

# *Israeli Blockade Cripples Gazan Economy*

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Gaza City, March 10 (RHC)-- The economy of the Gaza Strip has deteriorated in recent years as a result of the ongoing Israeli blockade and closure of crossings into the Palestinian territory. According to Press TV, many businesses have gone bankrupt and shops have been closed due to the blockade against more than 1.7 million Gazans since 2007.

Kerem Shalom, Gaza's sole commercial crossing, was closed for more than 150 days last year. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that during regular operation hours of the Kerem Shalom crossing, only one-third of what Gazans need passes through.

Some 3,000 trucks made their way through Kerem Shalom crossing into Gaza per week before the Israeli blockade. However, the figure is currently reduced to nearly 900 trucks per week. Gaza used to have three other commercial crossings, but they were closed by Israel in recent years for alleged security reasons.

Professor of Economics Moeen Rajal said the economy of Gaza will be improved by the lifting of the blockade and the reopening of all crossings. Rajal said: "Israel unilaterally closed the Kerem Shalom crossing for more than five months in 2013. The closure of Kerem Shalom coupled with a crackdown by the Egyptian military on tunnels between Gaza and Egypt has deprived Gazans of essential goods and worsened the economic situation in this blockaded territory."



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