



# **Gaza Displacement Site Verification Assessment: Baseline Findings for May 2026 Humanitarian Planning and Coordination**

**Site Management Cluster in the Occupied Palestinian Territory**



**Disclaimer:** *The Site Management Cluster (SMC) extracted data for this report from the Zite Manager application on 16 May 2026. As site information is frequently updated, figures may differ slightly from those presented in other SMC information products.*



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# I Glossary and Acronyms

**Collective centre:** A building (typically a school, mosque, or public facility) repurposed to shelter displaced people. May be UNRWA-managed or non-UNRWA (operated by other actors or with no formal management).

**Displacement site:** Any location where displaced people are living collectively, including makeshift sites, collective centres, and scattered locations.

**Explosive ordnance (EO):** Munitions containing explosives, including unexploded (UXO) and abandoned ordnance. A primary contamination hazard across displacement sites in Gaza.

**Explosive ordnance risk education (EORE):** Community-level awareness activities that teach residents to recognise, avoid, and report explosive ordnance (EO) hazards.

**Female-headed household (FHH):** A household in which the primary decision-maker and main provider is a woman, often where no adult male is present or contributing regularly to the household's economic and social support.

**Housing, land and property (HLP):** A protection sector focused on the legal rights of displaced people to occupy the land or buildings where they are living, including documentation, tenure security, and eviction prevention.

**Internally Displaced Person (IDP):** A person or persons who have been forced to flee or leave their homes due to conflict, violence, disasters, or other crises, and who remain within their country's borders.

**Makeshift site:** An informal, open-air area where people have established shelter independently using tents, emergency shelter kits, or improvised materials. The dominant displacement type in Gaza, accounting for over 80% of assessed sites.

**Mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) screening:** A rapid nutritional assessment method used to identify acute malnutrition by measuring the circumference of the upper arm. Used as a proxy indicator for screening large populations.

**Non-governmental organization (NGO):** A non-profit, independent organisation operating outside government control, delivering humanitarian or development assistance.

**Non-food item (NFI):** Essential household goods other than food, such as blankets, hygiene kits, kitchen sets, and shelter materials, distributed to meet basic needs.

**PLW:** Pregnant or lactating women, often prioritized due to heightened nutritional and health needs.

**Scattered site:** A very small displacement location of fewer than ten households, typically too small and dispersed for standard site management programming.

**Site focal point:** An individual, often community-selected, who acts as the primary contact for a displacement site, providing information to humanitarian actors and serving as a communication link between residents and service providers.

**Site management agency (SMA):** A humanitarian organisation formally designated by the Cluster to support the management and coordination of a displacement site, including community engagement, governance support, information collection, site improvements, and service facilitation.

**Site management committee:** A community-based governance body at site level, comprising residents who support community consultation and liaison with humanitarian actors. Distinct from, though often supported by, a site management agency.

**Site Management Cluster (SMC):** The coordination body responsible for site management in humanitarian displacement settings, ensuring assistance and protection are delivered to people in collective centres and informal sites.

**Temporary learning space (TLS):** An informal educational facility in or near a displacement site providing learning activities for children. Typically run by NGO partners or community volunteers; not equivalent to a formal school.

**UNRWA:** The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is a UN agency that supports the relief and human development of Palestinian refugees.

**"Yellow line" / confrontation line:** A demarcation line designated by Israeli forces east of which civil-military coordination is required for humanitarian movement. Sites in proximity to or east of this line are classified as high-risk for access.

**WASH:** Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, in reference to humanitarian and early recovery programming.

**Site Manager:** The data management platform used by the Site Management Cluster to collect, store, and share site-level information across partner organisations.

# Executive Summary

Between 3 February and 19 April 2026, the Site Management Cluster (SMC) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory conducted a systematic site verification assessment across the Gaza Strip, covering 1,591 active displacement sites accommodating approximately 1.7 million people.

This exercise was the first comprehensive site verification conducted at this scale and provides the most complete baseline of current site conditions available. The findings of this assessment are intended to inform 2026 humanitarian operational planning, site management partner programme design, inter-cluster coordination, and donor strategy.



Key findings show that displaced people in Gaza are living in extremely poor conditions, characterised by limited access to essential humanitarian supplies, inadequate lighting and energy, weakened health services, disrupted water supply system, and exposure to increasingly unsafe environments.



Palestinian Agricultural Development Association (PARC) site management staff assessing a makeshift displacement site. ©PARC2026

# Key Findings

## 1. Needs across sectors remain severely unmet.

Despite relative improvements following the October 2025 ceasefire, conditions in displacement sites remain dire. At least 59,000 shelters (24 per cent) accommodate more than eight people, while 7,700 households (around 38,500 individuals) reported sleeping outdoors without any shelter. Four in five sites (81 per cent) reported urgent medical cases in the preceding month, with severe skin diseases, fever, and respiratory illness among the most prevalent conditions. An estimated 600,000 people in displacement sites lack sufficient access to drinking water.

## 2. Sites have limited governance structure and are unevenly covered by site management actors.

Sixty-seven per cent of displacement sites have no Site Management Agency (SMA) presence. While 92 per cent of sites have a community management committee, 67 per cent of their community focal points are operating with no formal training. Sites without SMA coverage consistently show worse outcomes across key indicators, with displaced residents having lower access to shelter assistance, fewer protective services, reduced explosive ordnance risk education, and lower nutrition screening rates.

## 3. Physical environments are dangerous and hazards remain largely unmitigated.

Nearly two-thirds of sites (64 per cent) experience rainwater accumulation, while half lack any visible drainage. Forty-five per cent of sites report fire hazards near shelters. Rodent infestations, sewage in streets, and accumulated solid waste are present in 81 per cent, 60 per cent, and 56 per cent of sites, respectively, contributing to the spread of disease. Sites affected by rainwater accumulation report urgent medical cases in nine in ten sites compared to fewer than two in three without standing water, and also show substantially higher rates of severe skin disease, respiratory illness, and diarrhoea. Fewer than one in ten sites has communal lighting, leaving over 1.5 million people without any after-dark safety infrastructure.

## 4. Conditions in North Gaza require urgent attention.

North Gaza has the lowest SMA coverage (23 per cent), the lowest malnutrition screening rate (9 per cent), and the highest rate of urgent medical cases (95 per cent). Population movement indicates net in-migration, despite the governorate's proximity to conflict areas. Three in four sites rely on self-purchasing as their primary food source, representing the second highest market dependency in the Strip after Rafah. Paradoxically, shelter assistance coverage is higher in North Gaza than any other governorate (88 per cent), suggesting conscious efforts to reach these site populations. Meanwhile, sites in Gaza governorate have related but distinct priorities, including the highest reliance on bucket and plastic bag sanitation (22 per cent), the lowest food assistance coverage in the Strip (49 per cent), and no reported access to cooking fuel across all 38 sites.

## 5. Tenure insecurity is near-universal and creates compounding vulnerability.

Ninety-three per cent of sites have no formal tenure: 62 per cent rely on verbal permission only and 31 per cent have no known permission at all. Displaced residents in one in ten non-UNRWA sites reported active threats or pressure to vacate. Most sites are located on privately owned land, resulting in a risk of secondary displacement from

within displacement sites, directly undermining stability. Tenure insecurity also enables exploitation before eviction: Female-headed and elderly-headed households, who have less capacity to negotiate with landowners or resist informal payment demands, are disproportionately exposed to these risks.

## 6. Limited access to hygiene items is producing measurable disease burden.

Not a single UNRWA collective centre reported that all residents had sufficient soap. In the same facilities, seven in ten reported severe skin disease cases in the preceding month – nearly double the rate in non-UNRWA collective centres and substantially higher than in makeshift sites. The co-occurrence of limited soap access and elevated rates of skin disease is intuitive, pointing to a clear and addressable gap in assistance to these collective centres.

## 7. Explosive ordnance remains a major risk in displacement sites.

At least 244 sites, housing approximately 247,000 residents, reported confirmed explosive ordnance (EO) encounters in the period assessed, with 43 per cent of these receiving no EO risk education (EORE) in the preceding six months. EO risks in sites are concentrated in North Gaza and Gaza governorate, while sites located near to the “yellow line” report slightly higher rates of EO encounters than those closer to the shore.

## 8. Non-UNRWA collective centres are among the most neglected site types in the humanitarian response.

Despite hosting a disproportionately high share of households sleeping outdoors (8 per cent of the assessed population, but 23 per cent of all outdoor-sleeping households), having the weakest tenure profile of any typology (49 per cent with no known permission to remain), and reporting the highest rate of urgent medical cases in the 30 days prior to being surveyed (84 per cent of sites), only 12 per cent of these collective centres have any site management presence. These sites seem to fall systematically outside both site management and shelter assistance targeting frameworks and warrant dedicated attention in 2026 planning.



Acted site management staff discussing risks with Site Focal Point as a part of the visual observation portion of a site safety audit in August 2025. ©ACTED2025

## Key Asks and Recommendations

### For Site Management Actors

1. **Expand site management coverage by prioritising governorates and humanitarian clusters with the highest concentration of unmanaged sites and the most acute humanitarian needs.**

Where full site management coverage is not feasible, establish lighter-touch interim models, including trained community focal points supported by regular remote SMA engagement, to begin closing coverage gaps. Strengthen rapid referral pathways between site management teams and protection, legal, shelter, WASH, and health actors to enable a more integrated response across sites.

2. **Establish women's committees as a standard approach.**

Women's committees are associated with not only better overall site governance, but also increased EORE reach, reduced eviction pressure, and stronger protection referral pathways. Priority should be given to the 15 per cent of unmanaged sites with no women's involvement in management. Partnerships with protection actors can then be leveraged to expand outreach in sites that lack SMA.

3. **Embed site environment monitoring in routine site visits, linking findings to site improvement action plans.**

Most environmental hazards identified in the assessment, such as fire risks from poorly positioned cooking areas, blocked drainage channels, and solid waste accumulation, are observable and can be at least partially addressed through site-level action. Risks that cannot be mitigated with available tools should be subject to technical assessment and escalated to enable more comprehensive intervention.

4. **Prioritise communal lighting as a protection intervention.**

Ninety per cent of sites lack any form communal lighting, creating direct protection risks in overcrowded environments after dark, particularly for women and girls. The absence of lighting presents a substantial risk for those with limited mobility, especially given the presence of EOs, trip and fall hazards, stagnant water, waste and debris identified across sites. Solar lanterns and communal solar systems are low-cost, fuel-free and rapidly deployable. Addressing this gap would have a high impact, significantly improving site conditions and reducing protection risks.



For more detailed operational recommendations for Site Management Actors, see page 44

## For Humanitarian Actors in Sites

### 1. Use the site verification data to identify and respond to critical gaps.

Several priority gaps highlighted in this report are immediately actionable: the 106 sites with observed EOs and no risk education in the preceding six months should be prioritized for EORE; the 32 sites in Gaza governorate with no cooking energy could be provided with safer fuel sources; the 15,000 families living in the 93 sites where no residents have access to soap could be targeted for blanket soap distribution; the 179 sites, primarily in Gaza governorate, reporting no latrine coverage should be assessed for immediate sanitation support; and the 317 sites with families sleeping outdoors should be prioritized for shelter assistance.

### 2. Target programming to reduce compounding risks.

Environmental conditions in sites (i.e. accumulation of water, sewage and waste due to poor site layout and drainage), combined with gaps in assistance (i.e. limited access to soap, adequate shelters, and safe cooking fuel), are closely associated with negative health outcomes (i.e. skin diseases, respiratory infections, and diarrhoea). Closer coordination between sectoral service providers and site management teams can help identify trends, prioritise interventions in sites, and mitigate risks.

## For Donors and Decision Makers

### 1. Fund site management agency (SMA) coverage expansion.

Improvements in site conditions and service delivery is linked to the presence of site management agencies, reflecting the effectiveness of integrated responses when sites are supported by robust information, on-the-ground coordination and communal infrastructure. Funding for site management should be understood as a force-multiplier that enables timely, targeted and accountable programming where it is needed most.

