

**No easing for dying**

More than a year since Israel announced it was “easing” the blockade of Gaza, Ra’ed Azzam Saleem al Mghari, a 33-year-old from al Bureij refugee camp died on 25 July waiting for Israeli permission to access potentially life saving health care not available in the Strip. Oxfam partner Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) reports that although he has suffered from serious heart disease for the past 16 years, Israeli authorities turned down al Mghari’s request to travel to the Arab Centre for Treatment and Surgery of Heart and Blood Diseases in Nablus.

Al Mghari’s father, Azzam, told PCHR how initially the Health Coordination Committee of Israeli Civil Affairs had informed them on 19 July that his son’s application to leave the Gaza Strip with a companion for medical referral was refused.

“We then started working on the referral measures without a companion, but the Committee informed us on 24 July that Israel had rejected his application for security reasons,” Azzam said. “I moved to working on a referral permit to Egypt, but his health deteriorated more and more. As a result, on Monday, 25 July, the doctors (at Gaza’s Shifa Hospital) decided to perform urgent surgery... He died after five hours, during the operation.”

Al Mghari is the third Palestinian to die this year after Israel refused to allow them to receive medical treatment outside the Gaza Strip. In addition to these deaths, PCHR is also documenting and following cases of patients and companions – including for minors who legally require companions to travel – who were arrested or detained on their way out of Gaza to seek medical treatment.

In a recent statement, PCHR called upon the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to immediately exert pressure on Israel to ensure respect for international humanitarian law, stop the policy of collective punishment against civilians in the Gaza Strip, and offer Palestinian patients the chance to move freely to receive necessary medical treatment.



## **1. Headlines**

- **Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions:** There were no reports of Israeli airstrikes, shellings, or incursions into Gaza this week. Last week, there were reports that the Israeli military carried out 18 airstrikes, 6 shellings, and 1 incursion across the perimeter into Gaza.

There were reports this week of Palestinian militants firing 5 home made rockets (HMR) and 1 Grad rocket towards Israel or Israeli forces, as compared to 18 mortars, 42 home made rockets (HMR), and 19 Grad rockets that were reported to have been fired the week before.

1 Palestinian civilian was reportedly killed this week as a result of injuries sustained in an Israeli airstrike the week prior. Last week, 6 Palestinian civilians were reportedly killed and 37 others were reportedly injured as a result of Israeli military activity.

There were no reports of injuries or casualties amongst Palestinian militants this week. Last week, 5 Palestinian militants were reportedly killed and 10 others, including 3 Hamas police officers, were reportedly injured as a result of Israeli military activity.

There were no reports of injuries or casualties amongst Israeli civilians or soldiers this week. The week before, 1 Israeli civilian was reportedly injured as a result of Palestinian militant activity.

Since January 23, 2011, Oxfam calculates there have been 36 Palestinian civilians reportedly killed, 355 Palestinian civilians reportedly injured, 38 Palestinian militants (including Hamas officers) reportedly killed and 47 militants reportedly injured as a result of Israeli military activity. There have also been reports of 2 Israeli civilians reportedly killed, 30 Israeli civilians reportedly injured and 4 Israeli soldiers reportedly injured as a result of Palestinian militant activity during the same reporting period.

- **Fishermen:** There was 1 report of an Israeli naval vessel opening fire on Palestinian fishermen this week, with no injuries reported. There were 3 reports of Israeli naval vessels opening fire on Palestinian fisherman last week, with no injuries reported.

Since January 23, 2011, Oxfam calculates there have been 50 reports of Israeli naval vessels opening fire on Palestinian fisherman, with reports of 2 fishermen injured and 1 lost at sea. Since January 2009, Israeli naval forces have restricted the access of Palestinian fishing boats to three nautical miles from the coast; in practice, access is sometimes restricted to as little as one nautical mile, banning access to around 85% of Gaza's fishing water. In 2010, the annual fishing catch from Gaza decreased by 45% as compared to the 2008 fishing catch before fishing space was restricted to three nautical miles.

