



# MONTHLY REPORT

## June 2021

## Health Access

Barriers for patients in the occupied Palestinian territory

 **10,124**

referrals issued to access health facilities outside the Palestinian MoH

**2,021** Gaza

**7,950** West Bank

 **59%**

of Gaza patient permit applications approved

**39%**

of Gaza companion permit applications approved

 **87%**

of West Bank patient permit applications approved

**79%**

of West Bank companion permit applications approved

 **0**

Gaza patients called for security interrogation

# Part 1 Referrals

## June referrals by the Ministry of Health

In June, the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) issued 10,124 referrals to health care services delivered by non-MoH providers, 33% more than the monthly average (7,597) of the first quarter this year. Gaza patients' referrals increased by 20% in June compared to the monthly average of first quarter of the year (1,689).

Referrals from the West Bank comprised 79% (7,950) of the total, including 1,383 referrals for patients from East Jerusalem, while the West Bank population comprises approximately 60% of the total population in the oPt. The Gaza Strip makes up around 40% of the population in the oPt, while referrals from Gaza accounted for 20% (2,021) of the total in June. The origin of 147 (1%) of referrals was not reported, and 6 were for Palestinian patients in Jordan at the time of referral.

Palestinian MoH referrals to hospitals in the West Bank, outside East Jerusalem, comprised less than half (47%) of all referrals in June; to East Jerusalem hospitals less than two-fifths (36%) of the total; to Israeli hospitals 5%; within the Gaza Strip 4% (a decrease from 8% in 2020); to Egypt 4%; and to Jordan 4% and 1 referral to Turkey.

The top needed specialties for referrals were oncology (23%); urology & nephrology (11%); cardiac catheterization (6%); ophthalmology (6%); cardiology (5%); diagnostic and therapeutic procedures (4%); medical imaging (4%); and (3%) each for haematology, endoscopy, paediatrics and radiotherapy. The remaining 29% were for 21 other medical specialties.

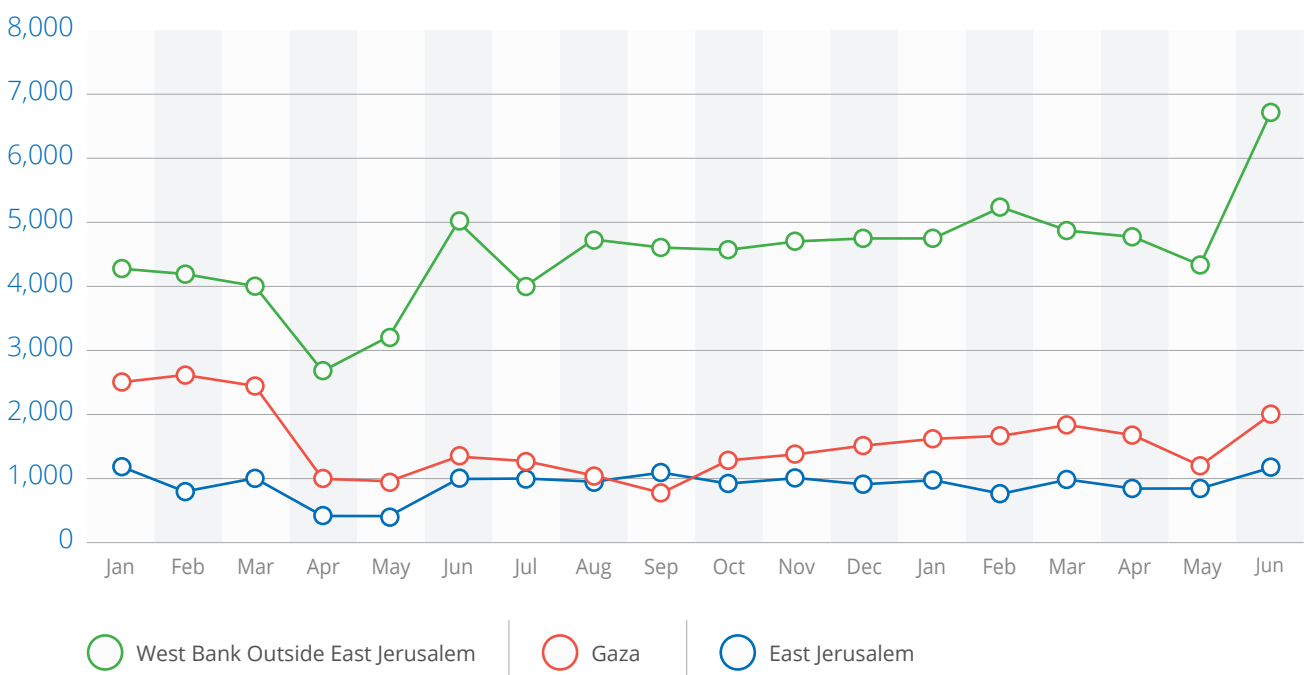
Referrals for patients under 18 years of age comprised 22% (2,269) of the total, while 28% (2,855) were for those aged 60 years or older. Referrals for female patients comprised 45% of the total.

