



OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
occupied Palestinian territory

The Gaza Strip: Access Report October 2005

This report monitors monthly humanitarian access and movement in the Gaza Strip. All movement in and out of the Gaza Strip is controlled by 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 and medical referrals 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.

The Gaza Strip was completely sealed off on 24 September, with the closure of Erez, Karni, Sufa and Rafah crossings and access to the sea was prohibited. This closure, put in place after Palestinian militants fired over 20 rockets from the northern Gaza Strip towards Israel, has largely remained in place during the month of October.

This report contains a map of the Gaza Strip before and after Disengagement. (see map page 4-5)

1. Gaza Strip Crossing Points

a. Access for Palestinian workers and traders into Israel (see Figure 1)

After Palestinian militants fired more than 20 homemade rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel on 24 September, resulting in the injury of six Israelis, the crossing was closed for all Palestinian workers and traders. This closure continued throughout October, coinciding with the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah (4-5 Oct), Yom Kippur (13 Oct), Sukkot (18-24 Oct) and Simchat Torah (25 Oct).

Key Events:

- 24 September onwards¹: The crossing was completely closed for all Palestinian workers and traders to Israel following Palestinian militant rocket attacks towards Israel, injuring six Israelis. Some humanitarian cases are allowed access with coordination.
- 13 August – 24 September: The crossing was closed for Palestinians. Only a limited number of workers and merchants, and some humanitarian cases were allowed access.
- 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, which killed 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.

b. Access for Humanitarian Organizations

International humanitarian organizations 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. On 24 October at 6:00pm Erez crossing was closed for all internationals, including UN agencies and international diplomat holders. It re-opened on 25 October and closed again the following day after a suicide bombing in Hadera that killed five and injured approximately 30 Israelis. The crossing was re-opened for internationals on 27 October at 2:00pm.

c. Access for Palestinian fishing (see Figure 2 and map page 6).

The fishing catch in October 2005 was significantly lower than during the same month last year and lower than in October 2000. This is partly related to a complete prohibition on Palestinian fishing from 24 September onwards following Palestinian militant rocket attacks against Israel - a prohibition that lasted until 6 October. Since January 2005, the Israeli authorities have permitted Palestinian fishing up to ten nautical miles from the Gaza Strip coastline compared to six nautical miles previously. Under the Oslo Accords, Gaza Strip fishermen are entitled to fish 20 nautical miles from the coast. Palestinian fishing is also prohibited one nautical mile north of the border with Egypt and one and a half nautical miles south of the border with Israel.

2. Gazan trade movement

Karni crossing (see Figure 3)

Most goods imported into the Gaza Strip and all exported goods pass through Karni crossing.² Truckloads of imported goods to Gaza dropped in October compared with the previous month and same month last year.

The decrease in the flow of goods in October follows several closures of the crossing since 24 September. The crossing was closed from 24 September to 9 October and closed again on 12 – 13, 17, 19 and 24 – 25 October. It was partially opened on 26 October for both imported and exported goods. However, on 27 – 28 and 30 – 31 October Karni crossing was only partially open for imported goods (food supplies only). At midday 31 October, the crossing opened again for the transit of exported goods.

3. Palestinians' access internationally from the Gaza Strip

Rafah passenger crossing is the point of access for Gazans traveling overseas and is located on the Gazan border with Egypt. Following the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip, Israel closed the crossing on 7 September. It remained closed with the exception of five partial openings on 3, 11 -

12, 23 -24 and 30 October. These partial openings resulted in an increase compared with September in the flow of people between Egypt and the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, the daily average number of people arriving or departing remained significantly lower than before Disengagement. Negotiations are taking place between the Palestinian, Israeli and Egyptian Authorities on the issue of Rafah crossing.

