

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS BRIEFING
ON ISRAEL'S NEW POLICY TOWARDS GAZA
WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY DIR.-GEN. YOSSI GAL &
COORDINATOR OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE TERRITORIES
MAJ.-GEN. EITAN DANGOT
JERUSALEM, JULY 5, 2010**

MFA Spokesman Yigal Palmor: Thank you for coming to the press conference here at the Foreign Ministry where we will address the new Israeli government policy towards Gaza. We will hear two statements: the first statement by the Director-General of the Foreign Ministry, Ambassador Yossi Gal, and then a statement by the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, Major-General Eitan Dangot. After the statements you will be able to ask questions, and then once the conference is over we will distribute a hard copy of parts of the things that have been said. Now we will start with a statement by the Director-General, Ambassador Yossi Gal.

DG Gal: Ladies and gentlemen of the press, good afternoon and welcome to this press conference, the purpose of which is to specify the elements of the Israel policy decided upon by the Security Cabinet. On the 20th of June, the Security Cabinet adopted an important decision marking a significant change in seeking to keep weapons and war material out of Gaza while liberalizing the system by which civilian goods enter Gaza. The government adopted a series of principles regarding its policy towards Gaza. Today we are announcing here the details and the specific elements of this policy of the government of Israel as defined by the Cabinet. This announcement is made following a concerted effort by the various branches of the Israeli government, specifically I wish of course to acknowledge the efforts of our colleagues from COGAT (the Coordinator of the Government Activities in the Territories), from the National Security Council, alongside my colleagues from the Foreign Ministry who have been working very hard in order to come up with these elements of the policy.

But before I even start, I wish to say that on a day like this we should all remember one person, Gilad Shalit, now four years in captivity. The Cabinet, in its decision on the 20th, called on the international community to join in strongly condemning those who held him captive, and asked the international community to redouble their efforts to secure his immediate release. I think that the entire world should call and act to, in the words of the Quartet statement of the 21st of June, put an end to this deplorable detention of Gilad Shalit and to demand of Hamas "to immediately remedy the situation".

If I go back to the statement we published on the 20th following the meeting of the Security Cabinet, there were a number of elements there, a number of principles on which we wish to elaborate, and the General and I will share this elaboration between us. There were a number of elements there.

- The first was to publish a list of items not permitted into Gaza, a list that is limited to weapons, war materiel and dual-use items, saying that all other

items not included in the list will be permitted to enter into Gaza. In a minute I will try to elaborate on the composition of the major principles of this list.

- The second item of the Cabinet decision was to enable and expand the inflow of construction material for PA (Palestinian Authority)-authorized projects under international supervision and monitoring.

- The third item was the expansion of the operation of the crossings so that they can allow greater volume of goods to enter into Gaza.

- And the fourth element was trying to work with the Palestinian Authority in order to authorize these projects.

So with your permission, I will start with the elaboration on the first item and then give the floor to the General to elaborate on the other items.

As far as the lists are concerned, we're talking about a list of controlled entry items. We have formed two categories of listed items whose entry into Gaza will be subject to Israeli control, and items that are not included in the two lists, which will be allowed into Gaza without the need for specific permission.

The first list of the controlled items consists of items that have to do with arms, munitions and dual use. The first group of items consists of all those materials that are forbidden under all circumstances across Israeli frontiers, and these are the two categories of arms and munitions, and missile equipment.

The second group of items on the list consists of dual-use goods and items, those items that are liable to be used alongside with their civilian purposes for either the development, production, installation or enhancement of military capabilities and terrorist capacities. This list comprises a number of items: first of all, all of the items that are listed under the international Wassenaar Arrangement. The Wassenaar Arrangement, updated in the year 2008, is an international arrangement, more specifically called The Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies - List of Dual-Use Goods and Technologies and Munitions List. So this is one element.

