

# Movement in and out of Gaza: update covering April 2023

23 May 2023

## Highlights

- In April 2023, the Israeli authorities slightly increased the number of exit permits given to Gaza residents for work purposes.
- However, the movement of both people and goods decreased, with most people still not eligible to apply for permits.

**Background:** Longstanding restrictions on the movement of people and goods to and from Gaza have undermined the living conditions of its over 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. Despite some easing of import restrictions since 2021, the remaining limitations continue to hinder access to livelihoods, essential services, and housing, disrupting family life and undermining 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.



An active marketplace in Gaza City where most of the consumable commodities seem available, yet limited purchasing power persists. Photo credit: OCHA.



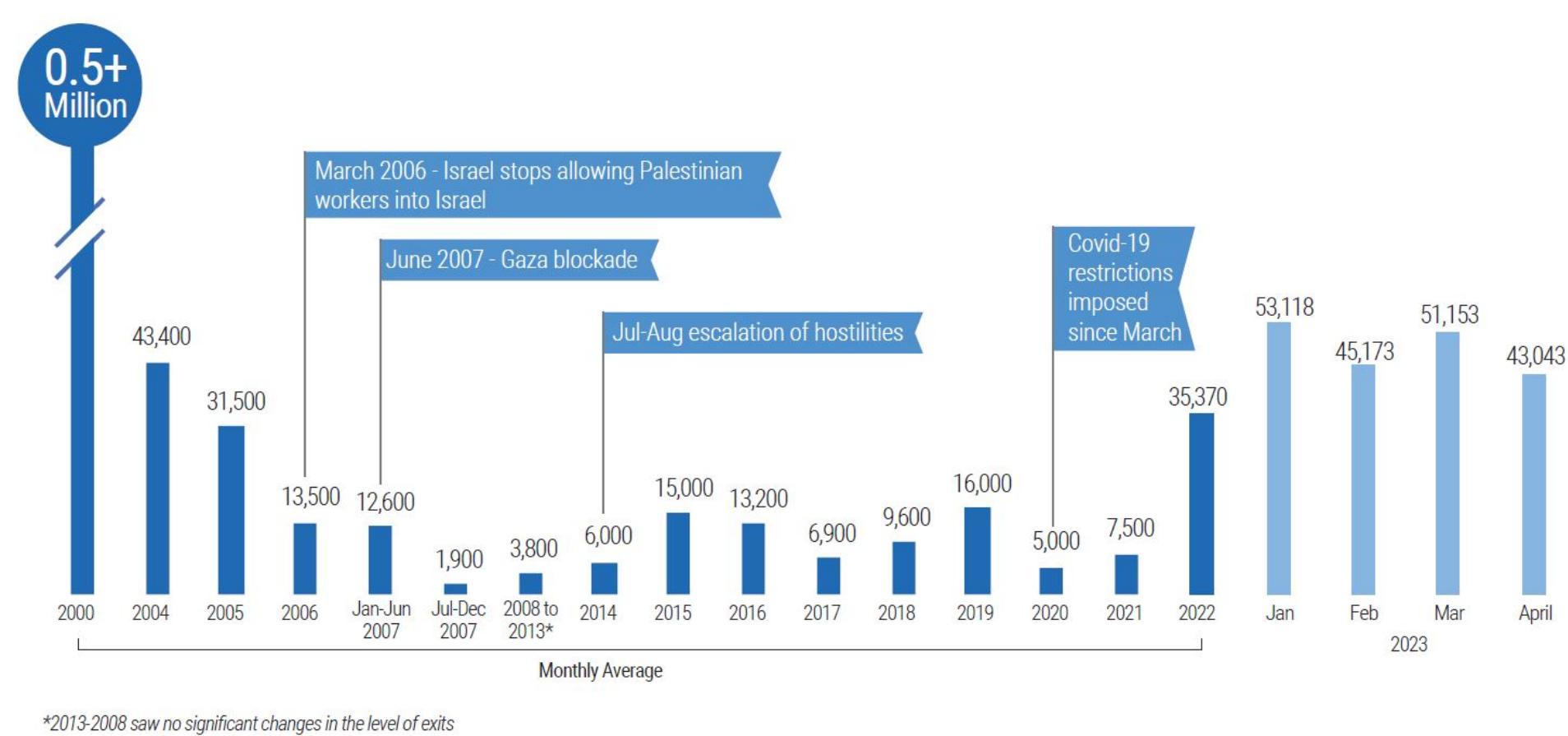


## Movement of people to Israel and the West Bank

- In April, the Israeli authorities allowed 43,043 exits of people from Gaza (in most cases, travelers exited multiple times). This is 16 per cent lower than in March, but 22 per cent higher than the monthly average in 2022. However, it is 91 per cent lower than the monthly average in 2000, before the imposition of category-based restrictions by the Israeli authorities.
