



OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
occupied Palestinian territory

The Gaza Strip: Access Report August 2005

This report monitors monthly humanitarian access and movement in the Gaza Strip. All movement in and out of the Gaza Strip is controlled by Israeli authorities. Fences and a concrete wall surround the Gaza Strip and sea access is restricted. Movement in and out of the Gaza Strip is controlled through:

- Erez crossing for Palestinian workers and merchants and medical referrals who have permits to enter Israel;
- Erez crossing for international organizations;
- Rafah crossing, between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, for access to other countries, including for overseas medical referrals;
- Four commercial crossings, of which Karni is the largest.

Palestinian movement within the Gaza Strip is restricted by internal closure:

- Through Abu Holi checkpoint in the central Gaza Strip;
- By over 200 observed closure obstacles, notably military bases and observation towers;
- For Palestinians living in enclaves in close proximity to Israeli settlements.

1. Gaza Strip Crossing Points

a. Access for Palestinian workers and traders into Israel

Erez crossing re-opened on 31 July after being closed since the 13 July following a Palestinian suicide attack at Netanya killing four Israelis. However, the crossing was closed again on 13 August, coinciding with the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip. Only a very limited number of workers and traders to Israel were allowed access after 13 August and only a few factory owners were allowed access to the Erez Industrial Zone (EIZ),.

Erez Crossing: Average Daily Labour Movement

	Jul 00	Jul 04	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05	May 05	Jun 05	Jul 05	Aug 05
Workers to Israel	22,410	1,052	49	390	1,451	3,200	2,067	3,588	1,767	281
Traders to Israel	N/A	N/A	17	70	158	224	103	362	175	168
Workers to EIZ	3,145	472	9	278	537	487	259	458	233	201

Palestinian National Security Forces | Data for 2000, 2004 obtained from UNSCO

Key Events:

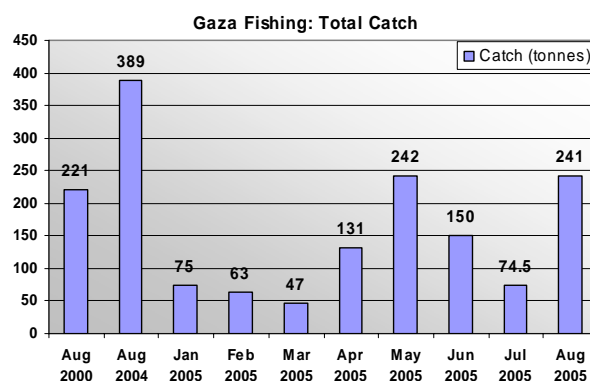
- 13 – 31 August: The crossing was closed for Palestinians coinciding with the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip. Only a limited number of workers and merchants, and some humanitarian cases were allowed access.
- 13 – 30 July 2005: The crossing was closed for all Palestinians following a general closure imposed on the oPt in the aftermath of a Palestinian suicide bombing in Netanya on 12 July killing four Israelis.
- 22 April – 15 May 2005: The crossing was closed to workers entering Israel (25 April - 14 May) and EIZ (22 April to 15 May) at the onset of the Jewish Passover holidays. The crossing remained closed after the Passover due to an alleged security threat.
- 14 Jan – 12 Feb 2005: Erez crossing was closed after six Israelis were killed in a Palestinian suicide attack at Karni crossing.

Access for Humanitarian Organisations

International humanitarian organisations require prior coordination with Israeli authorities to enter and leave the Gaza Strip. A small number of high-level Palestinian UN staff members are permitted to cross.

b. Access for Palestinian fishing (see map, page 3)

The fishing catch in August 2005¹ was significantly lower than during the same month last year but higher than in August 2000. Since January 2005, the Israeli authorities have permitted Palestinian fishing up to ten nautical miles from the Gaza Strip coastline compared to six nautical miles previously. Under the Oslo Accords, Gaza Strip fishermen are entitled to fish 20 nautical miles from the coast. Fishing is prohibited for the Al Mawassi – Khan Younis wharf and fishing from the Rafah wharf in Al Mawassi is subject to additional restrictions.² Most fishing happens off the Gaza Wharf.