- **Tunnel related fatalities:** There were reports this week that Egyptian officials discovered and destroyed 6 underground tunnels between Egypt and Gaza. Last week, there was 1 Israeli airstrike reported on the tunnels between Egypt and Gaza, resulting in the death of 4 tunnel workers and injury to 3 additional workers.

In 2010, 43 Palestinian workers, including 5 child labourers, reportedly died in tunnel related accidents and another 88, including 1 child labourer, were reportedly injured.

- **Palestinians in the access restricted area (the so-called “buffer zone”):** There was 1 report of the Israeli military opening fire on civilians in the access restricted area, with no injuries reported. There were no incidents reported the week before.

Since January 23, 2011, Oxfam calculates there have been 59 reports of the Israeli military opening fire on civilians in the buffer zone, with 9 civilians reportedly killed and 34 others reportedly injured. In 2000, Israel first imposed a 150 metre-wide security ‘buffer’ within Gaza’s perimeter. In certain areas along the northern and eastern perimeters, this official buffer extends up to 500 metres into Gaza. In practice, Israel restricts access to agricultural land up to 1,000-1,500 metres from the fence, which accounts for more than 30% of Gaza’s agricultural land and a significant number of water wells. Most of the Gaza Strip’s animal production is also concentrated in this area.

- **Rafah border crossing:** The Rafah border crossing was open 3 out of 7 days this week, with reports of 2,134 Palestinians entering Gaza from Egypt, 1,913 Palestinians leaving Gaza for Egypt, and 64 denied entry to Egypt. Last week, the Rafah border crossing was open 6 days with reports of 2,565 Palestinians entering Gaza from Egypt, 3,671 Palestinians leaving Gaza for Egypt, and 60 Palestinians denied entry to Egypt.

On May 28, 2011, the Egyptian authorities announced that they had permanently opened Rafah border crossing for the movement of people between Gaza and Egypt. During the first official week of opening, Egyptian officials had reported being overwhelmed by the volume of Palestinians from Gaza attempting to use Rafah border crossing, which had resulted in some delays. Hamas officials had also reported that the Egyptian procedures for transferring travelers from one side to the other were not clear.

Although Rafah border crossing does not ease movement restrictions between Gaza, Israel, and the West Bank, a full and consistent opening of Rafah border crossing would offer Palestinians in Gaza an opportunity to travel abroad for higher education opportunities, medical treatment, or to take a personal holiday.

An estimated 500 people rely on the Rafah border crossing every month to reach scheduled or ongoing medical treatment in Egypt or abroad.

- **Power plant and electricity supply:** Since January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Gaza’s power plant has not placed an order for industrial fuel to be transferred from Israel. The fuel for Gaza’s power plant is now being supplied through the tunnels underneath the Gaza-Egypt border in the form of Egyptian diesel, at a much lower price than the industrial fuel supplied from Israel.

OCHA estimates that the power plant is buying between 300,000 and 400,000 litres of diesel from the tunnels every day. In addition to what is procured daily from the tunnels, the power plant in Gaza now reportedly has a back up supply of fuel, capable of running the plant at an output of 60 Mw for one month.

- **Cooking gas:** 373 tons of cooking gas reportedly entered Gaza this week via the Kerem Shalom crossing, as compared to 597 tons of cooking gas reported to have entered Gaza the week before. The 373 tons of cooking gas entering Gaza this week represents 13 percent of the 1,750 tons of cooking gas needed weekly. The overall cooking gas shortage has been a main concern for humanitarian agencies since November 2009. Cooking gas cannot safely be transported through the tunnels beneath the Gaza-Egypt border as it is highly combustible and requires a special pipeline to transport in bulk. The one tunnel equipped with a cooking gas pipeline was reportedly destroyed in an Israeli air strike in December 2010. Although this tunnel started functioning again in February, it was damaged soon after and is now used

irregularly to transport limited quantities of cooking gas. The ongoing shortage has created huge demand for cooking gas in the local market. The Gas Station Owners' Association has indicated that of the 28 gas stations that supply cooking gas, only between 10 and 15 are operational due to the overall shortage. As gas stations are unable to meet the local demand for cooking gas, a rationing system remains in place, with customers reporting a waiting time to refill of over 1 month.

