

The Israeli Blockade on Gaza: Its Effects and Future

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Abstract

After Hamas had won the legislative elections with vast majority in January 2006, the Israeli occupation, along with Arab and international parties, imposed a severe blockade on the Gaza Strip which affected all life aspects there. 15 years since, this study presents the causes, effects, future, and attempts to end the blockade. The researcher uses the historical approach and addresses two topics: The blockade and its effects and attempts to end the blockade and Gaza future. Then the study ends with several results. Mainly, the Israeli blockade was imposed to overthrow Hamas and paralyze its military power, the American and European position is in favor of the Israeli occupation while the Arabs remain silent and carry out the will of the Israelis and Americans, and the blockade led to a humanitarian crisis that affected the Palestinians at social, psychological and health levels.

Keywords: *Blockade, Israeli Occupation, Gaza*

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Topic One: Causes and Effects of the Israeli Blockade

The Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip is considered one of Israel's worst crimes against the Palestinian people. Doing this, the occupation prevented 2,000,000 people living in such a small geographical place from enjoying their rights.

First: Causes and Stances

The causes can be listed at two levels:

1- Political Causes

On July 6, 2006, Financial Times published an article written by Gareth Evans and Robert Malley who wrote about the main reason behind the Israeli occupation's decision to impose a blockade on the Gaza Strip. They said it was the occupation's desire to prevent Hamas from ruling despite having won the elections¹. The two writers added that the strategy followed by Fatah, the Israeli occupation and Arab and western countries was basically to add pressure on Hamas' government, isolate it, and deprive it from receiving any funds; all of which to incite the Palestinians against Hamas and to quickly end Hams' period of ruling.²

2- Military Causes

The Israeli occupation aims to weaken the resistance' military capacity and end its attempt to arm itself. The blockade decision came after the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was captured on June 25, 2006. The occupation issued a list of more than 3,000 products which were to be banned from entering Gaza so that Hamas would not use them in manufacturing weapons and building military facilities³. The blockade began with Israel not giving the due taxes and charges to the Palestinian Authority. The occupation also took restriction measures regarding workers in the 1948 lands⁴. It is clear that the political and military objectives of the blockade were not achieved. Despite the severity of the blockade and its impact on the lives of the Palestinians, the Palestinian people in Gaza along with its resistance did not submit to the conditions of the Quatrain hence the resistance was not eliminated despite the 3 wars it was under.

¹ Evans and Malley, Gareth and Robert, How to curb the tension in Gaza, FINANCIAL TIMES, July 5, 2006, <https://www.ft.com/content/24572246-0c4c-11db-86c7-0000779e2340>.

² Ibid.

³ Gaza Blockade: From the Beginning, Waiting for the end, AlJazeera Net, shorturl.at/dmoX1.

⁴ Saleh and others, Mohsen, The Palestinian Strategic Report of 2006, (Beirut, Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 1st ed., 2007), p. 28.

Role of International Powers

After Hamas had won the elections, the occupation set a group of conditions for dealing with the Palestinian government and circulated it among its ambassadors. The conditions were recognizing the occupation, abandoning the resistance, disarming the resistance and approving the agreements signed between the occupation and the Palestinian Authority¹. Israeli-American talks commenced to impose an international blockade on the Palestinian government. Then, the American Administration and EU states announced cutting off diplomatic ties with the Palestinian government, and stopping aids. Their justification was that the Government did not submit to the international Quatrain's conditions². The US and Israeli occupation had several justifications, two of which are what Amos Malka said about how Hamas' winning reflected the Zionist movement's failure to persuade the Arabs to legalize its presence. The other was what Shimon Peres, former President of Israel, said that Hamas' ruling meant the occupation's inability to conclude a settlement agreement that ensures its achievement of strategic interests in the West Bank.³

Palestinian and Arab Position

The Palestinian Authority demanded Hamas to adhere to the conditions of the International Quatrain and agree on the Arab initiative.⁴ The Arab countries which were directly concerned with the Palestinian affairs could not make any practical moves to oppose the American position. The Egyptian Prime Minister and the Jordanian King asked Hamas government to adhere to Oslo Accords. As for Saudi Arabia, it had a weak position. Syria welcomed Hamas' winning, and Qatar and Sudan welcomed Hamas' delegation and pledged to assist the Palestinian government.⁵

Plans to Overthrow Hamas' Government

Several authors and intellectuals accused Arab regimes of colluding with the Israeli occupation and American Administration in imposing the blockade on Gaza. For instance, Abdulhalim Qandil, Egyptian author, believed that the Arab Peace Initiative had turned from 'peace for land' to 'peace for peace'; that is ensuring peace with the Israeli occupation in order for rulers to stay in power.⁶

¹ Saad, Wael, *The Blockade: A Study on the Blockade of the Palestinian People and Attempts to Overthrow Hamas Government*, edited by Mohsen Saleh, (Beirut, Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 1st ed., 2006), pp. 64-65.

