



المركز الفلسطيني لحقوق الإنسان PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

State of the Gaza Strip's Border Crossings 01 – 30 June 2013

This report documents the impact of the ongoing Israel-imposed siege on Palestinian civilians, which affects their economic and social conditions. This report also reveals the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip during the last week of June and shortages of most commodities due to the decrease of imports to the Gaza Strip through the tunnels on the Palestinian-Egyptian borders. Thus, this report reveals again the real conditions of the Gaza population under the Israeli closure that has been imposed on all Gaza's crossings for 6 years. It refutes Israel's claims that it has eased the closure of the Gaza Strip. The following are the most significant developments relevant to Gaza's border crossings during the reporting period 01 – 30 June 2013:

- In June, the Gaza strip witnessed a lack of most commodities as well as running out of most fuel types and some construction materials. Statistics documented by the Palestinian Centre for Human rights (PCHR) show that the materials allowed by Israel to be entered via Israeli crossings do not meet the minimum needs of the Gaza Strip. In June, Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 5,424 truckloads, an average of 181 truckloads daily. The number of truckloads allowed in constitutes 31.7% of the number of truckloads which used to be entered into the Gaza Strip before the closure.
- PCHR's statistics indicate that most of the materials entered were of a consumptive nature while the importation of some kinds of raw materials is still banned. The Gaza Strip's population has depended on goods coming via the tunnels on the Palestinian-Egyptian border in order to fill their basic needs over the past years. Imposing restrictions on imports to the Gaza Strip via tunnels revealed the Israeli fake claims that the closure of the Gaza Strip was eased.
- In June, most of fuel kinds ran out; the cooking gas ran out in all the Gaza stations. As a result, piles of empty gas cylinders are currently being left at gas stations waiting to be refilled due to the limited quantities allowed by Israel into the Gaza Strip. In June, the amount of gas allowed into the Gaza Strip is 3,160 tonnes only, an average of 105.3 tonnes per day. This amount represents 52.6% of the daily needs of the people, which is 200 tonnes.
- Stopping the importation of diesel and benzene via tunnels led to their lack in the gas stations resulting in closing most of them as a number of gas stations still depend on the limited quantities allowed in by Israel. In June, Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 371,000 liters of diesel and 578,800 liters of benzene. These quantities are considered very limited compared to Gaza's needs, which reached 350,000 liters of diesel and 120,000 liters of benzene per day before the Israeli decision in November 2007 to decrease the quantity of fuel entered to the Gaza Strip.
- The Gaza Strip witnessed a significant rise in prices of all construction materials and a lack of some in the markets because their entry via tunnels was banned. According to information available to PCHR, the amount of cement and construction steel allowed into the Gaza Strip in June was very limited and did not meet the actual needs of the Gaza Strip. Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 6,574 tonnes of cement and 504 tonnes of construction steel, and these quantities do not exceed 0.8% and 0.9% of the monthly needs



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of the Gaza Strip. Due to the ban on the entry of construction materials, the people of Gaza have depended over the past years in their construction projects on construction materials entered from Egypt via tunnels. Moreover, banning the entry of construction materials via tunnels has resulted in stopping construction projects, including residential buildings, established in the Gaza Strip.

- Israeli authorities continued to impose an almost-complete ban on the exportation of the Gaza Strip's products to the West Bank, Israel and the outside world. In a limited exception, they allowed the exportation of 3 truckloads in June while the Gaza Strip's exports used to reach 150 truckloads per day before the complete closure was imposed on the Gaza Strip.
- During the reporting period, Israel completely closed the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing for 8 days, preventing the travel of patients who are permitted to travel to hospitals in Israel and/or Jerusalem and the West Bank for medical treatment. Israel partially opened the crossing during the remaining days. 899 patients of 1,116 patients who submitted urgent applications for medical treatment were allowed to travel via the Beit Hanoun crossing, a daily average of less than 24 patients, knowing that the daily average of patients allowed to travel used to reach 50 before 2007. Israel obstructed the travel of 180 patients; one of whom was prevented due to security reasons, 37 of them were asked to change the companions and 27 others were forced to wait for a new appointment while the rest 116 patients are awaiting an Israeli reply following their security interviews.
- The Beit Hanoun crossing was closed to business people for 15 days. During the reporting period, 1,759 traders were allowed to travel via the crossing, a daily average of less than 59 traders, which constitutes 39% of the average daily number of traders allowed to travel via the crossing prior to June 2007 (150 traders). In the same period, Israel allowed 24 journalists, 10 diplomats, and 554 workers of international organisations to enter the Gaza Strip. The procedures for entry to the Gaza Strip are complicated, resulting in prolonged waiting periods, sometimes up to several days.
- Israeli authorities allowed 230 members of the prisoners' families to visit 115 of their sons in the Israeli jails. During the reporting period, the number of family visits was very limited compared to the number of visits that the agreement reached between the detainees and Israeli authorities in May 2012 as it allowed 2 visits, each of which include 2 persons, for each detainee per month. This means 1,760 members of the detainees' families are allowed to visit 440 detainees twice per month (around 880 per month).
- During the reporting period, 26,325 persons were allowed to travel outside the Gaza Strip via the Rafah Crossing Border and 30,284 others entered the Gaza Strip. 1,620 persons were prevented from travelling by the Egyptian authorities.