- **Diesel/petrol:** No diesel or benzine was reported to have been delivered to the private sector this week or last week. A near total ban on fuel imports for public sale was put in place by the Government of Israel in October 2008. Around 600,000 litres of diesel and 200,000 litres of petrol for public sale are reported to enter Gaza every day through tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border (OCHA, January 2011).
- **Exports:** No exports were reported to have left Gaza this week or the week before. The last truckload of exports to exit Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing was 1 truckload of flowers reported to be destined for the Netherlands on May 13, 2011.

Since 2007, and despite Israeli government promises this past December to make additional efforts to increase exports from Gaza, exports have to date been entirely agricultural in nature, contributing to the de-development of Gaza's private sector. According to UNRWA calculations, before the blockade, 90 percent of garments, 76 percent of furniture products and 20 percent of food products produced in Gaza were marketed to the West Bank and Israel.

The limited exports now leaving Gaza are allowed as a result of an agreement between Israel and the Netherlands permitting limited exports of seasonal agricultural items. The agreement resumed on 28 November 2010.

*\*Pre-blockade weekly average (490 truckloads) is calculated on the daily average of all truckloads that exited Gaza between January 2005 and mid June 2007, before Israel's imposition of the blockade.*

- **Truckloads of supplies:** Due to the Eid holiday, Kerem Shalom crossing was open 2 out of 7 days this week, with reports of 437 truckloads of supplies entering Gaza, which represents 15 percent of the pre-blockade weekly average.\*\* Last week, Kerem Shalom crossing was open 5 out of 7 days with reports of 897 truckloads of supplies entering Gaza, representing 31 percent of the pre-blockade weekly average.

Following the permanent closure of Karni crossing in early March, Kerem Shalom is now the sole permanent crossing through which goods enter Gaza. While Karni could accommodate up to 1,000 trucks a day, Kerem Shalom can only accommodate around 250 trucks per day. UNRWA has referred to the Kerem Shalom crossing, located in the deep south of Gaza, as an inefficient bottleneck that adds 20 percent in transport and labour costs to the price of humanitarian goods. Kerem Shalom crossing is also not equipped to handle the bulk transfer of large quantities of wheat and animal feed, while Karni is.

While imports remain limited, and raw materials severely restricted, exports remain banned almost entirely except for limited truckloads of strawberries, carnations and cherry tomatoes exported to the Netherlands. As a result, the scale of economic activity remains heavily dependent on local demand in Gaza, which in turn is constrained by the low purchasing power of the population and the relatively small size of the local market. Until crossings are fully

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opened for export, the impact of the easing of the blockade on unemployment, poverty and food insecurity rates remains limited.

**\*\*Pre-blockade weekly average (2,807 truckloads) is calculated based on the monthly average of all truckloads that entered during the first five months of 2007, before Israel's imposition of the blockade.**

## **2. Humanitarian trucks (week):**

<b>Truck originator</b>	<b>Total for week 28 August- 2 September</b>
Bulk grains (human and animal)	38
UNRWA	29
UNDP	4
Electric company	2
Commercial	364
<b>Total trucks for the week</b>	<b>437</b>
<b>Percentage of pre blockade average (first 5 months of 2007)</b>	<b>15%</b>

## **3. Fuel deliveries (week)**

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
28 August- 2 September		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>373 MT</b>
	Percentage of need *	<b>0</b>		<b>13 %</b>
Previous week		0	0	597 MT
* Fuel association 2006 estimates - ** Imports of diesel and petrol for the general public and public sector in Gaza were exceptionally authorized on 6 occasions since October 2008				

### **Request\* of Industrial Fuel to the Power Plant via Israel (week):**

Industrial diesel from Israel	Previous week	28 August- 2 September
0	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply capacity of 80 MW</b>		<b>0%</b>