### 2. Fund ongoing site monitoring initiatives.

Sixty-four per cent of staff and cluster focal points surveyed found the results of this site verification assessment, “very useful” and 36 per cent as “useful”, including in informing direct response. Providing up-to-date, robust data on conditions and populations in nearly 1,600 sites require significant investment from site management partners. Establishing consistent and predictable monitoring across subsequent rounds is relatively low-cost and generates actionable data to better plan and target humanitarian response.

### 3. Advocate for entry of materials needed for site improvement work.

Needed site improvement work includes construction or rehabilitation of site-level drainage, site planning or reconfiguration to reduce fire risk, and installation of communal lighting to provide safe environments for vulnerable site residents. However, most of the tools, materials and machinery required for these works are not available on the local market, and entry through humanitarian corridors is heavily restricted.

### 4. Support Housing, Land and Property (HLP) assistance.

Nearly 1.67 million people in Gaza live without any formal documentation to secure their tenancy in sites, while one in ten sites is under active eviction pressure. Insecurity at this scale presents challenges not only for site management actors looking to improve site infrastructure, but also for shelter, WASH and other actors investing in more durable assistance in sites. Funding dedicated to HLP and legal assistance programmes in sites, prioritizing female-headed and elderly-headed households at risk of exploitation, is highly needed.



Fares Al-Arab for Development and Charitable Works (FAFD) leveling ground in a site to improve access and reduce flooding. ©FAFD2026

# I 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The displacement crisis in the Gaza Strip is among the most severe and complex humanitarian crises in the world. Since October 2023, Gaza's population has faced repeated displacement, as successive waves of hostilities and forced displacement orders have driven families to relocate multiple times within a confined area. By April 2026, approximately 1.7 million people are estimated to be residing in displacement sites across the Strip inside informal makeshift tent encampments, collective centres in schools and public buildings, and scattered locations spread across all five governorates.

The scale and pace of mass displacement in this context produce a site landscape that is fluid, fragmented, and difficult to monitor systematically. Sites continuously form and dissolve as military operations, evictions, flooding, and population movements reshape the landscape. Restrictions on humanitarian access, limited funding for site management, and assessment fatigue driven by insufficient assistance relative to repeated surveys continue to constrain the ability of site management partners to regularly verify site locations, populations, and conditions.

Against this backdrop, the discrepancy between recorded site lists and reality on the ground widened by late 2025. A comprehensive, shared understanding of locations and conditions of sites became urgently needed to identify needs, inform prioritisation, and plan interventions.

## 1.2 Objectives

The Site Management Cluster (SMC) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) conducted the Site Verification Assessment across the Gaza Strip between 3 February and 19 April 2026. The primary objectives of the assessment were to:

- 1** Verify the status and existence of all sites recorded in the SMC site master list to establish a more accurate, up-to-date baseline for 2026 planning and coordination; and
- 2** Collect a minimum set of essential site-level information for humanitarian clusters to use, to support coordinated sectoral responses, including ongoing site management activities.

This assessment is not a detailed sectoral needs assessment, nor is it intended as a regular monitoring mechanism. It is a baseline exercise designed to answer a specific operational question: which displacement sites exist and what conditions they are in. Site management partners will update critical planning information through future monitoring, and the assessment data will inform site-level targeting of humanitarian response and support coordination across clusters in 2026.

## 1.3 Methodology


Twelve Site Management Cluster (SMC) partners collected data through the Zite Manager platform, with 165 trained enumerators deployed across 116 neighbourhoods. Prior to data collection, partners conducted seven standalone training sessions for all enumerators covering the survey tool, data collection procedures, and quality requirements. The SMC assigned partners geographic responsibility at neighbourhood level to ensure full coverage, including both sites in the SMC master list and previously unidentified sites. Enumerators conducted in-person visits to each site, recording site status, population, physical conditions, service access, and governance arrangements. Where detailed records were unavailable, focal points provided estimates.

Enumerators submitted surveys through the Zite Manager application using an Open Data Kit (ODK) form. Information management teams programmatically reviewed data for unexpected responses, numeric outliers, and inconsistencies with previously known site information. Where such issues were detected, field teams recontacted focal points for clarification and confirmation before updating records accordingly.

All 1,856 sites in the pre-assessment site list were targeted for verification, and additional sites were identified during and after the exercise. In total, 1,591 sites were confirmed as active and fully assessed as of 16 May 2026, accommodating approximately 1.7 million displaced people. These confirmed active sites form the basis of the analysis in this report.

### The twelve organisations that collected data were:

| Organisation   | No. of sites |
|--|--------------|
| International Organization for Migration (IOM)   | 494          |
| Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)                               | 274          |
| Palestinian Agricultural Development Association (PARC)                                | 240          |
| Palestinian Housing Council (PHC)  | 202          |
| Danish Refugee Council (DRC)   | 178          |
| United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) | 83           |
| Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)  | 47           |
| Bait Lahia Development Association (BLDA)  | 30           |
| Cooperation and Development (CESVI)  | 14           |
| Future Association for Development and Environmental (FADE)                            | 10           |
| Ma'an Development Center (MAAN)  | 10           |
| Fares Al Arab for Development (FAFD)   | 9            |

 The SMC extracted data for this report from the Zite Manager application on 16 May 2026. As site information is frequently updated, figures may differ slightly from those presented in other SMC information products.

## 1.4 Limitations and Assumptions

Counting and categorising sites in Gaza presents unique challenges that shape how the findings in this report should be interpreted. Displacement sites in this context should be understood as community-defined rather than formally designated – displaced people self-organise, select a focal point, and present themselves as a site; the SMC records what communities report rather than determining what constitutes a site. The widespread destruction of the landscape across Gaza often removed familiar reference points, fracturing the spatial logic that might have previously helped define a site boundary. Community structures and informal leadership, which would typically provide a cohesive community identity, are similarly disrupted by mass displacement, family separation, and casualties.

At a practical level, site names are frequently duplicated across the Strip, and the density of displacement means that adjacent tent clusters are often difficult to distinguish as separate sites. The 1,591 sites recorded in this assessment should therefore be understood as a social count: A measure of how many organised displaced communities were identified and reached rather than a census of discrete physical locations.



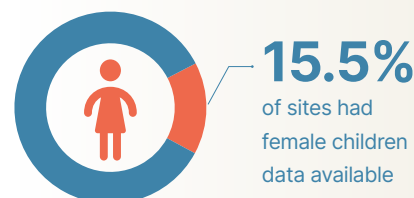
Since there is no standard registration system mandated or consistently supported across sites, all population figures should be treated as estimates, with accuracy varying by site and indicator. Where specific assumptions were applied, such as a household size of five, relevant sections note these accordingly.

A single interview per site limits representativeness of sub-groups including persons with disabilities, female-headed households, and pregnant or lactating women (PLW). As a result, these demographic figures likely reflect focal point awareness rather than direct reporting and should be read as underestimates. This limitation constrains the analysis of differential impact and humanitarian priorities across groups.

Data collection spanned a period of approximately two months, with the earliest data around four months old at the time of publication. Given site situation volatility, this report should be interpreted as a baseline overview rather than a point-in-time snapshot.

Security and logistical constraints required some surveys to be conducted by telephone, limiting direct observation and data quality. In addition, sites in areas inaccessible to humanitarian agencies were assessed remotely when possible and listed as unverified when no contact was possible.

Data on female children is available only for 15.5 per cent of assessed sites, limiting site-level analysis of specific needs and risks affecting girls, including education, protection, WASH, and safety. Strengthening the completeness of sex- and age-disaggregated data on children in future monitoring rounds would support a more robust analysis of girls' conditions and enable more targeted programme responses.



Associations between indicators are based on correlation analysis and thus should not be assumed to be causative. For instance, a positive correlation between site management agency presence and improved outcomes in this report may not always be causative, as site selection bias and site visibility potentially skew which sites were taken on by management agencies.



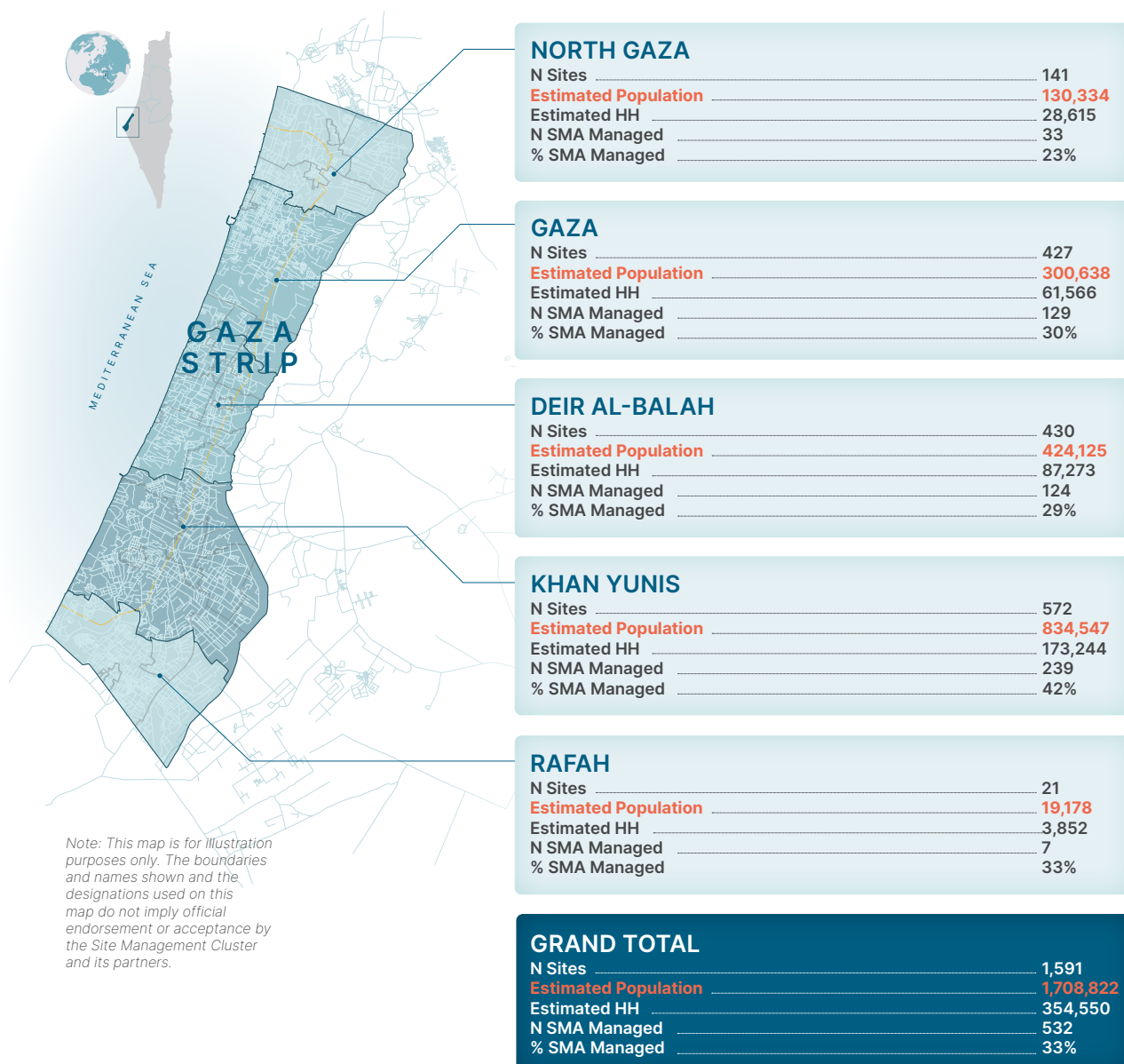
A woman washes dishes in her shelter in an UNRWA collective centre in Gaza city. @IOM2026

