

# Movement in and out of Gaza: update covering August 2022

26 Sep 2022

## Highlights

- On 2-7 August 2022, the Israeli authorities closed their border with Gaza, citing security concerns, blocking any movement of people or goods; an escalation of hostilities took place on 5-7 August.
- The closure forced the Gaza Power Plant, which depends on fuel imports, to shut down for two days.
- Overall, August 2022 recorded fewer exits of people and goods into or through Israel compared with July. Fewer goods exited to Egypt too.
- However, more Palestinians exited to Egypt compared with any single month since July 2013 and more goods entered Gaza through either Egypt or Israel compared with July.

**Background:** Longstanding restrictions on the movement of people and goods to and from Gaza have undermined the living conditions of the approximately two million Palestinian residents. Many of the current restrictions, originally imposed by the Israeli authorities in the early 1990s, were intensified after June 2007, following the Hamas takeover of Gaza when the Israeli authorities imposed a blockade. While recently there has been some easing in importation restrictions, they continue to reduce access to livelihoods, essential services and housing, disrupt family life, and undermine people's hopes for a secure and prosperous future. The situation has been compounded by the restrictions imposed by the Egyptian authorities at Rafah crossing.



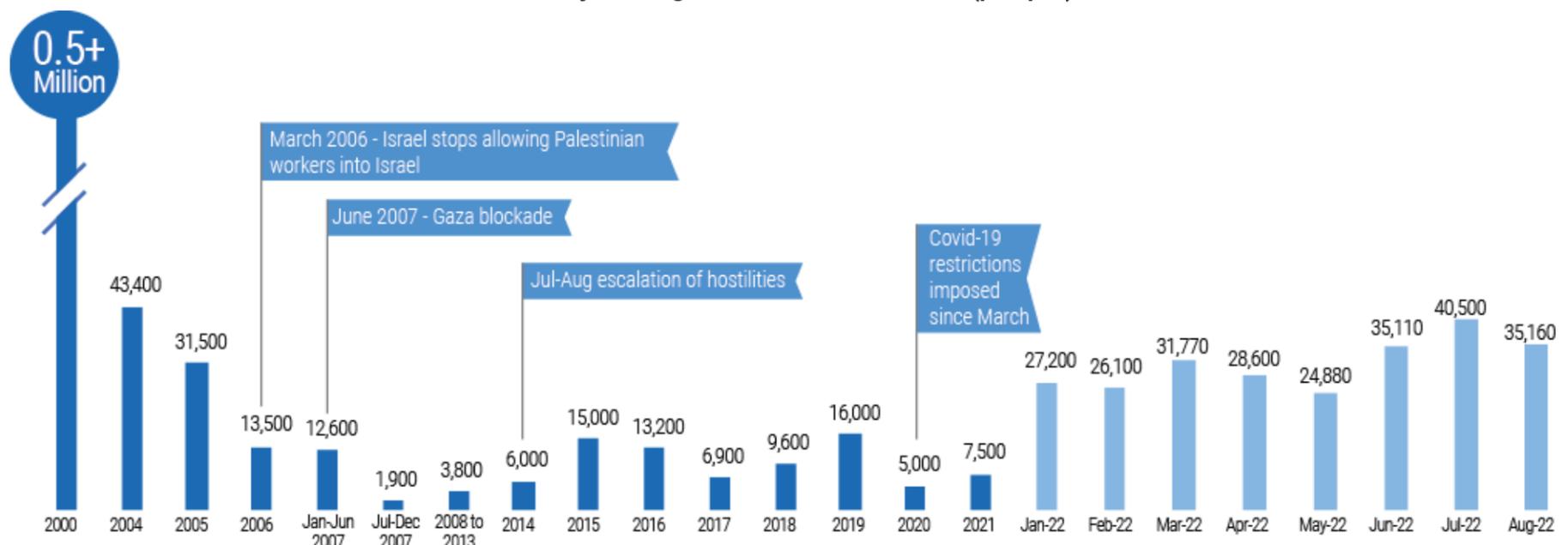
Five-year-old Ahlam needed medical treatment that is unavailable in Gaza, but her parents' exit permit application was delayed for several months, until humanitarian partners stepped in. In early August, she and her mother were in a Jerusalem hospital as hostilities escalated back home. Photo by OCHA

