

'Run for Love'

A spokesman for the Israeli Defence Ministry disputed the claim and said the policy had not changed.

He said there was no list of banned items, but "luxury items" and items which could be used for military purposes were still restricted.

The blockade was tightened after Hamas seized control of Gaza in June 2007 and in response to rocket fire into Israel.

The spokesman said militants were still firing rockets into Israel and there had been no movement on the release of the captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Separately, Italian marathon runner Max Calderan, was denied access from Israel into Gaza.

He had been planning a Run for Love covering 335 miles (540km) from Ramallah in the West Bank to Jerusalem, through Gaza to the summit of Egypt's Mount Sinai.

Unrwa, which had been due to provide security for the Gaza leg, said the Israeli authorities had told him they would let him in.

The Defence Ministry spokesman said he was unaware of Mr Calderan's request for permission until he arrived at the crossing.



Critics say Israel's list of banned items now includes marathon runners