



State of the Gaza Strip's border crossings 01 – 30 June 2014

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, including the shortages of most commodities due to the decrease of imports to the Gaza Strip through the tunnels on the Palestinian-Egyptian border. Thus, this report exposes the real conditions of the Gaza population and the Israeli closure imposed on all Gaza's crossings for 7 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 2014:

- During the reporting period, the Gaza strip witnessed a lack of most commodities due to restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on the only commercial crossing in the Gaza Strip, Karm Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom), as it was closed for 11 days (36.6%). During this period, Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 4,259 truckloads, an average of 142 truckloads daily. The number of truckloads allowed to be entered constitutes 24.9% of the number of truckloads which used to be entered into the Gaza Strip before the closure (570 truckloads daily).
- The Gaza Strip witnessed a significant rise in prices of all construction materials and lack of some of them in the markets due to restrictions imposed on their entry for international projects and being banned for the private sector. In June, Israel allowed the entry of limited quantities of construction materials: 5,411 tons of cement, 14,907 tons of construction aggregate; and 247 tons of construction steel, which constitute around 4.6%, 21.2% and 0.44% of the monthly needs of the Gaza Strip respectively. These quantities were entered for projects of international organizations.
- The cooking gas crisis has continued in all gas stations, and 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. During the reporting period, the amount of gas allowed into Gaza was 4,439 tons only, an average of 147.9 tons per day. This amount represents 73.9% of the actual daily needs of the population, which is 200 tons.
- During the reporting period, Israel obstructed the travel of 408 patients permitted to get some medical treatment at the Israeli hospitals or at hospitals in the West Bank; 58 of whom were prevented due to security reasons, 50 of them were asked to change the companions and 16 others were forced to wait for a new appointment while the remaining 284 patients are awaiting an Israeli reply following their security interviews. According to the Ministry of Health, the number of applications presented on behalf of Palestinians patients referred to hospitals in Israel or the West Bank was 1,842, but Israeli authorities issued permits to 1,434 applications only and obstructed the travel of the rest for different reasons.
- The Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing was closed to business people for 19 days. During the reporting period, 1,130 traders were allowed to travel via the crossing, a daily average of less than 37 traders a day, which constitutes 24.6% of the number of traders allowed to travel via the crossing daily prior to June 2007 (150 traders). In the same period, Israel allowed the entry of 679 persons for personal needs, 467 workers of international organizations into the Gaza Strip, and 54 travelers via al-Karama (Allenby) crossing under some complicated



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security conditions. The procedures for entering the Gaza Strip are complicated, resulting in prolonged waiting periods, sometimes up to several days.

- Israeli authorities allowed 149 family members of prisoners to visit their relatives in Israeli prisons. The number of family visits is very limited in this period (87 visits) compared to the number of visits allowed under the agreement reached between the detainees and Israeli forces in May 2012 as it allowed 2 visits, each of which include 2 persons, for each detainee per month. This means 1,760 persons of the detainees' families are allowed to visit 440 detainees twice per month (around 880 visits per month).
- During the reporting period, Rafah International Crossing Point was closed for 24 days as a result of the Egyptian internal situation and the deteriorating security situation in north Sinai. This unveiled the reality of the situation in the Gaza Strip under the policy of collective punishment and the Israeli closure imposed over all border crossings, especially Beit Hanoun crossing that has been closed for 7 years.
- The closure of Rafah International Crossing Point negatively affected the Gaza Strip's population. In the Gaza Strip, thousands of Palestinians, including hundreds of patients, students and holders of residencies in other countries, were denied travelling abroad. When the crossing point was partially opened for 6 days, 4,359 Palestinians, including 2,777 persons wishing to perform small pilgrimage, travelled abroad via Rafah International Crossing Point, 4,977 Palestinians, most of whom were persons who performed small pilgrimage, returned to the Gaza Strip and 184 were returned to the Gaza Strip by Egyptian authorities.

