

MONTHLY REPORT

December 2022



Health Access

Barriers for patients in the occupied Palestinian territory




December data on referrals was not available

 **80%**

of Gaza patient permit applications approved

45%

of Gaza companion permit applications approved

 **79%**

of West Bank patient permit applications approved

78%

of West Bank companion permit applications approved

 **54**

Gaza patient called for security interrogation

IN FOCUS

Gaza Health Access and Attacks on Health Care in the oPt, 2022

Part 1 Referrals

December referrals by the Ministry of Health

Referrals data for December was not made available to WHO by the date of publication.

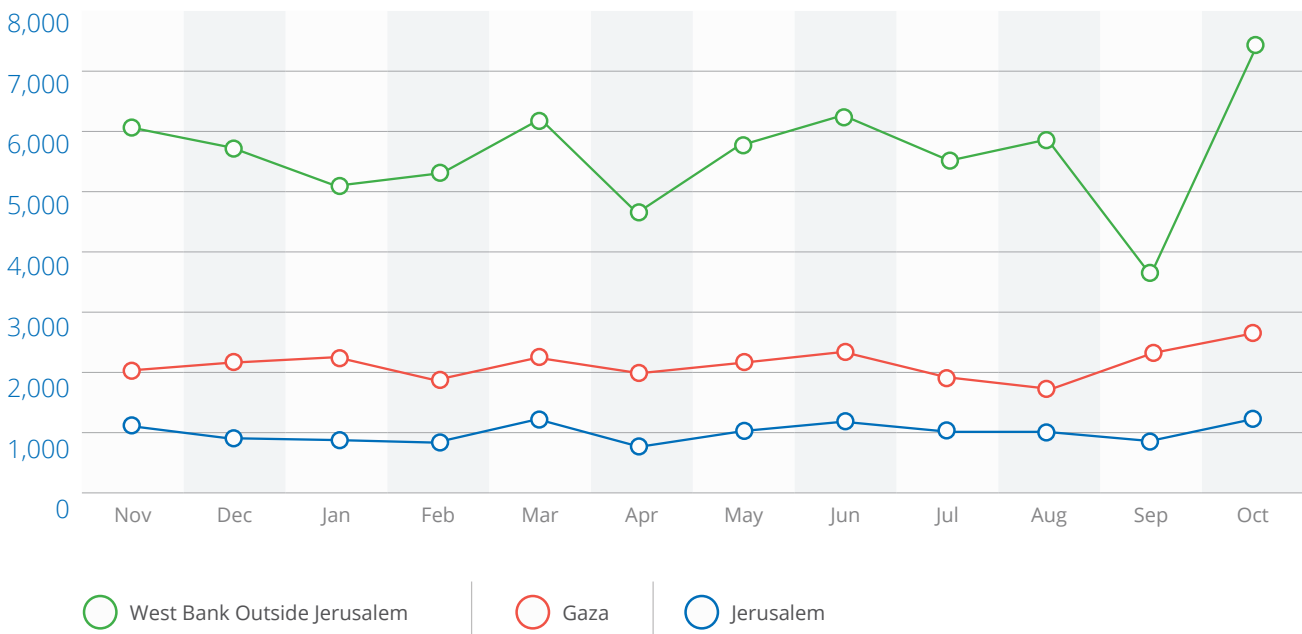


December data on referrals was not available



Chart 1

Number of referrals issued by the Palestinian MoH by place of origin, November 2021 to October 2022



Part 2 Access

The Gaza Strip

There were 1,802 (M: 975; F: 827) permit applications for patients from the Gaza Strip to Israeli authorities in December, 7% higher than the monthly average for January to November 2022. More than a quarter (27%) of applications were for children under 18 and more than a fifth (22%) were for patients over 60 years old. 46% were for female patients, while 85% were for referrals funded by the Palestinian MoH. Half (50%) of applications to pass Beit Hanoun/Erez checkpoint were for appointments in East Jerusalem hospitals; 32% for hospitals in the West Bank outside East Jerusalem; and 18% for Israeli hospitals. 45% of applications were for appointments at either Augusta Victoria Hospital (28%) or Makassed Hospital (17%), both in East Jerusalem. The top five specialties accounted for 71% of permit applications: oncology (40%); cardiology (10%); haematology (9%); paediatrics (7%); and orthopaedics (5%). The remaining 29% of applications were for 22 other specialties.