² Ibid: Saleh and others, *The Palestinian Strategic Report of 2006*, p. 28.

³ Al-N'ami, Saleh, *Palestinian Struggle Dimensions: American Plan to Overthrow Hamas*, *Middle Eastern Studies Journal*, (Middle Eastern Studies Center, 2007), issues 40-41, pp. 129-130.

⁴ Ibid: Saad, *The Blockade: A Study on the Blockade of the Palestinian People and Attempts to Overthrow Hamas Government* p. 65

⁵ Saleh and others, *The Palestinian Strategic Report of 2006*, p. 29.

⁶ Abdulhalim, Qandil, *Al-Itijah Al-Mu'akis (the Opposite Direction)*, AlJazeera Channel, November 26, 2008.

The accusations were later revealed to be facts as plans to overthrow Hamas surfaced. One of the most important plans in this context is that of Elliot Abrams, which was designed by the American Administration to overthrow Hamas. All following plans were based on it. The plan was to arm and train Fatah fighters so they would face Hamas' fighters in Gaza and the West Bank to eliminate Hamas and take over Gaza again. According to the plan, Egypt and Jordan helped arm the security officers of Mahmoud Abbas.¹

Second: Effects of the Occupation

The blockade left severe impacts on all life aspects of the Gaza Strip. It is normal, then, that the effects would intersect and increase the economic, social and psychological pressure on the people of the Strip. Following are the most serious consequences:

1- Health

The health sector suffered from clear damage and threatened the work of the health system. The deficit rate of medications reached 45%, the disposables 27% and lab materials and blood banks 58%. Out of 6,100 medical devices, 350 devices are damaged in the MOH's hospitals. The worst part was preventing patients from travelling for treatment abroad. In 2017 alone, 30 patients, including 12 children, died² because they were denied their right to travel. The continuous closure of Rafah crossing especially during the first years of the blockade prevented tens of patients from receiving treatment in Egyptian hospitals which led to serious health complications threatening the lives of the patients³. Because of the electricity shortage crisis, the Ministry of Health had to use generators. It has 87 generators that require 450,000 liters of fuel on a monthly basis.⁴

2- Education

The blockade imposed on Gaza has severely impacted various aspects of life, particularly in education and freedom of movement. In the educational sector, restrictions on the import of basic supplies and technological equipment have led to a significant deterioration in the quality of education. Schools face shortages in essential materials such as textbooks and stationery, and there is often insufficient funding for maintaining school infrastructure. Additionally, frequent power outages disrupt the learning process, and the psychological trauma experienced by students due to

¹ Ibid: Al-N'ami, Palestinian Struggle Dimensions: American Plan to Overthrow Hamas, p.134.

² Al-Nashwan, Saad, the Impact of the Occupation Blockade of the Gaza Strip on the Health Sector, Al Mujtama' Magazine, January 28, 2018 <https://mugtama.com/reports/item/67310-2018-01-28-15-19-06.html>

³ Deterioration of the Health Conditions in the Strip due to the Blockade, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, August 29, 2006, <https://pchgaza.org/ar/?p=7367>.

⁴ Ibid: Al-Nashwan, the Impact of the Occupation Blockade of the Gaza Strip on the Health Sector, Al Mujtama' Magazine.

the ongoing conflict further hampers their academic performance. Regarding freedom of movement, the blockade has effectively isolated Gaza from the outside world, severely restricting the movement of people and goods. This isolation limits academic opportunities, such as attending international conferences or participating in exchange programs, which are crucial for academic development and cultural exchange. The stringent travel restrictions also prevent the entry of educational experts and hinder the external development assistance needed for educational institutions, further exacerbating the educational challenges faced by the residents of Gaza. Students have also been affected by the blockade. On February 16, 2015, the Israeli occupation declared commencing measures that would reduce the restriction on movement. It gave permits to 50 students who wanted to study in the West Bank. However, on February 18, 2015 the occupation withdrew the declaration and deemed it 'a typographical error'.¹ From November 1, 2014 to October 31, 2015; 161 students left Gaza from Beit Hanoun Crossing. However, hundreds others are still incapable of reaching their academic institutions which would make them at the risk of losing their scholarships due to such delays and lack of permits.²