Commercial crossings

Commercial crossings were established to provide the Gaza Strip with manufactured or raw materials and to export the products of the Gaza Strip to Israel, the West Bank or abroad. The closure of al-Mentar (Karni) crossing, the demolition of its facilities in early January 2012 and using Karm Abu Salem instead created more obstacles for the limited movement of imports and exports. In addition, the expenses of transportation increased causing a rise in the prices of imports. It was also an extra financial burden for the Gaza exporters because of the location of the crossing in the far southeast of the Gaza Strip.¹

Karm Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) Crossing

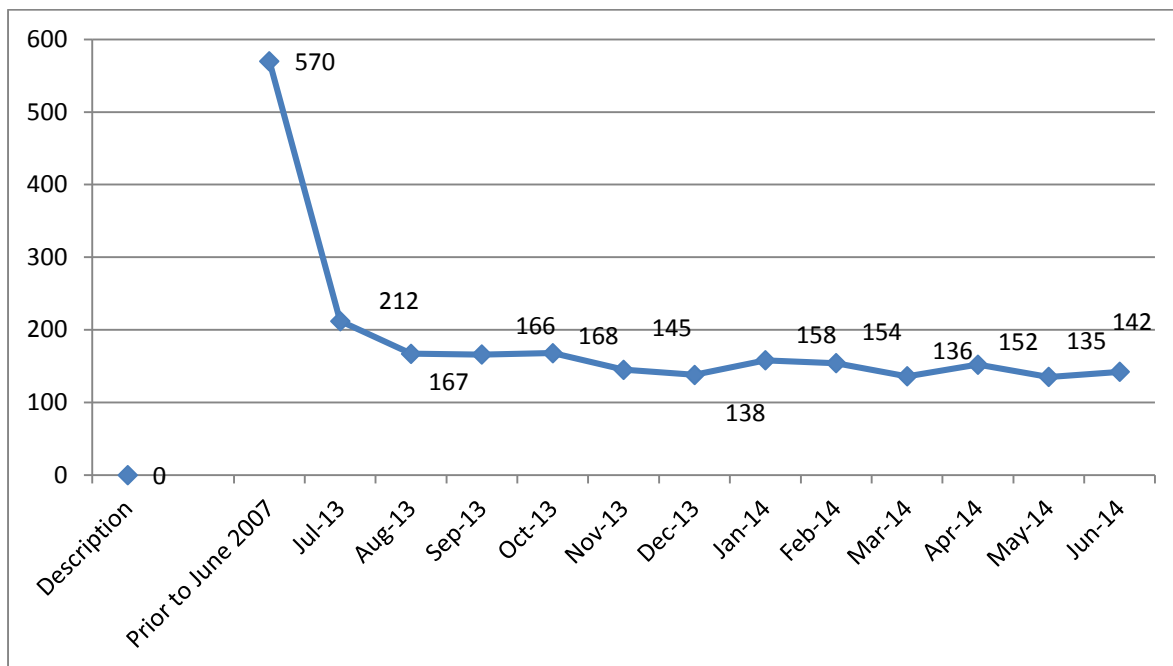
During the reporting period, Israel closed Karm Abu Salem, which is the sole commercial crossing, for 11 days (36.6% of the total period). On the days it was open, Israel allowed the entry of 4,259 truckloads, an average of 142 truckloads daily, representing 24.9% of the number of truckloads that was allowed into the Gaza Strip before the total closure was imposed in June 2007 (570 truckloads daily).²

¹ The Israeli authorities have tightened the closure over the Gaza Strip to make Karm Abu Salem crossing the main and only crossing in the Gaza Strip in spite of its low operational capacity. Moreover, the Israeli authorities closed Sofa crossing, which was designated to the entry of construction materials in November 2008 and transferred the limited quantities of construction materials to be entered into Gaza also via Karm Abu Salem crossing. On 04 January 2010, the Israeli authorities closed Nahal Oz crossing, which was designated for the entry of fuel into Gaza, and transferred that fuel to be entered via Karm Abu Salem crossing as well. On 02 March 2011, the Israeli authorities closed al-Muntar (Karni) crossing, which was the largest and best equipped commercial crossing. 75% of the Gaza Strip supplies used to enter via Karni crossing that had the capacity of around 400 truckloads daily.

² According to the Ministry of National Economy in Gaza.

