

WHO: Key Facts about Health Access to Jerusalem

For Palestinians residing in the West Bank the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and health access is restricted by the Israeli-imposed permit regime and the Barrier. Patients who have been referred to hospitals in East Jerusalem, including patients transferred by ambulance, can be denied access to scheduled appointments and emergency care.

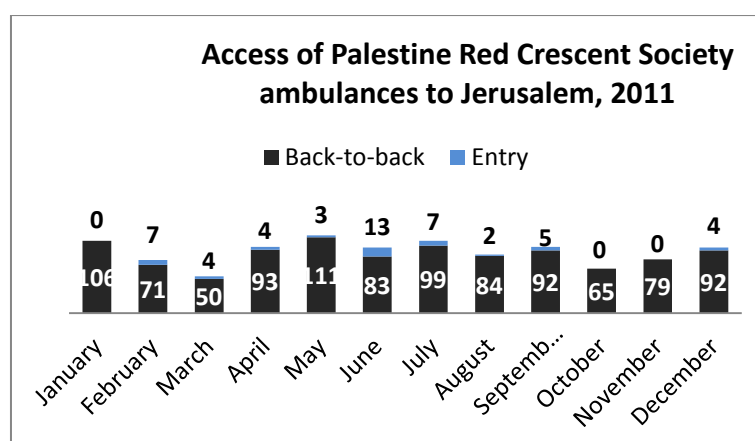
1. Almost one in five patients and their companions applying for health access permits is not approved.

In 2011, 175,228 patients from the West Bank and their companions applied for Israeli-issued health access permits through the Palestinian General Authorities of Civil Affairs. Of these, 32,678 patients and companions (19%) were denied access permits or did not receive a response in time and were unable to receive their medical consultation or treatment.

2. Access to ambulances and emergency care is highly restricted.

Ambulances enjoy special protection under international humanitarian law. Despite the agreement in the Memorandum of Understanding, signed November 28, 2005, between Magen David Adom in Israel and the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) for “securing freedom of movement for PRCS ambulances and vehicles throughout the Palestinian territory to provide urgent medical services and other humanitarian services,” these ambulances are still heavily restricted from entering Jerusalem.

In 2011, PRCS ambulances made 1,025 transfers of patients from the West Bank to Jerusalem, but only 5% of these ambulances were permitted to enter. For the rest, the patient had to be carried between ambulances at the checkpoint in order to enter Jerusalem (a cumbersome and time-consuming procedure referred to as “back-to-back”).



3. More than two thirds of East Jerusalem hospital employees require a permit to travel to work.

The six East Jerusalem referral hospitals comprise a workforce of 1,598 employees. More than two thirds of these employees (1,053) must apply for Israeli-issued permits to travel to work. None of the staff are granted permits valid for longer than 6 months. The continuous need to renew permits creates an additional administrative burden on hospitals and unnecessary stress for employees.

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