# 2. Site Overview

## 2.1 Geographic Scope and Displacement Typologies

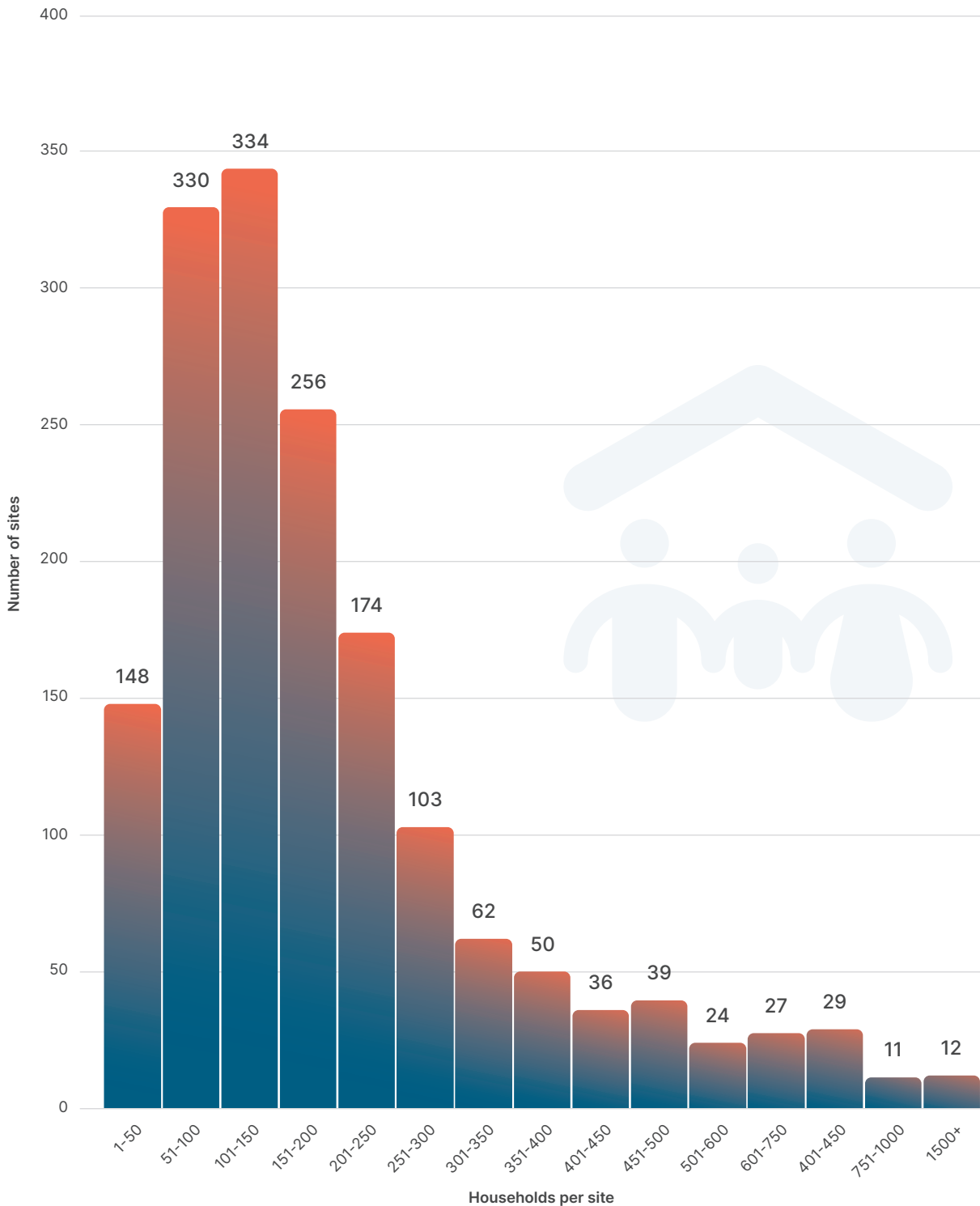
Covering all five governorates of the Gaza Strip – Rafah, Khan Yunis, Deir Al-Balah, Gaza, and North Gaza – the assessment identified 1,591 active sites, the vast majority of which (83 per cent) are makeshift, meaning informal, open-air, and tented locations. Collective centres (i.e. public buildings, schools) account for approximately 11 per cent of sites, including both UNRWA-managed facilities and non-UNRWA buildings. Scattered sites comprising fewer than ten households make up the remainder. Collective centres are more commonly located near the so-called “yellow line” than makeshift sites.

Figure 1: Estimated population in assessed sites by Site Management Agency coverage



Sites vary considerably in size. The smallest reported site comprised just two households, while the largest hosted 4,864. The average site size was 223 households. Larger sites are more likely to have Site Management Agency (SMA) coverage, meaning unmanaged populations (representing 66 per cent of sites) tend to be concentrated in smaller and more dispersed locations.

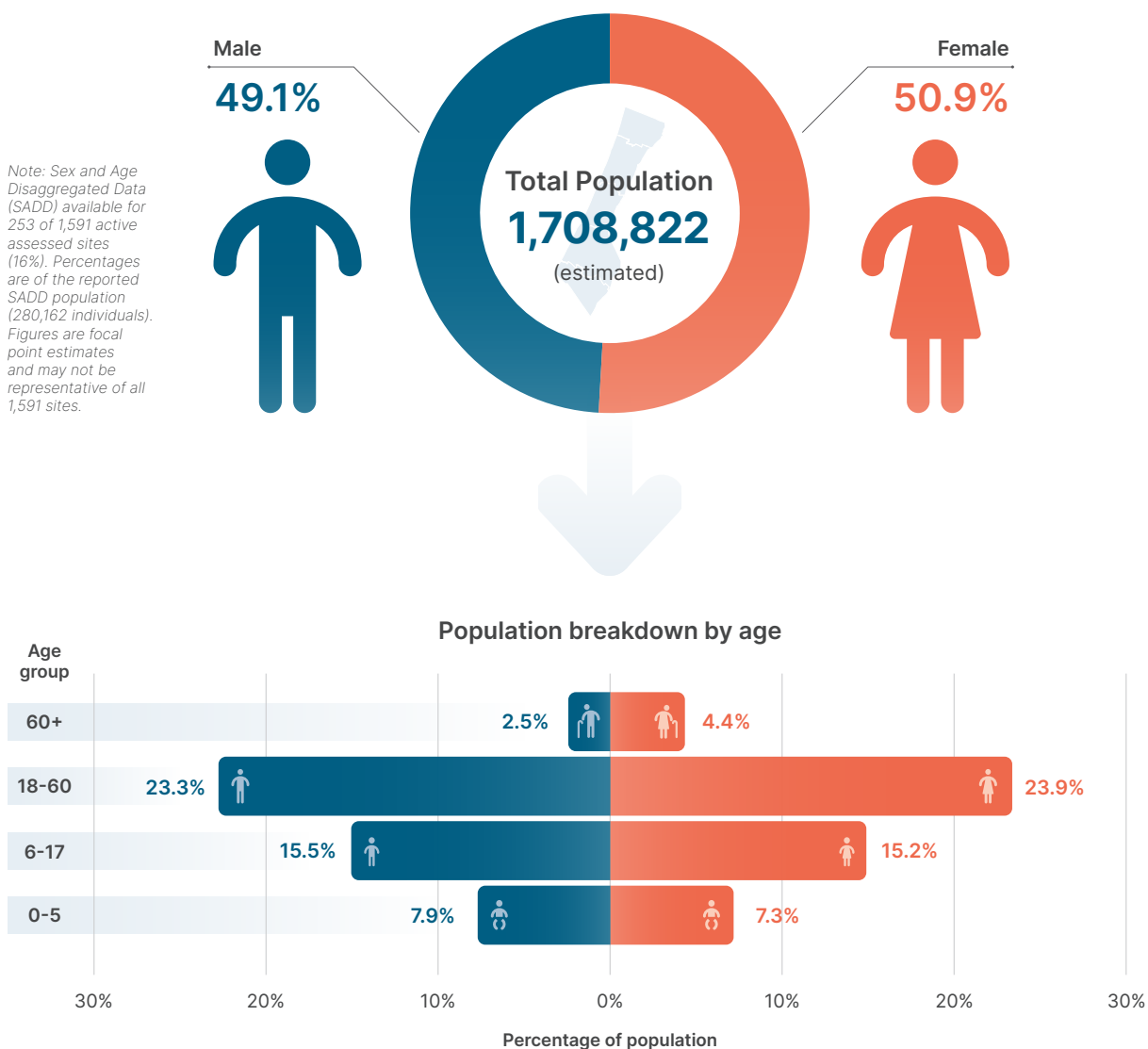
**Figure 2: Sites by household count**



## 2.2 Demographics

The 1,591 assessed sites accommodate an estimated 1,708,822 individuals across 354,550 households, based on the standard household size assumption of five persons where disaggregated data was unavailable.

**Figure 3: Population profile**



Population movement across sites remains active. In the 30 days preceding data collection, 549 sites reported arrivals and 363 reported departures, with the majority (985) recorded no change. An estimated 39,000 individuals arrived at assessed sites while 42,000 departed. These figures reflect ongoing displacement both within and into the site system, rather than a settled population.

## 2.3 Vulnerable groups

Chronic illness is the most numerically significant vulnerability reported across sites, with focal points estimating that roughly 109,000 individuals live with chronic health conditions. Pregnant or lactating women (PLW) account for an estimated 61,000 individuals. Female-headed households number at approximately 48,000, or roughly 14 percent of all households. This proportion is broadly consistent across governorates and site typologies, although under-reporting is likely where female-headed households reside with male relatives.

Forty-two per cent of sites reported the presence of unaccompanied and separated children (UAM/UASC), with a total estimated population of approximately 7,300 children. UNRWA collective centres report the highest proportion of UAM, accounting for more than 3 per cent of the resident population, compared to 0.3 per cent at both makeshift sites and non-UNRWA collective centres. This difference likely reflects both the demographic composition of UNRWA facilities and the stronger protection, registration, and reporting systems operating within them. The largest reported concentrations of UAM are in Deir Al-Balah (2,800), Gaza (2,200), and Khan Younis (1,900). Sites also reported an estimated 3,200 child-headed households.

Sites reported approximately 30,000 persons with physical disabilities, equivalent to 1.8 per cent of the estimated site population. This figure is likely a substantial undercount given the expected prevalence of disability in a population that has experienced prolonged conflict, explosive weapon injuries, and limited access to rehabilitation. The data should not be cited as a reliable estimate of disability prevalence without qualification.



An UNRWA collective centre. ©IOM2026

## 2.4 Gender in Focus

Women are involved in site management in some capacity in over four in five assessed sites, with formal women's committees present in 63 per cent of sites. However, only 5 per cent of site focal points are women. While sites with women's committees are more likely to have explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) and temporary learning spaces (TLSs), significant shortfalls in services key for women and girls reveal a consistent gap between representation and outcomes. Only one in ten sites report communal lighting – a critical safety concern for women and girls – and more than one in five report inadequate access to soap or insufficient drinking water, with implications for personal hygiene, menstrual health, and dignity. Women's involvement in site management should therefore be read alongside service provision, rather than as a standalone indicator of whether the needs of women and girls are being met.

Outcome measures for female-headed households do not differ greatly from other groups, with shelter as a major exception. Sites where female-headed households are above the median (13 per cent of families) report that 41 per cent of households have received no shelter assistance in the past six months, compared to 36 per cent of sites with lower concentrations.

While nearly all sites host PLW, sites with higher numbers of PLW show measurable gaps in several key services: inadequate access to soap is reported in more than a quarter of these sites, and inadequate drinking<sup>1</sup> and domestic water in nearly a third – both substantially above Strip-wide averages. This pattern suggests that sites hosting higher concentrations of PLW are not receiving services commensurate with their needs.

*Note: "Female" is used primarily in reference to demographic categories, while "women" is used in relation to social roles, participation, and lived experiences. The assessment did not collect gender data beyond a male–female binary.*

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<sup>1</sup> Inadequate water access refers to sites where half or fewer residents reported having sufficient drinking or domestic water in the preceding 30 days, covering the response categories 'Nobody (around 0%); 'A few (around 25%); and 'About half (around 50%)'.

# 3. Site Management

## 3.1 Site Management Coverage

Of the 1,591 active sites assessed, 532 (33 per cent) are currently supported by a Site Management Agency (SMA). The remaining 1,059 sites (67 per cent) have no dedicated SMA presence. Because SMAs tend to be assigned to larger, more established sites, the 532 managed sites accommodate approximately 720,000 people (42 per cent of all site residents), while around 987,000 people remain in sites without any SMA presence.