Karm Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) Crossing

During the reporting period, Israel closed Karm Abu Salem, which is the sole commercial crossing, for 11 days (36.6% of the total period). On the days it was open, Israel allowed the entry of 5,424 truckloads, an average of 181 truckloads daily, representing 31.7% of the number of truckloads that was allowed into the Gaza Strip before the total closure was imposed in June 2007 (570 truckloads daily).¹

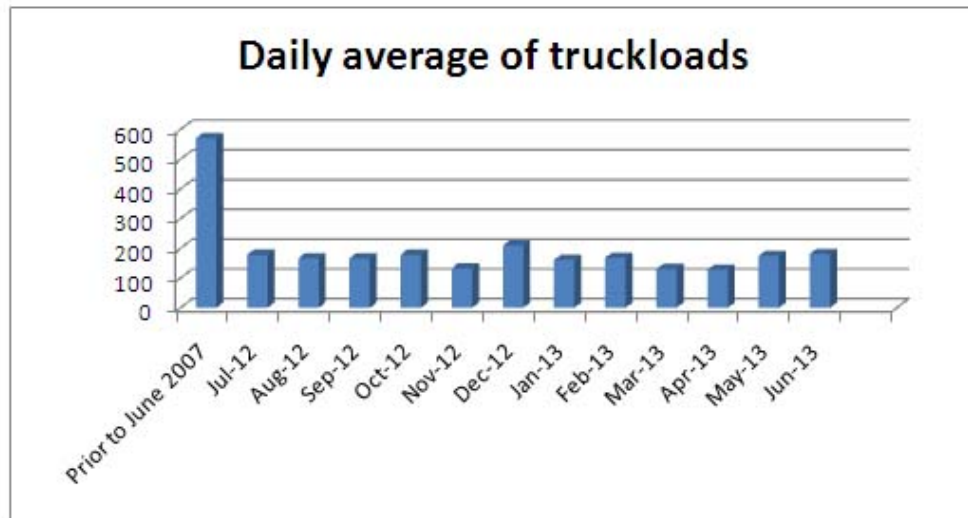
¹ Source: The Palestinian Ministry of National Economy in Gaza.



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Number of truckloads allowed into the Gaza Strip over the past 12 months and percentage of needs met

Description	Daily average of truckloads	Percentage of needs met
Prior to June 2007	570	100%
July 2012	178	31.18%
August 2012	166	29.1%
September 2012	166	29.1%
October 2012	178	31.2%
November 2012	133	23.3%
December 2012	209	36.7%
January 2013	161	28.2%
February 2013	168	29.4%
March 2013	130	19.7%
April 2013	128	22.4%
May 2013	174	30.5%
June 2013	181	31.7%





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The above data confirms that the Karm Abu Salem crossing does not meet the Gaza Strip's needs. The population's needs were previously met through the use of four commercial crossings. The data also refutes Israel's claims that the closure has been eased and that the number of truckloads allowed into Gaza has doubled. The average imports are low and do not meet the needs of Gaza's population, and most imports are consumables. The entry of various types of raw materials continues to be prohibited, with the exception of very limited types that are imported under complicated procedures.

Israel has continued to impose a near-total ban on exports to markets in the West Bank, Israel and other countries, excluding limited amounts of agricultural products. As an exception, during the reporting period, Israel allowed the exportation of 16 tonnes of tomatoes, 360 tonnes of mints and 880 truckloads of garlic.

