



# MONTHLY REPORT

## December 2019

## Health Access

Barriers for patients in the occupied Palestinian territory

 **8,327**

referrals issued to access health facilities outside the Palestinian MoH

**2,916** Gaza

**5,315** West Bank

 **64%**

of Gaza patient permit applications approved

**48%**

of Gaza companion permit applications approved

 **81%**

of West Bank patient permit applications approved

**77%**

of companion permit applications approved

 **28**

Gaza patients called for security interview

**2**  
approved

**9**  
denied

**17**  
delayed

IN FOCUS

2019: Right to health in numbers

# Part 1 Referrals

## December Referrals by the Ministry of Health

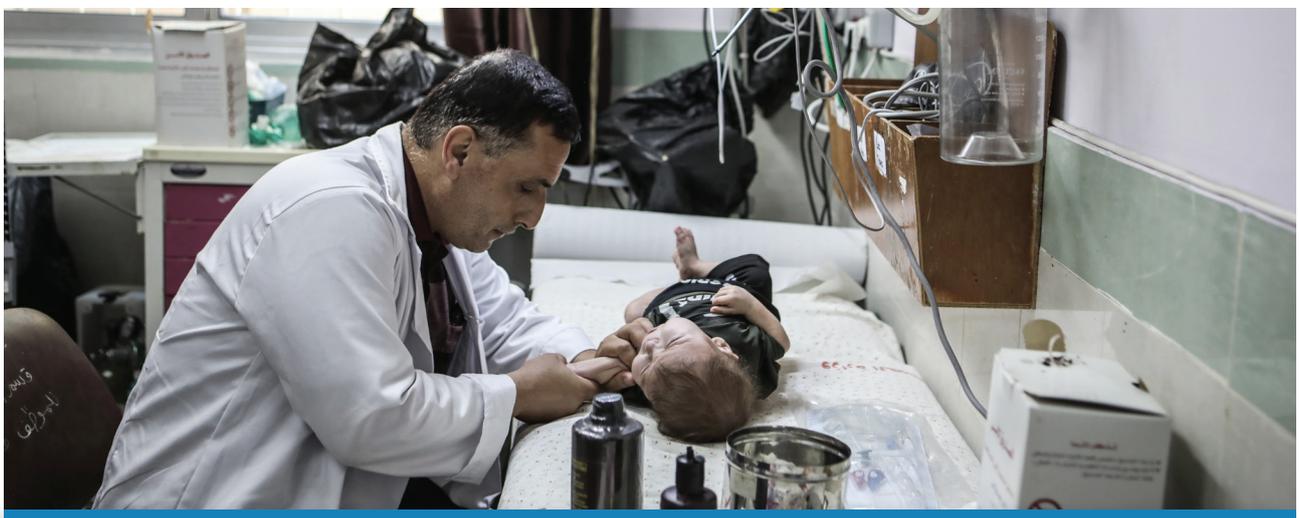
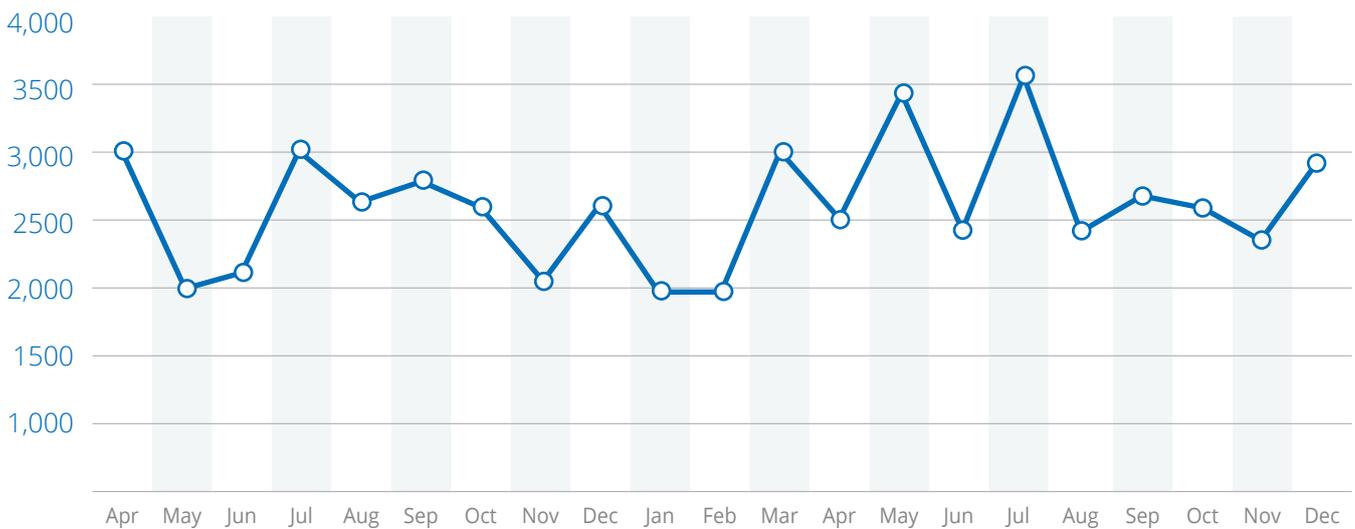
In December, the Palestinian Ministry of Health approved 8,327 referrals. 64% (5,315) of referrals were for West Bank patients, including 1,071 referrals for patients from Jerusalem, while 35% (2,916) of referrals were for Gaza patients and the origins of 96 referrals (1%) were not reported. Female patient referrals comprised 46% of the total. Reduced referrals to Israeli hospitals persisted, with 110 referrals to Israeli hospitals from Gaza (28% of the 2018 monthly average of 389), and 359 referrals for West Bank patients (30% of the 2018 monthly average of 1,185). Referrals from Gaza to Egypt comprised 10% (288) of total Gaza referrals compared to a monthly average of 245 in the first half of the year. Over two-thirds (72%) of Gaza referrals required Israeli-issued permits, while 10% required access through Rafah terminal to reach health facilities in Egypt. In the West Bank, 48% of referrals were to facilities in East Jerusalem or Israel, the majority of which require Israeli-issued permits to access care. Chart 1 shows the number of referral documents issued to patients in Gaza from April 2018 to December 2019.