## Movement of people to Israel and the West Bank

- On 2-7 August, the Israeli authorities closed their border with Gaza, citing security reasons, ahead of and during the 5-7 August escalation of hostilities.
- Overall, during August, the Israeli authorities allowed nearly 35,160 exits of people from Gaza (in most cases, travellers exited multiple times). This is 14 per cent lower than the number of exits in July, but more than four times higher than the monthly average in 2021. This is only about 7 per cent of the monthly average of exits in 2000, before the imposition of the category-based access restrictions.
- About 86 per cent of the exits were by Palestinians allowed out under the 'traders' or 'economic needs' permit category, most of whom are employed as day labourers in Israel.
- Some 7 per cent of the exits were patients referred for medical treatment in the West Bank or Israel, and their companions. A total of 2,067 exit-permit applications were submitted for medical appointments scheduled for August, of which 42 per cent were not approved on time.

**Background:** Palestinians are banned from leaving Gaza via Israel, including for passage to the West Bank, unless they obtain an Israeli-issued exit permit. Only those belonging to certain categories, primarily traders (including daily labourers), patients and their companions, and aid workers, can apply for such permits. Other people are not eligible for a permit, even if they do not pose a security risk according to the Israeli authorities. In most cases, the Israeli authorities do not provide specific reasons for the rejection of an application. If an application is approved, the permit holder may travel through the Israeli-controlled Erez crossing, which operates during the daytime, from Sunday to Thursday, and on Fridays for urgent cases and foreign nationals only.

Monthly average of exits to/via Israel (people)



## Movement of people to Egypt

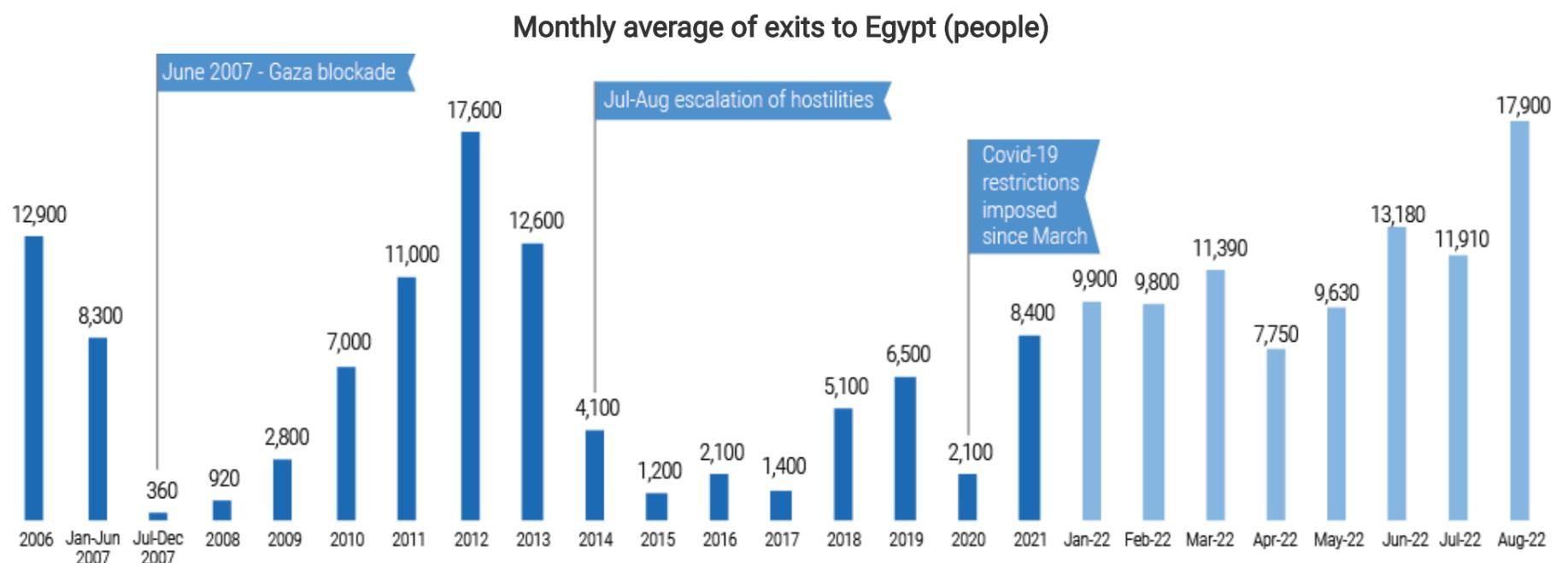
- The Egyptian authorities allowed about 17,900 exits in August (some travellers may have exited multiple times). This the highest number of exits into Egypt since July 2013. It is 50 per cent more than the exits