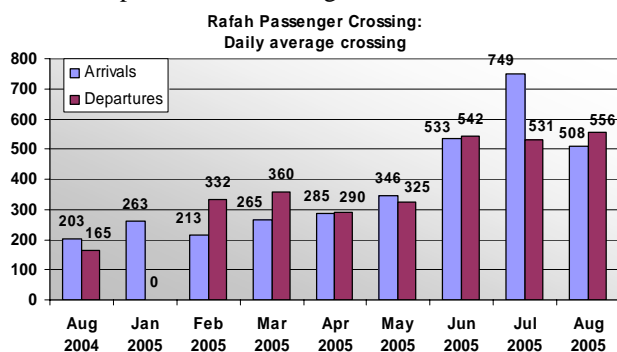
c. Access for Gazan trade movement

Karni crossing

Numbers of imported and exported goods at Karni in August are not available. See the September update.

d. Palestinians' access internationally from the Gaza Strip

The numbers of arrivals to the Gaza Strip through Rafah crossing dropped significantly in August 2005 compared to the previous month in part because of the end of the summer holiday season. The number of departures increased slightly. This may be due to the fact that on 1 August Palestinian men aged between 16 to 35 years were allowed to exit through Rafah crossing provided they had prior coordination with the Israeli authorities. On 16 July, the Israeli authorities re-imposed restrictions on Palestinian men aged between 16 to 35 years leaving the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. The x-ray machine re-installed on 20 July remains in place at the crossing.



2. Restrictions on medical referrals in the Gaza Strip

Gazans referred for medical treatment outside the Gaza Strip also experience access restrictions.³

a. Rafah crossing

Between 600 and 700 people per month require passage out of the Gaza Strip through Rafah crossing for secondary and tertiary treatment. This month four incidents of delay were reported with an average wait of six hours.⁴

b. Erez crossing

In August 2005, a total of 473 medical referrals had prior coordination with the Israeli authorities to access Israel. Of them, 198 were allowed entry, while 275 were denied access.

c. Internal medical access

Access to medical services within the Gaza Strip is particularly problematic for Palestinians in the enclaves.

Al Mawassi enclave:

There were 31 reported incidents of delay for an average of two hours and 40 minutes and five incidents of denial of access at Al Tuffah checkpoint at the exit of Al Mawassi enclave. Five of the delays involved Palestinian women in labour, waiting an average of three and a half hours before they were allowed to cross the checkpoint. Three delays and one denial were reported for medical supplies and humanitarian staff entering Al Mawassi enclave.

As Seafa enclave:

There were three delays for an average of two hours and 40 minutes experienced by Palestinians with medical referrals outside As Seafa enclave. Additionally, three delays and three denials were reported for medical supplies and humanitarian staff seeking to enter at As Seafa gate.

Al Ma'ani enclave:

There were five delays for an average of two hours and ten minutes experienced by medical referrals leaving Al Ma'ani enclave. Additionally, there were four delays and one denial for medical supplies and humanitarian staff entering Al Ma'ani enclave.

3. Restrictions on internal movement within the Gaza Strip

The IDF have periodically segmented the Gaza Strip into three areas by closing off the Coastal Road at Netzarim and Abu Holi junction. In exceptional cases, the IDF divided the Gaza Strip into four segments by also blocking the road as Moraq-Sufa junction.

a. Abu Holi junction

Between 26 July and mid-August, the checkpoint was open during daytime hours. When disengagement started, the checkpoint was open only at night, with some sporadic daytime opening hours. Movement within the Gaza Strip significantly improved between 9 February and mid-July when Abu Holi checkpoint was operational around the clock for vehicular traffic. In March, private vehicles were once again allowed to pass through the junction with the requirement of four people per vehicle; in May this requirement was reduced to two people per vehicle. Pedestrians were still not allowed to cross. Following an escalation of violence on both sides, Abu Holi checkpoint was closed on 12 July and remained closed until 23 July, subject to sporadic opening hours.

The Coastal Road was closed by the IDF on 22 August between 5.00am – 8.30am.