 **2,916**  
Gaza

 **5,315**  
West Bank

referrals approved for financial coverage for healthcare outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health

**Chart 1** Total number of referrals approved for Gaza patients, April 2018 to December 2019



# Part 2 Access

## The Gaza Strip

There were 2,198 patient applications submitted to Israeli authorities to cross Erez for healthcare in December. A third (34%) were for children under 18 and 16% were for patients aged 60 years or older. 44% of applications were for female patients and 90% were for medical care funded by the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

More than three-fifths (63%) of applications to cross Erez were for appointments in East Jerusalem hospitals, a quarter (24%) for West Bank hospitals and 13% for Israeli hospitals. More than half of applications (56%) were for appointments at Makassed Hospital (29%) and Augusta Victoria Hospital (27%), both in East Jerusalem. The top five specialties accounted for 68% of permit applications: oncology (33%); paediatrics (10%); haematology (10%); cardiology (9%); and ophthalmology (6%). The remaining 32% were for 24 other specialties.

**Approved permit applications:** 1,408 (777 male; 631 female) or 64% of the 2,198 applications to cross Erez in December 2019 were approved, close to the average approval rate so far for 2019. Chart 2 shows the trend for Israeli responses to Gaza patient permit applications over the past 12 months. Over a third (36%) of permits approved were for children under 18 and a fifth (20%) were for patients aged 60 years or older.



