

The Gaza Cheat Sheet • Real Data on the Gaza Closure • August 10, 2016

General information

The area of the Gaza Strip is 365 km² (141 sq. mi) and it is home to 1.88 million people • Israel has enforced a tightened closure on Gaza since 2007 • More than 70% of the population relies on humanitarian aid • 47% of the population suffer from food insecurity • In the 2nd quarter of 2016, the unemployment rate was 41.7%, and 57.6% among young people.

Access policy

Entrance of goods into Gaza: Kerem Shalom, connecting Gaza to Israel, is the only official crossing open for the transfer of goods into and out of the Strip (with the exception of permission given in July to transport cars for sale in Gaza via Erez Crossing) • Israel allows civilian goods to enter Gaza, other than an extensive list of items that it defines as "dual-use", which it claims may be used for military purposes • Cement and steel needed for construction are on the list, as are dozens of items needed for industry and maintenance of civilian infrastructure • According to data from the Shelter Cluster, true to July, about 1,200 of 11,000 housing units that were completely destroyed during Operation Protective Edge have been rebuilt • Cement was almost completely banned from entering Gaza for six weeks this year • Some cement and wood enter the through Rafah, when the crossing is open.

Exit of goods from Gaza: In November 2014, Israel canceled a seven-year ban on the marketing of certain commodities from Gaza in the West Bank, and allowed limited marketing of specific goods in Israel starting in March 2015 • In the first half of 2016, an average of 175 truckloads of goods exited Gaza per month • The monthly average of truckloads of goods exiting Gaza this year was just 16% of what exited monthly before the closure was imposed.

Travel between Gaza and the West Bank: Erez Crossing is the only crossing through which people are permitted to travel between Gaza and Israel, and thus to and from the West Bank • After the hostilities in 2014, Israel changed elements of the criteria for travel from Gaza, which led to a modest increase in the number of exits • Recently, Israel has revoked high numbers of exit permits it had previously given to many Gaza residents, including traders • In July, there was a 15% drop in exits by Palestinians through Erez Crossing compared to the first half of the year • In the first half of 2016, a monthly average of 14,100 exits of Palestinians was recorded at Erez Crossing, almost identical to the monthly average in 2015 (14,276) • The monthly average of exits of Palestinians this year is about 2.8% of the monthly average of exits of Palestinian laborers alone in September 2000, the eve of the Second Intifada, when about half a million exits of laborers were recorded at the crossing every month.

Travel from Gaza to the outside world: Travel from Gaza to the outside world takes place mostly through Egypt • During the first half of 2013, about 40,000 exits and entries were recorded at Rafah each month • Starting in July 2013 and following instability in the country, Egypt began closing the crossing frequently • When it is open, passage is limited to individuals who meet certain criteria • In the first half of 2016, the crossing was open on 11 days only, with a monthly average of only 1,896 exits and entries • Through its control of the Palestinian population registry, Israel retains indirect control over the issuing of Palestinian passports, which are required for travel through Rafah • Due to the ongoing closure of Rafah Crossing, some Gaza residents have been permitted to travel abroad via Allenby Bridge into Jordan, which necessitates receiving a permit from Israel to travel through Erez Crossing • In the first half of 2016, however the monthly average of exits of Palestinians via Erez Crossing to Allenby Bridge was only 243, a far cry from need.

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 • Since Operation Protective Edge, the fishing zone has been limited to six nautical miles from the coast with the exception of a temporary expansion to nine miles in April – May, 2016 • The size of the "buffer zone" on land, which is off-limits to Palestinians, stands at 300 meters from the border with Israel, but according to correspondence with Israeli officials, farmers can enter lands up to a distance of 100 meters from the border, with unspecified coordination.

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 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 all remaining and sweeping restrictions and allow free movement of people and goods, to enable economic growth, development and normal family life, subject to individual security inspections. Israel has a responsibility to allow regular movement of people and goods 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.