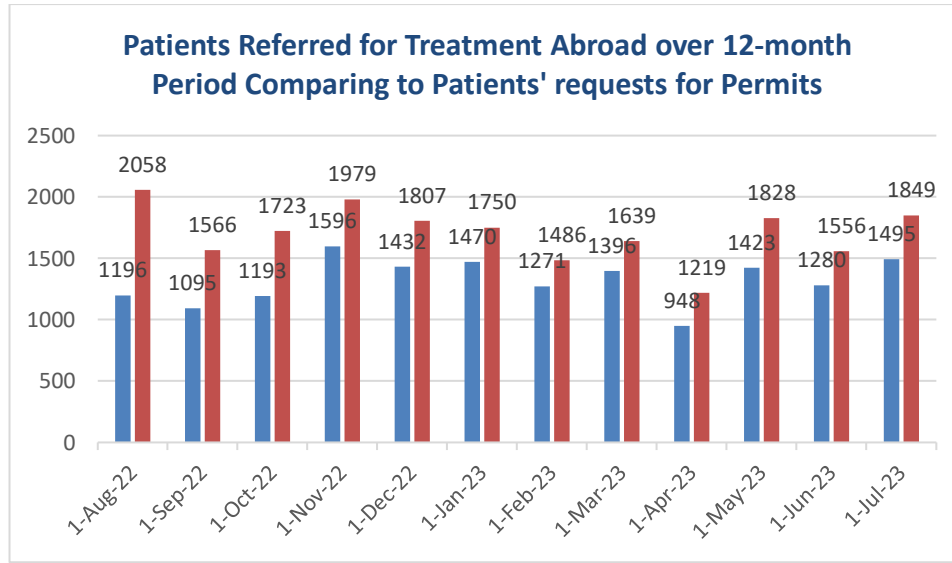
In July, the Israeli authorities obstructed the travel of 354 out of 1,849 patients referred for treatment in hospitals in Israel or the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, (i.e., 19.14% of the total permit applications), and allowed the travel of 1,495 patients.

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 July, the Israeli authorities rejected 12 permit requests for security reasons; did not reply to 129 requests; delayed replies (allegedly under study) to 117 permits, asked 83 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 July 2023, GACA

Result	Number	Percentage
No reply	129	%6.98
Under study	117	%6.33
Approved	1495	%80.85
Rejected	12	%0.65
Waiting for an interview	83	%4.49
New appointment	2	%0.11

Treatment available locally	5	%0.27
Hospital cancellation	1	%0.05
New medical report	3	%0.16
Change companion	2	%0.11
Total	1849	%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 was unjustifiably suspended for long periods. In July, the Israeli authorities allowed 82 family members of Palestinian detainees to visit 51 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



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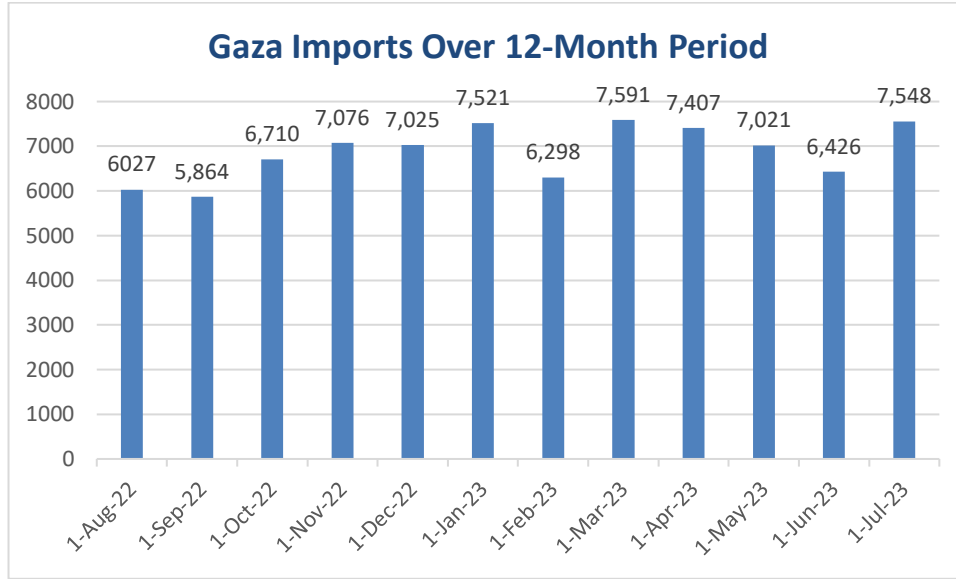
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The Israeli authorities continue to impose tightened restrictions on the movement of goods and commodities entering and exiting the Gaza Strip, deteriorating the Gaza population's economic rights, increasing the rates of unemployment, poverty, and food insecurity, and undermining opportunities for investment and development of the Gaza Strip economy. This constitutes 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