4. Restrictions on medical referrals in the Gaza Strip

Gazans referred for medical treatment outside the Gaza Strip experience access restrictions.³

a. Rafah crossing (see Figure 4)

Between 600 and 700 medical referrals per month require passage out of the Gaza Strip through Rafah crossing for secondary and tertiary treatment. The crossing opened for some of these referrals on 3, 11 - 12 and 30 October.⁴

b. Erez crossing (see Figure 5)

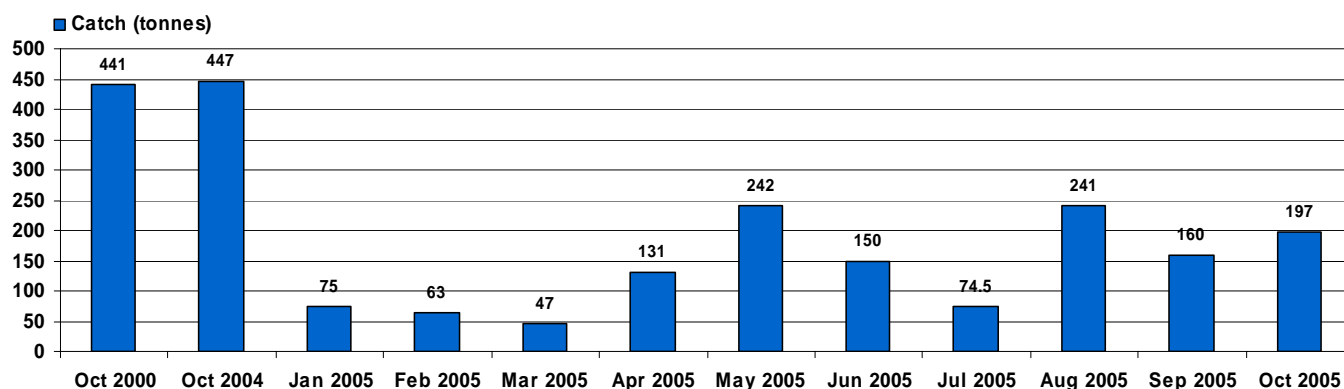
Following the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip, the Israeli Authorities announced that starting from 15 August only emergency medical referrals would be granted coordination to cross Erez for treatment in Israel. Since August, the number of requests and medical referrals granted passage has increased.⁵

Figure 1: Erez Crossing - Average Daily Labour Movement

	Oct 1999	Oct 00	Oct 04	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05	May 05	Jun 05	Jul 05	Aug 05	Sep 05	Oct 05
Workers to Israel	20,043	1,872	0	49	390	1,451	3,200	2,067	3,588	1,767	281	128	0
Traders to Israel	N/A	N/A		17	70	158	224	103	362	175	168	120	0
Workers to EIZ	2,617	1,747	0	9	278	537	487	259	458	233	201	41 ⁶	---

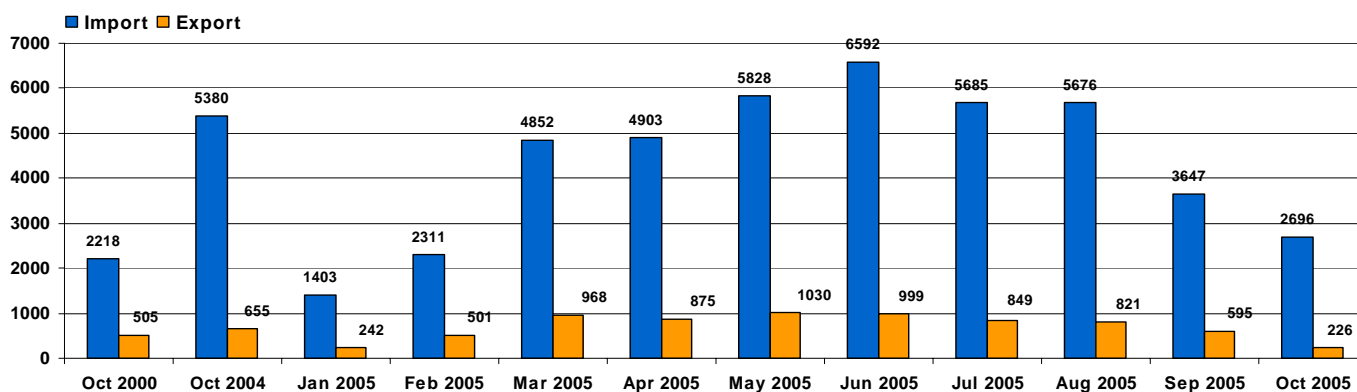
Source: Palestinian National Security Forces/Data. 1999 - 2004 data obtained from UNSCO

Figure 2: Gaza Fishing - Total Catch



Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture/Department of Fisheries

Figure 3: Karni Crossing - Truckloads of Imports / Exports



Source: Palestinian Ministry of National Economy; 2000 and 2004 data obtained from UNSCO.

