



OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
occupied Palestinian territory

The Gaza Strip: Access Report July 2005

This report monitors monthly humanitarian access and movement in the Gaza Strip. Movement in and out of the Gaza Strip is controlled by the Israeli authorities. Fences and a concrete wall surround the Gaza Strip and sea access is restricted. Movement in and out of the Gaza Strip is controlled through:

- Erez crossing for Palestinian workers and merchants who have permits to enter Israel;
- Erez crossing for international organizations;
- Rafah crossing, between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, for access to other countries, including for overseas medical referrals;
- Four commercial crossings, of which Karni is the largest.

Palestinian movement within the Gaza Strip is restricted by internal closure:

- Through Abu Holi checkpoint in the central Gaza Strip;
- By over 200 observed closure obstacles, notably military bases and observation towers;
- For Palestinians living in enclaves in close proximity to Israeli settlements.

1. Gaza Strip Crossing Points

a. Access for Palestinian workers and traders into Israel

June 2005 experienced the highest daily average number of people crossing for work in Israel and Erez Industrial Zone (EIZ) since March 2004. This was due to an increase of permits issued and a reduction in the number of closure days during which the crossing was closed. Numbers dropped from June due to the closure of Erez and EIZ from 13 to 30 July following the suicide attack in Netanya on 12 July, killing four Israelis.

Erez Crossing: Average Daily Labour Movement

	Jul 00	Jul 04	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05	May 05	Jun 05	Jul 05
Workers to Israel	22,410	1,052	49	390	1,451	3,200	2,067	3,588	1,767
Traders to Israel	N/A	N/A	17	70	158	224	103	362	175
Workers to EIZ	3,145	472	9	278	537	487	259	458	233

Palestinian National Security Forces | Data for 2000, 2004 obtained from UNSCO

Key Events:

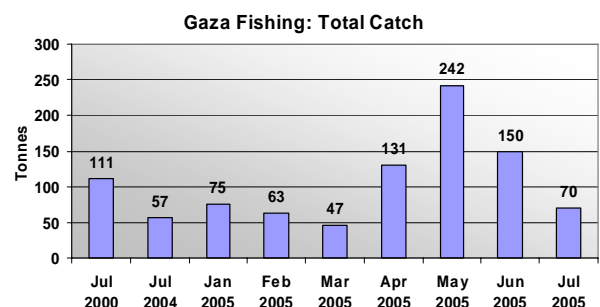
- 13 – 30 July 2005: The crossing was closed for all Palestinians following a general closure imposed on the oPt in the aftermath of a Palestinian suicide bombing in Netanya on 12 July killing four Israelis.
- 22 April – 15 May 2005: The crossing was closed to workers entering Israel (25 April - 14 May) and EIZ (22 April to 15 May) at the onset of the Jewish Passover holidays. The crossing remained closed after the Passover due to an alleged security threat.
- 14 Jan – 12 Feb 2005: Erez crossing was closed after six Israelis were killed in a Palestinian suicide attack at Karni crossing.

b. Access for Humanitarian Organisations

International humanitarian organisations require prior coordination with Israeli authorities to enter and leave the Gaza Strip. A small number of high-level Palestinian UN staff members are permitted to cross.

c. Access for Palestinian fishing (see map, page 3)

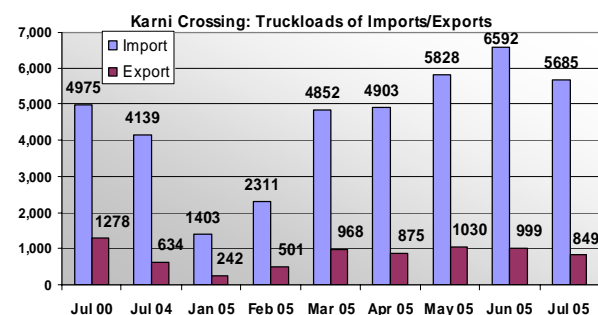
The fishing catch in July 2005¹ was higher than during the same month last year but was lower than in July 2000. Since January 2005, the Israeli authorities have permitted Palestinian fishing up to 10 nautical miles from the Gaza Strip coastline compared to 6 nautical miles previously. Under the Oslo Accords, Gaza Strip fishermen are entitled to fish 20 nautical miles from the coast. Fishing is prohibited for the Al Mawassi – Khan Younis wharf and fishing from the Rafah wharf in Al Mawassi is subject to additional restrictions.² Most fishing boats leave from the Gaza Wharf.



d. Access for Gazan trade movement Karni crossing

Most goods imported into the Gaza Strip and all exported goods pass through Karni crossing.³ Truckloads of imported goods to Gaza fell in July 2005 compared with the previous month although they are higher than the same month the previous year and pre-intifada. Exports have remained fairly stable since March this year. Nevertheless, the volume of exported goods remains lower today than pre-intifada. A higher demand for imported goods reflects the decline in the Gaza Strip's local productive capacity since September