The closure of al-Mentar (Karni) crossing on 02 March 2011,² and the destruction of its facilities, is a further obstacle to the movement of goods in and out of the Gaza Strip. The location of the Karm Abu Salem crossing in the extreme southeast of the Gaza Strip has resulted in increased transportation costs, leading to an increase in the prices of imports and extra financial burdens for exporters and importers. Mr Jihad Salim, Secretary of the Association of Road Transport in the Gaza Strip, stated that the cost of transporting a container of goods from the Ashdod Port to the Gaza Strip (a distance of 70 kilometres) is 10,400 NIS, while the cost of transporting the same container from China to the Port of Ashdod is 6,600 NIS (a distance is 9,000 kilometres).

• Entry of Vehicles into the Gaza Strip

Israel has continued to impose restrictions on the entry of vehicles to the Gaza Strip, although they increased the number vehicles allowed into the Gaza Strip to 80 weekly. In June, Israel allowed the entry of only 270 vehicles. As a result, vehicle prices have been rising compared with prices in the West Bank. Moreover, the decreased number of cars entered to the Gaza Strip is due to the complicated Israeli procedures and the frequent closure of the Karm Abu Salem crossing.

• Fuel

During the reporting period, the Gaza Strip's cooking gas crisis has continued for the 6th consecutive month as the whole quantities of gas ran out of the Gaza stations, whose number is 22 gas stations. Israel prevented the entry of cooking gas into the Gaza Strip for 17 days; for the remaining 14 days, Israel allowed the entry of limited quantities. The amount of gas allowed into

² Al-Mentar crossing was established in 1995. According to the Crossings Agreement of November 2005, the operational capacity of this crossing allows the daily export of 400 truckloads of vegetables, fruits and commercial and industrial products, as well as the daily import of 600 truckloads of goods for the Gazan population. The crossing is located inside the main industrial zone of the Gaza Strip, which was destroyed by Israel's forces during their offensive on the Gaza Strip between December 2008 and January 2009. This location facilitated the movement of imports and exports. Al-Mentar crossing was, before its closure on 02 March 2011, the major commercial crossing in the Gaza Strip. Al-Mentar crossing had an operational capacity amounting to 400 truckloads daily, so 75% of the Gaza Strip's needs used to be imported via this crossing.



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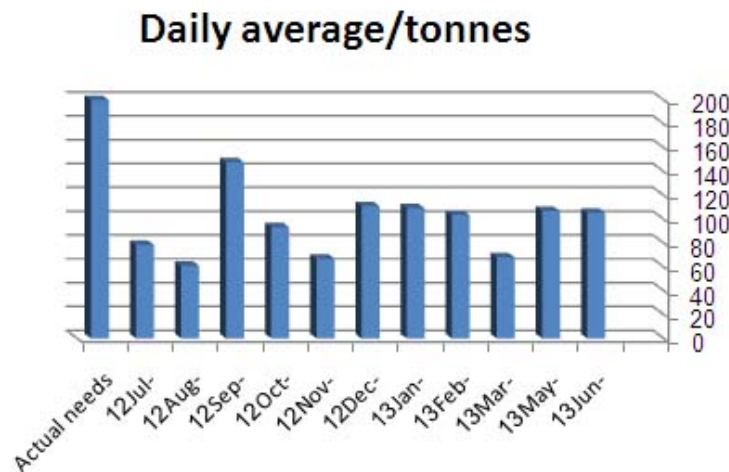
the Gaza Strip was 3,160 tonnes, an average of 105.3 tonnes per day. According to the General Petroleum Corporation in Gaza (EGPC), this amount represents 52.6% of the daily needs of the people, which is 200 tonnes.

Mr Mohammed al-‘Abadlah, Member of the Petrol Station Association in the Gaza Strip, said that the gas crisis prevailing in Gaza goes is due to the frequent closure of Karm Abu Salem crossing and the small daily amount of gas allowed in is around 100 tonnes, which does not meet the actual needs of the people of Gaza.

Quantities of gas allowed in during the reporting period compared with the actual needs of the population of the Gaza Strip

Month	Daily average/tonnes	Percentage of needs met
June 2013	105.3	52.6%
May 2013	106.8	53%
March 2013	68	34%
February 2013	103.6	51.8%
January 2013	109.2	54.6%
December 2012	111	55.5%
November 2012	67	33.5%
October 2012	93.3	49.2%
September 2012	147.6	73.1%
August 2012	60.9	34.4%
July 2012	78.4	39.2%
Actual needs	200	100%

Source: EGPC in Gaza.