Figure 4: Rafah Passenger Crossing - Daily average crossing

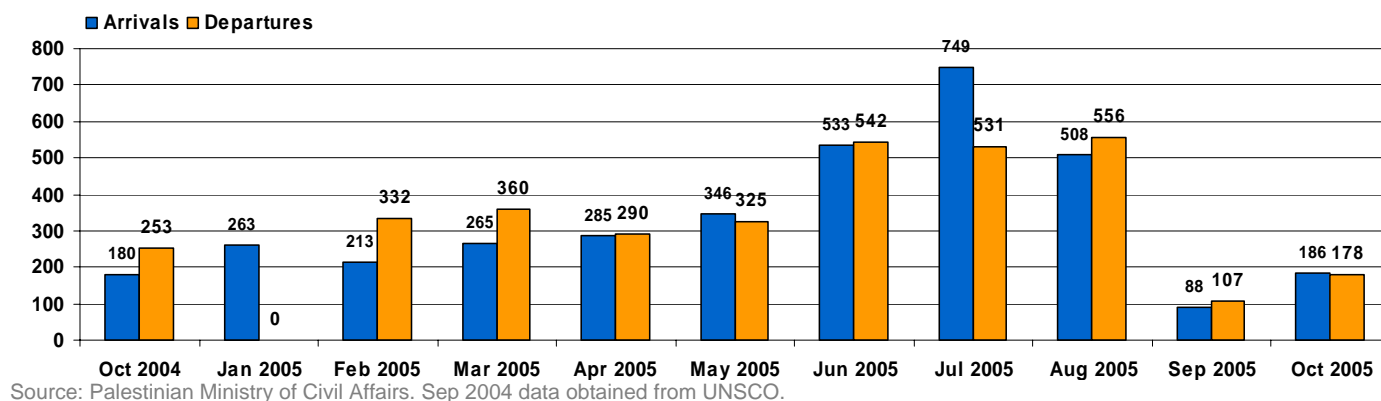
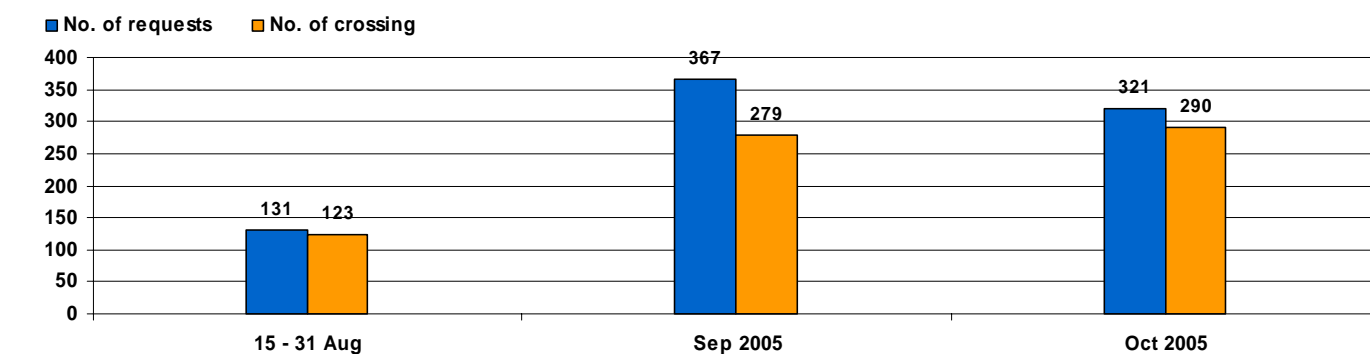


Figure 5: Erez Crossing - Total number of medical referral requests and crossing



¹ Erez crossing re-opened on 13 November. See coming Gaza Access report for November.