**Background:** Palestinians wishing to leave Gaza via Egypt must register with the local Palestinian authorities two to four weeks in advance. People may also apply directly to the Egyptian authorities, using the services of a private company. The procedures and decisions by both authorities lack transparency. Those that are approved exit through the Rafah Crossing, controlled by the Egyptian

allowed in July, and more than twice the monthly average in 2021, when COVID-19 restrictions largely applied. The uptrend is attributed to the end of the summer holiday, where visitors return to their countries of residence.

- **Some 486 people were denied entry to Egypt by the Egyptian authorities**, compared with 271 denials in July 2022.

*authorities, which operates from Sundays to Thursdays. The journey through the Sinai desert is often lengthy and includes multiple stops for checks by Egyptian security forces.*



## Incoming goods

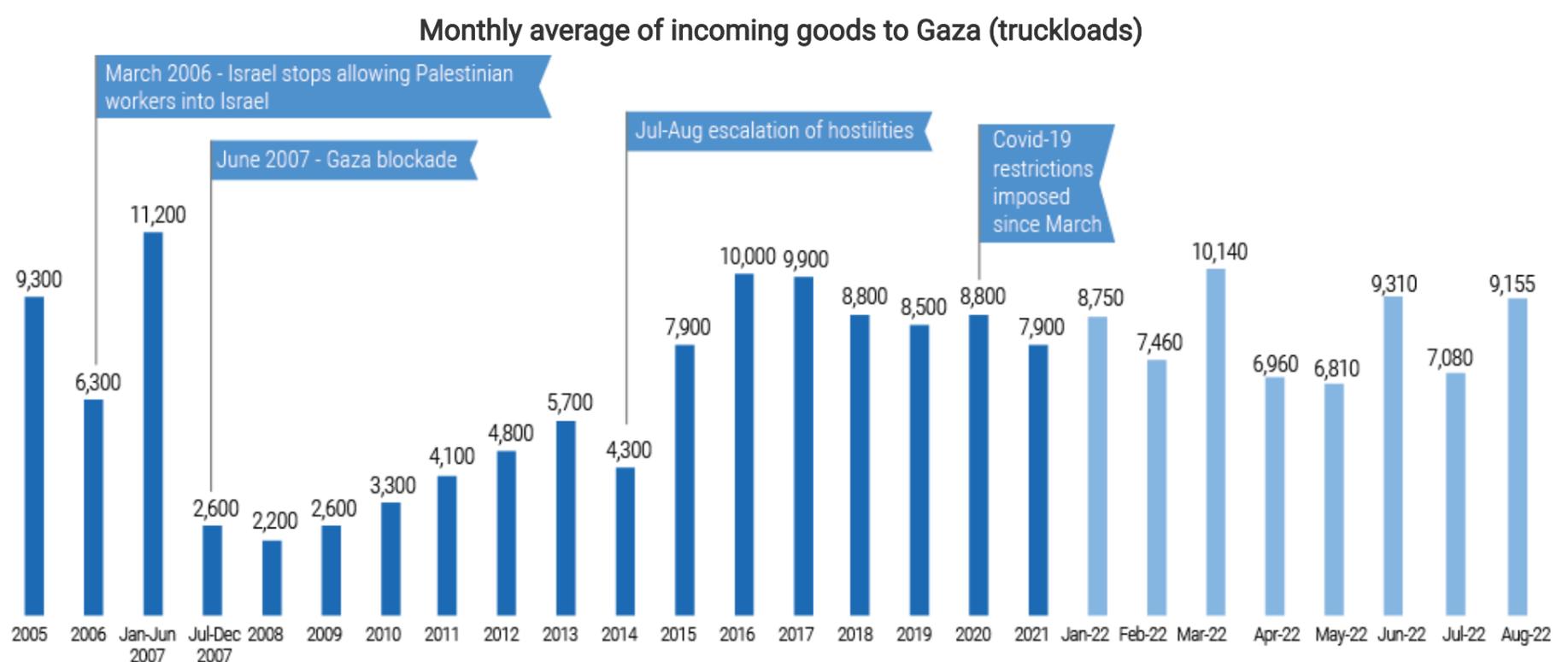
### General goods (excluding fuel and gas)

