



# MONTHLY REPORT

## September 2022

## Health Access

Barriers for patients in the occupied Palestinian territory



September data on referrals was not available.

 **69%**

of Gaza patient permit applications approved

**39%**

of Gaza companion permit applications approved

 **84%**

of West Bank patient permit applications approved

**78%**

of West Bank companion permit applications approved

 **12**

Gaza patients called for interrogation

### IN FOCUS

# Part 1 Referrals

## September referrals by the Ministry of Health

Referrals data for September was not available by 07 November following a cyberattack on the IT system in August.

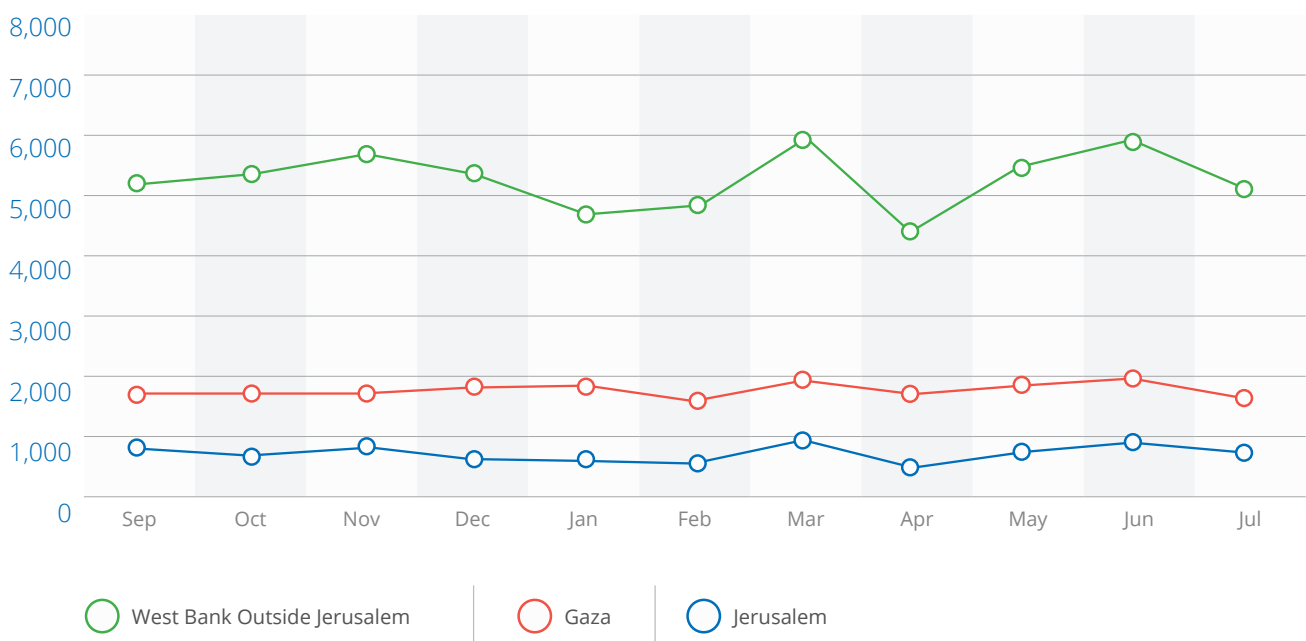


Data for August and September pending



**Chart 1**

Number of referrals issued by the Palestinian MoH by place of origin, September 2021 to July 2022



# Part 2 Access

## The Gaza Strip

There were 1,584 (M: 820; F: 764) patient permit applications for patients from the Gaza Strip to Israeli authorities in September. Just under a third (31%) of applications were for children under 18 and close to a fifth (19%) were for patients over 60 years old. 48% were for female patients, while 83% were for referrals funded by the Palestinian MoH. More than half (53%) of applications to cross Beit Hanoun/Erez were for appointments in East Jerusalem hospitals; 28% for West Bank hospitals outside East Jerusalem; and 19% for Israeli hospitals. Close to half (48%) of applications were for appointments at either Augusta Victoria Hospital (27%) or Makassed Hospital (21%), both in East Jerusalem. The top five specialties accounted for 70% of permit applications: oncology (35%); cardiology (10%); haematology (10%); paediatrics (8%); and ophthalmology (7%). The remaining 30% of applications were for 22 other specialties.

Travel by shuttle direct from Erez (Beit Hanoun) checkpoint to King Hussein (Allenby) Bridge, the crossing between the West Bank and Jordan, requires approval by Israeli and Jordanian authorities. In September, the Palestinian General Authority of Civil Affairs (GACA) submitted 192 permit applications and received 205 responses for patients and companions (for applications submitted in September or before). Of the 205 responses, 61 (30%) were approved, 6 (3%) were denied and 138 (67%) received a response that their application was still in process.

