



Site Management Cluster

Palestine

Site Management Cluster oPt

Statement On Escalating Forced Displacement in Gaza

03 September 2025

Gaza, 3 September 2025 – The Site Management Cluster for the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) expresses grave concern at the intensifying humanitarian catastrophe unfolding across the Gaza Strip, as Israeli military operations continue to forcibly displace hundreds of thousands of already exhausted and traumatized civilians.

Escalating Forced Displacement

The announcement on 7 August of intensified military operations in Gaza city is having horrific humanitarian consequences for people in displacement sites, many of whom were earlier displaced from North Gaza. Many households are unable to move due to high costs and challenges, especially for the elderly or people with disabilities, and lack of a safe space to move to. Palestinians are also reluctant to move due to the fear of not being able to return or exhaustion from repeated displacement. Forcing hundreds of thousands to move south could amount to forcible transfer under international law.

On 26 August, a new displacement order covering approximately 1 square kilometre across Ad Daraj and Ash-Sheikh Radwan neighbourhoods in Gaza city is estimated to affect 200,000-250,000 people. This brings the total area under displacement orders or militarized zones to 86.5% of Gaza's territory.

Since 14 August, when the intensified operations began, over 82,000 new displacements have been recorded, with 29,700 movements observed from north to south between 14-31 August

Dire Conditions in Displacement Sites

Current living conditions across displacement sites are deplorable:

- *Living space averages only 0.5 square meters per person, far below the Sphere Standard of 3.5 square meters for shelter;*
- *Limited space in displacement sites has forced debris and waste to accumulate in close proximity to—and frequently within—living areas;*
- *High temperatures have exacerbated these unsanitary conditions, leading to widespread rodent and insect infestations. Consequently, health risks have escalated, with children developing skin rashes, while overall living standards have deteriorated significantly;*
- *Access to water is a challenge, with water supplies inadequate, leading to large crowds around water distribution points prevent vulnerable groups from reaching supplies. Delivery trucks often cannot access sites, forcing families to travel long distances for water; Inadequate drainage systems discharge wastewater through unsafe, uncovered channels or directly onto streets, spreading waterborne diseases and creating environmental hazards;*
- *Inadequate drainage systems discharge wastewater through unsafe, uncovered channels or directly onto streets, spreading waterborne diseases and creating environmental hazards;*
- *Limited to no lighting at night creates highly unsafe environments, particularly for women and children who experience fear and insecurity. Due to the lack of light, there are increased risks of accidents, harassment, and protection-related issues. Many women and children cannot leave shelters to access toilets or essential facilities at night due to safety concerns.*

Land in the Middle Area and Khan Younis is already sheltering thousands of displaced families and cannot adequately accommodate displaced people from Gaza city. Based on our analysis, a maximum of 160,000 people can be accommodated while still maintaining global minimum site management standards. Within the Middle Area and Khan Younis, multiple sites are fully or partially within militarized zones, face high flooding risks, and/or are already overcrowded.

Overall, there is an urgent need for site improvements and shelter materials in advance of winter. Since early March, Israel has prohibited entry of essential shelter materials including tents, tarpaulins, and mattresses, even as more than 860,000 new displacements occurred. As summer concludes, many tents have deteriorated from prolonged sun exposure, leaving them vulnerable to heavy rains and storms. With winter approaching, sites face flooding risks from seasonal rainfall and harsh weather conditions. Urgent winterization activities are required including tent replacement and reinforcement, provision of essential equipment like ropes and tarpaulins, flood risk reduction measures, drainage system improvements, and barrier installation to prevent water intrusion.

Humanitarian Principles Under Attack

The Site Management Cluster in OPT reaffirms that humanitarian assistance must be provided wherever people have sought refuge, without directing them where to go. This is fundamental to our humanitarian principles. Aid must never be weaponized, used to facilitate forced displacement or advance military objectives.

Despite the recent announcement on 16 August allowing entry of shelter items, no tents and shelter materials have been able to enter Gaza through UN channels due to systematic restrictions, including customs clearance and crossing access, which remain unaddressed. The Site Management Cluster reiterates [the Shelter Cluster's position paper](#) which provides clear parameters to avoid instrumentalization of aid. Tents, shelter materials, and essential supplies must be allowed into all parts of Gaza, including through northern crossings and to

Gaza city. Despite severe access constraints, Site Management Cluster partners remain present in Gaza city and across Gaza to provide lifesaving support. Humanitarian partners must be allowed to operate without obstruction to meet the overwhelming needs of displaced populations. The Site Management Cluster calls for:

- *Unimpeded humanitarian access across all of Gaza to reach people wherever they are;*
- *Adherence to international humanitarian law and protection of civilians, humanitarian workers, and those who cannot or choose not to move;*
- *Immediate end to attacks on displacement sites and protection of civilians regardless of location;*
- *Respect for humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.*

The Site Management Cluster stands in unwavering solidarity with displaced communities in Gaza. We reiterate our commitment to serve people wherever they are through a principled, community-led humanitarian response.

The Site Management Cluster is a joint United Nations and humanitarian body that coordinates aid and safety in places where displaced families are sheltering, under the guidance and standards set by Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Since February 2024, the Site Management Cluster in oPt has been tracking population movement in Gaza whenever large-scale displacement happens to understand needs and fuel a more impactful humanitarian response.