



MoH Referral Abroad Office, Gaza

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## Referral of Patients from the Gaza Strip

Ref: RAD 9 (October 22, 2012)

### Summary

- **Detained:** A patient's companion, who had a valid permit, was detained while crossing through Erez.
- **Denied:** 16 patients (7 females; 9 males) including 1 child, were denied permits to exit Erez crossing for medical treatment.
- **Interrogated:** 12 patients (2 females; 10 males) were requested to appear for Israeli security interviews.
- **Delayed:** 42 patients (20 females; 22 males) including 12 children, did not receive a response to their permit application and missed their hospital appointments.
- **Fewer patients apply for access through Erez:** There was a 16% drop in patient permit applications for access through Erez during the first 9 months of 2012 compared to the same period in 2011, despite an increase in the number of referrals requiring access through Erez.
- **Downward trend in referrals:** There were 2,725 Ministry of Health (MoH) referrals in Quarter 3, compared to 4,172 in Quarter 2, a decrease of 35% as a result of MoH cost-reducing measures and acquisition of MRI equipment by the MoH.
- **Referrals to Jordan:** No MoH referrals were made to Jordan, however, 13 patients applied for permits to seek health care in Jordan at their own expense.
- **Medical reasons:** Most September referrals were for: oncology (16%), ophthalmology (11%), nuclear medicine (10%), paediatrics (8%), neurosurgery (7%), haematology (6%), and orthopaedics (6%). The estimated cost was NIS 11.2 million.

### No Ministry of Health referrals to Jordan

During September there were no MoH financed referrals to Jordan, due to the Palestinian Authority financial crisis. Thirteen patients applied for permits to travel to Jordan to obtain care at their own expense. Of the 1,056 MoH referrals, 398 (38%) referrals were to hospitals in East Jerusalem, 333 referrals (32%) were to Egypt, 181 (17%) were to Israel, and 111 (11%) referrals were to WB hospitals. For the second consecutive month, the number of referrals inside Gaza to non-MoH facilities was low, only 33 (3%) (Table 1). According to the Gaza RAD data for September, 45% of referrals were for male patients and 55% were for female patients.

### Patient applications for Israeli-issued permits to cross Erez

In September 2012, 705 applications were submitted to the Israeli District Liaison Office (DCL) for permits for patients to cross Erez to access hospitals in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, in Israel or Jordan compared with 585 in August. 89% were MoH referrals (see Table 2 and 3).

**Table 1. Palestinian MoH Referrals in 2012, by destination, exit route and month of hospital appointment**

Referral Destination	MoH Referrals									Total 2012
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	
<b>Within Gaza: 1,824</b>										
Gaza (non-MoH facilities)	289	258	284	301	265	290	76	28	33	<b>1,824</b>
<b>Exit via Erez/Israel: 6,361</b>										
West Bank (MoH and non-MoH)	110	101	94	115	134	120	88	99	111	<b>972</b>
East Jerusalem	374	301	359	344	416	420	313	336	398	<b>3,261</b>
Jordan	47	53	41	30	21	5	2	0	0	<b>199</b>
Israel	254	237	247	252	304	173	117	164	181	<b>1,929</b>
<b>Exit via Rafah to Egypt: 2,590</b>										
Egypt	319	240	270	296	358	328	237	209	333	<b>2,590</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,393</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>1,295</b>	<b>1,338</b>	<b>1,498</b>	<b>1,336</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>10,775</b>

Source: MoH RAD Gaza

In September, 92% (647 patients) were approved permits. However, 2.3% (16 patients; seven females and nine males) were denied permits to cross Erez checkpoint. The patients were seeking treatment for orthopedics (6), ophthalmology (4), neurosurgery (2) and gynecology, nuclear medicine, nephrology and neurology (1 each). Of the 16 denied patients, 9 patients had appointments at Makassed hospital in East Jerusalem, 4 in Ramallah and 3 in other areas of the West Bank. 6% (42 patients), including 12 children, received no answer to their applications and missed their hospital appointment date. Of the delayed patients 6 waited more than 2 weeks for their application to be studied, 3 waited more than 1 month.

