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Israel resumes imports of Gaza fruit and vegetables, easing embargo

According to Reuters, Israel imported its first fruit and vegetables from the Gaza Strip in almost eight years on Thursday, in a partial easing of an economic blockade maintained since the Islamist group Hamas seized control of the Palestinian territory. Twenty-seven tons of tomatoes and five tons of eggplants were trucked across the border under an Israeli plan to bring in around 1,200 tons of produce a month. The Palestinians welcomed the move, though the scale fell short of the some 3,300 tons they said they had previously exported to Israel monthly. Israel says its blockade is intended to restrict goods that could be used in weapons production and underground tunnels. It said its purchases of fruit and vegetables from Gaza were meant to help the Palestinian economy and make up for a shortfall in Israeli produce caused by a Jewish biblical fallow year.