

The Gaza Cheat Sheet • Real Data on the Gaza Closure • March 20, 2012

Economic situation

There is no shortage of food in Gaza, but severe poverty has increased over years of closure and because of travel restrictions

- More than 70% of the population currently receives humanitarian aid
- The official unemployment figure is 30.3% (compared to 18.7% in 2000)
- There is a shortage of approximately 250 schools in Gaza, among other things because of a ban on construction materials
- Classes are taught in two and sometimes three shifts.

Access policy

Entrance of goods into Gaza: Kerem Shalom, connecting Gaza to Israel, is the only crossing open for the transfer of goods into and out of the Strip (apart from the tunnels) • Israel allows all goods into the Gaza Strip except for items it defines as dual use and basic construction materials (cement, steel and gravel) • A limited amount of construction materials have been allowed in for international organizations: each month since January 2012, approximately 37% of what entered monthly in the years prior to June 2007 has entered for specific projects.

Export of goods from Gaza: Since June 2007, sale of goods from Gaza to the West Bank and Israel has been prohibited • In November 2011, export of negligible amounts of agricultural produce to Europe began, as in previous seasons, following six months in which no goods left the Strip whatsoever • Even if this year's plan for agricultural export is fully implemented, approximately 100 trucks per month will leave the Strip, compared to a monthly average quantity of 2,000 trucks (5%) before the closure • Officially, Gaza residents are permitted to export furniture and textiles abroad, however demand for these goods outside of the West Bank and Israel is low • Starting in January, limited quantities of goods were permitted to exit Gaza for Jordan and Saudi Arabia, all via Israeli territory • On March 4, 2012, the first truckload of an expected 13-truckload shipment of date bars was permitted to exit Gaza for the West Bank, however no change in policy was announced.

Travel between Gaza and the West Bank: The only crossings through which people are allowed to travel to and from the Gaza Strip are Erez (to Israel) and Rafah (to Egypt) • Israel allows passage through Erez only "in exceptional humanitarian cases, with an emphasis on urgent medical cases" • In practice, over the past few months, Israel has issued more than 3,000 permits to Palestinians per month to travel via Erez • Over half were businesspeople; patients and their companions also accounted for a significant number.

Travel from Gaza to the outside world: Such travel takes place mostly through Egypt • Rafah Crossing is open six days per week for travel of people, with preference for travel given to urgent cases • Since the start of 2012, an average of between 600-700 individuals crossed from Gaza to Egypt each day • Through its control of the Palestinian population registry, Israel has indirect control over the issuance of Palestinian passports, which are required for travel through Rafah.

Access to the Gaza Strip's land, territorial waters and air space: Israel prevents all access to and from the Gaza Strip by sea and air • Fishing is permitted up to three nautical miles from the shore • Israel prevents access to a 300-1500 meter "buffer zone" along the border fence.

Gisha's position

By virtue of Israel's substantial control of the Gaza Strip, international law requires Israel to facilitate normal life in the Strip, including by allowing access for civilians and civilian goods. Alongside this obligation, Israel has the authority to decide by which routes both people and goods enter and leave Gaza and to establish reasonable and proportionate security measures to prevent the transfer of weapons and other military activity.

Accordingly, Gisha's position is that Israel must lift the sweeping restrictions that remain and allow entrance of construction materials, sale of goods to the West Bank and Israel and travel of people between Gaza and the West Bank, subject to individual security inspections.

The opening of the Rafah Crossing by Egypt allows for a welcome improvement in Gaza residents' ability to access the outside world. However, it does not detract from Israel's obligation to allow regular travel between Gaza and the West Bank, which continue to share a single economy, a single education system, a single healthcare system and countless familial, cultural and social ties.