**Table 2: Israeli District Liaison Office decisions on patient permit requests to cross Erez, by age and sex, September 2012.**

Age group	Total		Approved		Denied		Delayed		Called for GSS interrogation	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
0 - 3	50	52	45	52	0	0	5	0	0	0
4 - 17	71	82	67	78	1	0	3	4	0	0
18- 40	97	65	84	46	6	7	7	12	2	7
41 - 60	100	89	95	84	0	1	5	4	0	2
Over 60	42	57	42	54	0	1	0	2	0	1
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>705</b>		<b>647 (91.8%)</b>		<b>16 (2.3%)</b>		<b>42 (5.9%)</b>		<b>12 (1.7%)</b>	

Source: Palestinian District Coordination Office, Gaza

**Table 3: Patient Applications by Source of Fund, September 2012**

Financial coverage source	Number of applications	Percentage
Ministry of Health	626	88.8%
Self-funded	38	5.4%
Nour Ala Al-Alam	7	1.0%
Peres Center for Peace	14	2.0%
Physicians for Human Rights-Israel	14	2.0%
UNRWA	1	0.1%
Hadassah Fund	1	0.1%
Others	4	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Palestinian District Coordination Office, Gaza



Erez crossing

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During September, 9 urgent cases were transferred through Erez crossing during off duty hours (6 males; 3 females). Of these, 5 cases were transferred to Israeli hospitals, 2 to St. Joseph hospital in East Jerusalem and 2 to the West Bank.

The Palestinian General Authority for Civil Affairs registered 592 patients and 582 companions travelling through Erez checkpoint towards Israel during September. 49 patients were transferred through Erez by ambulances. Since Palestinian ambulances are not permitted to leave Gaza, patients must be transferred from a Palestinian ambulance, and carried on a stretcher to an Israeli ambulance at Erez crossing 200 meters away (see Table 4).

Point of exiting Gaza	Patients crossing	Ambulance transfers (back-to-back)	Days open in month
Erez crossing (North)	601	49	Open: <b>21 days</b> Closed: <b>9 days</b> (5 Saturdays, September 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29) + (4 Jewish holidays September 17, 18, 25, and 26)
Rafah crossing (South)	720 (Patient & companion)	69	Open: <b>30</b> Closed: <b>0</b>

Source: General Authority of Civil Affairs and Emergency Medical Services in the MoH in Gaza.

According to the Emergency Medical Services of MoH in Gaza, their office coordinated the travel of 789 people to Egypt. 69 patients were transferred by ambulances with 97 companions. 623 were patients and their companions who travelled through Rafah terminal as regular passengers.

#### Detention of a patient's companion

Khalil Jibril Annajar, 44 years old, was arrested at Erez checkpoint as he was traveling to accompany his 69-year-old brother, Awni, who had undergone knee replacement surgery at Makassed hospital. According to District Liaison office in Gaza, Khalil applied to the DLO on September 23 in order to travel to Jerusalem on September 27, 2012. The Israeli DLO responded on September 26 that his application was being 'under study.' Later Khalil was informed that he obtained a permit to travel on October 3, 2012. He traveled to Erez crossing and was detained while undergoing the regular security procedures for pedestrians. Khalil was permitted to call his son to inform the family that he was detained. He was transferred to Ashkelon prison and later to Beer Sheva prison. According to the family, as of October 22 Khalil remained imprisoned.

**Table 5: Israeli District Liaison Office decisions on permit requests to cross Erez, by response, sex of applicant (number and %)**

Period	September 2011		September 2012		January - September 2011		January - September 2012	
<b>Total</b>	<b>822</b> (F:407; M:448)		<b>705</b> (F:360; M:345)		<b>8,225</b> (F:3614; M:4611)		<b>6,921</b> (F:3381; M:3540)	
<b>Approved</b>	<b>746</b> (F:352; M:394)	90.8%	<b>647</b> (F:333; M:314)	91.8%	<b>7,304</b> (F:3322; M:3982)	88.8%	<b>6,474</b> (F:3120; M:3354)	93.5%
<b>Denied</b>	<b>20</b> (F:4; M:16)	2.4%	<b>16</b> (F:7; M:9)	2.3%	<b>203</b> (F:46; M:157)	2.5%	<b>69</b> (F:23; M:46)	1.0%
<b>Delayed</b>	<b>56</b> (F:18; M:38)	6.8%	<b>42</b> (F:20; M:22)	6.0%	<b>718</b> (F:246; M:472)	8.7%	<b>378</b> (F:159; M:219)	5.5%
<i>Out of which called for GSS interrogation (of total applicants)</i>	<b>15</b> (F:2; M:13)	1.8%	<b>12</b> (F:2; M:10)	1.7%	<b>131</b> (F:27; M:104)	1.6%	<b>144</b> (F:53; M:91)	2.1%

Source: Palestinian District Coordination Office in Gaza.