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In the same context and during the reporting period, Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 371,000 liters of diesel and 578,800 liters of benzene. It should be mentioned that these are very limited quantities compared to the needs of Gaza people, which reached 350,000 liters of diesel and 120,000 liters of benzene per day before the Israeli decision in November 2007 to decrease the amount of benzene and diesel, which is currently smuggled via tunnels on the Palestinian-Egyptian border.

• Construction Materials

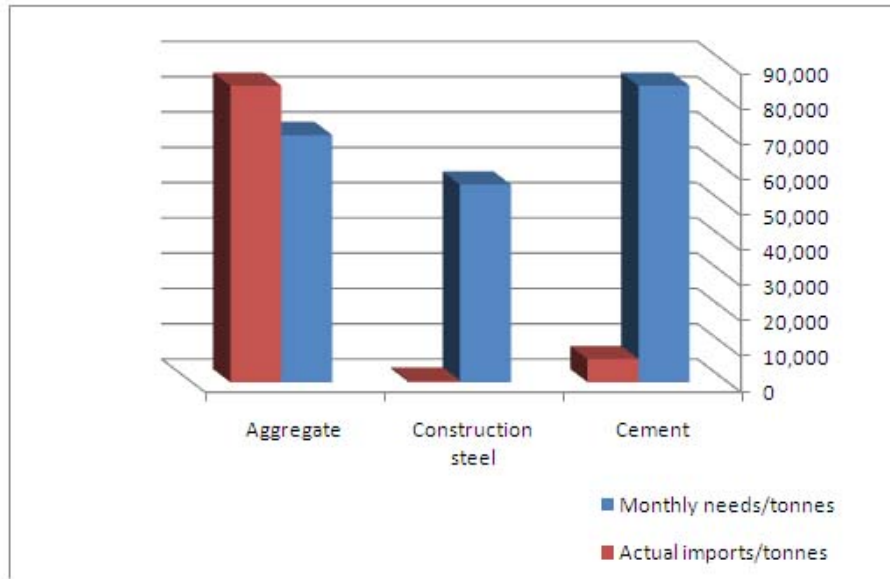
Israel has been imposing a complete ban on the entry of construction materials into the Gaza Strip for over 6 years. However, they have agreed to allow the entry of limited quantities for international organizations. On 31 December 2012, Israel allowed the entry of construction materials for the private sector, but on the ground they are still imposing a ban on importing cement and construction steel and only allowing the entry of construction aggregate for the private sector. According to sources in the Ministry of National Economy, Israel allowed the entry of approximately 6,574 tonnes of cement and 504 tonnes of construction steel for international organizations. These limited quantities amount to 0.78% and 0.9% respectively of the monthly needs of the Gaza Strip population. Israeli authorities allowed the entry of limited quantities of construction materials for use by international organizations in Gaza, and none were entered for the private sector. They also allowed the entry of limited quantities of tar, construction materials, plumbing tools, ceramics and marbles. During the reporting period, they allowed the entry of 84,400 tonnes of construction aggregate. They also allowed the entry of limited quantities of tar, construction materials, plumbing tools, ceramics and marbles.

In addition, for two years, the Gaza Strip population has depended on the construction materials smuggled through tunnels at the Gaza-Egypt border. Such smuggled materials are not always available in the markets and they are not of a good quality.

Quantities of construction materials entered into the Gaza Strip compared with actual needs in June

Description	Cement	Construction steel	Aggregate
Monthly needs/tonnes	84,000	56,000	70,000
Actual imports/tonnes	6,574	504	84,000
Percentage	0.78%	0.9%	120%

Source: GDP in Gaza.



Crossings Designated to the Movement of Persons

- **Beit Hanoun (Erez) Crossing**

Israel has closed the Beit Hanoun crossing to the movement of Palestinian civilians, with the exception of limited categories: patients suffering from serious illnesses; Arabs holding Israeli IDs; international journalists; workers of international humanitarian organisations; business people; and persons travelling via al-Karama crossing. These categories travel through the crossing under very complicated procedures. According to the Civil Liaison Office in the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Israel closed the crossing completely for 5 days during the reporting period.

According to the Ministry of Health in the Gaza Strip, 1,165 applications were submitted by patients requesting permission to travel via the Beit Hanoun crossing during the reporting period. They permitted applications of 985 patients to travel for medical treatment, an average of less than 24 patients daily. Israel obstructed the travel of 180 patients; one of whom was prevented due to security reasons, 37 of them were asked to change the companions and 27 others were forced to wait for a new appointment while the rest 116 patients are awaiting an Israeli reply following their security interviews.

