

# *Israel closes Gaza's main cargo crossing*

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Tel Aviv, July 10 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has announced the closure of the Gaza Strip's main commercial crossing, in what he describes as a crackdown against the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement.

The Israeli prime minister stressed that the Kerem Shalom closure will be coupled with “other measures that I won't go into.” The Kerem Shalom crossing between the southern Gaza Strip and the occupied territories is Gaza's main entry point for goods and trade.

The Israeli military also confirmed in a statement that the crossing would be closed until further notice. Israeli minister for military affairs Avigdor Lieberman linked the new measures to fires from incendiary kites and helium balloons that have been flown by the Palestinians on the occupied territories since “Great March of Return” protests began on March 30.

Protests along the Gaza fence since March 30th have led to clashes with Israeli forces, where at least 135 Palestinians, including 14 children, have been killed. Palestinian protesters demand their right to return to their homeland. Over 15,000 Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

On May 14, Israeli troops opened fire on Palestinians who had gathered near the fence in protest against the inauguration of the U.S. embassy in East Jerusalem. Over 60 Palestinians were shot dead and more

than 2,700 wounded by Israeli snipers who had been positioned along the fence. The death toll drew international criticism, but the United States, which has angered Muslims with its embassy move, continues to give its full support Israel.

Every year on May 15, Palestinians all over the world hold demonstrations to commemorate the day, which marks the anniversary of the forcible Israeli eviction of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland in 1948.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said children in the Gaza Strip are the main victims of the Israeli atrocities, where some 1.8 million people are living under a crippling blockade.

Gaza has been under the Israeli siege since June 2007, causing a decline in living standards as well as unprecedented unemployment and poverty.

Israel has also launched several wars on the Palestinian sliver, the last of which began in early July 2014 and ended in late August the same year. The Israeli military aggression killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians and injured over 11,100 others.

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