**2,198**

patients applications

to Israeli authorities to cross Erez/ Beit Hanoun to access healthcare



**64%**

approved



**11%**

denied

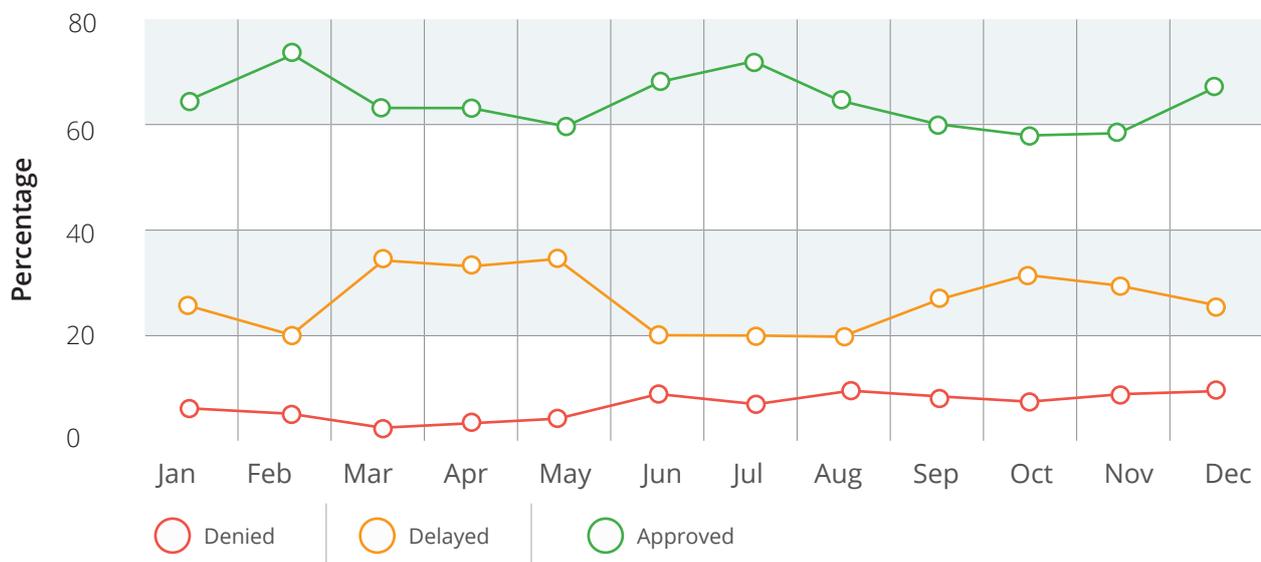


**25%**

delayed

### Chart 2

Israeli responses to Gaza patient permit applications, January to December 2019



**Denied care:** 242 patient applications (132 male; 110 female), or 11% of the total, were denied permits to cross Erez to reach healthcare in December. Those denied included 55 children under 18 and 18 patients aged 60 years or older. A quarter (25%) of denied applications were for appointments in oncology, 10% for orthopaedics, 9% for cardiology, and 7% each for internal medicine, ophthalmology, urology, paediatrics, and haematology. 88% of denied permit applications were for appointments at hospitals in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and 12% were for Israeli hospitals.

**Delayed care:** 548 patient applications (322 male; 226 female), or 25% of the total, were delayed access to care, receiving no definitive response to their application by the date of their hospital appointment. Of these, 180 applications were for children under the age of 18 and 50 applications were for patients aged 60 years or older. Almost a third (31%) of those delayed had appointments for oncology, 10% for haematology, 9% for paediatrics, 8% for cardiology, 7% for ophthalmology, and 7% for internal medicine. The remaining 28% were for 18 other specialties. The majority of delayed applications (499 or 91%) were 'under study' at the time of appointment.

## Access for those injured during the Great March of Return

As of 31 December 2019, according to Gaza's Coordination and Liaison Office, there had been 604 patient applications to Israeli authorities for permits to access healthcare through Erez/Beit Hanoun crossing by those injured during the Great March of Return demonstrations, since 30 March 2018. The approval rate for this group is significantly lower than the overall approval rate for patient permit applications to exit Gaza, with 17% (105) approved, 28% (167) denied and 55% (332) delayed.

## Security interrogation

In December, 28 (19 male; 9 female) patients, aged 20 to 68 years, were called for security interrogation as a prerequisite to processing of their permit applications. This is the highest number of patients requested for security interrogation since November 2017, when 58 patients were called. 13 patients had appointments for oncology, 4 for nuclear medicine, 3 for urology, 2 for vascular surgery, 2 for orthopaedics, and 1 each for cardiology, haematology, neurosurgery, and general surgery. Two of them were approved, nine were denied and 17 were delayed.

## Patient companions

In December, there were 2,432 companion permit applications to Israeli authorities to cross Erez to accompany patients. These applications include parents or other companions applying to accompany children. Only one companion is allowed to accompany each Gaza patient. In December, 1,158 patient companion applications (48% of the total) were approved, 407 applications (17%) were denied and the remaining 867 (36%) were delayed, receiving no definitive response by the time of the patient's appointment. Chart 3 shows the trend for Israeli responses to patient companion applications over the last 12 months.