2000. The increase in exported goods since February 2005 follows the Sharm al Sheikh summit.



Palestinian Ministry of National Economy | Data for 2000, 2004 obtained from UNSCO

e. Access for Humanitarian supplies

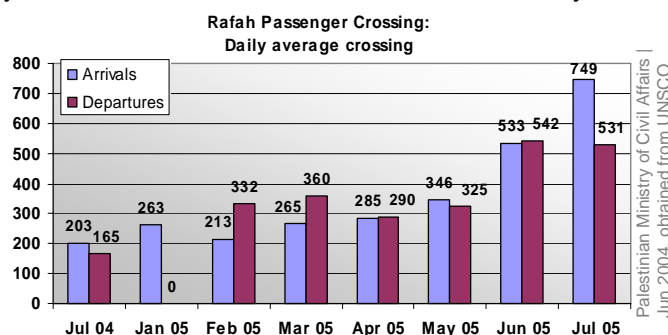
By end of July 2005, there were no empty containers inside the Gaza Strip, and the last 14 containers in Ashdod were received. UNRWA humanitarian supplies are now positioned in the Gaza Strip and will last until November 2005.

Humanitarian supplies, notably from United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), enter the Gaza Strip through Karni crossing. Since the end of March 2005, there has been a decrease in containers entering and exiting Karni crossing due to the clearance of the backlog of containers at Ashdod port.⁴

UNRWA had not been allowed by the Israeli authorities to import petrol during April and May. On 3 June and 29 July a total of 59,000 litres were permitted to enter the Gaza Strip and UNRWA now has enough petrol to last until mid October 2005.

f. Palestinians' access internationally from the Gaza Strip

In July, arrivals to Gaza increased with the influx of people returning from holidays. This increase was in spite of the renewed restrictions on travelers passing in and out of Gaza. On 16 July, the Israeli authorities re-imposed restrictions on Palestinian men aged between 16 to 35 years leaving the Gaza Strip and on 20 July, the x-ray machine was re-installed. Young Palestinian men have not been allowed to exit the Gaza Strip in the period from 17 April 2004 to 20 February 2005. After that date, arrivals had increased due to the lifting of the restrictions on this group. The x-ray machine installed by the Israeli authorities, had been removed in May.



Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs | Jun 2004, obtained from UNSCO

2. Internal movement within the Gaza Strip

The IDF have periodically segmented the Gaza Strip into three areas by closing off the coastal road at Netzarim and Abu Holi junction. In exceptional cases,

the IDF divided the Gaza Strip into four segments by also blocking the road as Moraq-Sufa junction.

a. Abu Holi junction

Movement within the Gaza Strip significantly improved between 9 February and mid-July when Abu Holi checkpoint was operational around the clock for vehicular traffic. In March, private vehicles were once again allowed to pass through the junction with the requirement of four people per vehicle; in May this requirement was reduced to two people per vehicle. Pedestrians were still not allowed to cross. Following an escalation of violence on both sides, Abu Holi checkpoint was closed on 12 July and remained closed until 23 July, subject to sporadic opening hours. Since 26 July the checkpoint has been open during daytime hours, from around 7.00am to 7.30pm.

- 16 July: Four Palestinians were shot and injured by the IDF shooting towards people trying to cross the closed checkpoint.
- 18 July: A 14 year old Palestinian boy was shot and killed by IDF fire towards a group of people waiting to cross.
- 23 July: Two Israeli settlers were killed and three IDF soldiers injured after Palestinian militants opened fire near the bypass bridge over the checkpoint. Two Palestinian militants were killed by IDF in the attack.
- 24 July: Checkpoint was completely closed.