The other elements are those items whose entry into the Palestinian Authority areas nowadays is controlled based on Israeli legislation. These are materials and equipment that are liable to be used for terror attacks and technology that could be used by terrorists, as defined by a number of items of legislation and orders. I'm not going to go through all the items on the list but just to give you an idea of what is it that we are talking about. This list includes a range of chemicals that can be used in the production of explosives, including certain fertilizers, composite materials, hunting knives, optical equipment, certain navigation aids, parachutes, gliders, non-motorized airborne vehicles, fireworks, avionics, flight control equipment, missile-related computer technologies, and so on and so forth. There is a long list of items, and I'm sure you understand the logic in building this list.

We then move to items that are not necessarily included in the above list but whose entry into Gaza will be controlled, and these are, again, items that could be used in the production of high-trajectory weapons - rockets and mortars. Here again is a whole list of mixtures and chemical agents that are not allowed into Gaza. At the end of the briefing, on your way out you will be able to get a copy of this general description of the list.

The second list comprises all the construction items and materials that are to be allowed entry into Gaza - only for Palestinian Authority-authorized projects implemented and monitored by the international community. This is a detailed list that includes everything from cement, lime, concrete, steel elements, iron, steel cables, and so on and so forth. There's a whole enumeration here. It also includes vehicles, excluding private cars which are allowed entry into Gaza. But for specific projects of the international community, there are exceptions here that will allow certain other things. As you can tell, we've made a very serious effort here to live up to the word and the spirit of the Cabinet decision of the 20th to make that very clear distinction between the security needs of Israel that we are committed to uphold, and everything else.

As far as the other elements of the announcement (and in a minute I'll give the floor to my friend and colleague), there are three other important elements. The first has to do with projects. There are a few projects that are running now in the fulfillment of our policy. The General will outline the many new projects that we will allow. The same goes for the crossings. And, General, if you can also elaborate a little bit on your contacts with the Palestinian Authority in the last several days. I think I will stop here and give the floor to the General.

Maj-Gen Dangot: Good afternoon. In accordance with the Cabinet decision on Israel's policy towards the Gaza Strip, we undertook some activities in implementing the new policy, and we tried to do it in an effective and immediate way that will serve the policy in the immediate term and also for the long term. The three elements, which were mentioned by Director-General Yossi Gal, that we worked on alongside the list of the controlled items, were the major subjects that we've dealt with in the past more than two weeks. The first is the crossing points. Israel will continue to maintain the active crossing points in Gaza, Kerem Shalom and Erez as the major crossing points for goods and human activity. Kerem Shalom will be the main conduit for the supply of goods. The principle is to supply all the needs of the Palestinians in Gaza for goods and items, and for that reason we have already taken several actions.

With your permission, I will go first into the crossings. As I mentioned, we undertook immediate action by increasing the facilities and the capacities at Kerem Shalom in order to immediately increase the number of trucks that will be able to cross. Meanwhile, we released a group of items for which we identified no direct connection to the list of banned items. Immediately, a few hours after the Cabinet decision, we increased the number of trucks from an average of 80 to 90 per day to 130, and today the average is 150 trucks per

day. That means that the authorized crossing managers from the Ministry of Defense took steps in order to supply goods, change working hours, immediately increasing the capacity of Kerem Shalom with new equipment. And in the past two days we are even at a level of 160 trucks crossing per day. As to Karni, the conveyor is supplying the needs. In Karni we already also increased the number of trucks from 80 to 120.

In the coming weeks, we are planning to increase the number of trucks to Kerem Shalom, after some construction activities, to 250, and in the first half of 2011, we estimate 400 trucks will be reaching Kerem Shalom daily. That means that, in total, on a working day in Kerem Shalom and via the conveyor in Karni, in a matter of weeks we will be see around 350 or 370 trucks per day. That brings us back to the level of the year 2005, when around 400 trucks were entering Gaza daily with items and goods.

We cannot take these steps without the cooperation of the PA in Ramallah and inside the Gaza Strip, and subject to security considerations - that is the basic principle for all our policies. We met with the Palestinians, and I will say a few words about it later. But today, for example, there is infrastructure work under way on the Palestinian side of Kerem Shalom in order to be able to receive the next batch of 250 trucks and with full cooperation with our teams.

