



Summary: May 2014

- Access**
- **High need for access through Erez:** In May the volume of patient applications to Israeli authorities to cross Erez checkpoint for health access (2,724 patients) was 88% higher than the monthly average in 2013. Monthly trends in 2014 have been the highest since the 1980s (larger numbers crossing through Erez). The increase in demand reflects the closure of the Rafah border to Egypt and lack of drugs, especially chemotherapy and lack of medical diagnostics.
 - **Permit approval rate back to average:** 85.79% of patient applicants were approved a permit in May 2014, 1% higher than the average of 84.67% in April 2014. 14 (0.51%) patients (3 females and 11 males, including 3 children) were denied permits. 24.62% of patients who applied (270 patients: 79 females and 191 males, including 40 children and 20 elderly people over 60) received no response to their applications and their medical treatment was delayed as a result.
 - **12 patients interrogated:** 11 men and 1 woman aged between 16-60 years were requested to attend Israeli security interviews after applying for a permit to cross Erez. One patient so far was granted a permit following the security interviews in May.
 - **Patient access through Rafah completely stopped:** No Gaza patients were able to travel to Egypt through Rafah in May, compared to more than 3,700 in May 2013, before the closure.
 - **An epidemic of suffering for Gaza patient-denied access to healthcare (see study page 16).**
- Referrals**
- **Decrease in Rafah referrals:** Total Rafah referrals of Gaza patients (2,772) to outside facilities were the lowest recorded since the beginning of the year due to a significant decrease in referrals to non-Rafah facilities within Gaza. 301 May referrals were 17% higher than the monthly average in 2013.
 - **Medical reasons for referrals:** The top ten specialties requiring referrals for treatment were: anaesthesia—236 referrals (8.6%), cancer—189 (6.8%), surgery—165 (6.0%), ophthalmology—149 (5.4%), heart transplantation—122 (4.4%), orthopaedics—120 (4.3%), medicine—113 (4.1%), neurology—89 (3.2%), haematology—79 (2.8%), and heart surgery—70 (2.5%). The remaining 25.7% of referrals were to 20 other specialties.
 - **Gender gap:** The gender gap in referrals continued: 34.4% male patients versus 40.9% female patients. 23.79% of all referrals were for children aged 14.67 years and 28.28% were for patients aged over 60 years.
 - **Estimated cost of referrals for May 2014:** 105 \$, 154,213.

30 June 2014, Jerusalem – WHO has published its May 2014 monthly report on referral of patients from the Gaza Strip. Access to health services is a fundamental element of the right to health and obstacles to this right can compromise health status. International humanitarian law and human rights law both uphold the right to health as a basic human right, and particularly call for states to protect, respect and fulfil the right to access health care, especially during situations of conflict.

This report is directed to all duty bearers: United Nations agencies, humanitarian organizations, the international community, international nongovernmental organizations, the Ministry of Health and other concerned authorities.

The WHO occupied Palestinian territory office has been monitoring referrals of patients and access to health care outside the Gaza Strip since 2006, as well as annual data for both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Data on referrals, permits and crossings are analysed and a monthly report is produced to show the status of access to health care. The report shows monitoring data on referrals, permit procedures and humanitarian access out of Gaza Strip via the two crossings at the Erez checkpoint and Rafah border.

[May 2014](#)

[Monthly RAD reports](#)

[Annual RAD report 2011 and 2012](#)

[Annual RAD report 2010](#)

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