 **2,021**  
Gaza Strip

 **7,950**  
West Bank

referrals approved financial coverage for healthcare outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health

**Chart 1** Number of referrals issued by the Palestinian MoH by place of origin, January 2020 to June 2021



# Part 2 Access

## The Gaza Strip

There were 1,236 (M: 613; F: 623) patient permit applications for patients from the Gaza Strip to Israeli authorities in June 2021. This represents an 11% increase from the monthly average number of patient permit applications for January to April (1,123). This shows a recovery from the severe restrictions on access during the 11-day military escalation in the previous month of May.

More than a quarter (28%) of applications were for children under 18 and more than a fifth (21%) were for patients aged 60 years or older. More than 50% were for female patients, while 89% were for referrals funded by the Palestinian MoH. More than half (54%) of applications to cross Beit Hanoun/Erez were for appointments in East Jerusalem hospitals; close to a third (31%) for West Bank hospitals outside East Jerusalem; 15% for Israeli hospitals; and 5 applications for hospitals in Jordan. More than half (52%) of applications were for appointments at either Augusta Victoria Hospital (35%) or Makassed Hospital (17%), both in East Jerusalem. The top five specialties accounted for 80% of permit applications: oncology (46%); haematology (14%); cardiology (8%); paediatrics (7%) and ophthalmology (5%). The remaining 20% of applications were for 20 other specialties.

A further 22 permit applications for patients and companions (12 patients; 10 companions) were submitted through the Palestinian General Authority of Civil Affairs during June for travel by shuttle to Jordan. The shuttle system transfers travellers from Gaza who are approved permits both by Israeli and Jordanian authorities to travel directly from Beit Hanoun/Erez to the King Hussein Bridge crossing to Jordan, without permitting entry to Israel or the West Bank. Jordanian hospitals issued approval with appointments for these applications, all of which remained pending at the time of reporting.

**Approved permit applications:** 725 (M: 345; F: 380) or 59% of the 1,236 patient applications to cross Beit Hanoun/Erez in June 2021 were approved, a drop of 13% from the average approval rate of 72% from January to April. This was an increase from the severe drop in the approval rate was recorded in the month of May during and after the military escalation.

52% of the approved applications were female patients; slightly more than a quarter (26%) were for children under 18; and 23% were for patients aged 60 years or older. Over half (51%) of approved applications were for oncology patients, 16% for haematology, 8% for cardiology, 6% for paediatric and the remaining 19% were for other 18 medical specialties.

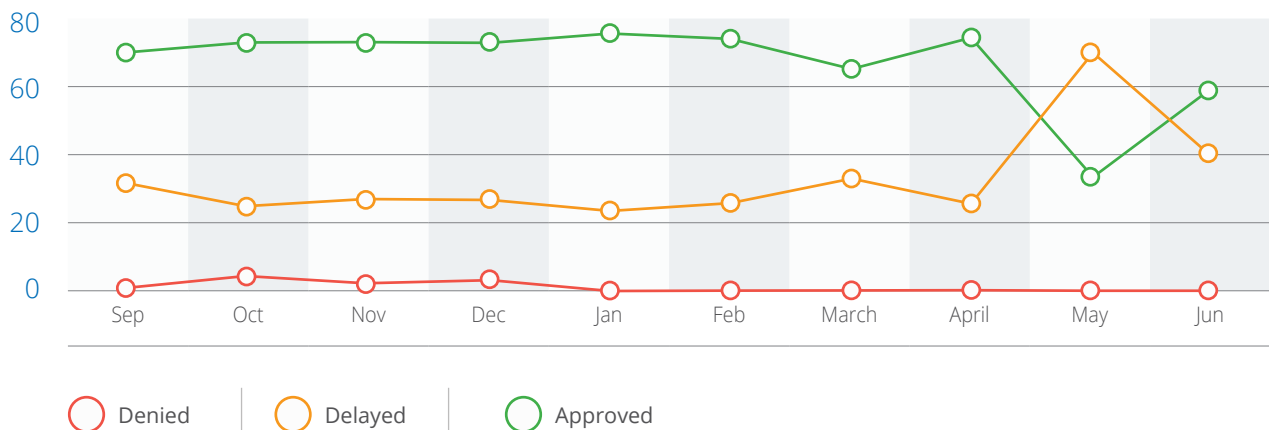
**1,236**  
patient applications  
to Israeli authorities to cross  
Beit Hanoun/Erez to access  
health care