- Up to 90 per cent of the exits were by Palestinians allowed out for work-related purposes, most of whom are employed as day labourers in Israel. The Israeli authorities increased the number of exit permits for such purposes from 21,306 in March to 21,835 in April.
- Five per cent of the exits were by patients referred for medical treatment in the West Bank or Israel and their companions. Some 1,211 exit-permit applications were submitted to the Israeli authorities for medical appointments scheduled for April. Of these, 22 per cent were not approved on time, compared with 18 per cent in March. [Click here for more information.](#)

**Background:** Palestinians are banned from exiting 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 day labourers, traders, patients and their companions, and aid workers, may apply for such permits. Other people are not eligible for a permit even if according to the Israeli authorities they do not pose a security risk. In many 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

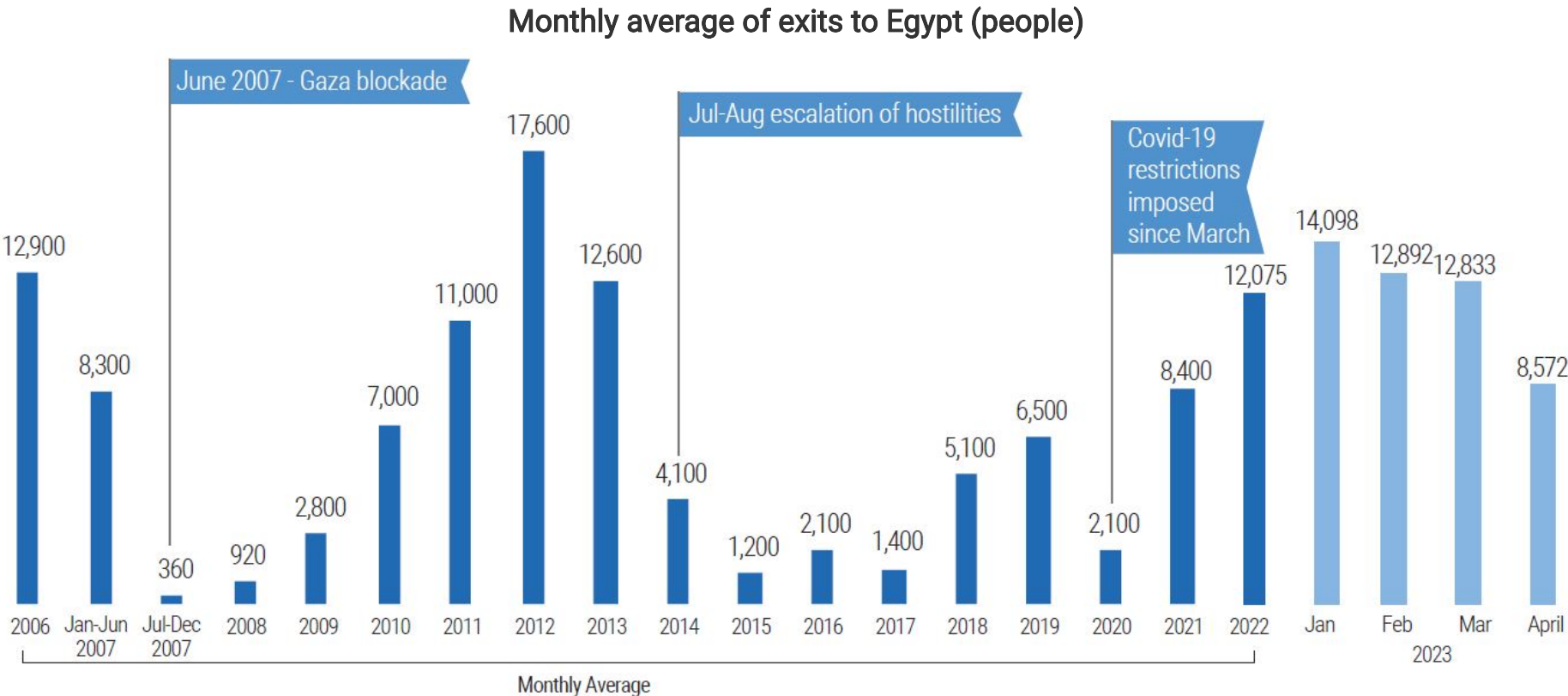
- In April, the Egyptian authorities allowed 8,572 exits of people from Gaza (some travelers may have exited multiple times). This is 33 per cent below the number