- **On 2-7 August, the Israeli authorities closed their border with Gaza, citing security reasons, ahead of and during the 5-7 August escalation of hostilities.**
- **Overall, during August, 9,155 truckload of goods entered Gaza, 29 per cent more than in July, and 16 per cent more than the monthly average in 2021.** This was 18 per cent lower than the monthly average on the eve of the blockade in 2007, although Gaza's population has grown by more than 55 per cent since then.
- **Of the goods entered, 43 per cent were construction materials and 23 per cent were food supplies.** About 4 per cent were humanitarian aid facilitated by international organizations, including food and medical supplies.
- **Some 61 per cent of the goods entered via Israel.** The volume was 15 per cent higher than the previous month, and 17 per cent below the monthly average in 2021.

**Background:** Since the imposition of the blockade in 2007, the Israeli authorities have restricted the entry into Gaza of goods they consider having a dual (civilian and military) use, such as building materials, certain medical equipment, and some agricultural items. Some of these goods may be allowed entry, following a lengthy application and review process. It is worth noting that, recently, a limited number of these items have been allowed to enter Gaza (e.g.: cement and steel bars). The entry of all goods from or via Israel (including non-restricted goods) is only possible via the Kerem Shalom crossing, following prior coordination with Israeli authorities. Since 2018, goods have also entered Gaza regularly from Egypt, via the Rafah crossing, controlled by the Egyptian authorities, and then through the adjacent Salah Ad Din Gate, controlled by the local authorities.



- **Of the goods entered via Israel, over 23 per cent were construction materials** (mainly aggregates, cement, and steel bars). This was 57 per cent below the monthly average recorded in 2021.
- **Some 39 per cent of the overall goods entered from Egypt, with the Rafah crossing allowing imports during 13 days.** This is 59 per cent higher than the volume in July, and more than twice the monthly average in 2021.
- **Of the goods entering from Egypt, more than 72 per cent were construction materials.** Most of the remaining goods were food items.



## Fuel and gas

- The volume of petrol and diesel entering Gaza from Israel and Egypt in August 2022 increased by 38 per cent compared with July, and it is 6 per cent higher than the monthly average in 2021.
- The volume of industrial diesel for the Gaza power plant (GPP) slightly decreased compared with the July. Still, this is 5 per cent more than the monthly average in 2021. The GPP was forced to shut down for two days due to lack of fuel by the end of the Israeli 2-7 August closure.
- Cooking gas imports slightly decreased compared with July. However, the volume of these imports was still 10 per cent higher than the monthly average in 2021.

