

# ISRAELI BLOCKADE: Egypt to open Gaza border crossing from May 28

By [Global Research](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

## Global Research Editor's Note

*This report by Reuters is unconfirmed. The Spirit of Rachel Corrie has requested shipment by land of a humanitarian cargo. The Foreign Ministry had promised to allow the shipment to proceed by land from the port of Al Arish to Rafah. So far the Spirit of Rachel Corrie is stranded in Egyptian waters.*

CAIRO (Reuters) – Egypt will open its border with the Gaza Strip “on a daily basis” starting from May 28, the state MENA news agency said on Wednesday, to ease entry restrictions for Palestinians.

The move, which is likely to raise Israel’s objections, suggested a further policy shift since the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak, whose government cooperated with the Jewish state in enforcing a blockade on the Islamist Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip and has a 1979 peace treaty with Israel.

Under Mubarak, Egypt only sporadically opened up the Rafah border crossing for food and medicine, or to let through people, mainly those seeking medical treatment or travelling to study from the area which is home to about 1.5 million Palestinians.

“Egyptian authorities have decided to extend the working hours at the Rafah border crossing starting from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on a daily basis, except for Fridays and official holidays, starting on Saturday, May 28,” MENA said.

It said the decision came as “part of Egyptian efforts to end divisions among Palestinians and to finalise their reconciliation.”

Egypt brokered a reconciliation deal between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’s Fatah movement and its Hamas rivals that ended a four-year rift. Both sides are trying to set up a government of technocrats and prepare for elections within a year.

## ISRAELI BLOCKADE

Egyptian Foreign Ministry this month said that Cairo planned to open the Rafah border crossing permanently to ease life for Palestinians under an Israeli blockade. But it said that the mechanics of such a move were being worked out.

Israel, which had earlier expressed hope that the clampdown on the Egypt-Gaza border would remain in place, was circumspect about Cairo's plans.

It has urged Egyptian authorities to prevent Rafah terminal being used as a conduit for weapons or militants.

Israeli officials were not immediately available to comment on Wednesday's announcement.

MENA said that Egyptian authorities have also decided to allow all Palestinian men over the age of 40 and those under the age of 18 to travel to Egypt from anywhere in the world without a visa. Women of all ages will be exempt from visas, it said.

Students of all ages with letters of acceptance from Egyptian universities will also be allowed to enter Egypt with any restrictions.

But the agency said that thousands of Palestinians trapped in war-torn Libya will continue to be subject to the same regulations that exist now "due to the existing conditions which require them to receive an advanced visa for all age groups."

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