



# THE BLOCKADE OF GAZA SHOCKING NUMBERS

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# THE BLOCKADE OF GAZA

## SHOCKING NUMBERS

### Introduction:

- ▶ The Israeli occupation authorities imposed a rigorous blockade on the Gaza Strip (a 360 square kilometre coastal strip of land) in 2006 which continues to date and was further intensified in 2007. The blockade commenced gradually and has culminated into a near-total closure of the area targeting all sectors and aspects of life of more than two million citizens living in the Strip as a punitive measure for Gazans over the results of the legislative elections held in January 2006.
- ▶ The blockade of Gaza is considered to be comprehensive, i.e., it is imposed via land, sea and air. As far as the land blockade is concerned, there are six crossings that serve as the only means of entry and exit for Palestinians for the Gaza Strip. While Egypt controls the Rafah Crossing, the rest are controlled by Israel. Each crossing serves a specific purpose for Gaza, such as either for the crossing of workers or the movement of individuals or goods, or fuel and gas, or for construction material.
- ▶ Israel has closed off all crossings except two, the Karam Abu Salem crossing which is partially functional since the movement of goods as well as raw material for various industrial purposes through it is prohibited, and the Beit Hanoun/Erez crossing which is marked for land transportation. The Israeli Occupation prohibits Palestinians to pass through it save those who have a security permit which is very difficult to obtain. The prohibition extends to patients, "hundreds of whom along with their escorts have been arrested."
- ▶ With regard to air, Gaza has only one airport which is the Gaza International Airport that was bombed during the Israeli aggression on Gaza in 2008. It was the only aerial link for Gaza with the outside world. With this, Israel brought Gazan air as well as land under its control.
- ▶ With regard to water and coastal areas, Israel reduced fishing areas in the Gazan waters to six nautical miles in the beginning of the blockade which were further reduced to three nautical miles only in the beginning of 2009. The blockade also includes prohibiting or rationing the entry of fuel, electricity and many other commodities.
- ▶ Numerous efforts were made by activists and those standing in solidarity with Gazans to break the siege. The most prominent of them was the Freedom Flotilla, in May 2010, where six ships, most of them Turkish and containing around 750 passengers from Turkey, Britain, USA, Ireland, and Greece, in addition to Arabs and citizens of other countries, were assaulted by Israeli occupation forces in international waters. They used live ammunition against the activists on the Mavi Marmara ship resulting in casualties.
- ▶ During these years of siege, restrictions and closures that affected healthcare, education, the society and the economy, the Israeli Occupation launched 4 devastating wars and scores of escalations leading to thousands being martyred, tens of thousands being injured, and thousands of buildings, residences, various establishments, infrastructure, factories and workshops being destroyed.
- ▶ In terms of numbers, the condition in the Gaza Strip during these years was extremely difficult and dangerous. International, Arab and local reports recorded a catastrophic humanitarian as well as living situation, at a time when governments, public institutions and all competent agencies across the world were called upon to launch a moral, humanitarian and legal movement to save whatever was left of the Gaza Strip and stand in solidarity therewith. The policy to maintain silence on the human rights violations in Palestinian lands has emboldened the Israeli Occupation to commit more violations and undertake increased punitive action.

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## About The Blockade of Gaza

### Living Situation

- The siege has threatened food security for around 70% of the families living in the Gaza Strip.
- More than 80% of the residents in the Strip live below the poverty line.
- Unemployment rates have reached 55%.
- Female unemployment rates have risen to more than 80%.
- More than 300 thousand workers are out of work.
- 80% of the factories have closed since the beginning of the blockade.
- The production rate in factories receded to 20% (due to the blockade and the prevention of industrial raw material from entering the Strip, and on account of restricting import and export activity).
- More than one million citizens rely on relief aid.

### Healthcare Sector

- There is a shortage of around 60% of medicines and medical protocol for cancer patients.
- 50%-60% of cancer patients are required to travel outside the Strip to receive radiotherapy, chemotherapy and atomic scanning treatments which are unavailable in Gaza.
- Israeli Occupation authorities prevent hundreds of patients from travelling, resulting in the deaths of critical cases.
- The Israeli Occupation has prevented the entry of "nitrous gas into Gaza since the beginning of 2021 which is used to anaesthetise patients during surgical procedures."
- There is a heavy shortage of nursing beds and specialised surgical supplies.
- There is a heavy shortage of fully equipped ambulances.
- There is a shortage of MRI and CT scan equipment. Each hospital has one machine only. If it breaks down, the maintenance thereof is difficult because of the lack of spare parts.

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### Drinking Water

- 97% of the water in Gaza is not suitable for drinking.
- The damage to the water and sewage sector during the latest aggression in May 2021 amounts to around 14 million US dollars.
- 170 water facilities and 110 sewage facilities were subjected to severe damage during the May aggression.
- Local water supply to the residents has been reduced by 50%.
- 25% of Gazan residents receive water only for seven hours a day.
- 56% of the residents receive water for 7 hours every two days, and some of them, every three days.

### Agriculture and Fisheries Sector

- 35% of arable land in Gaza is empty because the Israeli Occupation prevents access thereto since it falls near the border.
- The cultivation of this land is prohibited. During and before the blockade, the Israeli Occupation destroyed tens of thousands of acres of agricultural land cultivated with trees and crops, especially olive trees.
- Hundreds of farmers were killed or injured while cultivating their lands that are proximal to the border areas.
- The Israeli Occupation prohibits fishermen from fishing in an area of more than 12 nautical miles (during the best times) despite the Oslo Accords providing for 20 nautical miles (around 37 kilometres) adjacent to Gazan shores.
- 90% of fishermen in Gaza live in poverty.
- Hundreds of fishermen have abandoned their work on account of being pursued and prevented from practising their occupation. Consequently, their numbers have dropped from 10,000 to 3,000.
- Scores of fishermen have either been killed or injured by the Occupation's army while working in the seas. Their vessels and nets have been damaged due to firing and being directly targeted.

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### Gaza Crossings

- All Gazan commercial crossings are fully closed except for the "Karam Abu Salem" crossing (it functions partially under heavy restrictions).
- The Israeli Occupation does not allow the entry of a number of commodities and material, especially raw material (alleging dual use).
- The Israeli Occupation prohibits export from the "Karam Abu Salem" crossing with the exception of a very few cases.
- The "Beit Hanoun / Erez" crossing is marked for the passage of individuals. It functions partially for some medical cases. The Israeli Occupation authorities have arrested hundreds of patients and their escorts under baseless allegations. The passage of merchants is prevented except on rare occasions. People intending to travel are prohibited from crossing.

### Damages incurred due to the latest Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip in May 2021

- Losses suffered by the housing sector due to targeted bombings of towers, residential buildings and houses amounted to more than 144 US million dollars.
- Losses due to infrastructural damage amounted to more than 147 US million dollars.
- Loss to the economic sector amounted to around 74 US million dollars.
- Loss to the tourism sector amounted to around 3.6 US million dollars.
- Damages amounting to around 40 US million dollars were incurred by factories that were bombed.
- Losses amounting to 27 US million dollars were suffered by the agricultural sector (agricultural land and projects were targeted).