The 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 2013	212	37.2%
August 2013	167	29.3%
September 2013	166	29.2%
October 2013	168	29.4%
November 2013	145	25.4%
December 2013	138	24.4%
January 2014	158	27.7%
February 2014	154	27%
March 2014	136	23.8%
April 2014	152	26.6%
May 2014	135	23.6%
June 2014	142	24.9%



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, in addition to the fact that 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.



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• Imports

- 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.³ Israel allowed the entry of 5,411 tons of cement, 14,907 tons of construction aggregate and 247 tons of construction steel that constitutes less than 6.4%, 21.2% and 0.44% of the monthly needs. All these quantities were entered for international organizations and a limited quantity of construction aggregate allowed in was for the private sector. Furthermore, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of construction supplies, plumbing tools, ceramics and marbles.

Table comparing the quantities of construction materials allowed into the Gaza Strip and the actual needs in June 2014

Description	Cement	Steel	Aggregate
Monthly needs/tons	84,000	56,000	70,000
Actual imports	5,411	247	14,907
Percentage	6.4%	0.44%	21.2%

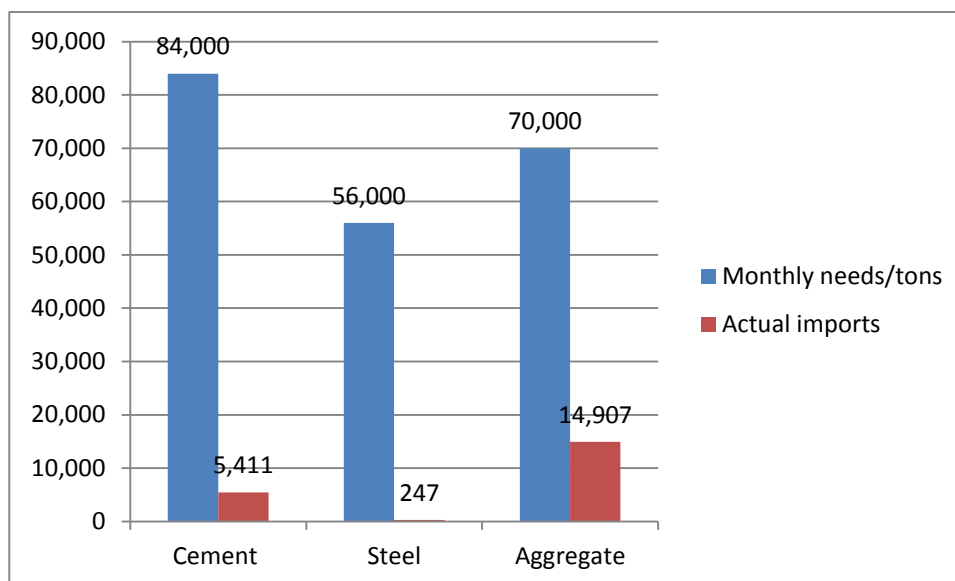
Source: Ministry of National Economy in the Gaza Strip.

³ In June 2007, Israel stopped the entry of construction materials for the private sector. In June 2010, Israel allowed the entry of limited quantities for international organizations. On 31 December 2013, Israeli authorities declared that construction materials for the private sector were allowed to enter, but in reality the import ban has still been imposed on cement and construction steel, while construction aggregate is allowed only in for the private sector. On 17 September 2013, Israeli authorities declared they would allow the entry of 20 truckloads of cement (800 tons), 10 truckloads of construction steel (400 tons) and 40 truckloads of construction aggregate (1,600 tons) daily. These quantities constitute 20%, 33% and 26% of the actual needs of the Gaza Strip. However, Israel has not even been able to remain committed to the entry of these minimum quantities to the Gaza Strip. In a sudden decision taken by the Israeli authorities, on 13 October 2013, a total ban was imposed on the entry of all types of construction materials in the Gaza Strip for a period of 2 months. As a result, construction projects were hampered and other infrastructure and constructions projects stopped. On 10 December 2013, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of limited quantities of construction materials. According to the Ministry of National Economy in Gaza, the quantities allowed into Gaza were very limited and did not meet the minimal needs.



