

## Graphing 5 years of closure

June 2012



Photo: Reuters

### Introduction

In the past five years since Hamas' takeover of Gaza, Israel's policy of closure on the Strip has undergone important changes. Today Gaza is more opened up towards the outside world, however sweeping and indiscriminate restrictions on travel and on movement of goods between Gaza and the West Bank and Israel remain nearly unchanged.

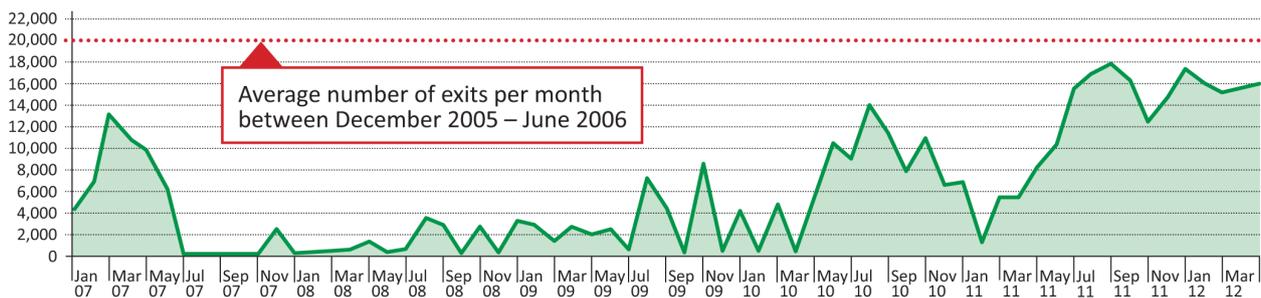
The following information sheet graphs the changes that have occurred over the past five years, providing context for those changes based on data about access before the closure and showing their impact on the economy. We hope this information can serve as a reminder that despite changes in the policy, the civilian closure on Gaza has not been lifted entirely and continues to prevent residents of the Strip from engaging in family life, from accessing opportunities for higher education, and from the possibility of developing a healthy and prosperous economy and society.

## Movement of people

Both graphs (figures 1-2) demonstrate the trend of a gradual increase in access starting in 2009-2010. However, while the number of individual exits to Egypt has risen nearly to pre-closure numbers, movement to Israel and the West Bank remains at less than 1% of the volume before significant restrictions were imposed at the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000.

Fig. 1

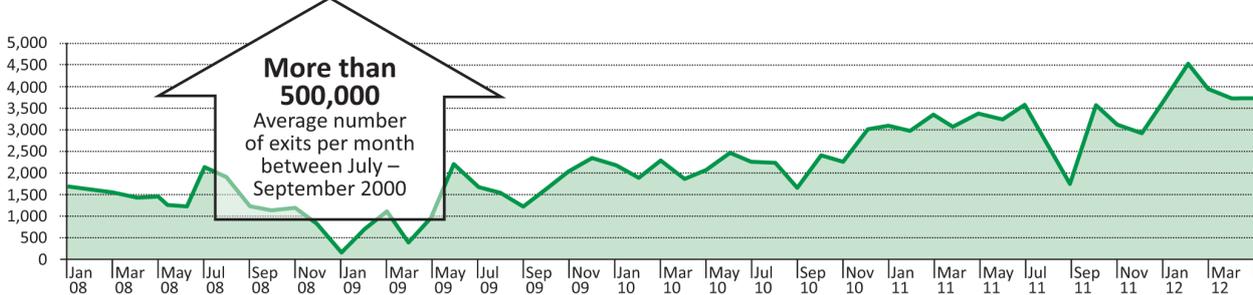
### Exits of Palestinians from Gaza to Egypt (via Rafah Crossing)



Sources: Palestinian Crossings Authority - Gaza; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Fig. 2

### Exits of Palestinians from Gaza to Israel and the West Bank (via Erez Crossing)



The graph begins in January 2008. Data for the year 2007 is unavailable

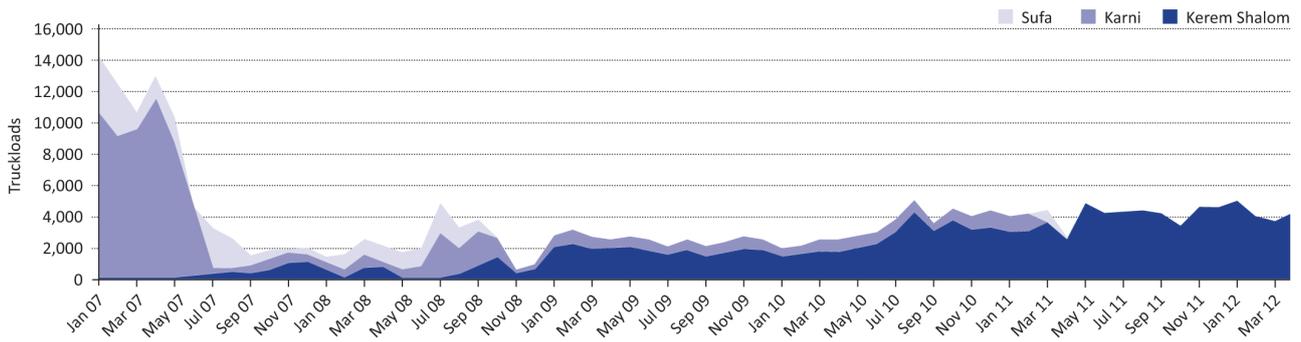
Sources: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO); Palestinian Civil Affairs Committee

## Movement of goods

The volume of goods allowed into the Strip increased gradually, particularly since June 2010, after which it stabilized at around 4,000 truckloads per month or roughly 40% of the pre-closure average (Fig. 3). There are two main reasons for the remaining gap. Firstly, severe restrictions remain on the entrance of building materials to the Strip via Israel. In the past, building materials comprised approximately half of all incoming goods. Restrictions via Israel have transferred the supply route of building materials to tunnels from Egypt. Figure 3 also demonstrates the shift in commercial traffic from the Karni and Sufa crossings, to Kerem Shalom Crossing which is located at the southernmost point on the Israel-Gaza border.