No data on permit applications for direct access to Jordan from the Gaza Strip in December was made available to WHO by the date of publication.

Approved permit applications: 1,433 (M: 733; F: 700), or 80%, of the 1,802 patient applications to cross Beit Hanoun/Erez were approved in December 2022, similar to November (80%) which was the highest monthly approval rate in over six years, since July 2016 (83%).

The approval rate for patient permit applications varies by sex and age of patients, see Table 1. In December, of the different demographic groups, men aged 18 to 40 had the lowest approval rate at 62%, while women over 60 had the highest approval rate of 90%.



1,802
patient applications

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



80%
approved



4%
denied



16%
delayed

Table 1

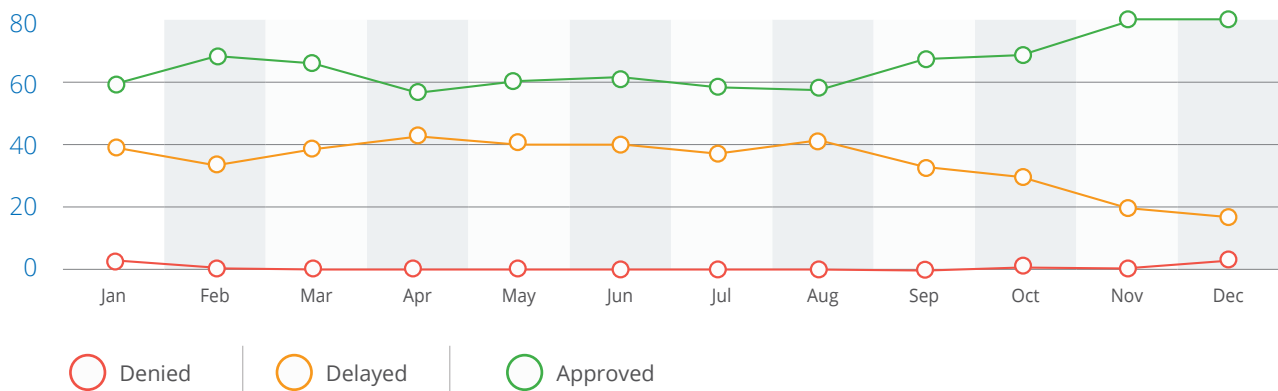
Approval rate for patient permit applications in December 2022, by age and sex

December 2022	Number of applications		Approved	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
AGE				
0-3	80	58	84%	79%
4-17	215	135	78%	89%
18-40	209	218	62%	77%
41-60	247	244	72%	87%
over 60	223	172	85%	90%
Missed	1	0		
sub-total	975	827	75%	85%
Total	1,802			
Overall approval rate for patient applications			79.5%	

Approval rates also vary by referral specialty. In December, specialties with an approval rate 80% or higher with more than 20 applications included oncology (726) at 87%, nephrology (36) at 86%, haematology (164) at 85%, paediatrics (128) at 83%, nuclear medicine (31) at 81%. Specialties with an approval rate lower than 80% and more than 20 applications included, general surgery (58) at 79%, ENT (23) at 78%, cardiology (189) at 76%, intensive care (26) at 73%, vascular surgery (22) at 73%, neurosurgery (40) at 68%, orthopaedics (95) at 67%, internal medicine (74) at 65%, ophthalmology (77) at 64%, neurology (24) at 58%, and urology (42) at 57%.

Chart 2

Israeli responses to Gaza patient permit applications, January to December 2022



Denied care: 74 (M: 46; F: 28) patient permit applications, comprising 4% of the total for Gaza, were denied in December, the highest denial rate since February 2020 (9%). These included seven children under 18 years, 38 adults aged 18 to 40 years, 20 adults aged 41 to 60 years and 9 adults over 60 years of age. They were referred for oncology (23); orthopaedics (8); urology (7); infertility (5); (4) each for internal medicine and ENT; (3) each for obstetrics & gynaecology, nuclear medicine, ophthalmology, cardiology, and neurosurgery; 2 each for vascular surgery and haematology; and 1 each for heart surgery, maxillofacial surgery, paediatrics and pulmonary disease. 51% (38) patients were referred to hospitals in the West Bank outside East Jerusalem, 42% (31) to East Jerusalem hospitals, and 7% (5) to Israeli hospitals.