**Background:** Palestinians wishing to exit Gaza via Egypt must register with the local Palestinian authorities two to four weeks in advance. People may also apply to the Egyptian authorities, using the services of a private company. The procedures and decisions by both authorities lack transparency. Approved passengers exit

of exits in March, and 29 per cent below the monthly average in 2022.

- **A total of 324 people were denied entry to Egypt, compared with 132 denials in March 2023.** The grounds for denial are typically not provided, but according to the local Palestinian authorities, Egyptian authorities have often cited security concerns or specific limits that often apply to men aged 18-40.

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



## Incoming goods

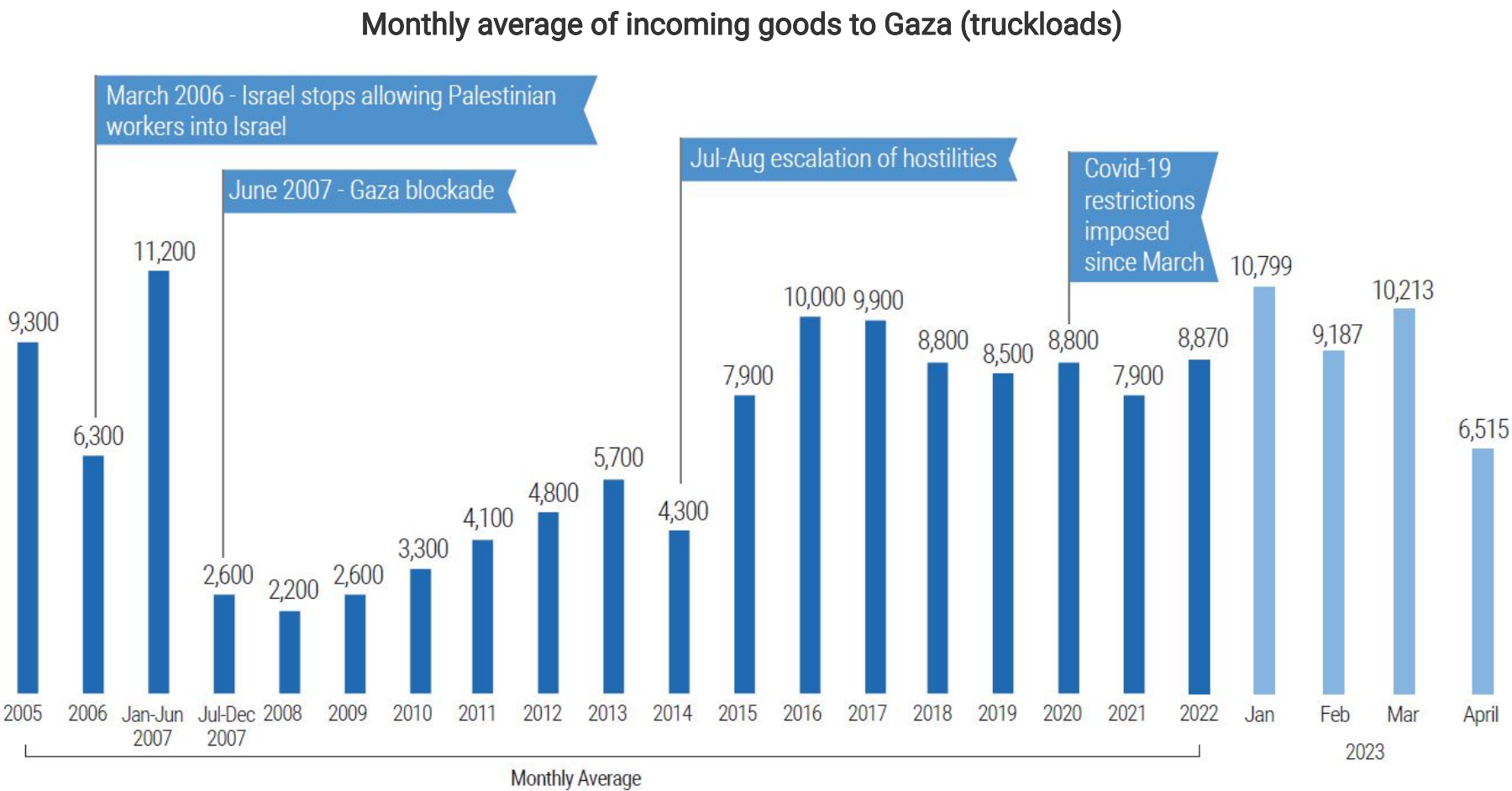
### General goods (excluding fuel and gas)