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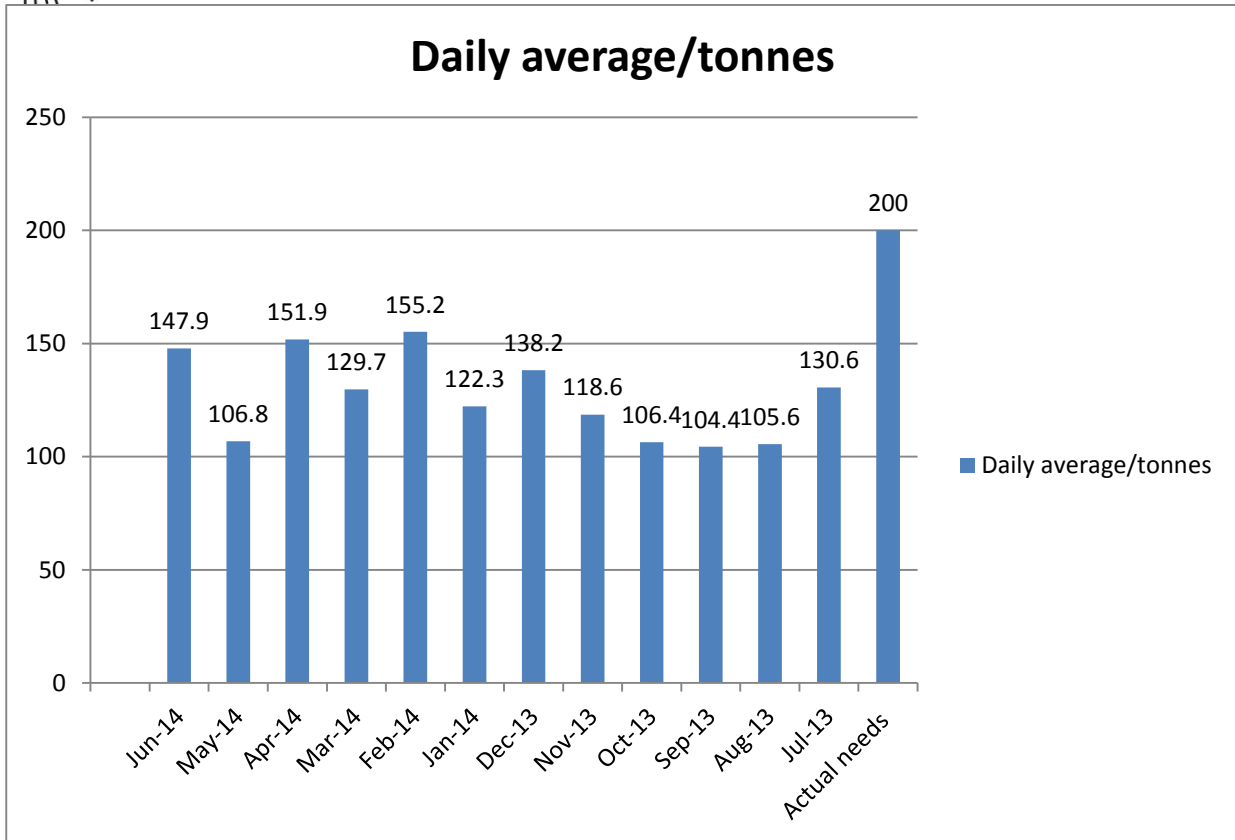
• Fuel

During the reporting period, Israel prevented the entry of cooking gas into the Gaza Strip for 11 days; for the remaining days, Israel allowed the entry of limited quantities. The amount of gas allowed in was 4,439 tons, an average of 147.9 tons per day. According to the General Petroleum Corporation in Gaza (EGPC), this amount represents 73.9% of the daily needs of the people, which is 200 tons.

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 2014	147.9	73.9%
May 2014	106.8	78.3%
April 2014	151.9	75.9%
March 2014	129.7	64.8%
February 2014	155.2	77.6%
January 2014	122.3	61.2%
December 2013	138.2	69.1%
November 2013	118.6	59.3%
October 2013	106.4	53.2%
September 2013	104.4	50.7%
August 2013	105.6	52.8%
July 2013	130.6	65.3%
Actual needs	200	100%

Source: EGPC in Gaza.