Delayed care: 295 (M: 196; F: 99) patient permit applications, or 16% of the total, were delayed access to care, receiving no definitive response to their application by the date of their hospital appointment. This was the lowest delayed rate in three years, since January 2020 when it was (17%). Of delayed applications, 27% (80 applications) were for children under the age of 18, while 14% (42) were for patients over 60 years old. More than two-fifths (41%) were for appointments in East Jerusalem hospitals, while 35% were for the West Bank outside East Jerusalem, and 24% for Israeli hospitals. Most delayed applications (274 or 93%) were classified as ‘under study’ at the time of hospital appointment. 18 (6%) were cancelled by hospitals and two applications were 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

In December, 54 (M: 48; F: 6) patients from the Gaza Strip were requested for interrogation as a prerequisite to their permit applications. 21 were aged 18 to 40 years, 25 were aged 41 to 60 years, and eight were over 60 years old. Of these patients, 13 had appointments for cancer care (oncology); 12 for ophthalmology; seven for cardiology; five for orthopaedics; four for neurosurgery; three each for internal medicine and nuclear medicine; two for haematology; and one each for endocrinology, vascular surgery, neurology, infertility, and general surgery. 30 of the patients had applied for permits to access hospitals in East Jerusalem, 22 for hospitals in the West Bank and two for Israeli hospitals. More than two-fifths, 44% (23) of patients had submitted their permit applications more than 30 days before the hospital appointment. Three of the 54 patient were approved permit after interrogation and 51 remained pending under study by the end of the month.



54

Gaza patients

called for security interrogation



0

Gaza patients or companions

arrested

Patient companions

The Health Liaison Office submitted 2,476 companion permit applications to Israeli authorities to accompany patients in December. 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 December, 1,111 companion permit applications (45% of the total) were approved, 678 applications (27%) were denied, the highest denial rate ever, and the remaining 687 (28%) were delayed, receiving no definitive response by the time of the patient's hospital appointment.

Patients and companions crossing Beit Hanoun/Erez

The Palestinian General Authority of Civil Affairs reported that 1,788 Gaza patients and 1,387 companions exited through Beit Hanoun/Erez checkpoint in December to access hospitals outside the Gaza Strip. More than a fifth, or 22% (401), of patients therefore crossed Beit Hanoun/Erez checkpoint without a companion. Of the 1,788 patients, 79 were transferred by back-to-back ambulance with 79 companions. The number of patients exiting via Beit Hanoun/Erez in the month was the second highest for more than three years – i.e. before the outbreak of COVID-19 in the oPt. In November, there had been 1,886 patient-exits. The bodies of 29 deceased patients were returned to Gaza across Beit Hanoun/Erez in December. During the month, the checkpoint was open for 26 days for daytime working hours and closed on 5 days (5 Saturdays).



