


[Login/Register](#) [Contact Us](#) [Help](#)

[Home](#) > [World Jewry](#) > Myth and Fact: Israeli Checkpoints

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[Donations](#) ▶

[GA](#)
[Travel](#)
[Jobs](#)
[News](#) ▶


Myth and Fact

MYTH

"Israel uses checkpoints to deny Palestinians their rights and humiliate them."

FACT

It is not unusual for nations to guard their borders and to establish checkpoints to prevent people from illegally entering their countries. The United States has checkpoints at its borders and airports and, as Americans saw on September 11, these are necessary but not foolproof security precautions.

In the case of Israel, the necessity for checkpoints has been created by the Palestinians. By pursuing a violent campaign of terror against Israel's citizens, they have forced Israel to set up barriers to make it as difficult as possible for terrorists to enter Israel or travel through the territories to carry out acts of violence. The checkpoints are an inconvenience to innocent Palestinians, but they do in fact prevent terror and save lives.

For example, on November 2, 2002, a van carrying boxes of jeans pulled up at a checkpoint. Soldiers checked the IDs of the men in the van and discovered one of the passengers was a wanted man. The van was unloaded and it was not until the soldiers opened the last box that they discovered an explosive belt that was being delivered to a suicide bomber. Two weeks later a taxi pulled up to the same checkpoint. Soldiers found two computers in the trunk that seemed unusually heavy. They opened the boxes and found two explosive belts. They also found a bag with a gun (Ha'aretz, November 28, 2002).

Commercial goods, food, medicine, ambulances, and medical crews continue to circulate freely, hampered only by continuing attacks. Palestinian workers going to jobs in Israel also may pass through the checkpoints with the proper identification; restrictions are only imposed when necessitated by the security situation.

Barriers are not set up to humiliate Palestinians, but to ensure the safety of Israeli citizens. Unfortunately, every time Israel has relaxed its policy and withdrawn checkpoints, Palestinian terrorists have taken advantage of the opportunity to launch new attacks on innocent Israelis.

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