3- Freedom of Movement

The blockade has also profoundly affected freedom of movement for the residents of Gaza, imposing severe restrictions that influence nearly every aspect of their lives. The blockade limits not only the movement of goods but also people, severely restricting residents from leaving Gaza for medical, educational, or professional purposes. The stringent control and closure of border crossings like Rafah and Erez mean that Gazans often face insurmountable hurdles in obtaining necessary permits to travel, leading to prolonged waiting times, which can have dire consequences, especially for those seeking urgent medical treatments unavailable in Gaza. These restrictions also stifle economic opportunities by limiting access to external markets and the ability to engage in meaningful employment or business activities outside the narrow confines of the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the social and psychological impacts of such confinement create a sense of isolation and helplessness among the population, further contributing to the humanitarian distress within the enclave. The Israeli occupation have restricted the movement of the people in the Strip since the beginning of the 1970s. The restrictions were increased in June 2007 when the occupation imposed a ground, air and sea blockade on Gaza under the pretext of security measures. The blockade disrupted the lives of the people and broke down the occupied Palestinian lands, and their economic and social ties.³

¹ Opposite to Earlier Announcement: Israeli Will Not Allow Gaza Strip's Students to Study in the West Bank, Maslak, February 18, 2015, <https://gisha.org/ar/updates/2786/>

² The Status of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Lands including the Eastern Al-Quds, the UN General Assembly, January 20, 2016, p.14.

³ Gaza Blockade, OCHA, United nations, <https://www.ochaopt.org/theme/gaza-blockade>

4- Electricity Crisis

The electricity crisis began in the Gaza Strip in 2006 when the Israeli occupation bombed the only power plant in the Strip. It then shut down entirely. The power crisis passed several stages. At times, the power cuts would last for 8 hours, at others for more than 12 hours which influenced the lives of the Palestinians in the Strip. On normal days, the Strip needs from 450 to 500 megawatts. In winter, though, it needs up to 600 megawatts. This means that the Strip suffers from 50% power deficit. The main causes of the electricity crisis are the limited electricity sources, the increasing need for electricity, and the lack of permanent supplies for the plant due to Israeli obstacles and closure of crossings.¹

5- Agriculture

The blockade has had a particularly devastating impact on agriculture in Gaza, critically undermining food security and the livelihoods of many residents. Gaza's agricultural sector, crucial for the local economy and sustenance, faces severe challenges due to restrictions on the import of necessary farming supplies, including seeds, fertilizers, and equipment. Additionally, frequent Israeli military operations have resulted in substantial damage to farmland and agricultural infrastructure, compounding the difficulties for farmers. Access to agricultural land is also severely restricted, especially in areas near the border, designated by Israel as security zones. This results in a significant loss of arable land, reducing crop yields and increasing dependency on food imports, which are themselves subject to stringent controls and sporadic closures of crossing points. Water resources, essential for farming, are scarce due to over-extraction and pollution, and the blockade impedes the import of equipment needed for water management and irrigation systems, further stressing the agricultural sector.

These combined factors not only affect the economic stability of those working in agriculture but also exacerbate food insecurity in the region, affecting the health and nutritional well-being of the entire population of Gaza. Throughout 2018, the occupation continued to target workers in the field of agriculture and their properties. In fact, the occupation forces banned farmers from farming and investing 35% of the total agricultural lands which caused great economic losses². As for fishing, the forces banned the fishermen from working in about 85% of the water which was approved by Oslo Accords. The occupation then continued to reduce the fishing area to 3-9 miles instead of 20 miles.³

¹ Stages of the Electricity Crisis in the Gaza Strip, AlJazeera Channel, April 17, 2017.

² Reality of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Gaza Strip 2018, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, Research and Technical Assistance Unit, pp. 16-17, 2019.

³ Ibid, p.17.

6- Industry

In 2018, the number of closed factories reached 470, and the productivity was reduced from 35% in 2015 to 17% in 2018. As for the workers, their number before the blockade was 45,000. However, after the blockade their number became 10,047 with a reduction rate of 77.6% in 2018¹. The supplies related to aids and development projects have reduced in the past 5 years. The number of trucks carrying supplies during the first half of 2019 reached about 2,790 trucks in comparison with 14,621 trucks during the first half of 2015. The reduction rate of trucks coming to the Gaza Strip carrying aids and development project supplies reached 80%².