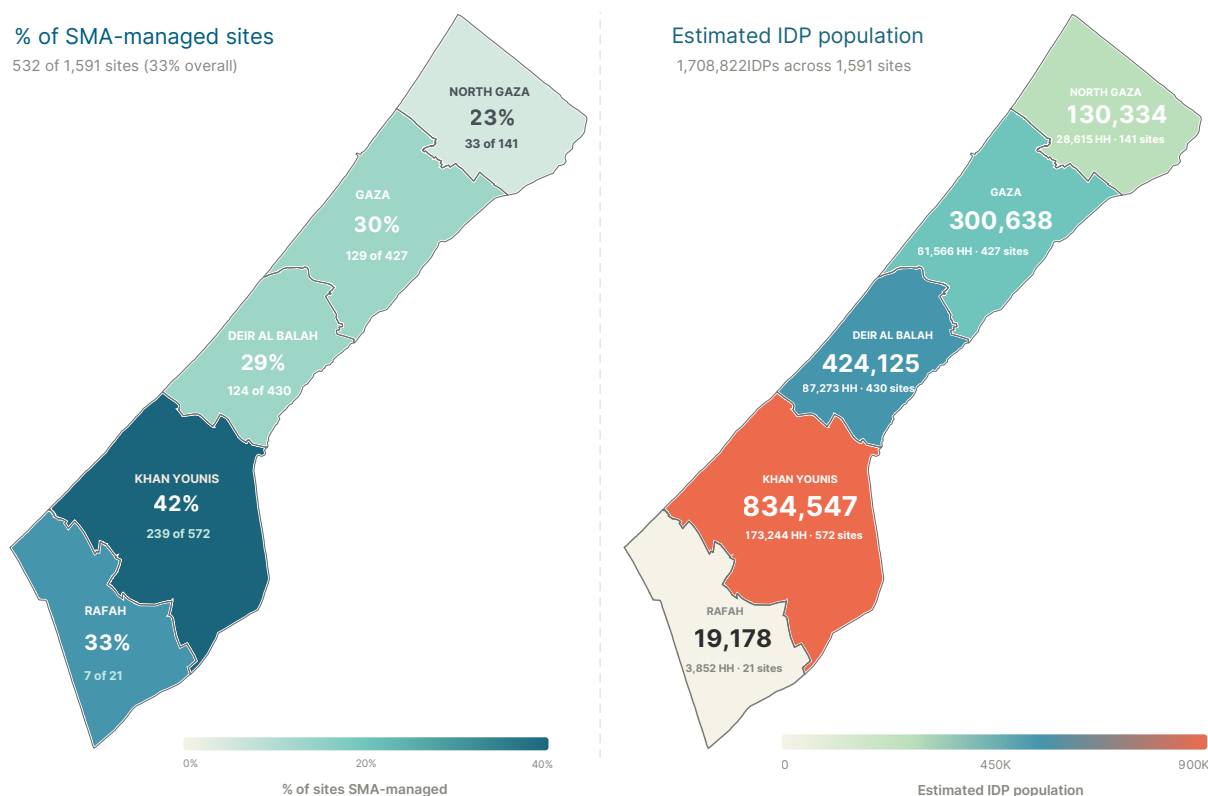
The distribution of managed sites is geographically uneven. Khan Younis has the highest proportion of managed sites (42 per cent), while North Gaza has the lowest (23 per cent). Managed sites tend to cluster geographically, reflecting the operational footprints of humanitarian partners. As a result, large contiguous areas of the Strip consist predominantly unmanaged sites, particularly near active conflict zones. Sites closer to the confrontation line are less likely to have SMA coverage. There are approximately 78 sites identified in the “orange zone”, an area east of the “yellow line” designated by Israeli forces where civil-military coordination is recommended for humanitarian movements. Of these, only 13 are managed, reflecting the impact of security risks on coverage.

Sites with fewer than ten households, referred to as “scattered” sites, have no SMA coverage. Due to resource constraints, current site management interventions prioritise sites with larger populations. An acute coverage gap also exists among non-UNRWA collective centres: only 22 of 177 such sites (12 per cent) have SMA presence, despite collective centres frequently hosting highly vulnerable populations including unaccompanied minors and individuals with chronic illness. Additionally, only 10 of the 177 non-UNRWA collective centres (less than 6 per cent) reported the involvement of any entity in site management, including non-Site Management Cluster actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Arab Committees, or local authorities.



Cesvi performs site maintenance work through a cash-for-work programme in a collective centre. ©Cesvi2026

**Figure 4: Site management coverage and estimated internally displaced person (IDP) population by Governorate**



## 3.2 Site Management Impact

Across every sector for which comparison data is available, sites with Site Management Agency (SMA) presence consistently perform better than unmanaged sites. In many cases, the scale of these differences is substantial, and the cumulative findings across sectors provide a strong operational and advocacy case for expanding SMA coverage. The comparisons below draw on this assessment’s findings disaggregated by site management status throughout the report.

### Governance and Community Protection

Women are involved in site management in some capacity in 84 per cent of sites, most commonly through women’s committees (63 per cent of sites) and service provision roles (29 per cent); cash-for-work programmes (8 per cent) and stewardship of communal facilities (7 per cent) are less common. Only 5 per cent of designated Site Focal Points are women.

Women’s involvement is strongly tied to the presence of a formal site management actor; only 4 per cent of managed sites report no women’s involvement, compared to 23 per cent of unmanaged sites. Likewise, while just over half of unmanaged sites have a women’s committee, 80 per cent of managed sites do, reflecting both the organisational priorities of site management actors and the enabling environment that a formal SMA presence creates for structured community participation.

Data shows a meaningful association between women's participation in site governance and service outcomes. Sites with higher levels of women's involvement show stronger explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) coverage, greater provision of temporary learning space (TLS), and improved community protection, accountability and gender-sensitive programming.

More broadly, managed sites report eviction pressure in 8 per cent of cases, compared to 11 per cent among unmanaged sites. This modest but consistent difference suggests that the presence of formal site management actor provide some degree of protection against forced eviction, whether through documentation, negotiation with landowners, or escalation to cluster coordination mechanisms.

### Environmental Conditions

Managed sites are less likely to lack visible drainage channels (42 per cent versus 53 percent in unmanaged sites), report sewage in the streets (53 per cent versus 63 per cent), or experience open defecation (16 per cent versus 22 per cent). Although managed sites still face severe environmental challenges, the gap between managed and unmanaged sites remains consistent and meaningful.

### Service Delivery and Humanitarian Assistance















The most pronounced difference between managed and unmanaged sites relate to service delivery. On average, 73 per cent of households in managed sites received shelter assistance in the six months preceding the assessment, compared to 53 per cent in unmanaged sites. Only 4 per cent of managed sites reported not receiving any shelter assistance, compared to 16 per cent of unmanaged sites – a fourfold difference.

One of the largest service delivery gaps in unmanaged sites is related to EORE coverage: 78 per cent of managed sites conducted EORE activities in the six months preceding the assessment, compared to 55 per cent of unmanaged sites. Managed sites also reported higher coverage of mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) screenings (39 per cent versus 28 per cent) and temporary learning spaces (TLSs) (46 per cent versus 26 per cent). Water adequacy scores are approximately seven percentage points higher in managed sites. Additionally, only 4.5 per cent of managed sites report garbage or plastic as the primary cooking fuel, versus 10 per cent of unmanaged sites.



Norwegian Refugee Council conducting safety audits around a site. ©NRC2026

Figure 5: Service delivery indicators by management status

| Indicator   | With Site Management Agency | Without Site Management Agency |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
|  Women's committee present                 | 80%                         | 54%                            |
|  No women's involvement in management      | 4%                          | 23%                            |
|  Eviction threats or pressure reported     | 8%                          | 11%                            |
|  No visible drainage channels              | 42%                         | 53%                            |
|  Sewage present in streets                 | 53%                         | 63%                            |
|  Open defecation reported                 | 16%                         | 22%                            |
|  Shelter assistance: avg HH coverage     | 73%                         | 53%                            |
|  Sites with zero shelter assistance      | 4%                          | 16%                            |
|  EORE conducted in past 6 months         | 78%                         | 55%                            |
|  EO encounter reported                   | 13%                         | 16%                            |
|  MUAC screening in past month            | 39%                         | 27%                            |
|  TLS present (medium and large sites)    | 48%                         | 29%                            |
|  Garbage/plastic as primary cooking fuel | 4%                          | 10%                            |
|  Water adequacy score                    | 0.67                        | 0.60                           |

The consistency of these differences across all measured sectors indicates that SMA presence is associated with systematically better outcomes, rather than improvements in any single area. Expanding SMA coverage, particularly in the 67 per cent of sites and the one million people currently without it, therefore represents a priority intervention with the potential to generate broad impact across humanitarian sectors.

### 3.3 Committee Presence

Community-based governance structures are considerably more widespread than formal SMA presence, with 92 per cent of sites reporting an active site management committee. Only 106 sites (accommodating approximately 56,000 people) represent a critical governance gap where neither institutional (SMA) nor community-level management structures are present.

Committee types cover a broad range of functions. Distribution committees are the most common, operating in 69 per cent of sites, reflecting the central role of aid distribution in site organisation. Women's committees (63 per cent of sites), youth committees (59 per cent), and protection committees (46 per cent) are also widespread. Less common were site maintenance committees (37 per cent), education committees (27 per cent), water and sanitation committees (24 per cent), senior citizens' committees (21 per cent), and health committees (19 per cent). Sites with SMA coverage report higher average number of committee types, typically hosting between four to eight active committees compared to three to six in unmanaged sites.

Information flows in sites are predominantly informal and community-driven. Word of mouth is the primary source of information on available assistance for residents in 55 per cent of sites. Community focal points and social media both serve as the main communication channel in approximately 20 per cent of sites. United Nations and international NGO staff constitute the primary source in a small proportion of sites (2.8 per cent).

Stable internet connectivity, or connectivity sufficient for calls and SMS, is available in 83 per cent of sites. In a context where safety alerts, distribution notifications, and access to complaints or referrals depend largely on phone-based communication channels, sites with severely limited connectivity face a significant information access gap.



Site Management Cluster partner, Future Association for Development and Environment (FADE), conducting a community engagement meeting in a displacement site. ©FADE2026

## 4. Site Environment

### 4.1 Physical and Fire Hazards

Visible fire hazards, such as cooking or heating sources situated too close to shelters, affect 45 per cent of sites (718 sites). Residents also reported the presence of dangerous physical hazards identified in 28 per cent of sites (451 sites). Both fire and physical hazards occur throughout the Strip without strong geographic patterning, although sites in Khan Younis reported particularly high levels of visible fire hazards.

The near absence of fire mitigation infrastructure across sites compounds risks. Almost no sites have fire breaks or fire safety equipment. The predominance of manufactured tents (160,000 in assessed sites) creates conditions in which fire can spread rapidly through entire settlement areas. SMC partner alerts also recorded 41 shelters damaged or destroyed by recent domestic-level fire incidents across 25 sites between 1 January 2026 and 16 May 2026.



Fire safety training conducted by Palestinian Agricultural Development Association (PARC) in central Gaza. ©PARC2026

## 4.2 Environmental Hazards

Only 3.5 per cent of sites report no visible environmental health hazards, making multi-hazard conditions effectively the norm across Gaza's displacement landscape. Rodents and pests are the most prevalent hazard, present in four out of five sites (81 per cent). Sites also report sewage in streets in 60 per cent of cases, accumulated solid waste in 55 per cent, and flooding or stagnant water in nearly one quarter (23 per cent). Open defecation reportedly occurs in 20 per cent of sites, while 14 per cent of sites report the presence of dead animals.

This hazard profile reflects the combined consequences of displacement density, the near-total collapse of municipal waste and wastewater management systems, and the absence of site-level environmental management in most sites. The coexistence of rodent infestation, open defecation, and sewage within many of the same sites creates compounding transmission pathways for communicable diseases, with implications for the health outcomes documented in the Health section.



