

Gaza: Exports of Palestinian Goods Challenge the Illegal Israeli Blockade from the Inside

By [Gaza Ark](#)

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[Gaza's Ark](#)

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

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With their economy suffocated by the illegal Israeli blockade, Palestinians in Gaza suffer from massive unemployment, as well as ongoing Israeli attacks from air and sea. Economic strangulation is as deadly for Gaza as the renewed Israeli bombings. In recent days, however, we have begun to pay several producers for export goods sold to international buyers through Gaza's Ark.

✘ Fayrouz from [Green Olive for Social Development](#) says:

“Most of the women who are working with us come to work in order to help their families and help their kids to get proper education. Gaza's Ark helps to empower these women and open new work opportunities.” Awni Farhat, products coordinator for Gaza's Ark, adds: “Most of these producers are marginalized women who work in cooperatives to help their families and improve their lives. Gaza's Ark helps them in a simple and direct way.”

All [commerce in Gaza is subject to severe restrictions](#), controlled either [directly by the Israeli occupation](#), or indirectly by the Egyptian military which enforce the Israeli blockade. The amount of [export trade permitted is miniscule](#) compared to pre-2007 levels, which has a devastating impact on the Palestinian economy and on employment in Gaza. Most of the population is aid dependent not because of any 'natural' disaster, but rather due to an entirely preventable political disaster: the illegal Israeli blockade of Gaza and our governments' complicity in allowing it to continue.

✘ It does not have to be this way. With the same freedom of movement rights that other nations enjoy, the Palestinians of Gaza could have a vibrant export economy, selling agricultural and manufactured products throughout the region and the world. Since Palestinians know they cannot depend on governments to help, solidarity organizations and individuals have put their money where their hearts are by purchasing goods from Gaza. Now those producers have begun receiving payments and are at work fulfilling these orders.

Islam Abu Suaib of the [Al-Ahliya Association](#) for Date Production and Development [says](#):

“[We are used to seeing convoys come through Rafah crossing](#), carrying humanitarian aid into Gaza, but this project is trying to break the blockade carrying Palestinian products out of Gaza: high-quality products made by

Palestinian hands that enhance and promote Palestinian national industry.”

✘ We know the risks of sailing to challenge the Israeli blockade and do not expect Palestinians to bear the commercial risk of exporting goods on such a voyage. So Palestinian producers who sell through our campaign are being paid in full before Gaza’s Ark sets sail. Purchasers are sharing in some of the risk of the voyage by investing in hope for a free and peaceful Palestinian economy while ‘getting on board’ symbolically with their goods to sail from Palestine against the blockade.

Over \$8,800 US in payments from international buyers has already been put in the hands of Palestinian producers in Gaza through our campaign, and before Gaza’s Ark sails, we know that there will be much more. By showing our confidence in an autonomous Palestinian economy and our commitment to freedom of movement for Palestinians, solidarity purchasers from Norway to Australia and from California and Canada to Greece and South Africa are also sending a strong message to our own governments. We demand that our governments protect our rights as consumers to purchase Palestinian goods exported from Gaza, the only Mediterranean port closed to commercial shipping. More importantly, we demand that our governments call on Israel to end illegal and arbitrary restrictions on Palestinian trade, and press for full freedom of movement for all Palestinians.

Learn more about products that can be purchased through Gaza’s Ark [here](#). If you are interested in a group purchase, please contact products@gazaark.com; for individual purchases, especially by mail order in North American, see

<http://palestineonlinestore.com/product-category/gazas-ark/>

See more [photos from producers in Gaza here](#).

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