## Outgoing goods

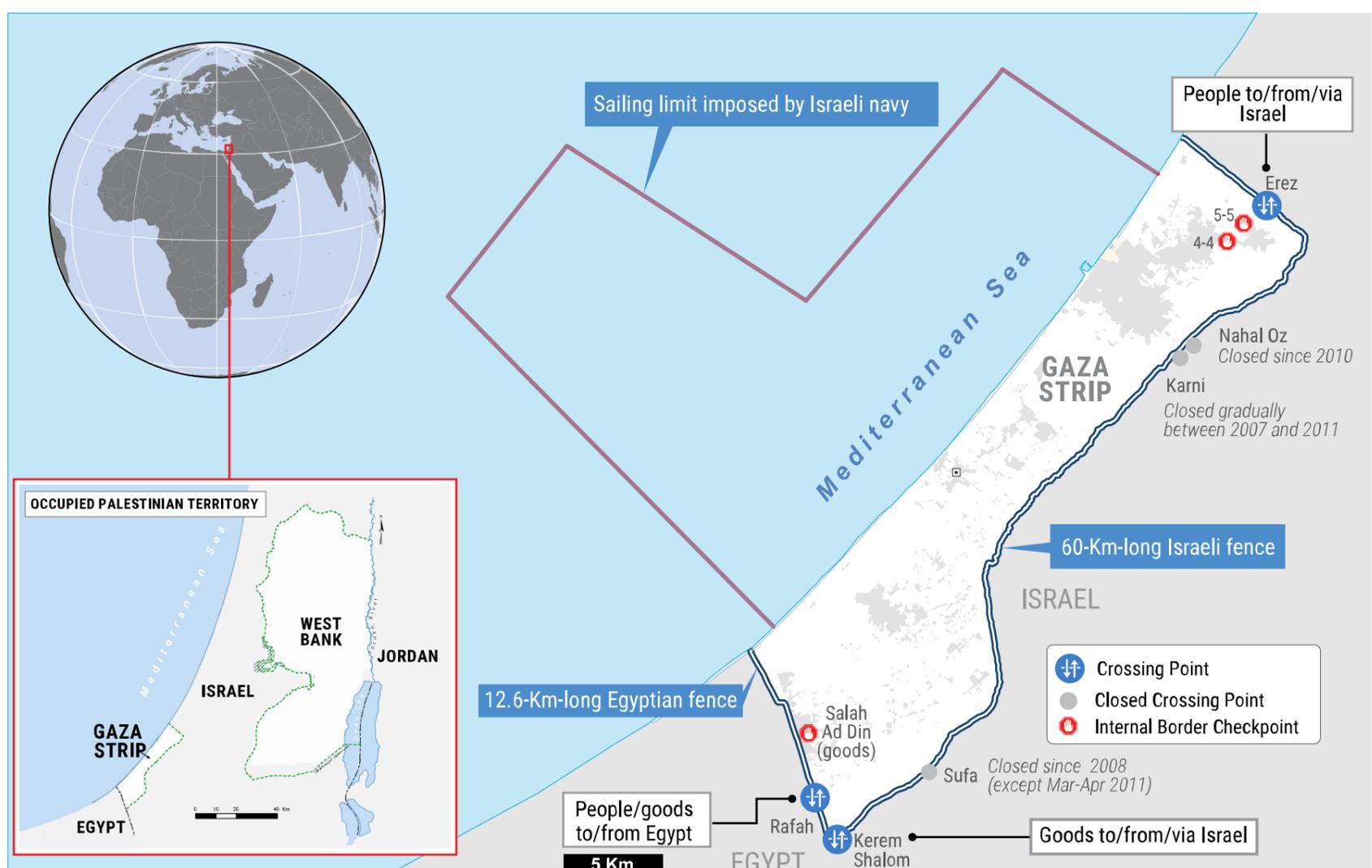
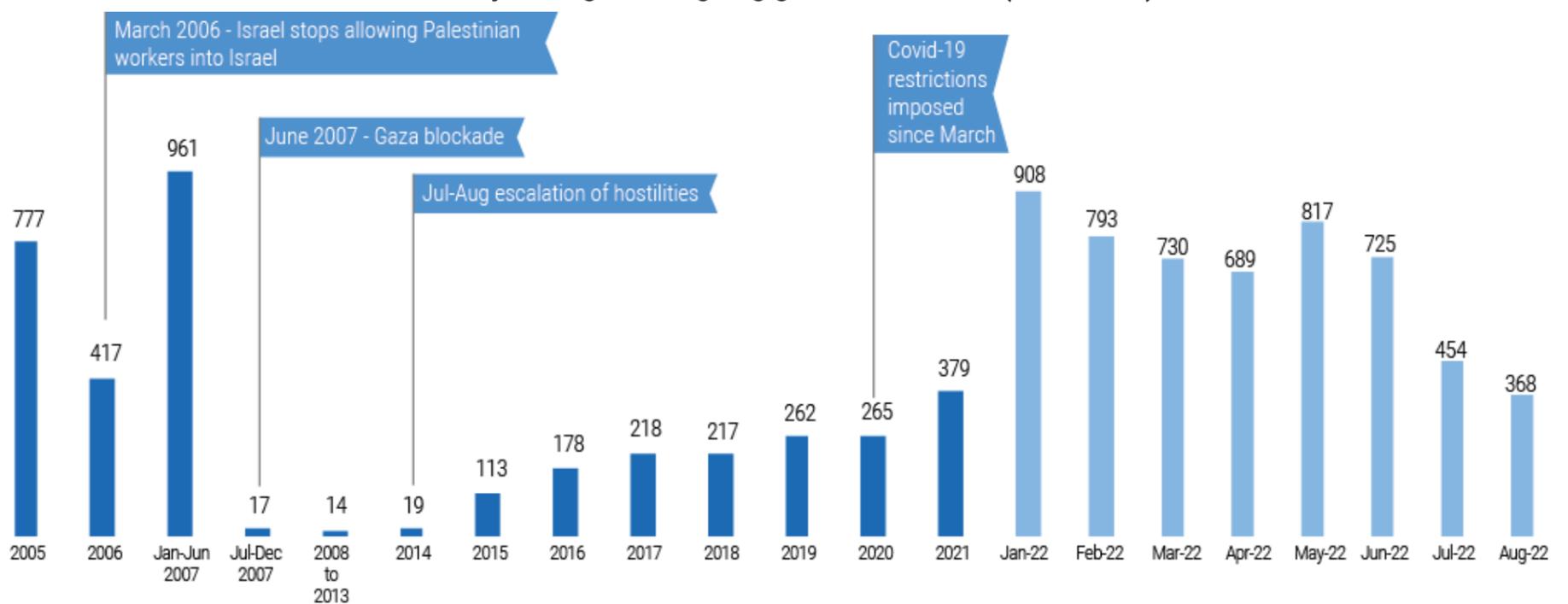
- **In August, the Israeli authorities allowed 192 truckloads to exit Gaza, 27 per cent fewer than in the previous month which is the lowest number since the beginning of 2022.** This was also 80 per cent below the monthly average on the eve of the blockade in 2007.

**Background:** Most products traded outside of Gaza are transported to markets via the Israeli-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing, where various restrictions apply. The exit of goods to the West Bank and Israel, the main markets, was totally banned between 2007 and 2014, then gradually reinstated. Since August 2021, certain goods have been exported to Egypt, via the Salah Ad Din gate and Rafah crossing.



- The Israeli authorities heavily restricted the exit of fish in August.
- Some 33 per cent of the outgoing goods went to the West Bank and 67 per cent to Israel. Vegetables accounted for 62 per cent of the goods and textiles for 19 per cent, while the remainder included fish, aluminium scrap used copper, and furniture.
- Another 176 truckloads exited Gaza to Egypt, carrying scrap iron, scrap copper, scrap aluminium, and used batteries. This is 9 per cent lower than the previous month.

Monthly average of outgoing goods from Gaza (truckloads)



**Data source:** Ministry of National Economy in Gaza. **More data:** [ochaopt.org/data/crossings](https://ochaopt.org/data/crossings)