2,476

companion applications

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



45% approved



27% denied



28% delayed



1,788

patients

exited through Beit Hanoun/Erez

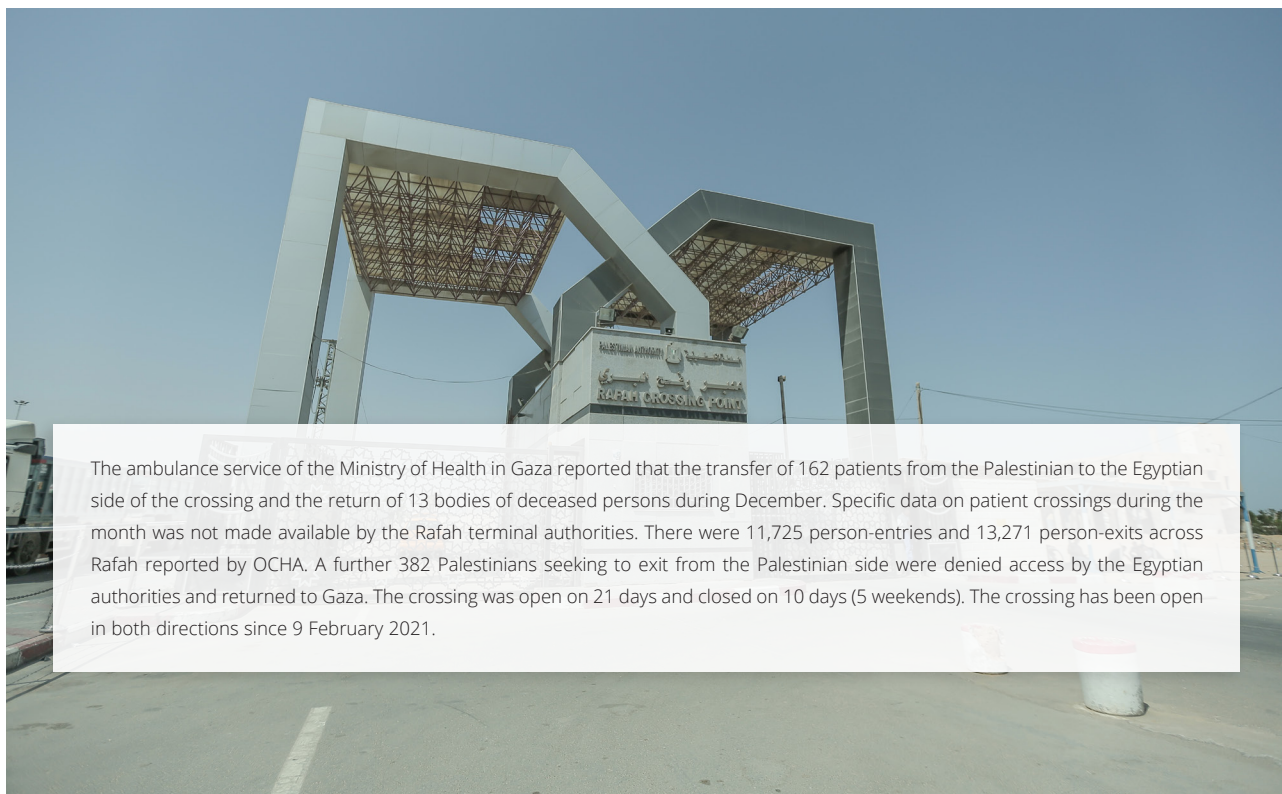


1,387

companions

exits through Beit Hanoun/Erez

Rafah crossing - Egypt



The ambulance service of the Ministry of Health in Gaza reported that the transfer of 162 patients from the Palestinian to the Egyptian side of the crossing and the return of 13 bodies of deceased persons during December. Specific data on patient crossings during the month was not made available by the Rafah terminal authorities. There were 11,725 person-entries and 13,271 person-exits across Rafah reported by OCHA. A further 382 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 10 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 affect parts of the population more than others. 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 December, there were 7,610 permit applications by patients from the West Bank outside Jerusalem to Israeli authorities to access hospitals in East Jerusalem and Israeli hospitals. Of patient permit applications, 3,459 (45%) were for female patients, 1,375 (18%) were for children under the age of 18 years, and 643 (8%) were for patients over 60 years. More than three-fifths (64%) were for appointments at hospitals in East Jerusalem, while more than a third (36%) were for Israeli hospitals or clinics.


Of the 7,610 West Bank patient applications in December, 6,001 (79%) were approved, 1,373 (18%) were unsuccessful (denied) and 236 (3%) were pending reply at the time of monthly reporting.


Companions: In December 2022, there were 8,319 patient companion permit applications to Israeli authorities from the West Bank outside East Jerusalem, to access health care in East Jerusalem and Israel. 4,242 (51%) were for female companions, while 92% of companion permit applications were for companions aged from 18-59 years.


Of the 8,319 West Bank companion applications, 6,480 (78%) were approved, 1,481 (18%) were unsuccessful and 358 (4%) were pending reply at the time of monthly reporting.