- **In April, 6,515 truckloads entered through the Israeli and Egyptian controlled crossings. This is 36 per cent lower than in March and 26 per cent lower than the monthly average in 2022.** Additionally, this is still 42 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. The downtrend in April is attributed to longer closures of the Israeli border during the Israeli holidays.
- **Of the goods that entered, 28 per cent were construction materials and 32 per cent were food supplies.** About 5 per cent was humanitarian aid facilitated by international organizations, mostly food and medical supplies.
- **Some 72 per cent of the goods entering, went in via Israel.** This volume is 33 per cent lower than in March 2023, and almost 24 per cent lower than the monthly

**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. The entry of most of the goods from or via Israel (including non-restricted goods) is only possible via the Kerem Shalom crossing, following prior coordination with the 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.

average in 2022. **Over 24 per cent of it was construction materials** (mainly aggregates, cement, and steel bars). This is 40 per cent lower than the monthly average in 2022.

- The remaining 28 per cent of the goods entering, went in via the Egyptian border, which opened for imports on 10 days. This is 42 per cent below the volume in March but still about 33 per cent lower than the monthly average in 2022.
- Of the goods entering via Egypt, more than 38 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 April decreased by 15 per cent compared with March. It was also 23 per cent lower than the monthly average in 2022. No restrictions are imposed on the import of fuel of any type, but funding and storage capacity are limited.
- Cooking gas imports decreased by 3 per cent compared with March. The volume was 5 per cent higher than the monthly average in 2022.
- The volume of industrial diesel entering for the Gaza Power Plant decreased by 7 per cent compared with March. However, it was slightly higher than the monthly average in 2022.