*Solid waste accumulation in sites is a serious health risk. ©DRC2026*

Figure 6: Prevalence of environmental health hazards by Governorate

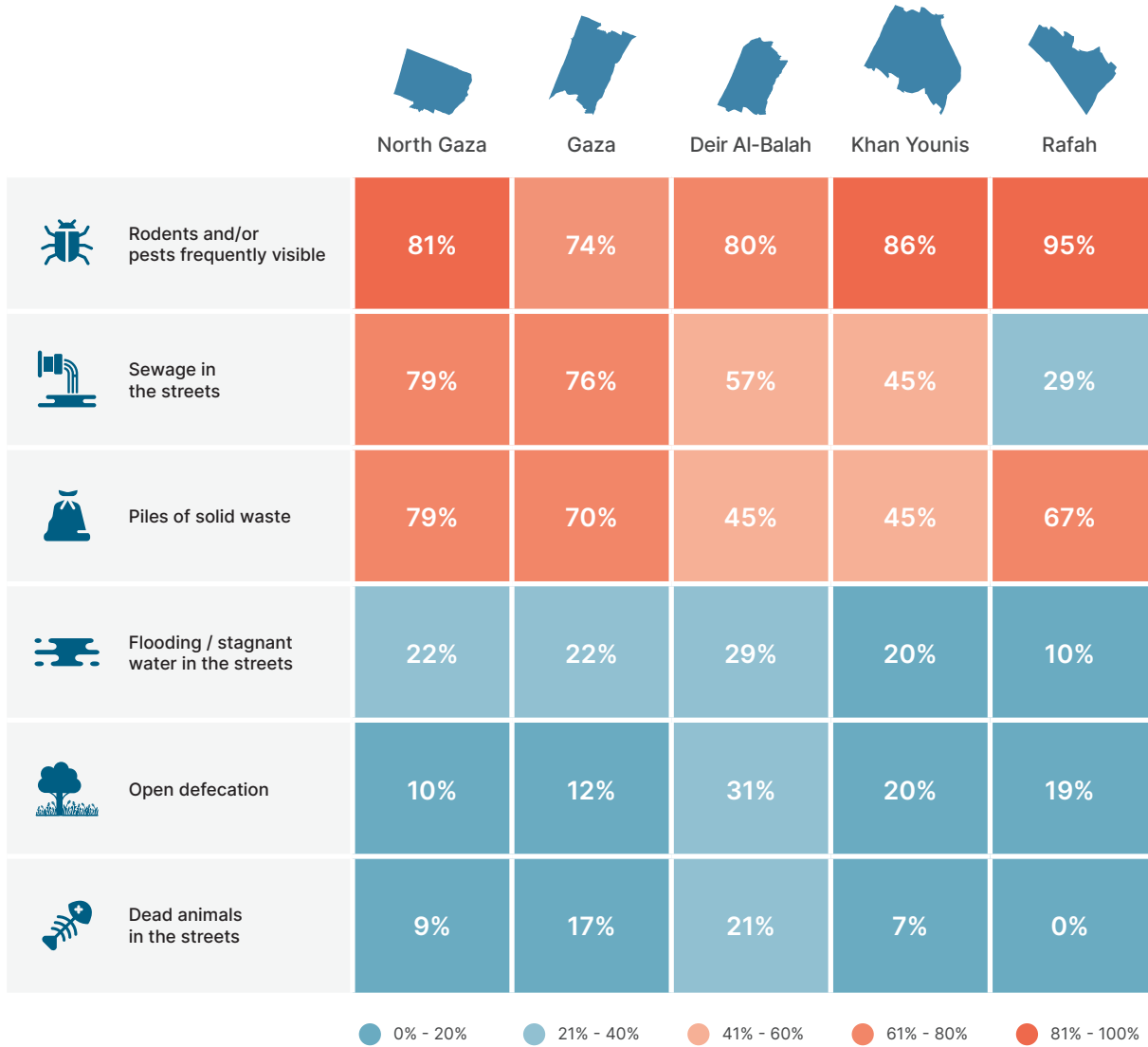
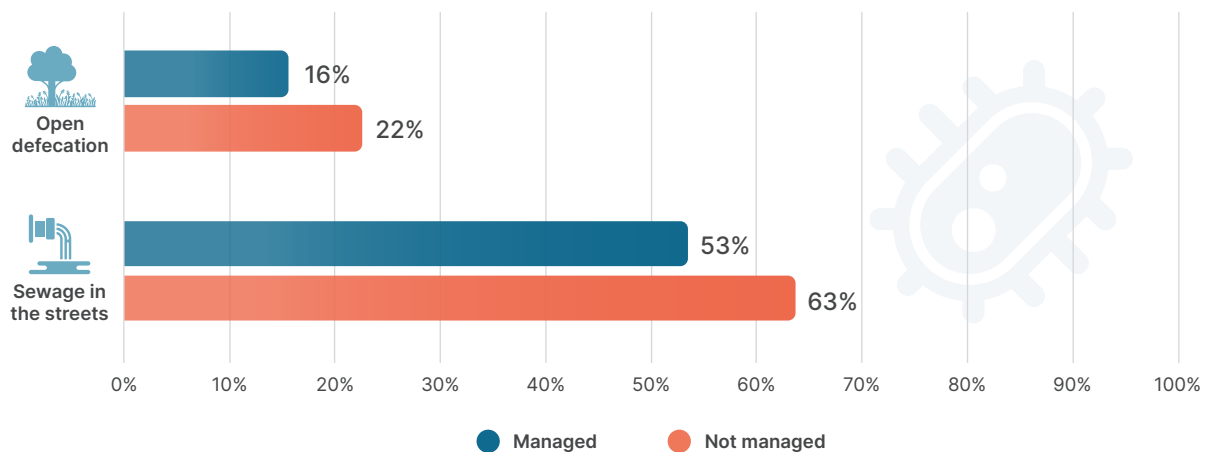


Figure 7: Prevalence of open defecation and sewage in the streets by management status



### 4.3 Rainwater Accumulation and Visible Drainage Channels

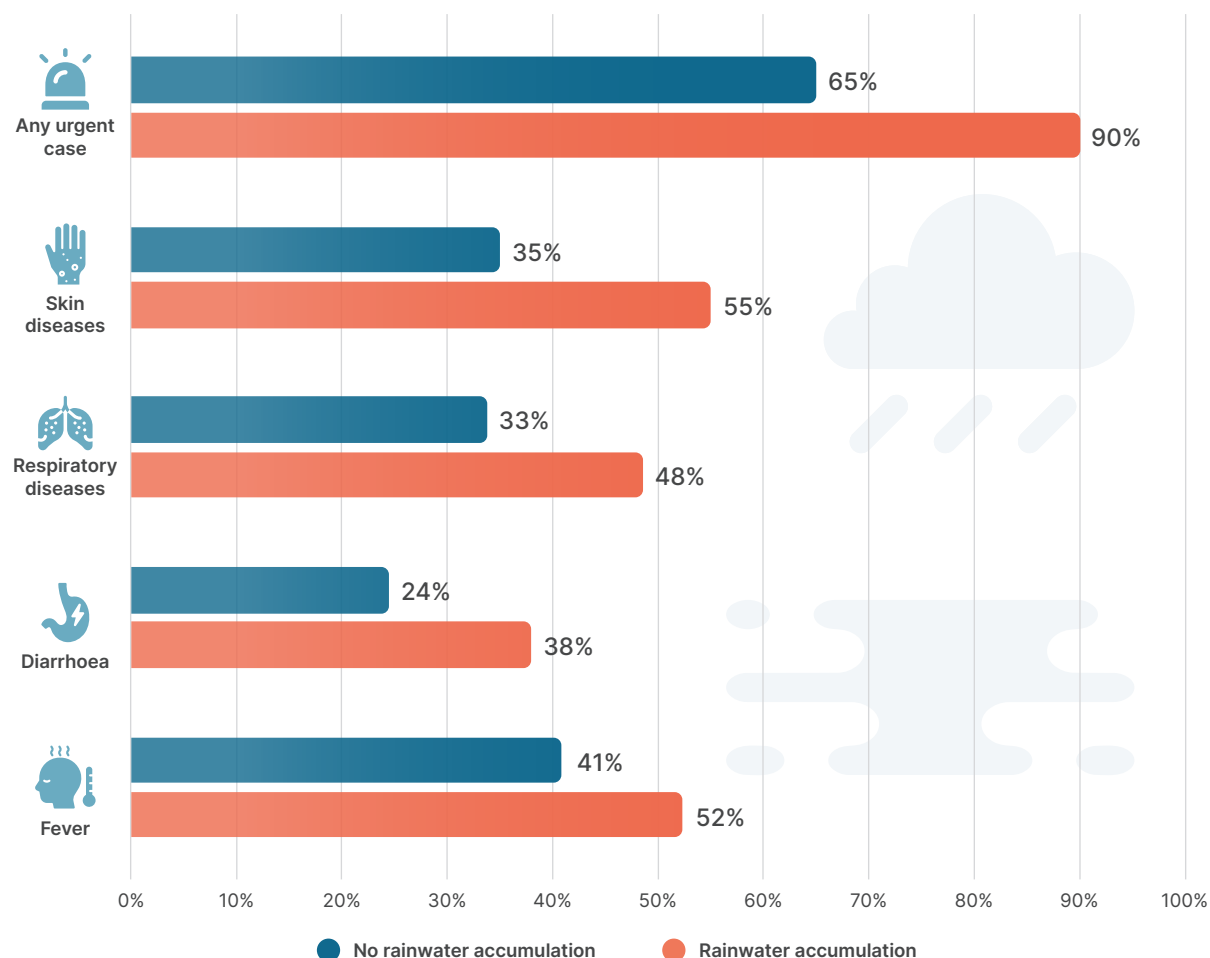
Nearly two-thirds of sites (64 per cent) have areas where rainwater accumulates, while half of all sites lack visible drainage channels or water paths. Overall, 32 per cent (510 sites) report both rainwater accumulation and an absence of drainage infrastructure.

The co-occurrence of standing water and inadequate drainage presents more than a physical hazard. Sites reporting rainwater accumulation show substantially worse health and site environment outcomes across multiple indicators: 90 per cent of such sites reported urgent medical cases in the month prior to survey, compared to 65 per cent of sites without accumulation. Sites with standing water also report higher rates of severe skin diseases (55 per cent versus 35 per cent), respiratory illness (48 per cent versus 33 per cent), and severe diarrhoea (38 per cent versus 24 per cent). These same sites are nearly twice as likely to report sewage in the streets (72 per cent versus 38 per cent) and accumulated solid waste (66 per cent versus 35 per cent). While data in this assessment cannot establish causality, these associations align with well-established links between poor drainage, environmental contamination, and communicable disease transmission in overcrowded displacement settings.



*Stagnant rainwater accumulation in a makeshift displacement site. ©PHC2025*

**Figure 8:** Urgent medical cases reported by sites with flooding/stagnant water in the streets



## 4.4 Site Accessibility

Reliable access for ambulances, water trucks, and supply vehicles is available in 73 per cent of sites. Twenty-one per cent of sites report partial or intermittent access, while approximately 6 per cent of sites report no vehicle access at all. Residents describe walking pathways as “easy to traverse” in 73 per cent of sites, “partially obstructed” in around 24 per cent, and “frequently impassable” in a small number of sites. However, pathways are rarely paved or formally levelled, making them largely inaccessible for those with mobility restrictions, including disabled and elderly site residents.

Notably, sites without vehicle access do not show consistently lower service levels compared to accessible sites. For example, reliance on water trucking and water adequacy scores remain broadly similar regardless of assessed vehicle access. This finding may reflect the relatively small number of sites without vehicle access, the location of sites along main roads, or the use of alternative delivery methods such as donkey carts. It should not be interpreted as evidence that vehicle access is unimportant for emergency response or protection.

# I 5. Housing Land and Property

## 5.1 Land Ownership in Sites

The majority of displacement sites (55 per cent or 879 sites) are located on privately owned land, 27 per cent (427 sites) on public or municipal land, and 9 per cent (150 sites) on school or other institutional premises. Gaza governorate is a notable exception to this pattern: Private and public/municipal land are almost equally represented (approximately 37 per cent and 33 per cent respectively), reflecting the greater density of public infrastructure in that governorate. In all other governorates, private land use dominates, most predominantly in Deir Al-Balah (74 per cent), followed by Rafah (62 per cent), North Gaza (58 per cent), and Khan Younis (54 per cent).