 **28**

patients called for security interrogation

 **2 approved**

 **9 denied**

 **17 delayed**

 **2,432**  
patient companion applications

to Israeli authorities to cross Erez to accompany patients

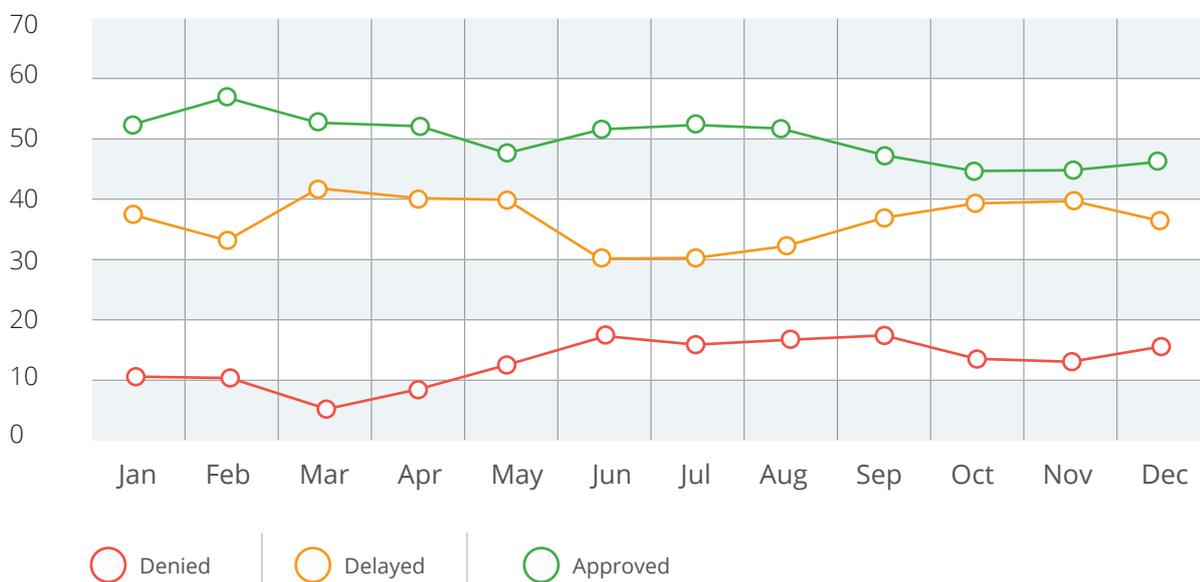
 **48% approved**

 **17% denied**

 **36% pending**

### Chart 3

Israeli responses to patient companion applications, January to December 2019



## Patients and companions crossing Erez

The Palestinian General Authority of Civil Affairs reported that 1,832 Gaza patients and 1,501 companions crossed Erez in December to access hospitals outside the Gaza Strip. Of these, 104 patients were transferred by back-to-back ambulance with 103 companions. During the month, Erez crossing was open for 27 days for daytime working hours and closed on 4 days (4 Saturdays).

 **1,832**  
patients  
crossed Erez for healthcare

 **1,501**  
patient companions  
crossed Erez

## Rafah crossing – Egypt



During December, Rafah crossing was open for humanitarian cases in both directions for 22 days, two days for pilgrims only, and was closed for 9 days (4 Fridays, 4 Saturdays and 1 day closed by Egyptian authorities). According to the terminal authority, 7,088 travelers crossed towards Egypt, among them 1,391 patients crossing for healthcare with 560 companions. 112 patients were transferred by ambulance with 94 companions. Seven bodies of deceased persons were returned to Gaza. No medical aid or medical delegates entered via Rafah terminal during the month.