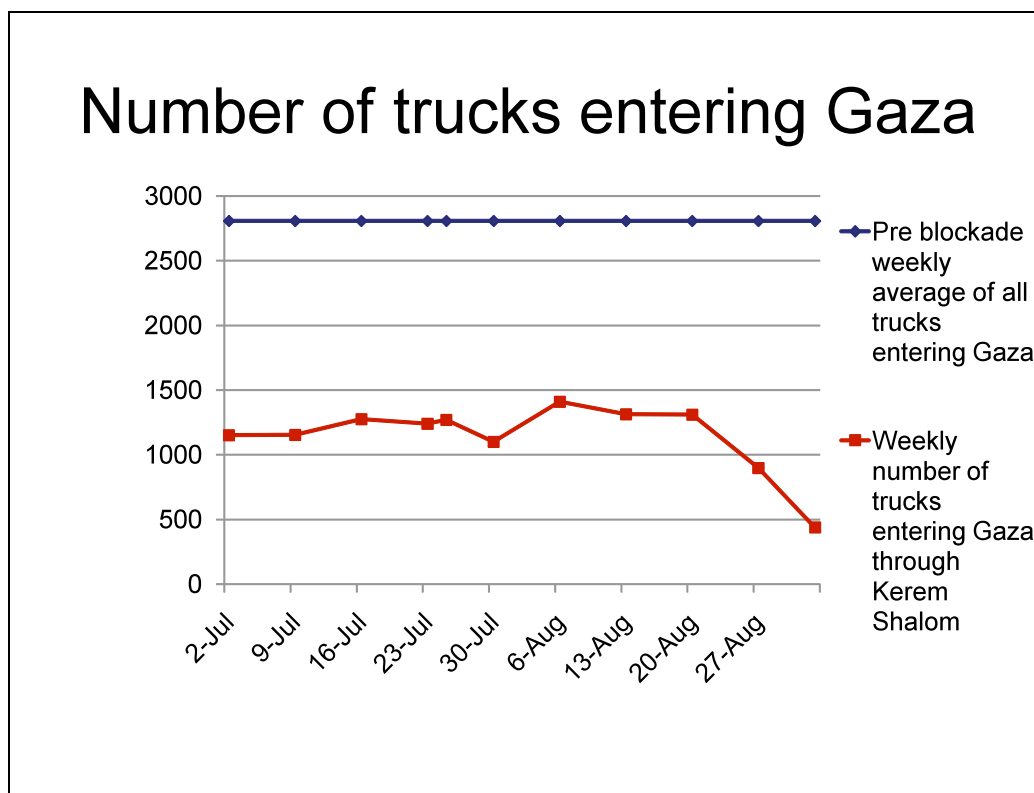
**Estimates of fuel supplied to the power plant from the tunnels**

Diesel from the tunnels beneath the Gaza-Egypt border	<b>Previous week</b>	<b>28 August-2 September</b>
	2.1- 2.8 million litres**	2.1- 2.8 million litres**
<b>Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply of 80 MW</b>	<b>60-80%</b>	<b>60-80%</b>

*\*The power plant has not requested any industrial fuel to be transferred from Israel since January 5, 2011*

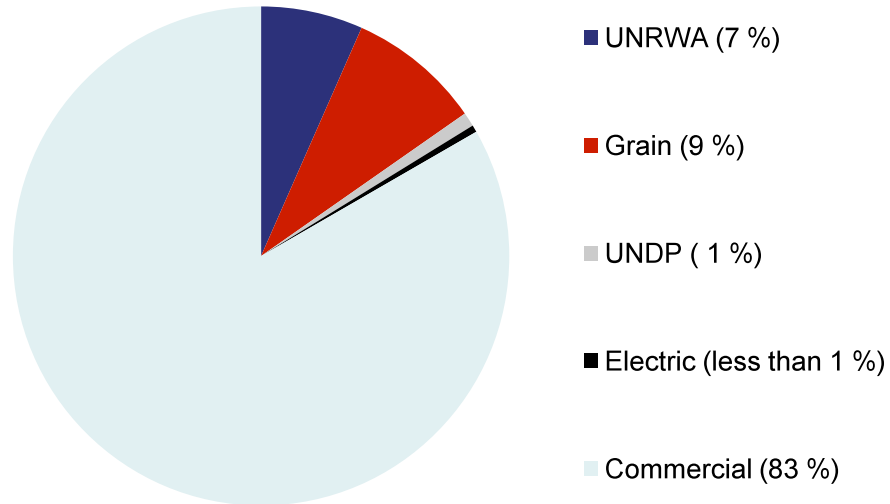
*\*\*based on OCHA estimates of 300,000- 400,000 litres of diesel per day*