The second element that I'm going to address now is the projects. Last February, together with the international community and the PA, we already initiated certain actions and approved some projects in Gaza. We are talking about nine big projects that are active these days and which precede the Cabinet decision, and another five projects already approved by the Israeli authorities. In recent days since the Cabinet decision, we have been in contact with U.N. delegations, with the USAID organizations, with European countries, with the PA. And today I can declare that in the coming days to the coming months, 31 new projects will be approved by Israeli authorities. Thus, in the coming months we will see 45 active projects in the Gaza Strip.

These will be based on a mechanism between Israel, the international community and especially the PA authorities in Ramallah. The mechanism is to ensure, first, that all the investments and the ideas of the international community are carried out through the PA in Ramallah, including the work mechanisms and an agreed-upon timetable; that raw materials will enter Gaza according a mechanism between us and the international organizations, which will serve us for the next 45 projects that we are undertaking with the international community and the PA.

In the coming weeks, we will continue our meetings and work towards the next projects that are per the international community's requests. These projects are in the sectors of education, health, infrastructure in sewage and water, and also, later on, housing, etc. In addition, we are working with the international community on long-range projects, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs'

efforts with the Norwegians regarding the water project in the coming months; once the staff work is completed, we will implement it with our mechanism.

The third element is the PA. We are looking forward to increasing cooperation and coordination with the PA in order to strengthen their involvement in Gaza activities. As I mentioned before, we have conducted several meetings with the Palestinians during recent days, and we agreed about two major elements which have already begun to be implemented: first regarding the crossings, and the second concerning the projects.

These four main elements are already part of the implementation of the Cabinet decision, which was carried out with the full cooperation of the international community. And I would like to thank especially the U.N. organizations, USAID, as well as some of the European countries which we worked with about those projects. Thank you very much.

Question: Is what we are doing here today something that is supported by the Prime Minister departing for the United States tonight, as part of the list of things that Israel is doing that makes it easier for it to progress in the diplomatic arena?

DG Gal: The Prime Minister's visit to Washington will cover a wide range of issues: undoubtedly, Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons following United National Security Council Resolution 1929; the legislation in the United States Congress and other issues; the peace process will be very high on the list - more specifically, how to move rapidly to direct talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians; and, yes, the Israeli policy towards Gaza and the significant steps that have been taken by the government of Israel that were announced following the Cabinet decision and elaborated upon in today's briefing; and last but not least, a very strong and steadfast alliance and friendship between our two countries and the cooperation between the United States and Israel on a very wide range of areas.

Question: General Dangot, from talking to Palestinian counterparts, it's clear that Israel is still not allowing in industrial-size raw materials for food production and other factories, even though after the decision from the government was announced we were told that all food and all sizes, including industrial-size margarine and all these things, would be allowed in. Why is that the case that it's still not being allowed in? And, also, even though it's not explicit in the Cabinet decision, will there be any announcement or change about whether Palestinians will be allowed to export and whether more people will be able to move, or is that policy remaining the same?

Maj-Gen Dangot: I think it's very clear, according to the Cabinet decision and what we just briefed, that the items that are not included in the list of controlled items are available each day beginning tomorrow. Most of the items depend on the PA itself, which decides each day what will be on the list of

goods entering Gaza for the next day. The PA decides from whom, from where, according to their principles and policy.

As for food, I can tell you very surely and with confidence that 90% of the food items were already released before the Cabinet decision. And we released the last 10% a few days after the Cabinet decision. So everything on the list of food items is open. I'm not going to go over with you the entire list, but it's very clear that items that are not included in the list of controlled items can, beginning tomorrow, enter freely into Gaza. And what was the second question?

Question: It was about whether Palestinians would be able to export and move. But just to be clear, I wondered if you can make a statement that raw materials for all factories that are not weapons or dual-use will be allowed in.