Outgoing goods

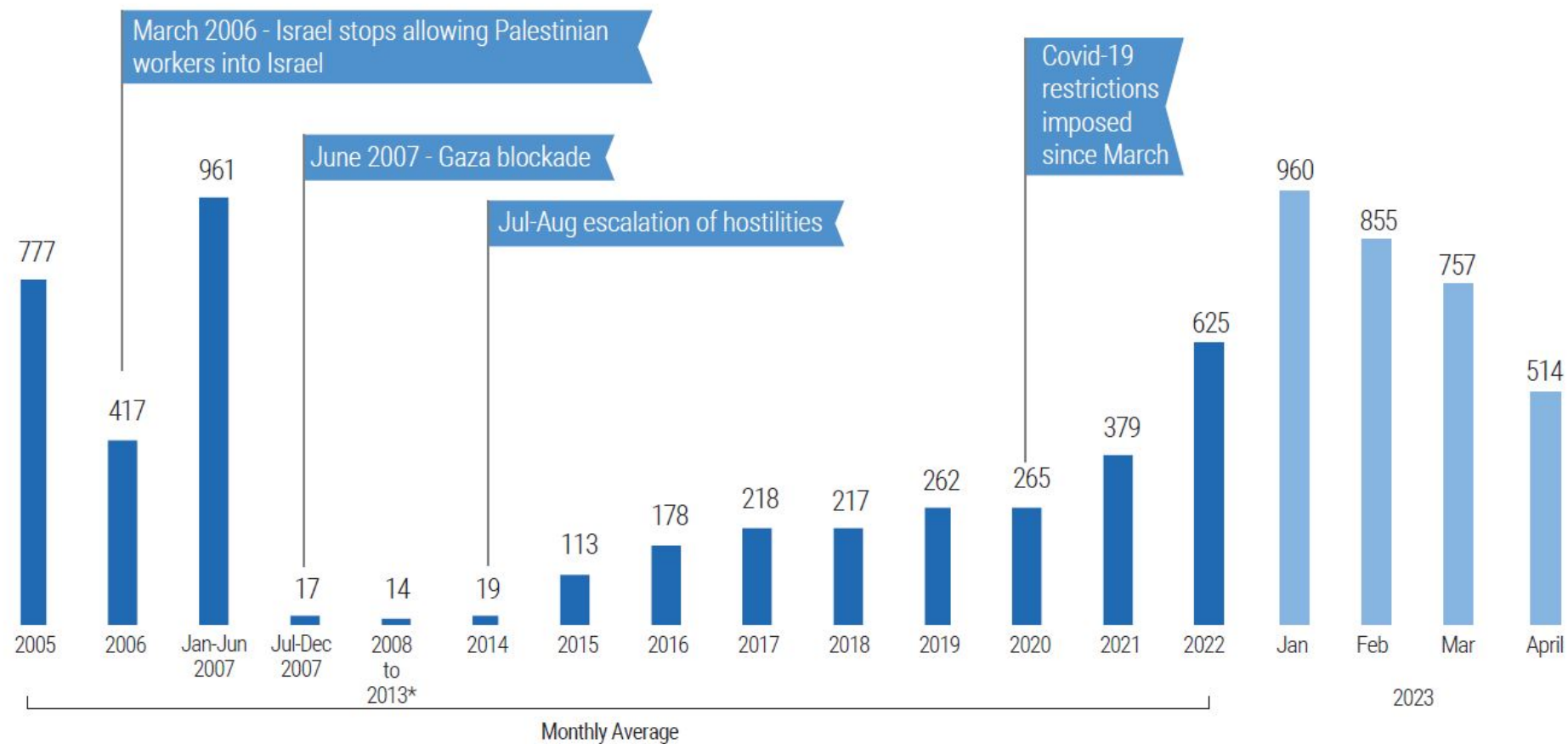
- In April, 514 truckloads exited Gaza through the Israeli and Egyptian borders. This was 32 per cent lower than in March 2023, and 18 per cent lower than the monthly average in 2022. The decline is attributable to the end of the export season of some

*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, Gaza’s main markets, was banned between 2007 and 2014, and then gradually reinstated. Since August 2021, certain goods have been exported to Egypt, via the Salah Ad Din gate and Rafah crossing.*

of the authorized agricultural items, as well as to the longer closures of the Israeli border during the Israeli holidays.

- **Some 366 of the truckloads exited through the Israeli border.** This was 38 per cent below the volume of exits in March, and 62 per cent below the monthly average on the eve of the blockade in 2007.
- **About 53 per cent of these goods went to the West Bank, 47 per cent were exported to Israel, and less than 1 per cent were shipped abroad.** Vegetables accounted for 76 per cent of the exiting goods, textile for 11 per cent, fish for 4 per cent, and the remainder 9 per cent included furniture, scrap iron and aluminium, and fish.
- **Another 148 truckloads were exported to Egypt, carrying scrap iron and aluminium as well as used batteries.** This is 12 per cent lower than in March. In 2022, the Egyptian authorities only allowed used batteries, scrap iron, aluminium, and copper to exit.

Monthly average of outgoing goods from Gaza (truckloads)



\*2013-2008 saw no significant changes in the level of exits





<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/movement-and-out-gaza-update-covering-april-2023>