**4. Weekly Charts**



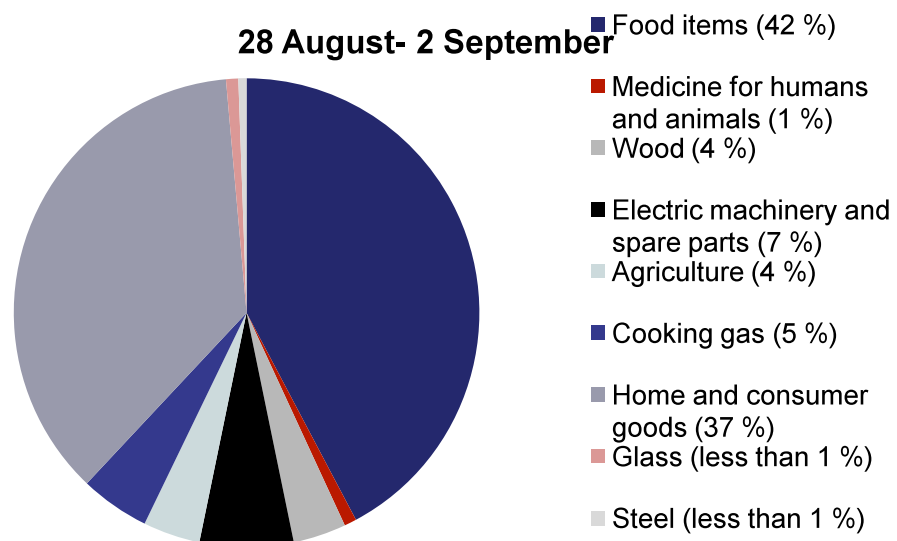
## Weekly trucks entering Gaza through Kerem Shalom by provider

28 August- 2 September



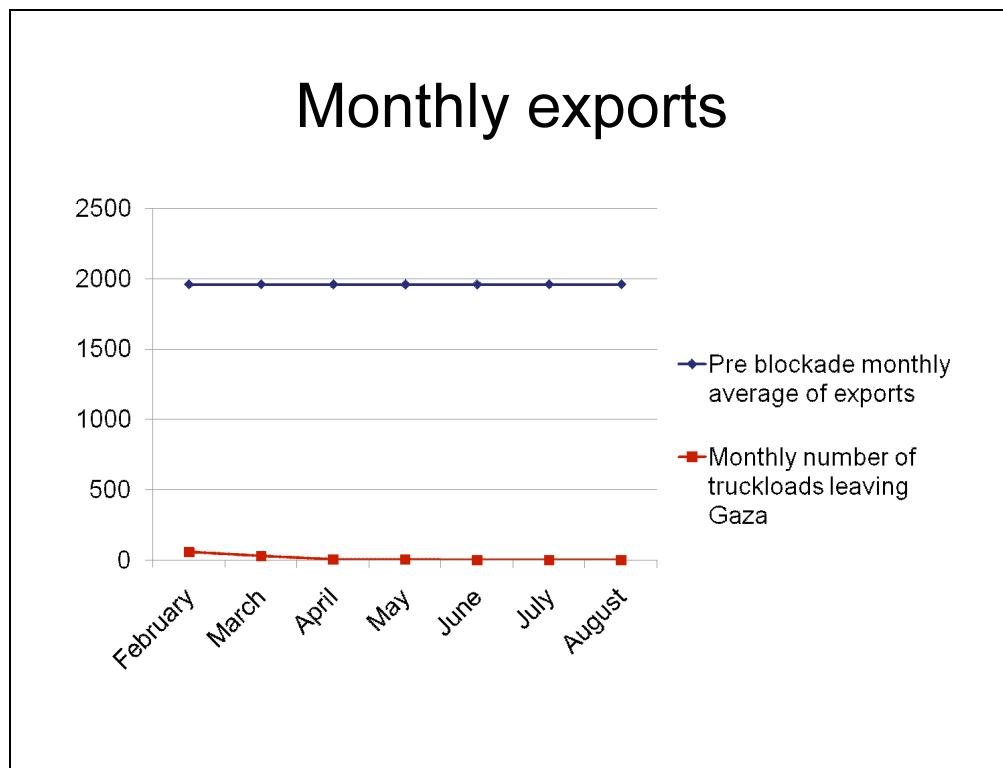
## Weekly breakdown of commercial items entering Gaza via Kerem Shalom by item type