Maj-Gen Dangot: I make it very clear that items that are not on the list of controlled items will be able to enter into Gaza.

DG Gal: As to the second part of your question, I would refer you again to the statement made following the Cabinet meeting. It speaks very clearly about streamlining the policy of permitting entry and exit of people for humanitarian and medical reasons, and of course that of employees of international aid organizations. It does say however that, as conditions improve, Israel will consider additional ways. That is in the Cabinet decision.

Question: Have you released the list? Is it public yet, this list? Who has it? Will we receive it today? Because you say things that are not on the list. So is the list out? And can you tell me how many specific items are on the list, how many pages is the list, and just to start with that?

Maj-Gen Dangot: The list is based on existing definitions as to dual-use weapons and munitions from 2008, based on security considerations. What we added with regard to Gaza will be also added to the list. The list will be published in a few hours from now. Some of the major items on the list have already been published in the orders issued regarding Israeli supervision of these kinds of materials since 2008.

DG Gal: The Wassenaar list, if I'm not mistaken, is public domain.

Question: I mean, does your list include every item that's on that list, or do you make a reference? Is that, like, one item on your list, the Wassenaar items, and then other lists? And, still, could you give me a sense of how many items are on it? And this is supposed to be a list of banned items. How many banned items are there, specific banned items?

Maj-Gen Dangot: Israeli supervision of controlled raw materials and dual-use materials and arms and munitions include, I think, thousands of items - as in your country, like in every modern country that uses the Wassenaar list. To

these we have added about four specific orders. The number of items that were added for Gaza in the list of items under security considerations, I estimate, is not more than 20 or 30.

DG Gal: Again, the principles here are very important. The list of course will be made available later. But the two principles are that: one, items that are not included in the list are allowed into Gaza without the need for any special permission, this is one thing. And the second is that we are seeking to prevent weapons, war materiel and the capacity to produce explosives and the like from getting into Gaza, while opening and liberalizing the system by which civilian goods that are not under either this internationally recognized, or otherwise, list cannot enter Gaza. These are the principles.

Question: I have a question of whether exports will be allowed. And if I may ask Mr. Gal, while we have you, on another subject. I'm sure you're aware of the remarks that were published today by the Turkish foreign minister saying that Israel must either apologize or accept an international inquiry, or face a break in diplomatic ties, and I wondered if you could give us any response to that.

Maj-Gen Dangot: First, I made it clear in my short briefing that active crossing points that are currently active will be the main active crossings for the coming future. And the main principle will be that we will supply all the needs that will be requested from Gaza through the present crossing point of Kerem Shalom. If the need arises, we will examine other possibilities, but all of them subject to security considerations. We must not forget that in Gaza there is a terror regime, and we are dealing with the PA when in Gaza and from Gaza there are terrorist organizations operating. Even Kerem Shalom was barraged by rockets and mortar shells in the last half year. So all the decisions beyond the current existing arrangements, if needed, will be subject to these kinds of considerations.

As to exports, we will look towards the future. You have to remember that to export from Gaza to Israel must be under some kind of security measures. Don't forget the pas, when a container arrived at Ashdod Port, and three terrorists emerged and shot at people and there was bloodshed. So the immediate activity and broad opportunity, as I see it, of increasing the civilian policy in order to supply their needs has to be subject to security considerations.

DG Gal: The answers to your question are the following. First, as my good colleague said, we are now working on the expansion of the existing agreements, and I think you've heard about the expansion of hours of operation, days of operation. But again I will refer you to the statement of the Cabinet, which reads that Israel will "add substantial capacity at the existing operating land crossings and, as more processing capacity becomes necessary and when security concerns are fully addressed, then open additional land

crossings". But I think that there is a lot of room to work on the existing crossings in terms of capacity.

As for the question directed to me, I would refer you to the statements made by the Prime Minister on Friday night and by the Foreign Minister made earlier today in Riga, Latvia on this issue, and I don't think I have anything to add to that. And I want to thank you very much for your patience and to thank you for coming.