² The other three commercial crossings in the Gaza Strip are Rafah, Sufa and Nahal Oz.

³ Data from this section is obtained from the Palestinian Ministry of Health and WHO.

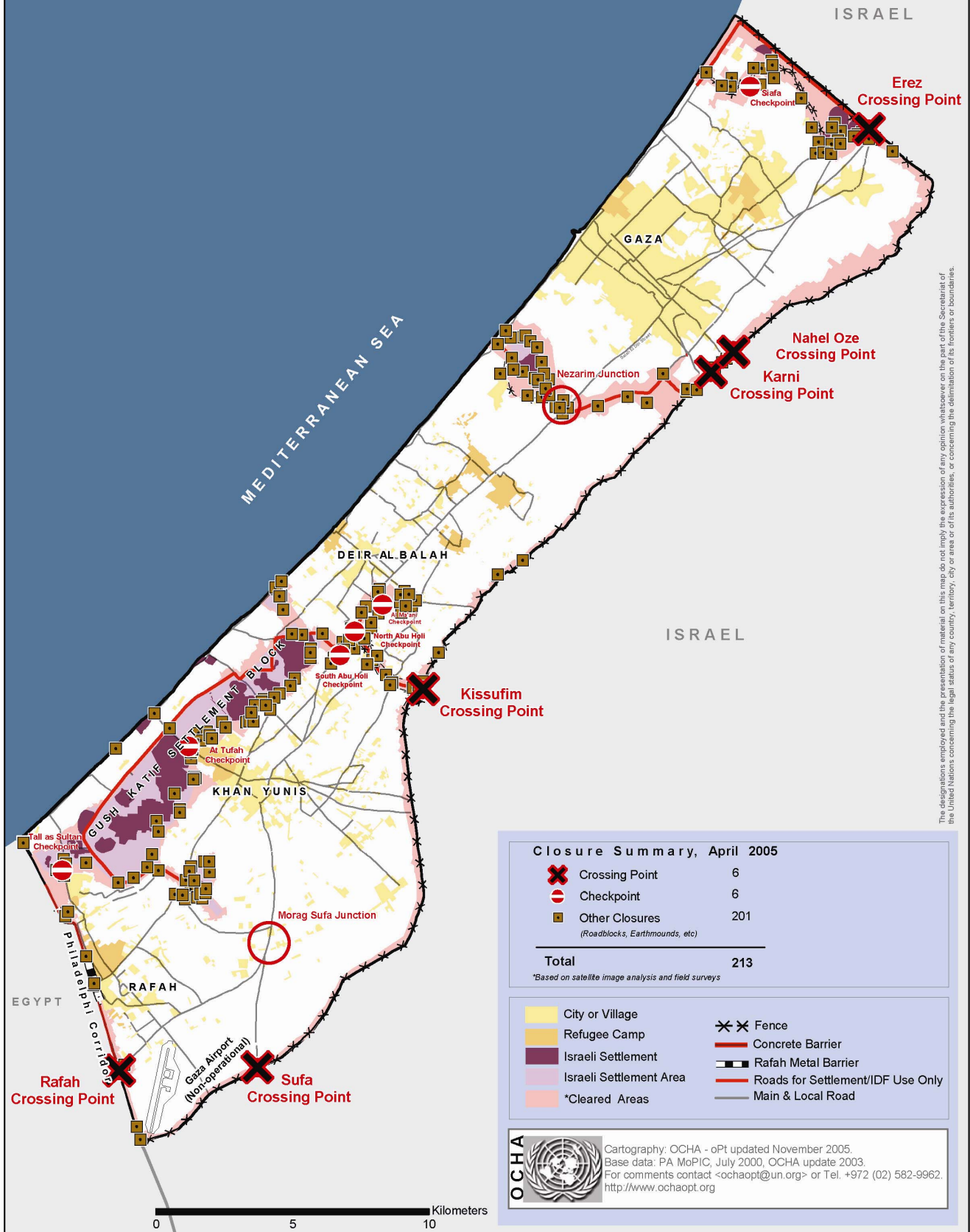
⁴ An estimated 120 referrals left on 3 October. It was not possible to obtain the numbers of medical referrals crossing out on the other days.