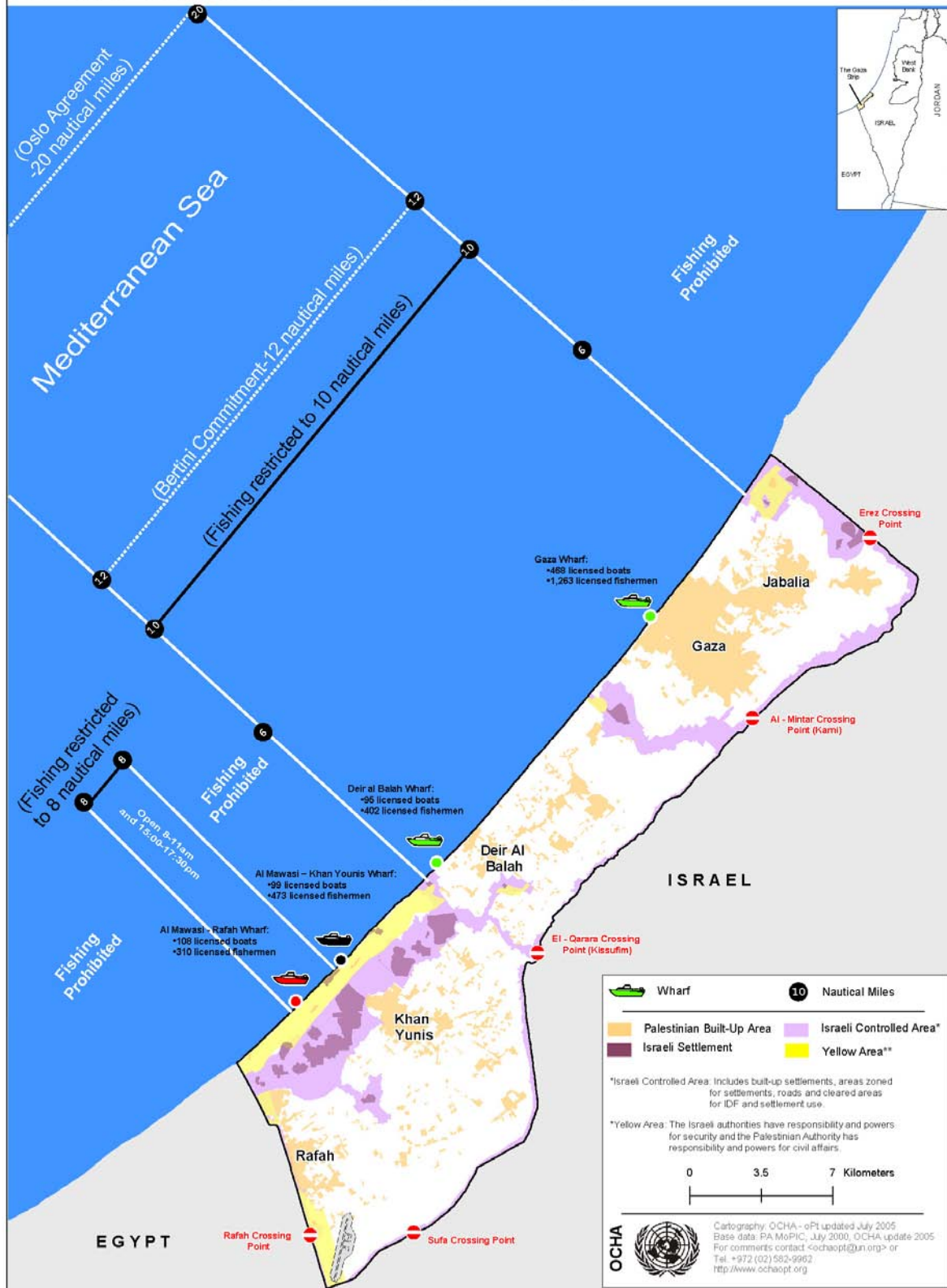
b. Palestinian enclaves

Isolated Palestinian communities in close proximity to Israeli settlements or settlement roads have been particularly affected by internal closures (see map, page 4). Common characteristics of these areas; or 'enclaves' are:

- Access is controlled by the IDF through a gate or a checkpoint;
- Vehicles are not permitted to cross. Goods, including drinking water and cooking gas, are carried by hand or donkey cart;
- Restrictions according to gender and age are often in place;
- Access in and out of the enclaves is limited to residents. Humanitarian organizations require prior coordination with the IDF;
- The back-to-back transfer of patients through coordination is required;
- Students often miss classes due to irregular opening hours at the gates/checkpoints; and
- Residents are afraid to leave their homes after dark due to the close proximity of IDF observation and patrols.

Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs |
Jun 2004, obtained from UNSCO

The Gaza Strip: Access for Palestinian Fishing



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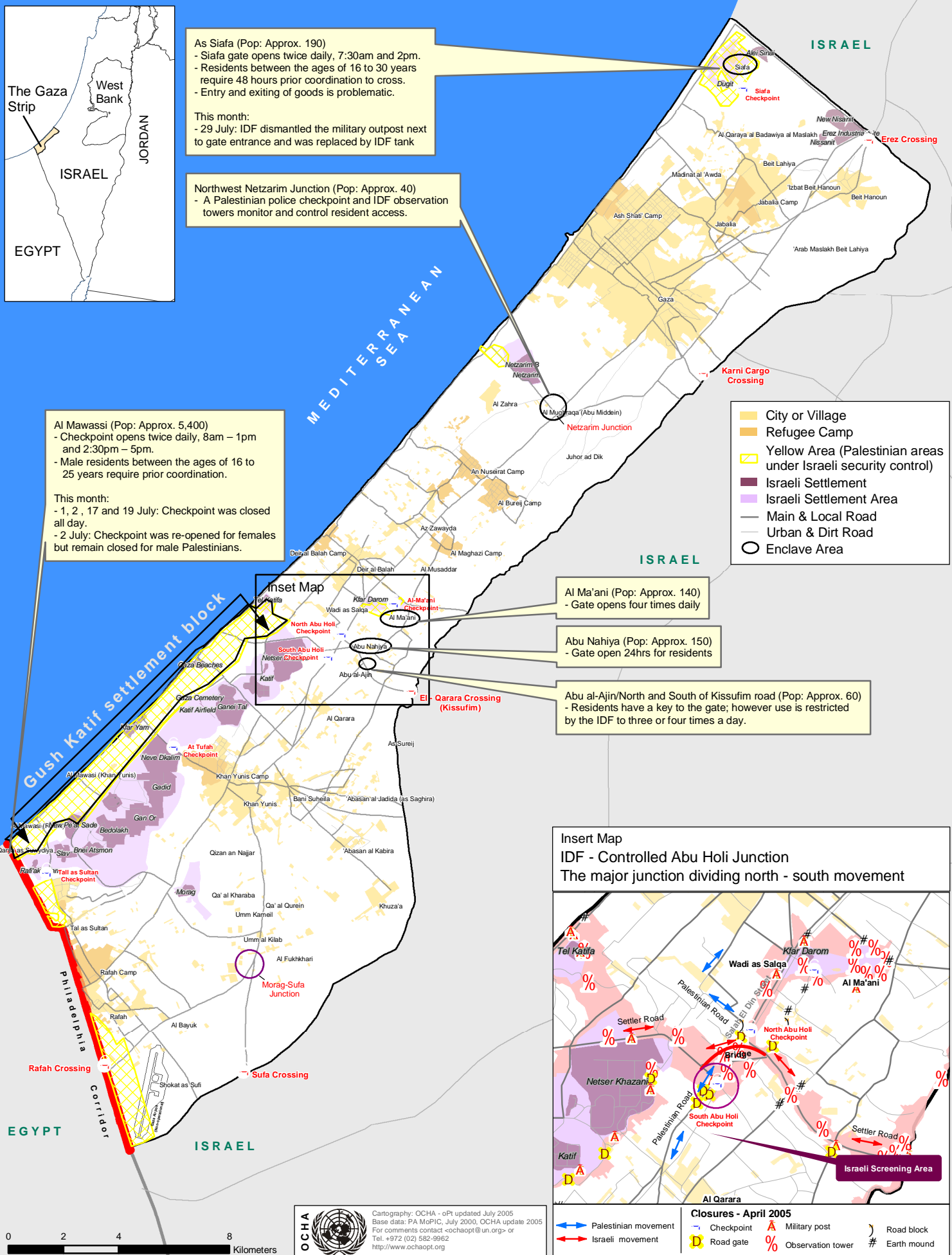
¹ Data from the Rafah wharf is not yet available. The total for August 2005 is likely to be higher than stated here. Since the July update, 4.5 tonnes of catch has been added to the total July catch, as the data from the Rafah wharf became available.

² Fishermen can only access the wharf during opening hours (8-11am and 3-5.30pm) and are not allowed on the shore at other times. Fishing is limited to eight nautical miles off the coastline and three kilometers north of the wharf along the coastline and two nautical miles north of the Egyptian border. Fishermen, boats, equipment and catch are searched by the IDF and only three traders are allowed to enter Al Mawasi to purchase the catch.

³ Data from this section is obtained from the Ministry of Health, PRCS and WHO.

⁴ Palestinian men aged between 16 to 35 years requiring referral for medical treatment face additional restrictions on crossing through Rafah.

The Gaza Strip: Enclaves July 2005



The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.