Fig. 3

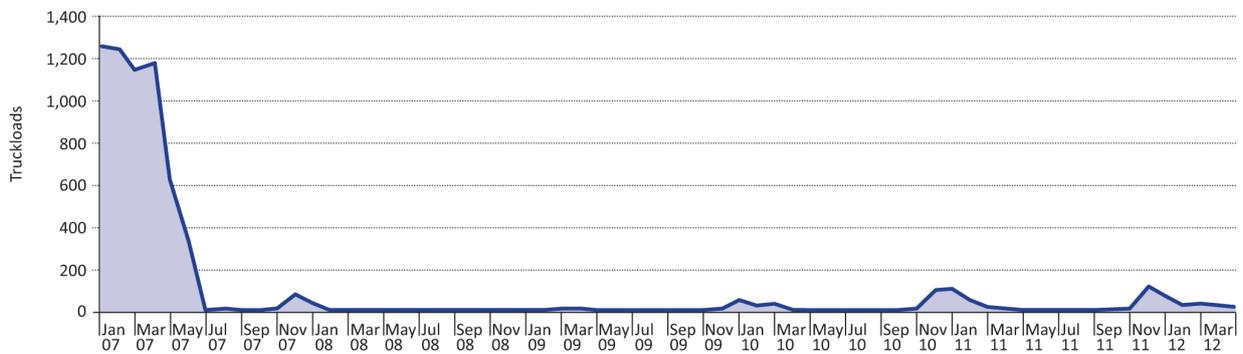
### Total incoming goods via Israeli crossings



Sources: Palestine Trade Center (PalTrade); Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO)

Fig. 4

### Total outgoing goods from Gaza via Israeli crossings

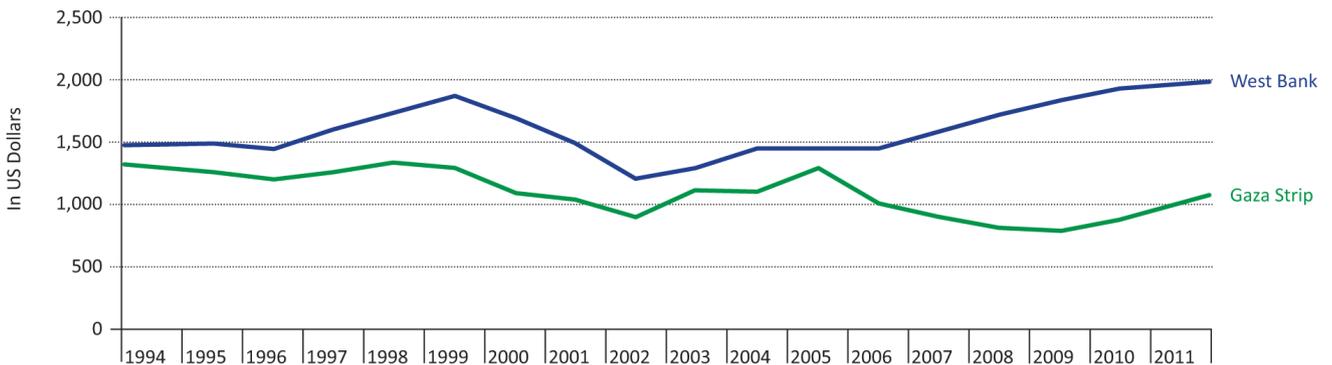


Sources: Palestine Trade Center (PalTrade); Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC)

The second reason for the remaining gap in the volume of incoming goods is decline in demand for raw materials due to the paralysis of the industrial sector. This paralysis was caused and has been sustained by the drop in outgoing trade due to the ban on marketing products from Gaza in Israel and the West Bank (Fig. 4). In 2011, the rate of outgoing goods was just 2% of the level recorded in the first half of 2007, prior to the closure. A March 2012 World Bank [report](#) notes that without access to Gaza's traditional markets, "Gaza's industry will not manage any significant recovery". While consumption, construction and external aid drove Gaza's GDP upward, the labor-intensive industrial and agricultural sectors remain far below their pre-closure levels of production. Although GDP has experienced growth in recent years, it remains lower than it was in the year 2005 or even 1994 (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5

## Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita



Sources: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

## Conclusion

Since June 2010, measures introduced to "ease" the closure have had a positive impact, reflected by most macro-economic indicators. However, remaining restrictions on movement of people from Gaza to the West Bank and on marketing of goods from Gaza in Israel and the West Bank, where changes in policy have been minimal, continue to block Gaza's economy from achieving sustainable growth and prevent its residents from maintaining their personal, cultural, educational and commercial ties with the West Bank. These two remnants of the "economic warfare" doctrine of 2007-2010 (which the current government ostensibly renounced) are explained by the term "[separation policy](#)" – a policy which in practice deepens the split between the two areas, for admittedly political reasons rather than due to security requirements.

To read more on the "Separation Policy", download Gisha's information sheet from [here](#).

The data used for this paper is available in Excel format [here](#).

Graphs designed by Yael Katzeer.