7- Trade

The Gaza Strip has 5 crossings at the borders of 1948 occupied lands, and with Egypt. They were used for people's travels and products' movement from and to the Gaza Strip. However, the movement of both the people and products through such crossings became very difficult as more constraints were imposed³. The Israeli occupation closed down several commercial crossings, leaving only Karam abu Salim Crossing open for the transport of products from and to the Strip. This Crossing is located in the far south of the Strip. It has been used to pressurize the Palestinians. For example, in 2018, the Crossing was open for 235 days only. The merchants, too, were restrained from moving freely. From 2015-2018, 57 merchants were arrested at Beit Hanoun Crossing in the north of the Gaza Strip.⁴

Unemployment and Serious Losses

The restriction policy and almost complete prevention of exportation have led to economic collapse in the Strip with unemployment rate exceeding 40%.⁵ According to the Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics, the number of unemployed workers in the third quarter of 2019 reached 217,100.⁶ The monthly losses, both direct and indirect, of the economic sector (the industrial,

¹ Ibid: Reality of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Gaza Strip, p. 19.

² Al-Tabba', Maher, Economic, Humanitarian and Living Conditions in the Gaza Strip, Times of Israel, August 5, 2019, <http://arblogs.timesofisrael.com/%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a3%d9%88%d8%b6%d8%a7%d8%b9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a5%d9%86%d8%b3%d8%a7%d9%86%d9%8a%d8%a9%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a5%d9%82%d8%aa%d8%b5%d8%a7%d8%af%d9%8a%d8%a9-%d9%88%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85%d8%b9%d9%8a%d8%b4/>

³ Al-Raei, Ibrahim, Evaluating the Performance of Crossings in the Gaza Strip and Possible Improvements, Ministry of National Economy, 2005, p. 7.

⁴ Ibid: Reality of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Gaza Strip, pp. 21-22.

⁵ Restrictions on Movement and Travel, B'Tselem, November 11, 2017, btselem.org/arabic/topic/freedom_of_movement.

⁶ Survey on Workforce, Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics, July, 2019, p. 7.

commercial, agricultural and contracting sectors) in the Gaza Strip increased by the end of 2019 to reach about \$100 million. The conditions of these sectors became very critical. About 4,000 factories, workshops, shops and companies had over 80% of their operational capacity reduced or shut down throughout the years of the blockade. The remaining establishments are working at about 50% or less of their operational capacity.¹

Second Topic: Attempts to End the Blockade and Gaza Future

Despite the official stances of major countries which identify with the Israeli occupation, several European officials called for the end of the Blockade. Luisa Morgantini, former Prime Minister of the European Parliament, is an example. She said that the blockade of the Gaza Strip is a disgrace to humanity, and that the occupation commits crimes every day and must be tried at the International Court of Justice for having occupied 1967 lands for more than 50 years.²

First: International and Palestinian Efforts to End the Blockade

The exerted efforts to end the blockade were usually carried out from outside Palestine in coordination with the Palestinian government and institutions in the Gaza Strip. Several Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims and foreigners participated in these attempts. Ship convoys are considered the first method the organizers followed to attempt breaking the blockade. They sent ships carrying aids and activists from around the world to the Gaza Strip. This method is of importance because accessing the Strip would have been direct without crossing any occupation gates. For the first time since 1967, this act holds political indications and was hugely covered by media³. Some ships in 2008 were able to reach Gaza shore, including ‘Liberty’; ‘Free Gaza’, which are considered the first successful attempts to break the naval blockade; ‘Humanitarian Aid Ship from Egypt’; and ‘Hope’. Other ships, such as the ‘Libyan Marwa’ in 2008, ‘El-Eid Ship’ in 2008, ‘Dignity’ in 2009 and ‘Marmara’ in 2010 were banned from entry. ‘Marmara Ship’, which was in the lead of Gaza Freedom Flotilla, is the most famous attempt because the Israeli warships attacked it leading to the martyrdom of 10 activists and injury of others.⁴

¹Al-Khudari, Jamal, Total Monthly Losses Due to Occupation Reached about \$100 Million, Al-Resalah Net, December 6, 2019, <https://alresalah.ps/post/209203/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B6%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%AE%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%AA-%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B1>

² Siege of Gaza shames humanity: Former top EP official, ANADOLU AGENCY, 11 Nov 2018, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/siege-of-gaza-shames-humanity-former-top-ep-official/1314647>

³ Attempts to End Blockade of the Gaza Strip: Where to? Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, Strategic Evaluation no. 37, September, 2011.