## The West Bank

In December, there were 8,380 applications by West Bank patients to the Israeli authorities to access healthcare in East Jerusalem and Israel. Restrictions on the movement of Palestinians from the West Bank to Israel and East Jerusalem are less severe for certain sections of the population. Many women older than 50 years of age and men older than 55 years of age, as well as children under 13 years traveling with an approved adult, are exempted from the requirement to obtain a permit to travel – provided they are not traveling on a Saturday, before 8am or after 7pm. Of West Bank patient applications, 6,798 (81%) were approved, 1026 (12%) were unsuccessful and 556 (7%) were pending reply at the time of monthly reporting. Of the 9,262 patient companion applications, 7,114 (77%) were approved, 1,417 (15%) were unsuccessful and 731 (8%) were pending reply at the time of monthly reporting.

 **8,380**  
patient  
applications

for Israeli permits to access  
healthcare in East Jerusalem  
and Israel

 **81% approved**

 **12% unsuccessful**

 **7% pending**  
at the time of monthly  
reporting

 **9,262**  
patient companion  
applications

to access healthcare in East  
Jerusalem and Israel

 **77% approved**

 **15% unsuccessful**

 **8% pending**  
at the time of monthly  
reporting

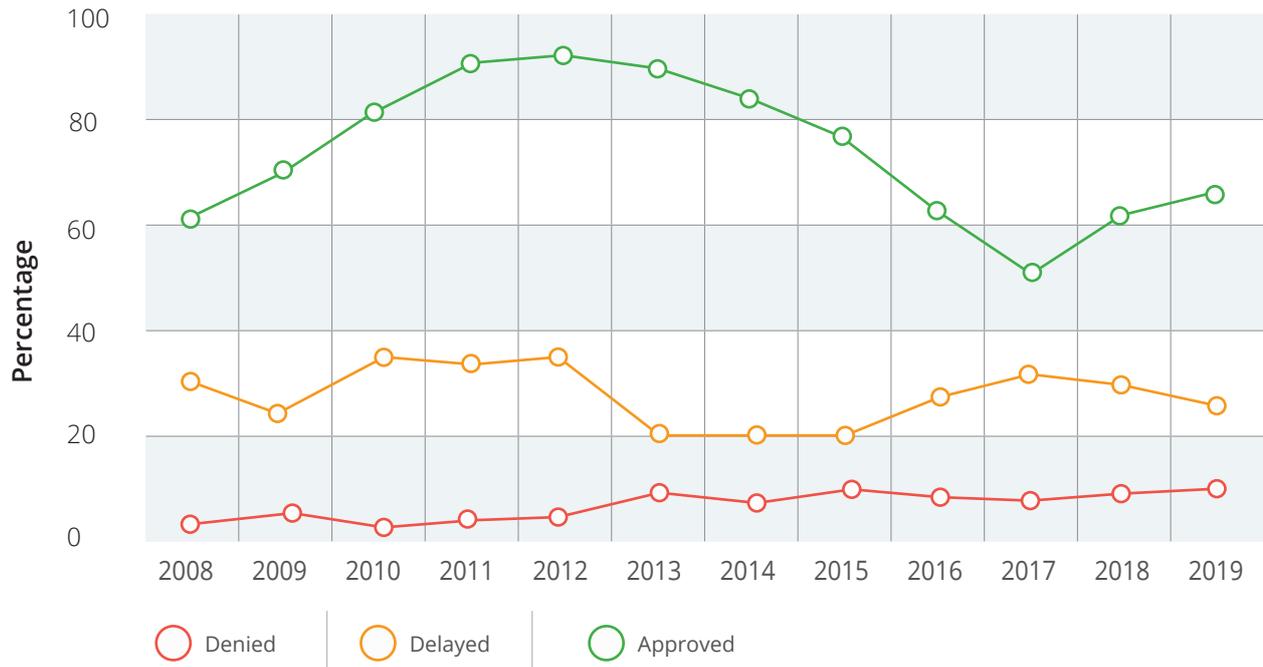
# In focus

## 2019: Right to health in numbers

### Gaza Strip

**Chart 4**

Annual trend for Gaza patient access (by year and response) 2008-2019



### Patient access

#### Gender

♀ 46%  
were for female patients

♂ 54%  
were for male patients

#### Age Groups

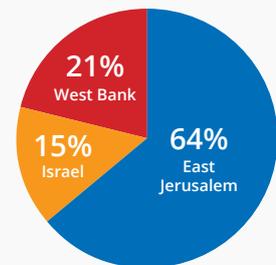
👤 31%  
were for children < 18

👴 17%  
were for elderly patients >60

#### Financial Coverage

💰 91.5%  
of Gaza referrals were financially covered by the MoH

#### Destination & coverage



**31%** referred for cancer care

#### Hospitals

🏥 57% of appointments were to Makassed and Augusta Victoria Hospital

### Gaza companion access

26,796 applications for patient companions

-  **50%** approved
-  **13%** denied
-  **36%** delayed

### Great March of Return

169 applications for persons injured in GMR

-  **14%** approved
-  **23 %** denied
-  **64 %** delayed

### Security interrogation

 **70 patients and 76 companions**

requested for security interview as a prerequisite to health access number

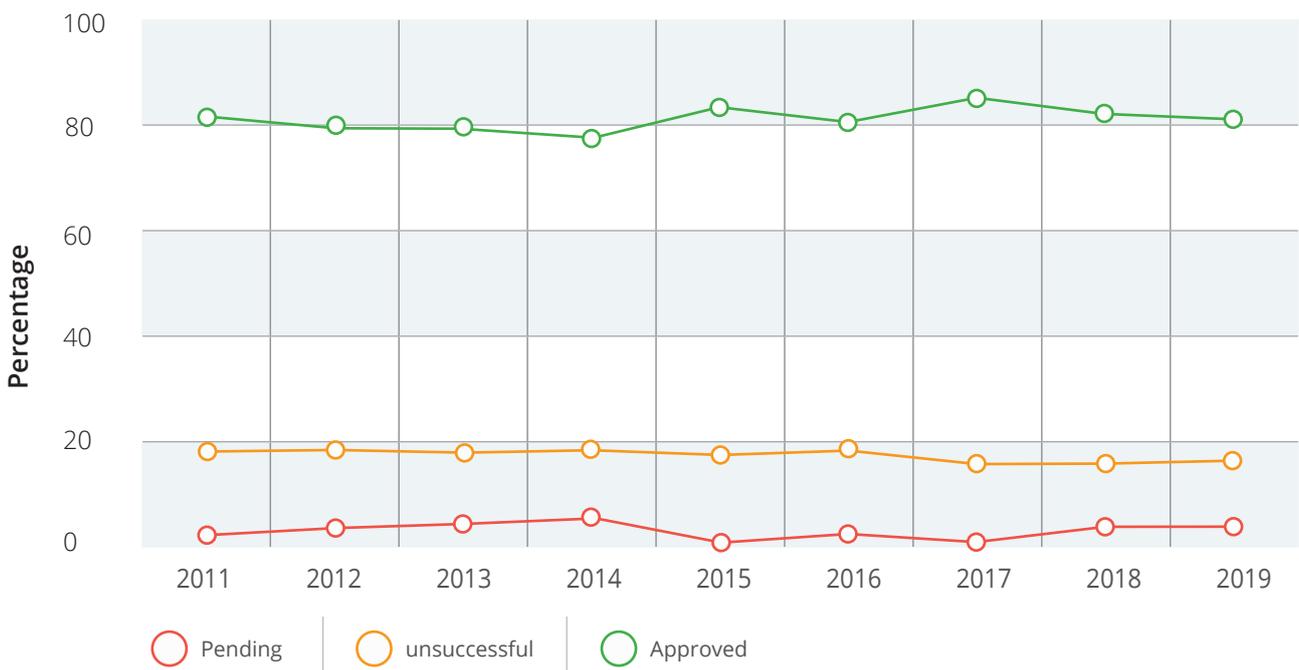
 **2 patient companions arrested**

- 1** arrested returning from accompanying his wife
- 1** arrested after security interrogation

## West Bank

**Chart 5**

Annual trend for West Bank patient and companion access (by year and response) 2008-2019