 **7,610**
patient permit
applications

for Israeli permits to access
healthcare in East Jerusalem
and Israel


 **79% approved**


 **18% unsuccessful**


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

 **8,319**
patient companion
applications

to access healthcare in East
Jerusalem and Israel

 **78% approved**

 **18% unsuccessful**

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



In Focus

Gaza Health Access and Attacks on Health Care in the oPt, 2022

Gaza Health Access 2022



World Health Organization

occupied Palestinian territory

Patient and Companion Permit Applications



20,295
Patient Permit Applications
33% Delayed or Denied



26,461
Companion Permit Applications
62% Delayed or Denied



29%
for Child Patients



19%
for Patients Over 60 Years

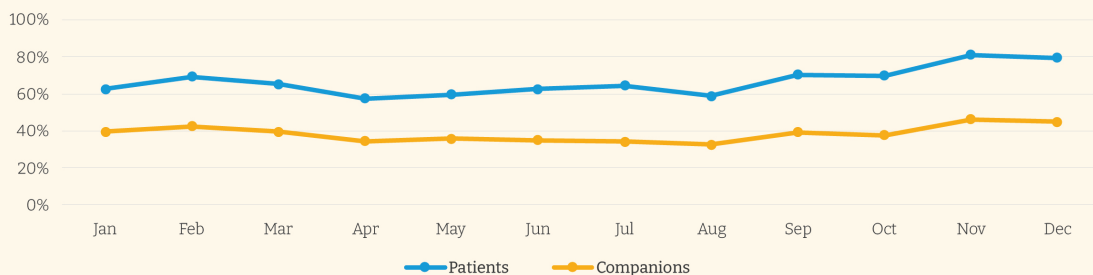


35%
for Cancer Patients



47%
for Female Patients

Approval Rate for Patient and Companion Permits by Month



Gaza Patient Crossings



25%
of Patients Exited Without a Companion



935
Patients Delayed at Erez Checkpoint due to Requirement for Transfer Ambulance-to-Ambulance

Impact of August Military Escalation



289
Patients Lost Hospital Appointments due to Checkpoint Closure

Security Interrogation of Patients and Companions



225 Security Interrogations Requested for Patients
24 Approved Permits

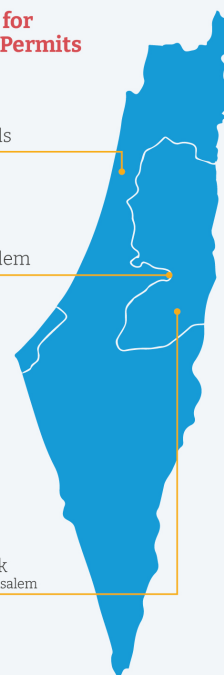
61 Security Interrogations Requested for Companions
5 Approved Permits

Destinations for Gaza Patient Permits

18%
to Israeli Hospitals

51%
to East Jerusalem

31%
to West Bank outside East Jerusalem



Health Attacks oPt 2022



World Health Organization

occupied Palestinian territory

187 Attacks on Health Care

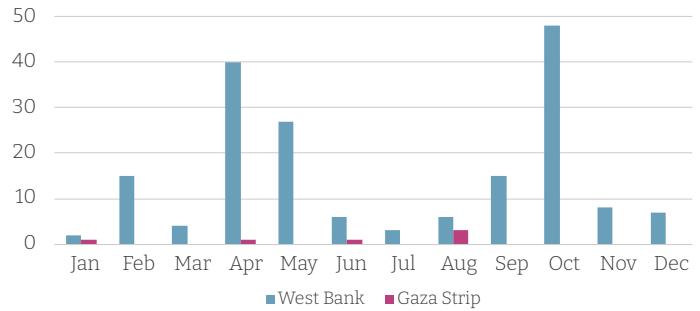
91 in the West Bank (outside East Jerusalem)

90 in East Jerusalem

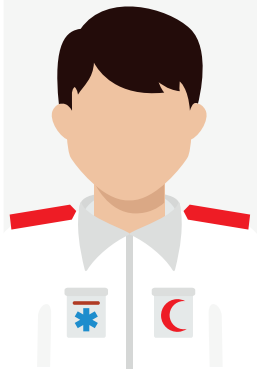
6 in Gaza Strip



Health Attacks in Numbers



105 Health Workers Injured

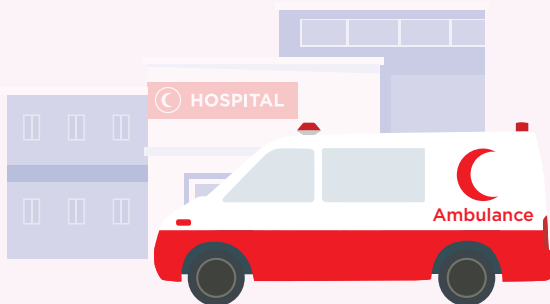


- 2 Live Ammunition
- 25 Rubber Bullet
- 8 Tear Gas or Sound Canister
- 17 Tear Gas Inhalation
- 5 Shrapnel of Live Ammunition
- 48 Beating, Combined or Other Injuries
- 19 Health Workers Detained or Arrested

9 Health Facilities Affected

3 Patients Detained or Arrested

108 Ambulances Affected



77 Obstructed Access

44 Damaged

18 Searched

2 Detained