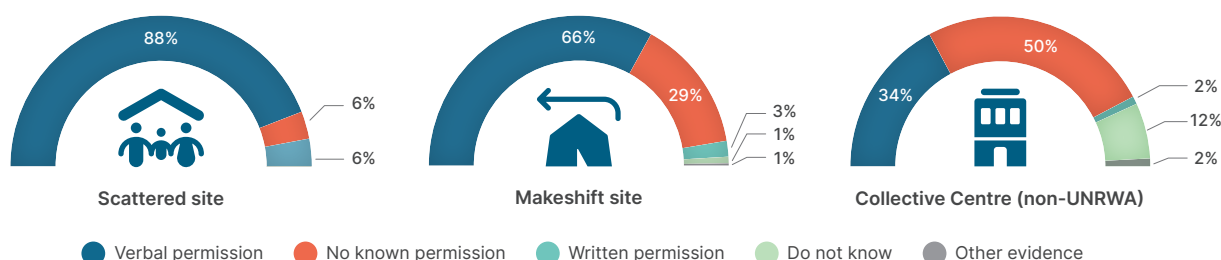
The predominance of private land for displacement sites has direct implications for tenure security, eviction risk, and the ability to invest in site-level infrastructure.

## 5.2 Permission and Tenure Arrangements

Formal tenure agreements for displacement sites are virtually absent across the Strip. Written permission – the most secure arrangement captured in the survey – covers only approximately 3 per cent of sites. Only one single site holds any form of site registration card. Most sites operate on verbal permission agreements (59 per cent) or without any known permission at all (29 per cent), meaning approximately 1.55 million people are living in sites with informal or no tenure arrangements.

Where permission exists, it is overwhelmingly granted by private landowners rather than public authorities: private landowners account for 75 per cent of verbal agreements and 85 per cent of written agreements. This dependence on the continued goodwill of individual landowners, within a context of active hostilities, economic stress, and disrupted legal systems, creates a structural vulnerability that cannot be addressed through site-level management alone.

**Figure 9:** Tenure arrangements by site typology (excluding UNRWA sites)



Non-UNRWA collective centres have the weakest tenure profile: over half (58 per cent) report no known permission to remain, compared to just under a third (28 per cent) of makeshift sites. While some collective centres operate in publicly-owned buildings such as schools, many also occupy privately owned commercial and residential buildings that communities use as de facto shelters, often without formal agreement with building owners.

## 5.3 Rent Payments

Three-quarters of sites (72 per cent) report that no households pay ground rent. Among the remaining sites, some households reportedly pay rent in 12 per cent of cases, a majority of households pay in 7 per cent, and all households pay in 4 per cent. Ground rent is therefore not a universal condition, but it is sufficiently widespread to constitute a meaningful secondary financial burden on an already economically stressed population.

Rent burdens are geographically concentrated. In Deir Al-Balah, 39 per cent of sites report some rent payment, with a majority or all households paying rent in 21 per cent of sites – the highest rate in the Strip. Khan Younis follows with 30 per cent of sites reporting rent payments. By contrast, rent payment is relatively uncommon in Gaza governorate (6 per cent of sites) and North Gaza (8 per cent). Ground rent is predominantly a feature associated with makeshift sites, 26 per cent of which report some form of payment, compared to just 7 per cent of non-UNRWA collective centres.

The median reported rent is 250 New Israeli Shekel (NIS) per month, while the mean reaches NIS 335 due to a small number of high-cost outliers, including 13 sites reporting rent payments of over NIS 1,000 per month. Just over a third of rent-paying sites (36 per cent) report an average rent payment in the NIS 200-299 range, with a further 28 per cent in the NIS 300-499 range. Written permission arrangements may be functioning as de-facto rental agreements: half of sites reporting written permission also report that some or all residents pay rent.



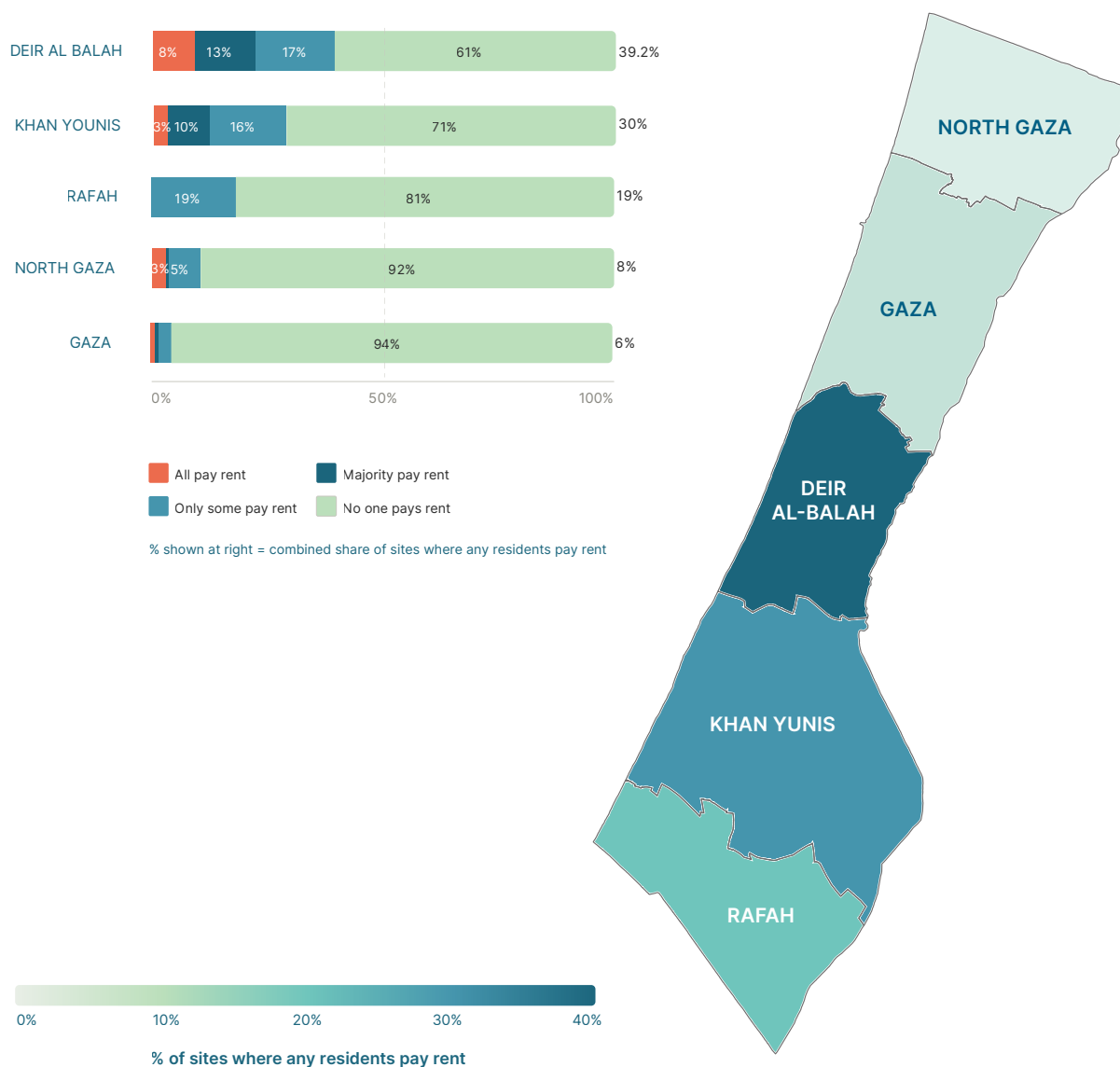
Site planning being done by Danish Refugee Council and local partner. ©DRC2026

## 5.4 Eviction Pressure

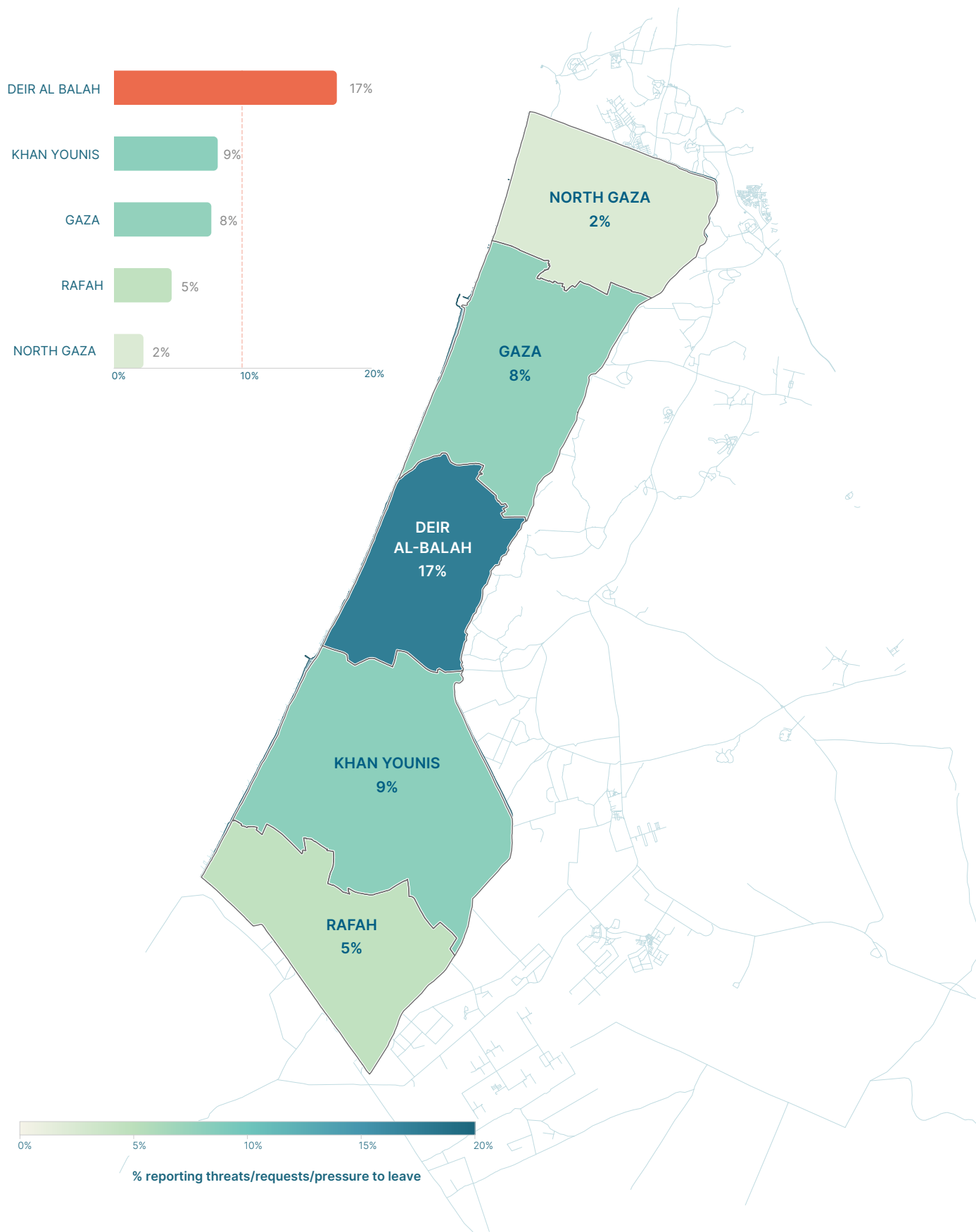
Focal points in 150 sites, hosting approximately 168,000 people, report active threats, requests, or pressure on residents to vacate, representing 9 per cent of surveyed sites. Rates remain broadly consistent across site typologies and tenure types, suggesting that residents face eviction pressure regardless of the formal status of the site.

Deir Al-Balah recorded the highest rate of reported eviction pressure (17 per cent), followed by Khan Yunis and Gaza (9 per cent each), Rafah (5 per cent), and North Gaza (2 per cent). Managed sites were somewhat less likely to report eviction pressure than unmanaged sites (8 per cent versus 11 per cent), reflecting the protective role that site management can play through documentation, liaison with landowners, and escalation through cluster coordination mechanisms.

