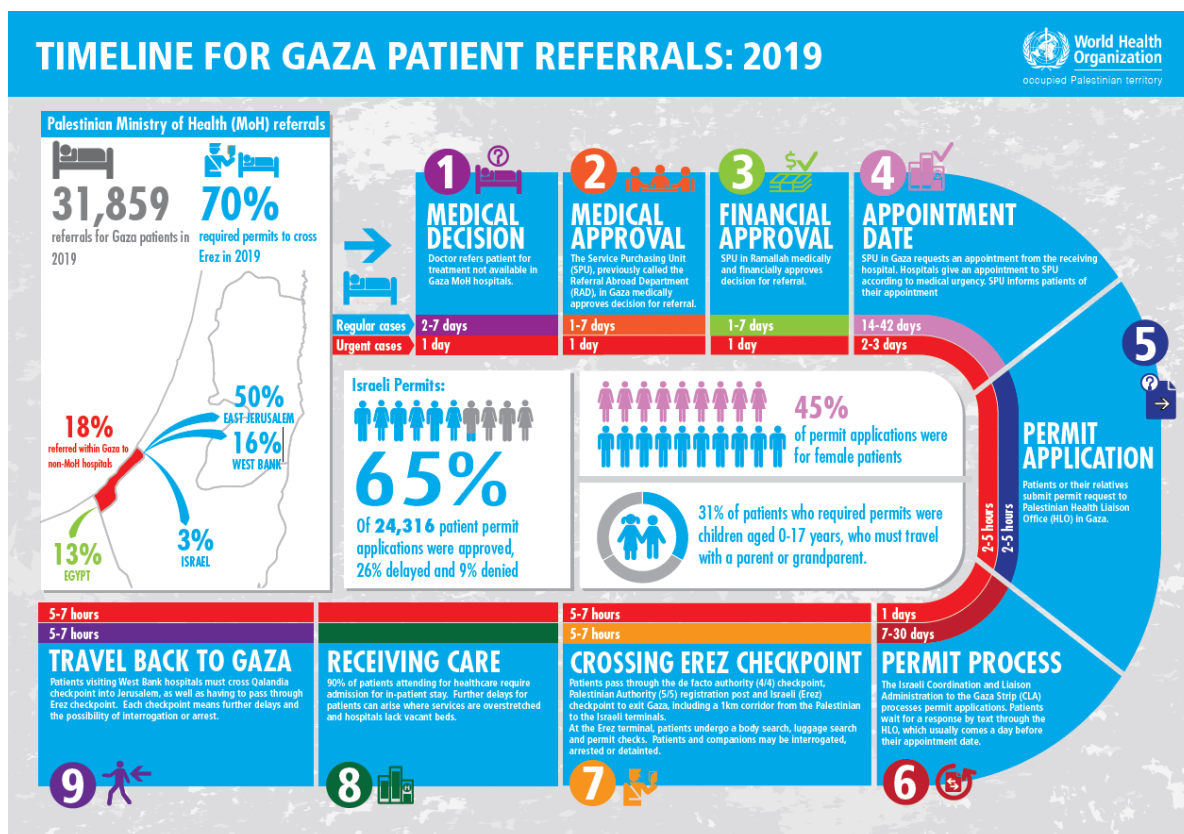


## Questions & Answers on WHO Temporary Coordination Mechanism

Following extensive advocacy and negotiations with stakeholders, WHO on Sunday 6 September initiated a temporary coordination mechanism to support Palestinian patients and companions required by Israel to apply for permits to access essential health services outside the Gaza Strip.

### 1. How does the mechanism work?



- Medical doctors in the Gaza Strip identify patients who require referral for services outside the Gaza Strip. On the basis of this identified clinical need, doctors submit for approval of referrals by the Services Purchasing Unit of the Ministry of Health (MoH). These referrals receive medical and financial approval in accordance with the MoH's defined package of essential health services.
- Patients whose approved referrals require exit from the Gaza Strip can then consent for their information to be shared through WHO with Israeli authorities in order to apply for a permit for themselves and one companion. This application is electronic and can be processed with the consent of patients and their companions once they have submitted for medical and financial approval of their referral through the Ministry of Health.
- In order to submit patient and companion permit requests to Israeli authorities, WHO requires:

- A copy of the patient's medical report
  - A copy of his or her hospital appointment
  - A pledge of financial coverage for their appointment
  - The patient's ID details and functioning telephone number
  - The companion's ID details and functioning telephone number
  - Proof that patient and companion of COVID-19 status
- Patients and their companions are informed by text message of the receipt of their applications and the result of their permit applications, which is also communicated to the patient's medical team through the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

## **2. Where do the patients need access to?**

- The majority of patients from the Gaza Strip needing Israeli permits require access to Palestinian hospitals in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. A small percentage require access to Israeli institutions. Referrals to Jordan are currently difficult and discouraged because of movement restrictions and severe delays to access in the context of COVID-19.

## **3. Is the mechanism only for urgent and lifesaving cases?**

- Referrals are made according to medical need as decided by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, according to its package of essential healthcare services. This includes non-urgent applications, and there are no restrictions currently on permit applications for non-urgent referrals.

## **4. What capacity does the system have and can it handle the high number of expected permit applications?**

- The mechanism is temporary and currently only equipped to deal with the monthly number of permit applications that have been submitted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is considerably lower than pre-COVID-19 numbers. The mechanism will be closely monitored, with plans to ensure additional capacity should there be increased demand for permits.

## **5. Does the mechanism deal with all aspects of coordination?**

- Hospitals will manage the coordination of patients and companions returning to Gaza, as previously.
- The Ministry of Health will coordinate with ambulance services for patients requiring ambulance transportation.

## **6. What happens to patients who are delayed or denied permits?**

- WHO continues to advocate for the unhindered access of patients and their companions to essential health services within and outside the occupied Palestinian territory.
- The responsible officer managing the temporary coordination mechanism will follow up with Israeli authorities in advance of missed hospital appointments.
- Patients delayed (receiving no definitive response by the date of their hospital appointment) or denied will be provided with details of organizations through which they can appeal.