**Approved permit applications:** 1,093 (M: 538; F: 555) or 69% of the 1,584 patient applications to cross Beit Hanoun/Erez in September 2022 were approved, an improvement of 7% compared to the approval rate for the period from January to August (62%). The approval rate for patient permit applications varies by sex and age of patients. In September, men aged 18 to 40 had an approval rate of 53%, while women over 60 had an approval rate of 82% – see Table 1.



**1,584**

patient applications

to Israeli authorities to cross Beit Hanoun/Erez to access health care



**69%**

approved



**1%**

denied



**30%**

delayed

**Table 1**

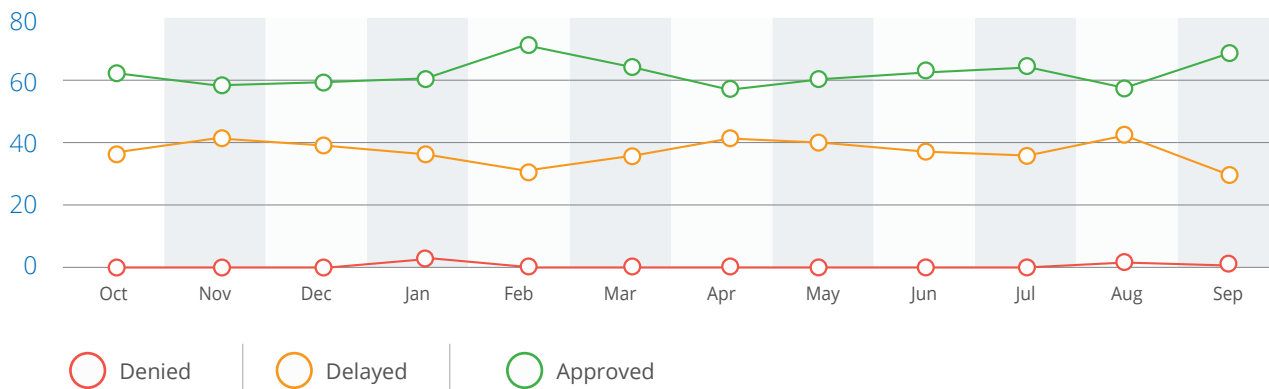
**Approval rate for patient permit applications in August 2022, by age and sex**

August 2022 AGE	Number of applications		Approved	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-3	94	55	74%	73%
4-17	189	147	71%	68%
18-40	195	217	53%	67%
41-60	182	203	57%	75%
over 60	160	142	79%	82%
<b>sub-total</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,584</b>		<b>69%</b>	
<b>Overall approval rate for patient applications</b>			<b>69%</b>	

Approval rates also vary by referred specialty. In September, specialties with an approval rate higher than 70% with more than one application included paediatric surgery (2 applications) at 100%, intensive care (19) at 89%, oncology (555) at 78%, haematology (164) at 76%, neurosurgery (42) at 74%, and cardiology (160) at 71%. Specialties with an approval rate lower than 50% included neurology (27) at 44%, endocrinology (5) at 40%, plastic surgery (3) at 33%, heart surgery (12) at 25%, and infertility (2) at 0% approval.

## Chart 2

### Israeli responses to Gaza patient permit applications, October 2021 to September 2022



**Denied care:** 11 (M: 10; F: 1) patient permit applications, comprising 0.7% of the total for Gaza, were denied in September. These included one child under 18 years, seven adult aged 18 to 40 years, and three adults aged 41 to 60. They were referred for oncology (3); orthopaedics (3); and cardiology, general surgery, neurology, obstetrics/gynaecology, and intensive care (1 each). Six patients were referred to hospitals in the West Bank outside East Jerusalem, four to East Jerusalem and one to an Israeli hospital.

**Delayed care:** 480 (M: 272; F: 208) patient permit applications, or 30% of the total, were delayed access to care, receiving no definitive response to their application by the date of their hospital appointment. 29% (139 applications) were for children under the age of 18, while 12% (58) were for patients over 60 years old. Of delayed applications, 51% were for appointments in East Jerusalem hospitals, 31% for the West Bank, and 18% for Israeli hospitals. The major delayed specialties included cancer care (25%), ophthalmology (10%), cardiology (9%), paediatrics (9%), haematology (8%), and orthopaedics (8%). Most delayed applications (452 or 94%) were 'under study' at the time of appointment. One application was delayed based on the assertion by Israeli COGAT that suitable care is available within Gaza, though no evidence was provided to support this claim.