⁴ Gaza Break the Siege Ships: From Liberty to Zaytouna, AlJazeera Net, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/events/2016/9/22/%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%86-%D9%83%D8%B3%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9->

In October 2016, the Israeli occupation stopped the ‘Women’s Boat to Gaza’ about 35 miles from the Gaza shore. 13 women who were on the boat were deported. One of the participating women was Mairead Maguire, an Irish activist and a Nobel Prize winner.¹ Ground convoys were the only means to deliver humanitarian aids to the Gaza Strip. The convoys included Parliaments and political officials from around the world. The convoys entered Gaza successfully. However, they did not receive political attention or media coverage like the ship convoys did.² On January 26, 2008, a convoy of cars and buses bringing together activists from around the world came to Beit Hanoun Crossing to enter the Gaza Strip and break the blockade. They carried with them supplies, but the occupation stopped them. The activists cheered against the collective punishment, i.e. the blockade, the occupation exercises against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.³ The Israeli navy attacked a fishing boat that carried 7 wounded Palestinians leaving the besieged Strip and going to Cyprus for treatment.⁴ The Malaysian people played a role in trying to break the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip as well. Several Malaysian officials participated in the break-the-siege ships. In July 2018, the occupation forces took over the ‘Return’ ship, part of the Freedom Flotilla, and arrested the participating women, of whom some were Malaysians.⁵ The Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the Israelis’ takeover of the ship which carried humanitarian aids to the Strip. The Ministry called for the release of all the captured activists.⁶

Although the attempts to break the blockade failed, they helped in

1. Illegalizing the blockade morally and politically, and denouncing the international silence.
2. Clarifying the severity of the violations the Israeli occupation exercises against the Palestinians, and Israelis’ disregard for the International Law.
3. Forming an international campaign coordinated to show solidarity with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.
4. Entering an amount of aids and medical supplies necessary for the survival of the people of the Strip.⁷

[%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A9](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-navy-intercepts-gaza-bound-womens-boat/)

¹ No violence as Israel intercepts women’s boat to Gaza, *The Times Of Israel*, October 5, 2016, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-navy-intercepts-gaza-bound-womens-boat/>

² Ibid: Attempts to End the Blockade of the Gaza Strip: Where to?

³ Convoy to Erez Checkpoint, and demonstration, January 26th, INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT, Jan 28, 2008, <https://palsolidarity.org/2008/01/convoy-to-erez-checkpoint-and-demonstration-january-26th/>

⁴ Israeli navy attacks ship carrying wounded after leaving Gaza shore, Wafa, July 10, 2018, <http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=jbCge8a98376997092ajbCge8>

⁵ Boat trying to break Gaza blockade seized by Israeli navy, *THE TIMES OF ISRAEL*, July 29, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/activists-say-boat-trying-to-break-gaza-blockade-seized-by-israeli-navy/>

⁶ Malaysia calls for Israel to release Freedom Flotilla activists, *MIDDLE EAST MONITORE*, August 1, 2018, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180801-malaysia-calls-for-israel-to-release-freedom-flotilla-activists/>

⁷ Ibid: Attempts to End the Blockade of the Gaza Strip: Where to?

The Great March of Return and End of Blockade

The most prominent attempt for breaking the blockade was the ‘Great March of Return and Breaking the Siege’ which was carried out by the people of the Gaza Strip, beginning in March 2018. This March, a form of struggle, was organized by the Coordinating Committee for the Great March of Return with the support of all factions and Palestinian powers. The preparation period began on March 17, 2018. The March itself was launched on the commemoration day of the Land Day of the same year. Tents were set about 700 meters from the borders with the occupied lands in 5 different camps in the eastern areas of the five governorates of the Strip.¹

It was decided that the tents would be gradually moved closer to the borders, so that the movement would begin in the Gaza Strip and would soon be followed by the occupied West Bank and occupied lands of 1948; then Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, America, Europe, Chile and others. This movement was meant to add pressure on the world to find a solution for the refugees’ issue.² Despite the several successes the March achieved in different aspects, it failed to break the blockade entirely. It helped, however, in improving the living conditions of the citizens. For example, it reduced the electricity crisis, provided working programs for workers and graduates, offered financial aids to tens of poor families, increased the amounts exported abroad, increased the fishing area, and improved trade with Egypt.³