Israel has also continued to impose severe restrictions on international journalists, diplomats and workers of international humanitarian organisations in the Gaza Strip. During the reporting period, 24 international journalists, 15 diplomats and 554 workers of international humanitarian organisations were allowed to enter Gaza, often under complicated procedures, resulting in prolonged delays for many of those allowed to enter. During the reporting period, the crossing



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was completely closed to traders for 9 days. On the days it was open, 1,759 traders were allowed to travel via the crossing, an average of 60 traders daily. This is a sharp decline in comparison with the number of business people who were allowed to travel via the crossing prior to June 2007, when 150 traders used to be allowed to travel via the crossing daily.³

• Prisoners' Visits

During the reporting period, Israeli authorities allowed 230 family members of detainees to visit their relatives in the Israeli prisons, and they were divided into 3 groups. The first group was on 03 June 2013, when 98 family members, including 9 children, were allowed to visit 48 detainees in Nafha prison. The second one was on 11 June 2013, when 37 family members, including 9 children, were allowed to visit 18 detainees in Eichel prison. The third one was on 17 June 2013, 95 family members, including 20 children, were allowed to visit 49 detainees in Nafha prison.

The number of visitors is limited compared to the number of visits allowed under the prisoners' deal between Palestinian prisoners and Israeli authorities. According to the agreement, each prisoner has the right to family visitation twice a month. As there are 440 prisoners in the Israeli jails, the number of visits reaches 880 monthly. However, the Israeli forces allowed only 84 visits. This is also applicable to the number of family members who are allowed to visit their sons; the number of these members mounted to 127, whereas, the number should include 1,760 persons in case each prisoner is visited by 2 members of his family twice a month.

The families were subjected to arbitrary practices, obstacles and immoral and degrading treatment. They also suffered from the Israeli provocative measures and the continuous threats to cancel their visitations in the future if they did not respond to the Israeli orders.

It should be noted that the Israeli authorities determines the visitor who is allowed to visit the prisoner, and those authorized are limited to the prisoners' father, mother or wife and one or two of them only are allowed to visit. Furthermore, in the case either one is incapable of visiting (due to sickness, old age or death), the Israeli authorities does not allow the change of the visitors' name; thus, the prisoner loses the visitation right. In the same context, Israeli authorities continue to deprive children from visiting their fathers in Israeli jails, and prisoners' families are not allowed to bring them personal items, including clothes and food.

• Rafah International Crossing Point

There were significant improvements at Rafah International Crossing Point in February. Nonetheless, hundreds of Palestinians were unable to travel or experienced prolonged delays, due to the restrictions that are imposed on the movements of young men (18-40 years old) who are not included in the facilitations that were declared by the Egyptian authorities at the Rafah International Crossing Point at the end of May last year. According to information of the commission of borders and crossings, 26,325 citizens were allowed to travel outside the Gaza

³ Source: The Civil Affairs Department – Gaza.



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Strip, 30,284 entered the Gaza Strip, whilst 1,620 others were prevented from travelling by the Egyptian Authorities.

Recommendations

PCHR calls upon the international community, particularly the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, to:

1. Exert effective pressure on Israel to compel it to open all of Gaza's crossings, both those used for commercial purposes and those used for the movement of civilians, to allow the civilian population of the Gaza Strip to reconstruct civilian property destroyed during Israel's latest offensive on Gaza and to enable them to enjoy their fundamental civil and political rights, as well as their economic, social and cultural rights;
2. Promptly and urgently intervene to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and put an end to the deterioration of living conditions across the Gaza Strip;
3. Compel Israel to put an end to measures of collective punishment against the civilian population of the Gaza Strip, including the tightening of the closure of Gaza's border crossings;
4. Remind the State of Israel, the Occupying Power, of its obligations towards the civilians of the Gaza Strip, under Article 55 of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, which stipulates that: "To the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring 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. The Occupying Power may not requisition foodstuffs, articles or medical supplies available in the occupied territory, and then only if the requirements of the civilian population have been taken into account." The High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention must fulfil their obligation under Article 1 of the Convention by ensuring the implementation of the Convention's provisions by the State of Israel, in order to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip; and
5. Call on the Egyptian authorities to take more measures to facilitate movement at the Rafah International Crossing Point, in particular by increasing the number of travellers and opening hours, and to find a solution for the thousands of Palestinians wishing to travel via the crossing, particularly during the summer when the number of travellers doubles.