⁵ Data for August is based on the second half of the month only.

⁶ As of 12 September 2005 Erez Industrial Zone was no longer operational following the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip. The daily average number of workers crossing is calculated for the first 12 days of the month.

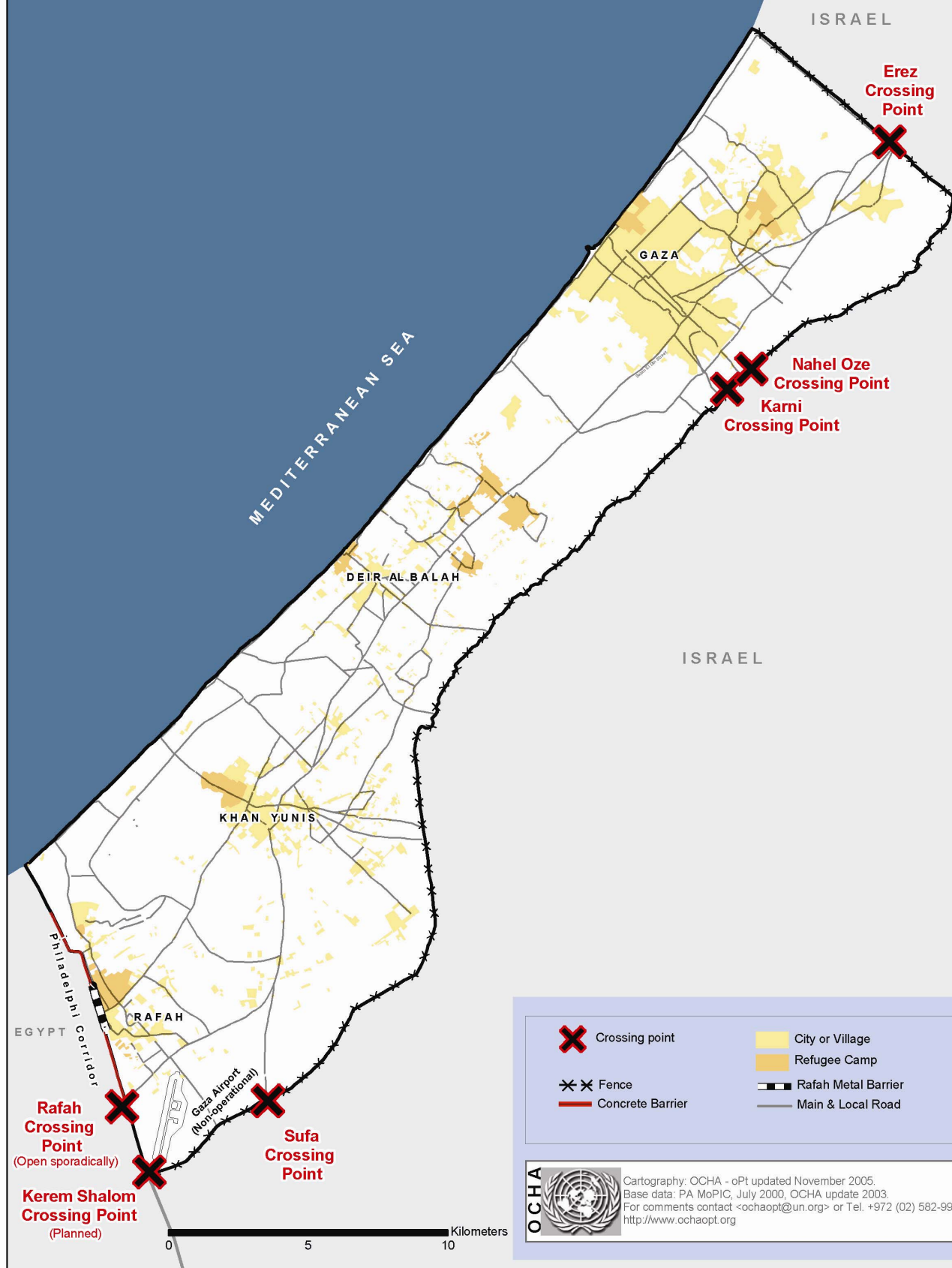
Gaza Pre-Disengagement

August 2005



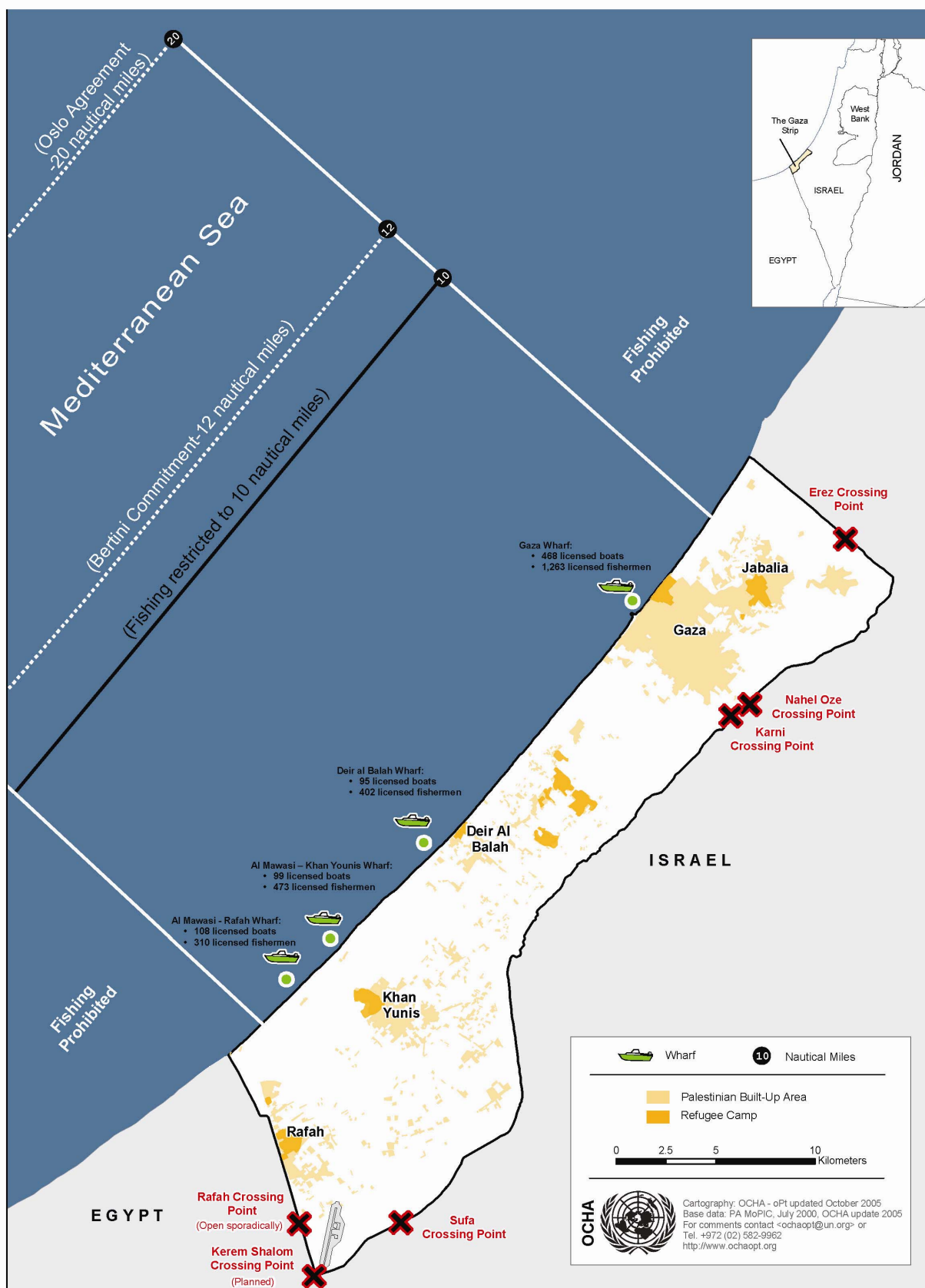
Gaza Post-Disengagement

September 2005



The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

THE GAZA STRIP: ACCESS FOR PALESTINIAN FISHING - SEPTEMBER 2005



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