**Figure 10: Proportion of rent-paying sites by Governorate**



**Figure 11: Proportion of sites reporting threats, requests, or pressure to leave by Governorate (excluding UNRWA collective centres)**



# I 6. Shelter

## 6.1 Shelter Types

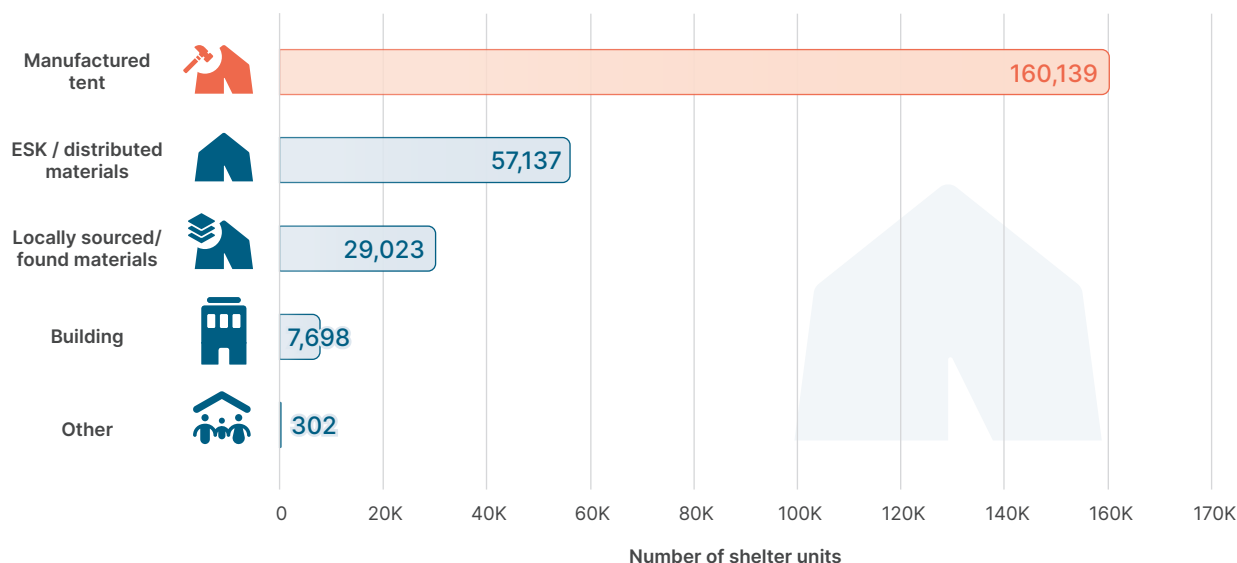
Displacement across Gaza is characterized overwhelmingly by tent-based shelter. Manufactured tents produced by humanitarian organisations are the most prevalent shelter type, present in nearly all makeshift and scattered sites and accounting for the vast majority of shelter units across the assessed population. Shelters built from Emergency Shelter Kit (ESK) materials or other distributed supplies, such as tarps, plastic sheeting, and framing kits, are present in roughly half of makeshift and scattered sites. Locally sourced or improvised structures built from scavenged materials appear in about a quarter of assessed sites. Buildings – including damaged or unfinished structures, public premises, and rented facilities – are used for accommodation in a similar proportion of sites but account for a comparatively small share of total units, reflecting the typically lower density of building-based accommodation.

These patterns reflect both the acute scarcity of durable shelter options and the extent to which conditions depend on continuous humanitarian support. Manufactured tents deteriorate rapidly in Gaza's climatic conditions, where intense summer heat, winter cold, and seasonal storms accelerate wear and tear. They also remain highly vulnerable to fire hazards and provide limited thermal insulation or longer-term protection from the elements over time. Only 3 of the 1,591 sites have a communal heating facility and only 10 per cent have communal lighting, leaving residents in weakened shelter conditions without basic infrastructure.



Beit Lahia Development Association (BLDA) distributes tents provided by the IOM Common Pipeline programme to support displaced families. ©BLDA2025

Figure 12: Frequency of shelter types in scattered and makeshift sites

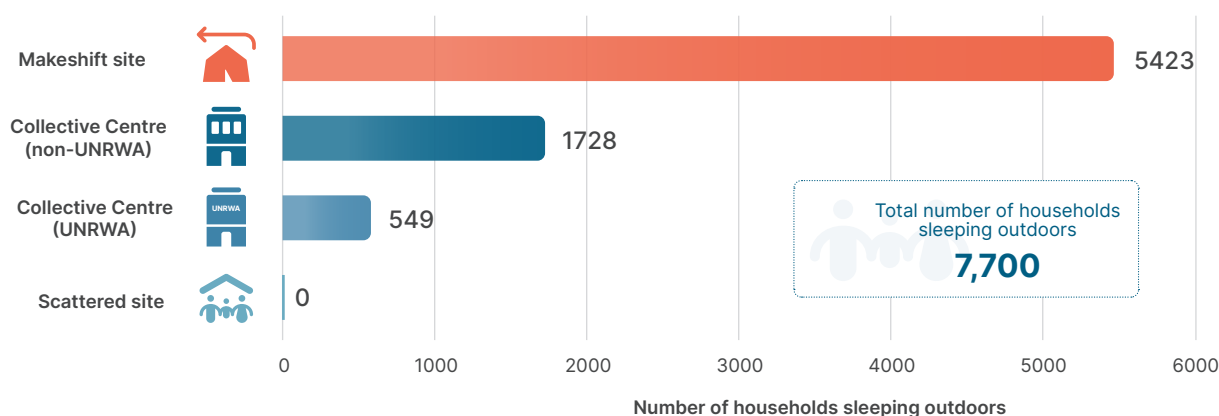


## 6.2 Households Sleeping Outdoors

An estimated 7,700 households (approximately 38,500 individuals) are sleeping outdoors without any available shelter. These households are present in 19 per cent of all surveyed sites. Outdoor sleeping shows notable geographic concentration, particularly around the At-Tahrir neighbourhood in Khan Younis and adjacent areas of Rafah, across Deir Al-Balah, and throughout Gaza governorate. By contrast, sites in North Gaza rarely report households sleeping outdoors.

While most unsheltered households are located in makeshift sites, collective centres host a disproportionate share of these populations. Non-UNRWA collective centres accommodate only 8 per cent of the total site population, yet account for 23 per cent of all reported households sleeping outdoors (an estimated 1,800 households). A further 549 households sleeping outdoors are in UNRWA collective centres. These findings highlight a gap in shelter targeting, whereby households in collective centres are frequently deprioritised on the assumption that residents are sheltered within the structure itself. Collective centres, which tend to host disproportionately high numbers of vulnerable individuals, face a particularly acute shelter gap that extends beyond the typological focus on makeshift and open-air sites.

Figure 13: Households sleeping outdoors by site typology



## 6.3 Overcrowding

The average occupancy rate among families living in tents in makeshift and scattered sites is approximately six people per tent, calculated from an estimated 1.5 million residents living in approximately 246,000 tents or tent-like shelters. Standard emergency tents are designed for families of five, meaning that average occupancy rates indicate systemic overcrowding at site level. More severe overcrowding is also widespread: approximately 59,000 shelters house more than eight people. These highly overcrowded shelters are geographically concentrated, particularly in the At-Tahrir and Al-Jala'a areas of Khan Younis, southern Deir Al-Balah, and across Gaza governorate.

## 6.4 Service Provision

Across all assessed households in sites, approximately 136,000 households (around 680,000 people) did not receive any shelter assistance in the six months preceding the survey. This represents just over one third (38 per cent) of all households in sites.

Coverage varies considerably by governorate. North Gaza reported the highest service provision rates, with approximately 88 per cent of households receiving some form of shelter support, followed by Rafah (63 per cent) and Gaza (66 per cent). Deir Al-Balah and Khan Younis both reported coverage rates of around 58 per cent. The gap between managed and unmanaged sites is substantial: on average, 73 per cent of households in managed sites received assistance in the six months prior to the survey, compared to 53 per cent in unmanaged sites. Only 4 per cent of managed sites reported that no household had received any shelter assistance, compared to 16 per cent of unmanaged sites – a fourfold difference.



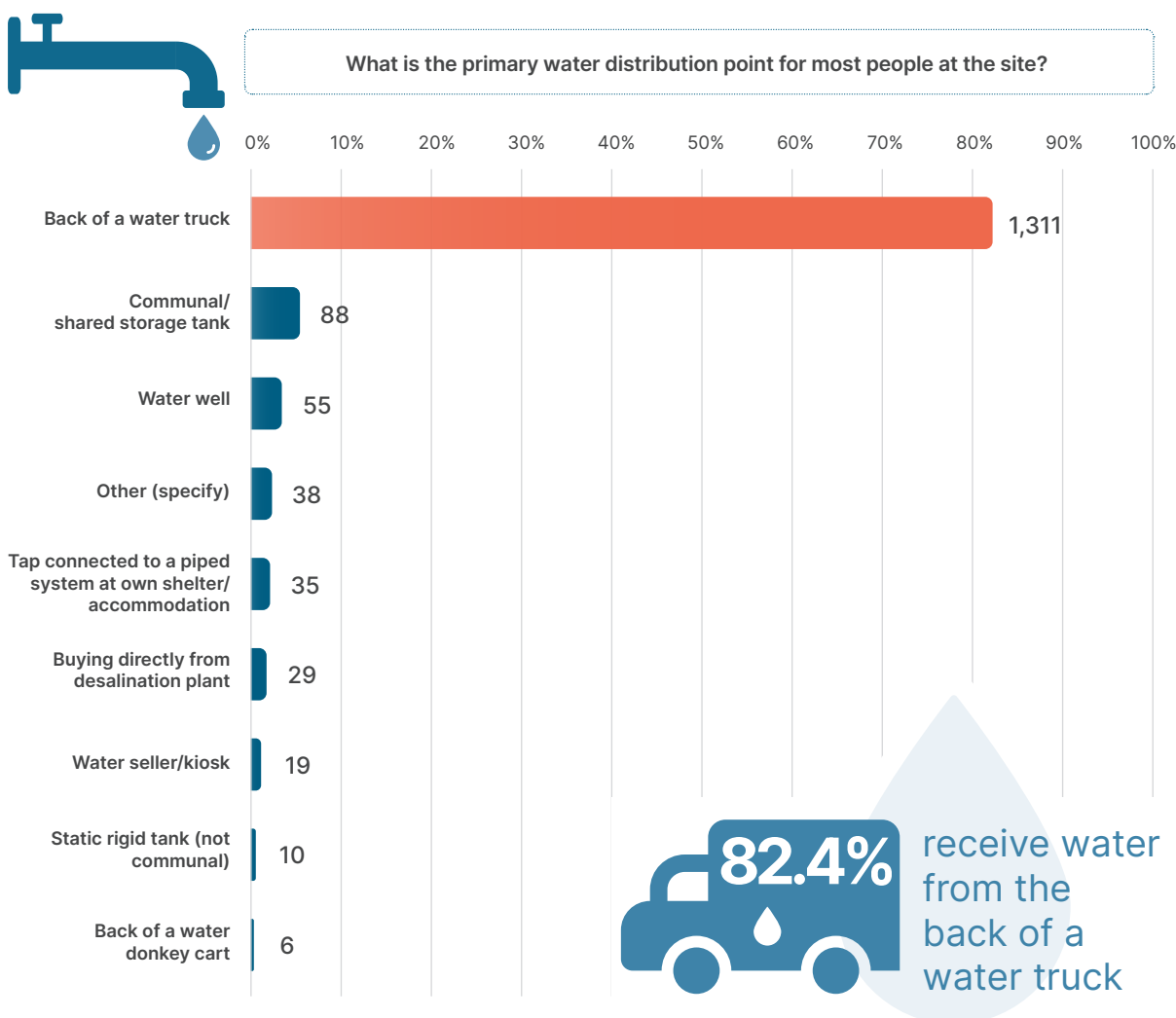
A tented site, with no visible fire breaks. ©PHC2025

# 7. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

## 7.1 Water Sources and Adequacy

Water access across displacement sites is critically dependent on humanitarian water trucking. Back-of-truck distribution is the primary source of drinking water in 82 per cent of sites, followed by communal or shared storage tanks (5.5 per cent), water wells (3.5 per cent), and pipe or tap connections (2.2 per cent). This near-total reliance on trucked water reflects the extensive destruction of core civilian infrastructure and leave the site population acutely dependent on aid and vulnerable to disruptions in supply chains, whether from operational constraints, vehicle breakdown, fuel shortages, or access limitations.