28 August- 2 September

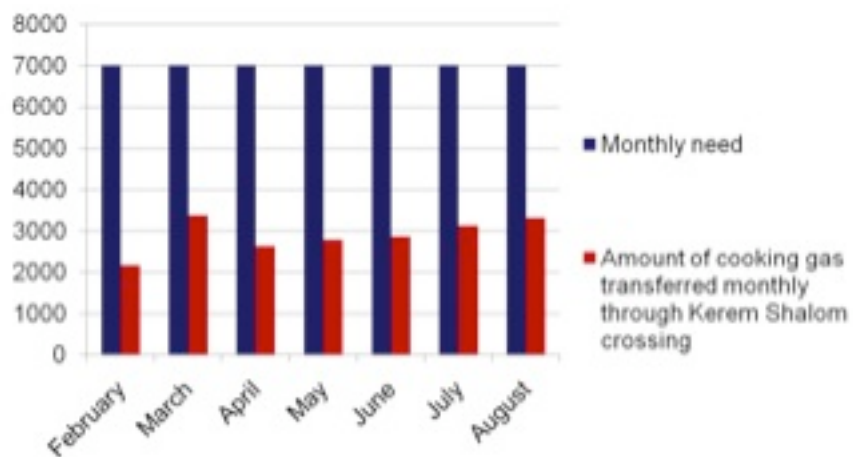


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## 5. Monthly Charts

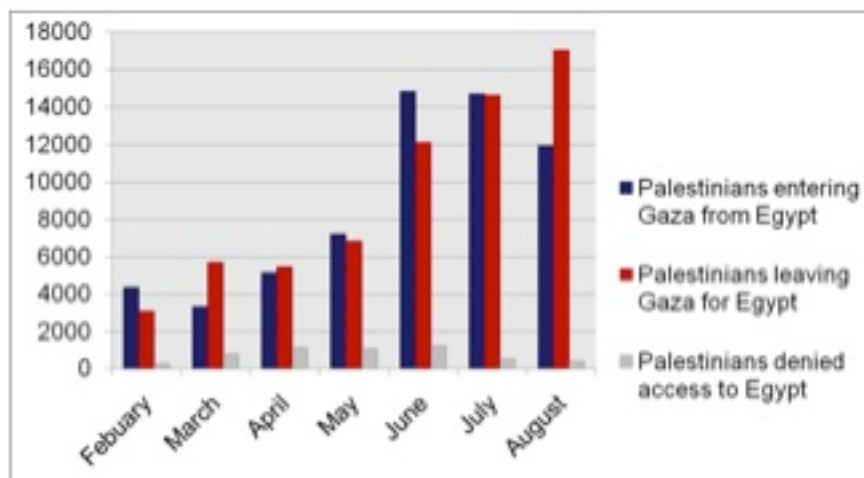


### Monthly supplies of cooking gas



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## Rafah Border Crossing



### **6. Contact information**

**Willow Heske, OI OPTI Media Lead:** +972 (0) 59 71 33 646  
or +972 (0) 54 63 95 002 – [willow.heske@oxfamnovib.nl](mailto:willow.heske@oxfamnovib.nl)

**Karl Schembri, Communication Officer:** +972 (0) 59 89 10 981 – [kschembri@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:kschembri@oxfam.org.uk)