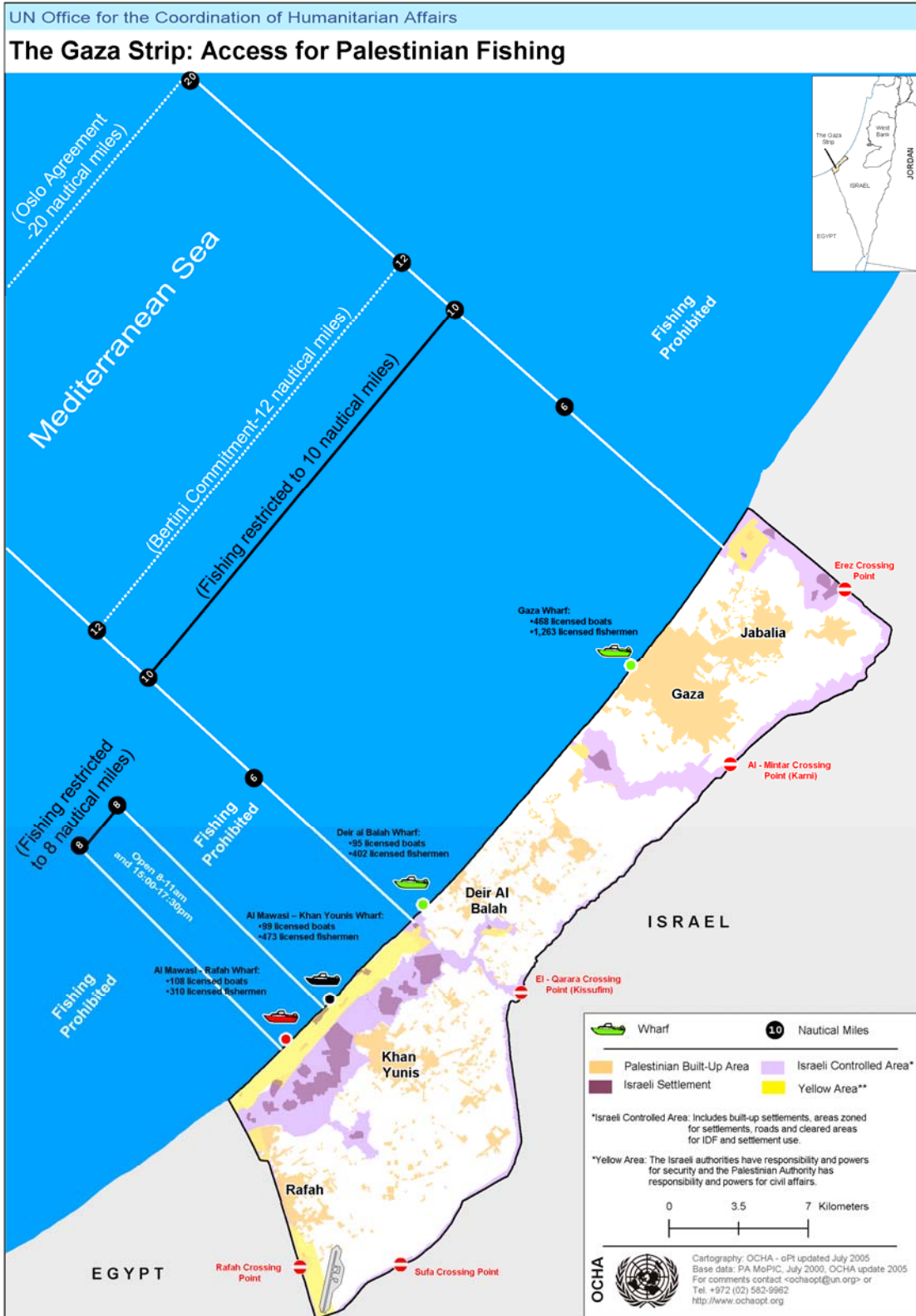
The Coastal Road was closed by the IDF on 15 July and remained closed for vehicles until 18 July. Palestinian commuters had to rely on back-to-back services.

b. Palestinian enclaves

Isolated Palestinian communities in close proximity to Israeli settlements or settlement roads have been particularly affected by internal closures (*See attached map of the Gaza Strip*). Common characteristics of these areas; or 'enclaves' are:

- Access is controlled by the IDF through a gate or a checkpoint;
- Vehicles are not permitted to cross. Goods, including drinking water and cooking gas, are carried by hand or donkey cart;
- Restrictions according to gender and age are often in place;
- Access in and out of the enclaves is limited to residents. Humanitarian organizations require prior coordination with the IDF;
- The back-to-back transfer of patients through coordination is required;
- Students often miss classes due to irregular opening hours at the gates/checkpoints; and
- Residents are afraid to leave their homes after dark due to the close proximity of IDF observation and patrols.

22 August 2005



OCHA oPt provides humanitarian information, maps and analysis through a range of services, products and briefings. It is headquartered in Jerusalem and has six field offices: Jerusalem, Gaza, Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus and Tulkarm.

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¹ Data from the Rafah wharf is not yet available. The total for July 2005 is likely to be higher than stated here.

² Fishermen can only access the wharf during opening hours (8-11am and 3-5.30pm) and are not allowed on the shore at other times. Fishing is limited to eight nautical miles of the coastline and three kilometers north of the wharf along the coastline and two nautical miles north of the Egyptian border. Fishermen, boats, equipment and catch are searched by the IDF and only three traders are allowed to enter Al Mawasi to purchase the catch.

³ The other three commercial crossings are Rafah, Sufa and Nahal Oz.

⁴ On 27 February 2005, an agreement was reached between UNRWA and the Israeli authorities to allow 20 full containers to enter the Gaza Strip daily via Sufa crossing, and 40 empty containers to leave the Gaza Strip daily via Karni crossing point. Sufa crossing has however been closed since 29 March; all humanitarian cargo passes through Karni.

The Gaza Strip: Enclaves July 2005