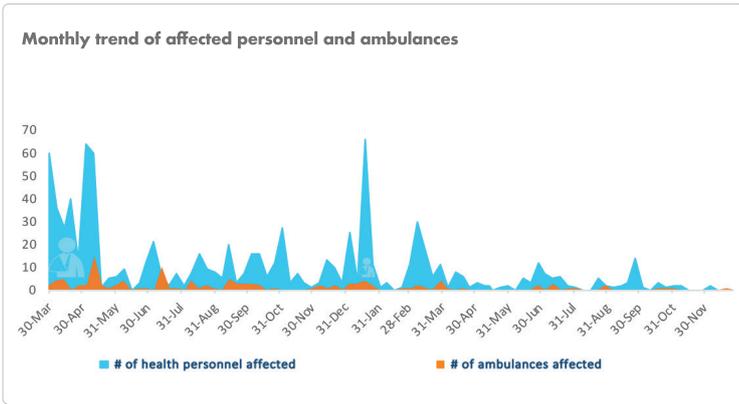
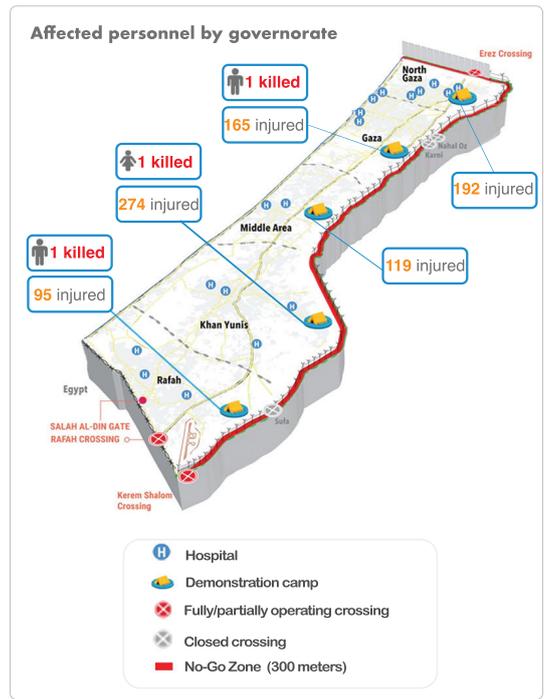
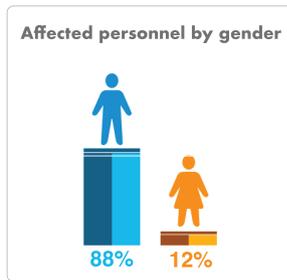
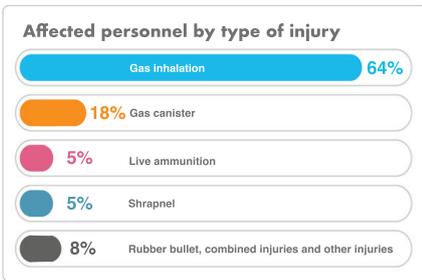
# Attacks on health care in Gaza



## Attacks on health care during the Gaza Great March of Return

March 2018 to December 2019

<p><b>567</b></p> <p><b>incidents</b></p>	<p><b>Affected health care personnel</b></p> <p><b>3 killed</b></p> <p><b>845 injured</b></p>	<p><b>Affected health care transport</b></p> <p><b>119 ambulances</b></p> <p><b>10 transports</b></p>	<p><b>Affected health care facilities</b></p> <p><b>1 hospital</b></p> <p><b>6 health facilities</b></p>
---	---	---	--



# Attacks on health care in West Bank

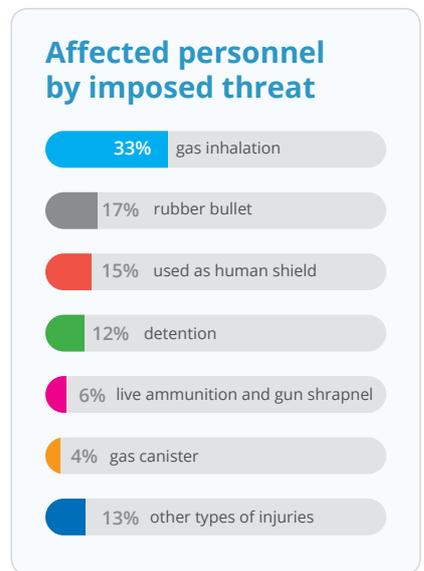
**66 incidents**

in West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

**Affected health care personnel**

52 directly affected

- 1 health worker killed
- 34 health staff physically injured



**Affected health care transport**

- 3 ambulances attacked or damaged
- 31 ambulances access affected

**Affected health care facilities**

- 2 hospital incursions
- 3 mobile clinics prevented from accessing communities