Second: The Future of the Gaza Strip

Regarding the living conditions in the Gaza Strip, international organizations have warned from the gravity of the situation in the Strip the coming year should the Israeli occupation remain the same. Maxwell Gaylard, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, warned that, "Gaza will have half a million more people by 2020 while its economy will grow only slowly. In consequence, the people of Gaza will have an even harder time getting enough drinking water and electricity, or sending their children to school.⁴" According to the World Food Programme, by 2020 the need for electricity will double to meet the requirements of the inhabitants. In addition, the coastal aquifers will be too damaged unless there is immediate intervention. Hundreds of schools will be needed and health services must be improved to meet

¹ Great March of Return: Longing to the Land and Clinging to the Right, AlJazeera Net, n.d.

² Hammad, Essam, Deputy of the International Coordinating Committee for the Great March of Return, an interview, October 17, 2019.

³ Al-Batch, Khalid, Al-Batch Presents the Accomplishments of the Great March of Return in its First Year, Palestine Online, April 6, 2019.

⁴ UN Officials warn problems in Gaza Strip will get worse in coming years. A Press Release on launch of the report: “Gaza in 2020 – A livable place?”, UNICEF, August 27, 2012, https://www.unicef.org/media_7198.html.

the needs of the youngsters.¹ It is expected that by 2020 the only water source available in Gaza will dry out unless immediate intervention is carried out.²

One of the future scenarios of the Palestinian issue in the Strip is the Israeli occupation's acceptance to end the blockade, allow the establishment of a seaport, and reach a long-term calm. This will keep Hamas in control of the Strip as a separate entity from the Palestinian Authority. The realization of this scenario is improbable for now because of the Israeli political and security considerations, the Egyptian position, the Authority's position, and Hamas' lack of enough power to force the occupation to. However, this may happen should the actors change in the future.³

Conclusion

The Israeli blockade on Gaza, originally imposed to dismantle Hamas's governance and curtail its military operations, has had profound and lasting repercussions on the territory. This blockade is supported by American and European policies, which generally align with Israeli interests, while the passive stance of Arab nations further compounds the situation, reflecting a broader international dynamic that influences the blockade's persistence and severity. Over the years, the blockade has not only targeted military aspects but has also strangled Gaza's economy, leading to severe economic degradation. This economic downturn is characterized by vast losses in productive capacity and a sharp increase in unemployment, as movement restrictions cripple trade and production capabilities. The blockade's impact extends deeply into the social fabric of Gaza, where residents suffer from significant psychological distress and health crises, exacerbated by restricted access to medical supplies and healthcare services.

Humanitarian efforts by various Arab and international institutions and organizations, including attempts to send aid through ground and sea convoys, have been crucial. Although some of these efforts have successfully delivered aid, they have not been sufficient to overturn the overarching humanitarian crisis. The persistence of these crises has spurred local initiatives, such as the Great March of Return, which represents a creative and collective attempt by Palestinians to end the blockade. While this movement has managed to draw international attention and brought some improvements to living conditions, it has not achieved its primary goal of lifting the blockade. Thus, Gaza remains caught in a cycle of restriction and relief, where significant political, economic, and humanitarian challenges continue to demand comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

¹ Gaza in 2020 – A liveable place?, World Food Programme, 11 September 2012, <https://www.wfp.org/publications/gaza-2020-%E2%80%93-liveable-place>.

² Living conditions in Gaza 'more and more wretched' over past decade, UN finds, UN News, July 11, 2017, <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/ar/node/100043781>

³ Mohra, Ismael, Gaza: Possible 'De Facto State' (Strategic Evaluation), (Gaza, Masarat Center, Policies Committee, 2017), p. 28.

Second: Recommendations

- 1- Resending the ground and sea convoys to break the blockade in coordination with Palestinian institutions abroad.
- 2- Archiving all Israeli crimes resulting from the blockade and presenting them to the International Criminal Court.
- 3- Making use of the governmental and factions delegations participating in international conferences and seminars to persuade the world of the importance of working together to end the blockade.
- 4- Organizing events in Gaza simultaneously with other countries worldwide commemorating the annual anniversary of the blockade.
- 5- Encouraging international popular denouncement of the blockade through Palestinian institutions in Europe.

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