Some 15 Gaza residents have died since the start of 2017 after Israel denied terminally ill patients the necessary permits to travel outside the besieged Strip for medical treatment.

Al-Mezan Centre for Human Rights revealed the figures in a statement yesterday, condemning the Israeli blockade on the coastal enclave that has resulted in its healthcare service being brought “to its knees”, in the words of the World Health Organization.

Al-Mezan cited the cases of two women who were refused travel documentation on numerous occasions: Kaenat Jarour, a 42-year-old uterine cancer patient, and Faten Ahmed, a 26-year-old woman who died as a result of a brain tumor due to Israel’s refusal to allow her to re-enter Jerusalem where she had initially received treatment.

Four patients whose travel applications were approved attempted to make the journey to Israel, only to be arrested alongside their family members at the Beit Hanoun crossing. Others who make the journey are often beaten and interrogated at checkpoints by Israeli occupying authorities.

The Israeli government shirks its international legal
obligations by denying residents of Gaza the flow of necessary medical relief and supplies into Gaza, while simultaneously denying and delaying the movement that residents require to seek the care outside of Gaza the statement added.

At least 12 patients have died in Gaza because of the Palestinian Authority's decision to deprive Gaza patients of travel permits. pic.twitter.com/mz6W2YWwDg

— Days of Palestine (@DaysofPalestine) August 26, 2017

As Gaza’s two million residents struggle to survive with a maximum of only four hours of electricity a day, an estimated 40 percent of necessary drugs are also unavailable or will be depleted within a month. Medical funding to the Strip has also been cut by Israel at the request of the Palestinian Authority (PA), as they attempt to pressure Gaza’s de-facto government Hamas into relinquishing control.

Last month, Palestinians protested at the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) condemning the international organization’s failure to stem the crisis. Many described the UN’s inaction as tacit approval of the Israeli blockade on Gaza.

(MEMO, PC, Social Media)