**59%**  
approved

**0.3%**  
denied

**41%**  
delayed

**Chart 2** Israeli responses to Gaza patient permit applications, September 2020 to June 2021 (%)



**Denied care:** Four male patients were denied in June, including one child and three adults. The child was a patient with cancer, while the adults were referred for intensive care, internal medicine, and ophthalmology. Two had appointments at An-Najah University Hospital in Nablus and two at Makassed Hospital in East Jerusalem.

**Delayed care:** 507 (M: 264; F: 243) patient permit applications, or 41% of the total, were delayed access to care, receiving no definitive response to their application by the date of their hospital appointment. 29% (149 applications) were for children under the age of 18, while 18% (91) for patients over 60 years old. Close to two-fifths (39%) of those delayed had appointments for cancer care (oncology); 11% for haematology, 9% for ophthalmology; 9% for cardiology; 8% for paediatrics, and 5% for orthopaedics. The remaining 19% were for 15 other specialties.

Of delayed applications, 54% were for appointments in East Jerusalem hospitals, 30% for the West Bank, 15% for Israeli hospitals and 1% (3 applications) for hospitals in Jordan. Most delayed applications (497 or 98%) were 'under study' at the time of appointment.

## Security interrogation

In June, no patients or patient companions were recorded to have been requested for security interrogation as a prerequisite to processing their permit application.


## Patient companions


The Health Liaison Office submitted 1,460 companion permit applications to Israeli authorities to accompany patients in June. 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 June, 563 companion permit applications (39% of the total) were approved, 11 applications (1%) were denied and the remaining 886 (61%) were delayed, receiving no definitive response by the time of the patient's appointment.




## Patients and companions crossing Beit Hanoun/Erez


The Palestinian General Authority of Civil Affairs reported that 846 Gaza patients and 655 companions exited through Beit Hanoun/Erez checkpoint in June to access hospitals outside the Gaza Strip. Of the 846 patients, 99 patients were transferred by back-to-back ambulance with 99 companions. These numbers show that close to a quarter (23%) of patients crossed Beit Hanoun/Erez checkpoint in June without a companion. 10 bodies of deceased patients were returned to Gaza. During the month, Beit Hanoun/Erez checkpoint was open for 26 days for daytime working hours and closed on 4 days (4 Saturdays).

 **0**  
Gaza patients or companions called for security interrogation

 **1,460**  
companion applications


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

 **39% approved**

 **1% denied**

 **61% delayed**

 **846**  
patients exited through Beit Hanoun/Erez

 **655**  
companions exited through Beit Hanoun/Erez

## Rafah crossing – Egypt



In June, there were 8,629 entries and 8,741 exits through Rafah crossing. Another 514 (6%) travellers departed from the Palestinian side were denied access by the Egyptian authorities and returned to Gaza. The crossing was open in 22 days and closed in 8 days. The crossing was declared open in both directions from 9 February 2021. Specific data on patient crossings during the month has not been made available by the Rafah terminal authorities.

### The West Bank

In June 2021, there were 8,916 permit applications by patients and 9,305 by patient companions from the West Bank outside East Jerusalem to Israeli authorities to access health care in East Jerusalem and Israel.


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, as well as children under 13 years traveling with an approved adult, are exempted from the requirement to obtain a permit to travel – provided they are not traveling on a Saturday, before 8am or after 7pm.


Of 8,916 West Bank patient applications, 7777 (87%) were approved, 915 (10%) were unsuccessful (denied) and 224 (3%) were pending reply at the time of monthly reporting.


Of the 9,305 West Bank companion applications, 7385 (79%) were approved, 1,593 (17%) were unsuccessful and 327 (4%) were pending reply at the time of monthly reporting.

 **8,916**  
patient permit  
applications

for Israeli permits to access  
healthcare in East Jerusalem  
and Israel


 **87% approved**


 **10% unsuccessful**


 **3% pending**  
at the time of monthly  
reporting

 **9,305**  
patient companion  
applications

to access healthcare in East  
Jerusalem and Israel

 **79% approved**

 **17% unsuccessful**

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