### Interrogation and arrests

16 male patients from the Gaza Strip were requested for interrogation as a prerequisite to their permit applications in September. Two were in the age group 18-40 years, twelve were 41-60 years and two were over 60. Six had appointments for cancer care (oncology), three for cardiology, two for ophthalmology with the remainder applying for vascular surgery, general surgery, heart surgery, internal medicine and nuclear medicine (1 each). Ten of the patients had applied to reach hospitals in East Jerusalem and six to hospitals in the West Bank. Two patients were approved permit after interrogation; two were denied; eleven remained pending under study; and one application was returned for administrative reasons.

### Patient companions

The Health Liaison Office submitted 2,122 companion permit applications to Israeli authorities to accompany patients in September. These applications include parents or other companions applying to travel with children. Patients are eligible to apply to Israeli authorities for one companion to accompany them for health care outside the Gaza Strip. In September, 821 companion permit applications (39% of the total) were approved, 39 applications (2%) were denied and the remaining 1,262 (59%) were delayed, receiving no definitive response by the time of the patient's hospital appointment.



**16**

**Gaza patients**

called for security interrogation



**0**

**Gaza patients or companions**

arrested



**2,122**

**companion applications**

to Israeli authorities to cross Beit Hanoun/Erez to accompany patients



**39% approved**



**2% denied**



**59% delayed**

## Patients and companions crossing Beit Hanoun/Erez

The Palestinian General Authority of Civil Affairs reported that 1,308 Gaza patients and 997 companions exited through Beit Hanoun/Erez checkpoint in September to access hospitals outside the Gaza Strip. Of the 1,308 patients, 78 were transferred by back-to-back ambulance with 77 companions. These numbers show that **311 (24% of) patients** crossed Beit Hanoun/Erez checkpoint without a companion. The bodies of 22 deceased patients were returned to Gaza across Beit Hanoun/Erez in September. During the month, the checkpoint was open for 24 days for daytime working hours and closed on 6 days (4 Saturdays and 2 days for Jewish Holidays).



**1,308**

**patients**  
exited through Beit  
Hanoun/Erez



**997**

**companions**  
exited through Beit  
Hanoun/Erez

## Rafah crossing - Egypt



The ambulance service of the Ministry of Health in Gaza reported that their **ambulance transferred 147 patients** from the Palestinian side to the Egyptian side of the terminal and returned **6 bodies** of deceased persons during the month. Specific data on all patient crossings during the month was not made available by the Rafah terminal authorities. There were **9,827** entries and **13,705** exits through Rafah crossing recorded by OCHA. Another **324** Palestinians seeking to exit from the Palestinian side were denied access by the Egyptian authorities and returned to Gaza. The crossing was open on **21 days** and closed on **9 days** (5 weekends). The crossing has been open in both directions since 9 February 2021.

## The West Bank


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 are exempted from the requirement to obtain a permit to travel – provided they are not traveling on a Saturday, before 8am or after 7pm.


**Patients:** In September 2022, there were 7,254 permit applications by patients from the West Bank outside Jerusalem to Israeli authorities to access health care in East Jerusalem and in Israel. 3,754 (52%) were for female patients; 1,319 (18%) were for children under the age of 18 years; and 686 (9%) were for patients over 60 years. 70% of patient applications were for appointments in East Jerusalem Hospitals and 30% in Israeli hospitals or clinics. Of the 7,254 West Bank patient applications in September, 6,126 (84%) were approved, 871 (12%) were unsuccessful (denied) and 257 (4%) were pending reply at the time of monthly reporting.


**Companions:** In September 2022, there were 8,649 patient companion permit applications to Israeli authorities from the West Bank outside East Jerusalem, to access health care in East Jerusalem and Israel. 4,578 (53%) were for female companions, while 91% of companion permit applications were for companions aged from 18-59 years. Of the 8,649 West Bank companion applications, 6,756 (78%) were approved, 1,478 (17%) were unsuccessful and 415 (5%) were pending reply at the time of monthly reporting.

 **7,254**  
patient permit  
applications

for Israeli permits to access  
healthcare in East Jerusalem  
and Israel


 **84% approved**


 **12% unsuccessful**


 **4% pending**  
at the time of monthly  
reporting

 **8,649**  
patient companion  
applications

to access healthcare in East  
Jerusalem and Israel

 **78% approved**

 **17% unsuccessful**

 **5% pending**  
at the time of monthly  
reporting