In the same context, in June, the Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 8,878,000 liters of diesel, 3,947,000 liters of benzene and 7,182,000 liters of industrial fuel, an average of 295,933 liters of diesel and 131,566 liters of benzene daily. These quantities are very limited compared to the actual needs of the Gaza Strip which reach 400,000 liters of diesel and 200,000 liters of benzene daily.

- **Entry of Vehicles into the Gaza Strip**

Israel has continued to impose restrictions on the entry of vehicles into the Gaza Strip, although they increased the number of vehicles allowed into the Gaza Strip to 80 ones weekly. In March, Israel allowed the entry of only 103 vehicles. As a result, vehicle prices continue to rise compared with prices in the West Bank. Moreover, the reduced number of cars allowed into the Gaza Strip is attributed to the complicated Israeli procedures and the repeated closures of the Karm Abu Salem crossing.

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 organizations; business people; and persons travelling via al-Karama crossing. These categories are allowed to travel



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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 6 days during the reporting period.

Patients

Israel obstructed the travel of 408 patients; 58 of whom were prevented due to security reasons, 50 of them were asked to change the companions and 16 others were forced to wait for a new appointment while the remaining 284 patients are awaiting an Israeli reply following their security interviews. According to the Ministry of Health, the number of applications submitted for medical treatment in hospitals in Israel or the West Bank reached 1,842 ones during the reporting period. The Israeli authorities issued permits for 1,434 and obstructed the travel of the remaining patients under various pretexts.

• Prisoners' Visits

During the reporting period, Israeli authorities allowed 149 family members of detainees to visit 87 of their relatives in Israeli prisons. The visitors were divided into 2 groups as follows:

Family visits to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons in March 2014

Day	Number of visitors	Number of children	Number of visited prisoners	Prison
02 June 2014	77	10	41	Ramon prison
09 June 2014	72	7	46	Nafha prison

The above table shows that the number of visitors is limited compared to the number of visits allowed under the prisoners' deal. According to the agreement, each prisoner has the right to two family visits a month. With 440 prisoners in Israeli prisons, the number of visits should reach 880 monthly. However, the Israeli forces only allowed 87 visits. The same applies to the number of family members who are allowed to visit their relatives; the number of these members mounted to 149, 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 visits in the future if they did not respond to Israeli orders.

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



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- **Traders**

Beit Hanoun crossing was closed to business people for 19 days. During the reporting period, 1,130 traders were allowed to travel via the crossing, a daily average of 37 traders, which is considered a sharp decline compared to the number of traders allowed to travel via the crossing daily prior to June 2007 (150 traders).⁴

- **Other categories**

During the reporting period, Israeli authorities allowed the entry of 679 persons for personal needs and 467 employees of international organizations into the Gaza Strip, and 54 persons travelling via Al-Karama crossing.

Rafah International Crossing Point

During the reporting period, Rafah International Crossing Point was closed for 24 days as a result of the situation in Egypt and the deteriorated conditions in north Sinai. This situation combined with the ongoing policy of collective punishment and closure imposed by Israel exposed the real suffering experienced by the Gaza population. In the Gaza Strip, thousands of Palestinians, including hundreds of patients who are in urgent and serious need of medical treatment abroad, suffer because they are prevented from travelling abroad. Besides, hundreds of workers holding residency permits in different countries abroad were prevented from leaving the Gaza Strip. During the reporting period, 4,359 Palestinians, including 2,777 persons wishing to perform small pilgrimage, traveled abroad; 4,977, most of whom were persons who performed small pilgrimage, returned to the Gaza Strip; and 184 were returned to the Gaza Strip by the Egyptian authorities.

⁴ Source: the Civil Affairs Department in the Gaza Strip.



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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:

- 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;
- Promptly and urgently intervene to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to put an end to the deterioration of living conditions across the Gaza Strip;
- 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;
- 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 fulfill 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
- 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 travelers 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.