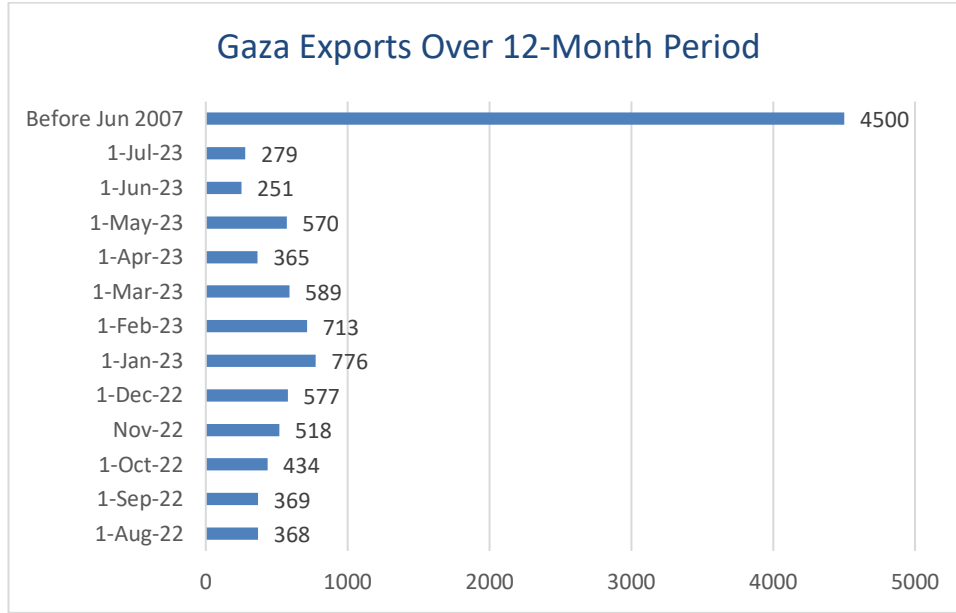
The Israeli authorities continued to impose tightened restrictions on the list of items classified as "dual-use." The dual-use items include 61 types and hundreds of goods and commodities that are essential to the life of the population. Imposing these restrictions caused infrastructure, economy, healthcare, 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 July, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 7,548 truckloads via Kerem Shalom crossing, including 357 humanitarian aid truckloads, 476 fuel trucks and 6715 truckloads of goods for the private sector as reported by the Ministry of National Economy in Gaza. During the reporting period, 3,686 truckloads entered via Rafah Crossing, including 559 fuel truckloads and 3127 truckloads of goods for the private sector.



Gaza Strip exports:

IOF impose tightened restrictions on Gaza exports to the West Bank, including Jerusalem, or Israel and the world. In July, in a limited exception, the Israeli authorities allowed the export of 279 truckloads (135 to the West Bank and 144 to Israel) according to the Ministry of National Economy. Those truckloads included agricultural products, scraps, clothes, fish, and chips. Also, 127 scraps truckloads were exported through Rafah crossing. The exports during the reporting period constitute only 6.2% 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 July, 14,988 persons traveled from the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing while 19,944 persons returned to the Strip. Moreover, the Egyptian authorities denied travel of 216 persons. Travelers returning to the Gaza Strip via Rafah Crossing suffer from prolonged, recurrent, and unjustified searches.