Figure 14: Primary source of drinking water at site level



Drinking water adequacy falls well short of universal coverage. Only 18 per cent of sites report that all or nearly all households have sufficient drinking water. In the remaining 82 per cent of sites, not all households had enough drinking water, with over one in five sites reporting that more than half of residents lack drinking water completely. Domestic water adequacy follows a nearly identical pattern. Geographic disparities are pronounced: sites in Deir Al-Balah and Khan Younis report average adequacy levels closer to “most households,” while North Gaza and Gaza governorate average closer to “half of households.” With average daytime temperatures in the summer exceeding 30 Celsius, an estimated 709,000 people living in sites report inadequate levels of either drinking or domestic water, or both, represents a significant cause for concern.

Sites with SMA coverage report drinking and domestic water adequacy scores approximately seven percentage points higher than unmanaged sites, consistent with the broader pattern of improved outcomes associated with site management presence across sectors.

**Figure 15: Site-level drinking water adequacy score by Governorate**

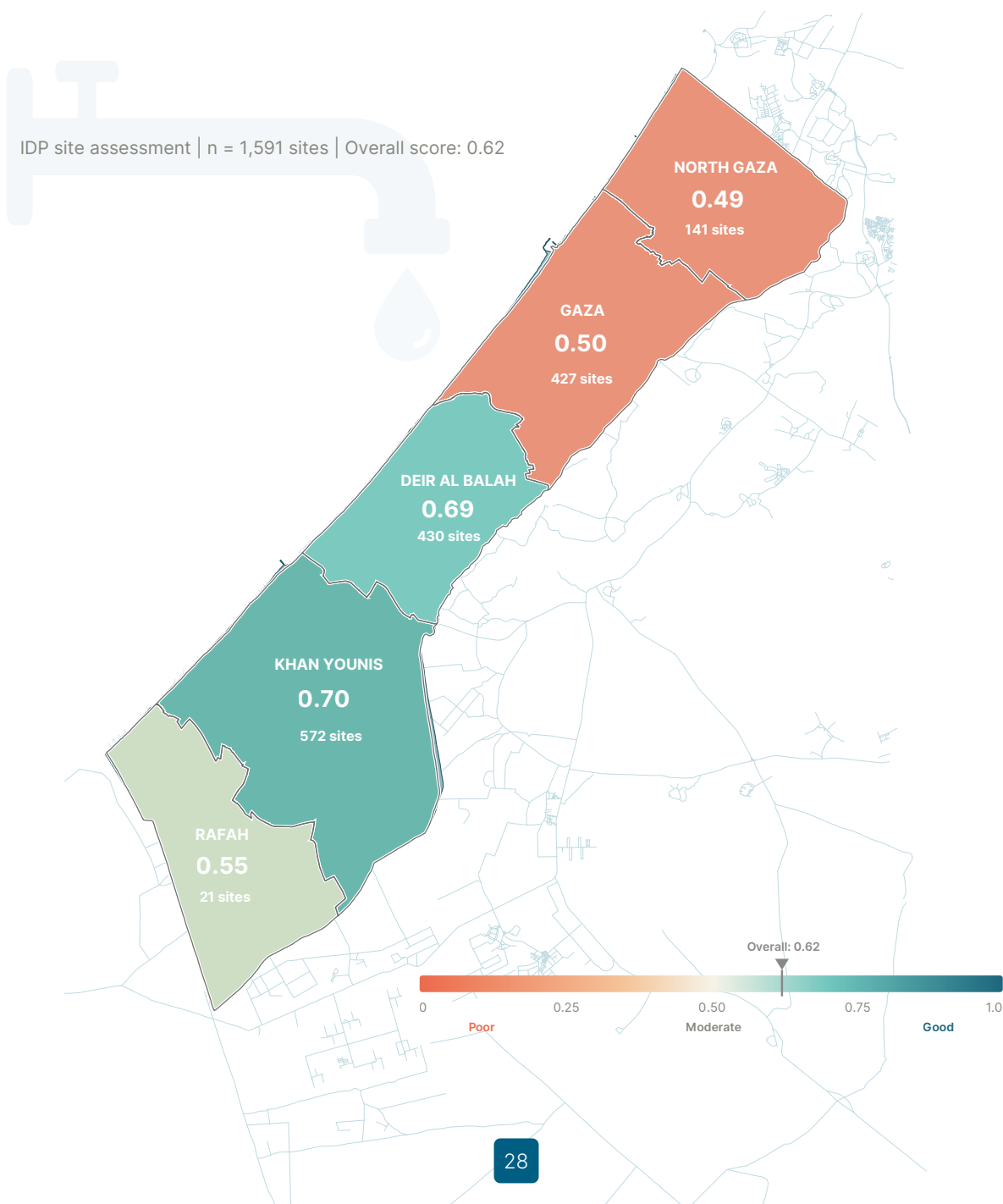
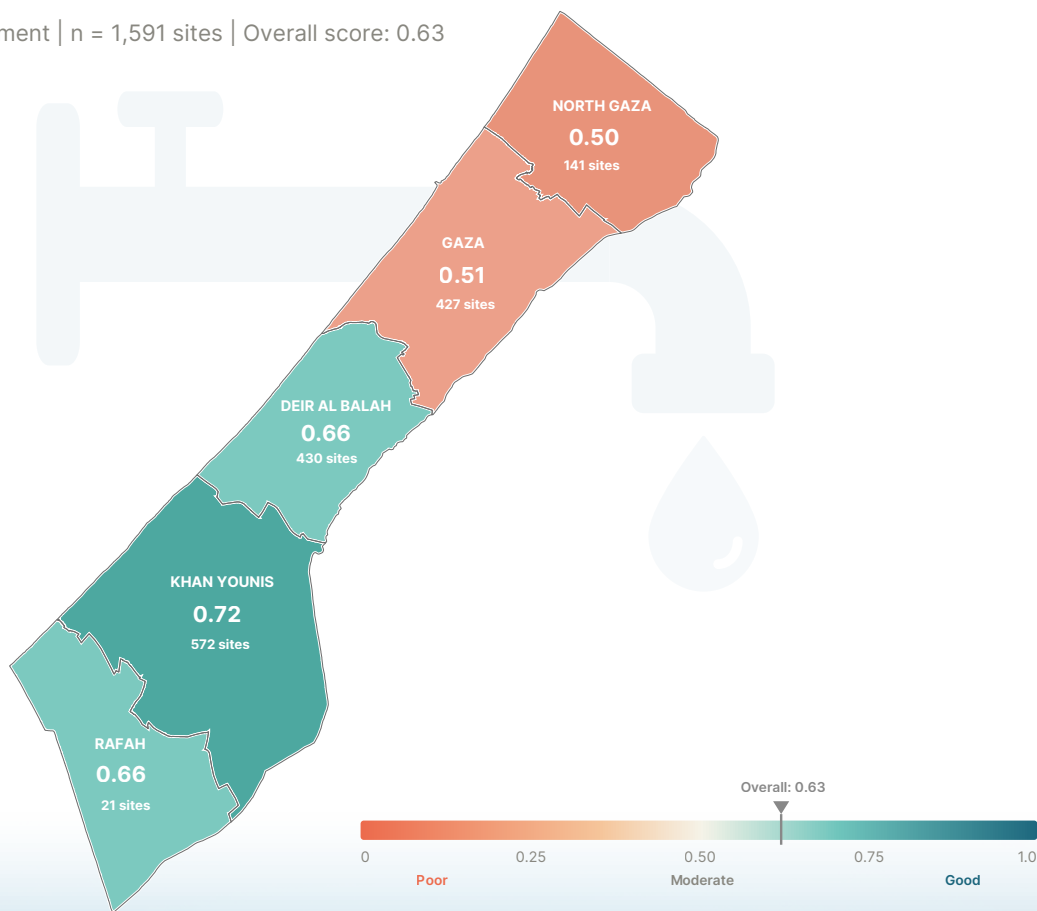


Figure 16: Site-level domestic water adequacy score by Governorate

IDP site assessment | n = 1,591 sites | Overall score: 0.63



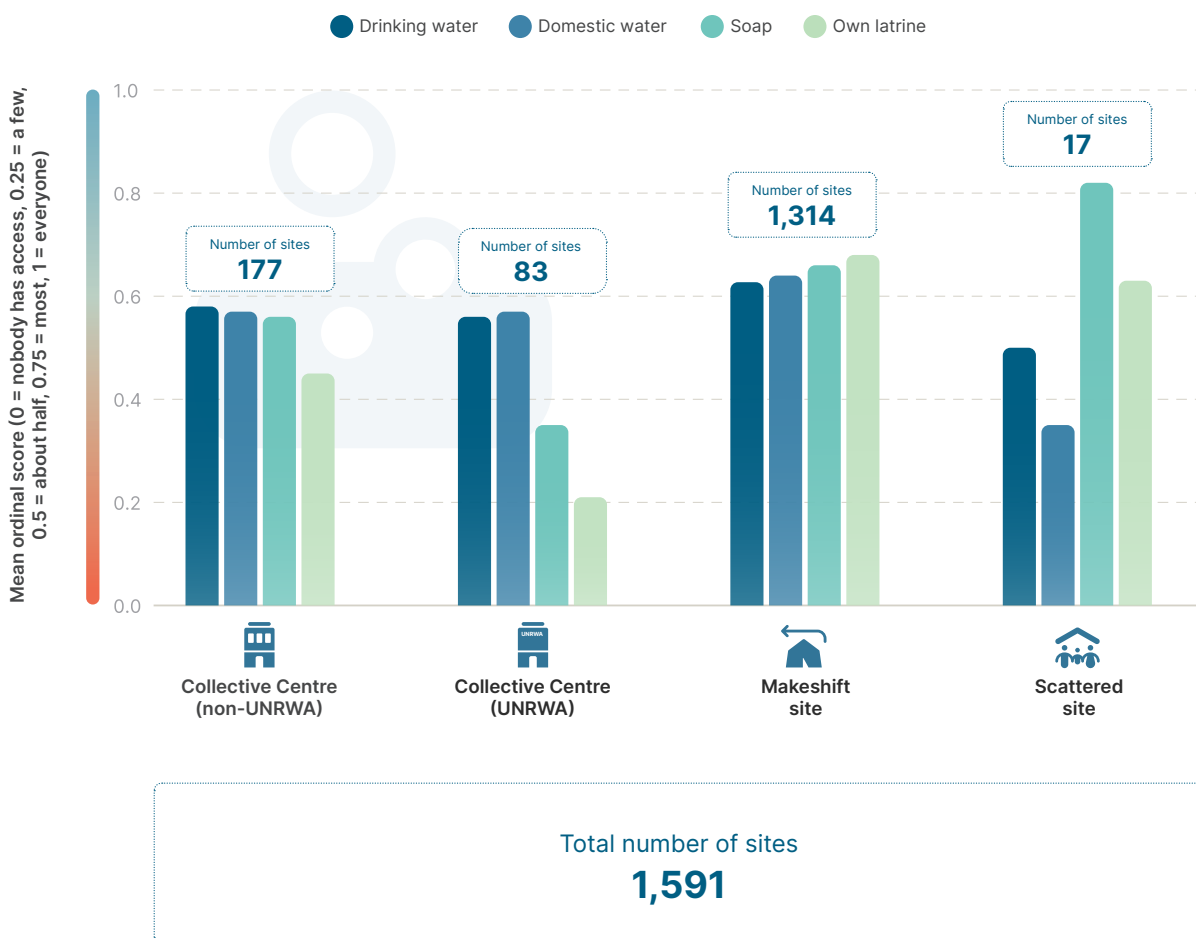
MA'AN Center for Development site management team conducts community engagement around a site in Al-Mawasi. ©IOM2026

## 7.2 Soap Accessibility

Access to soap is extremely limited across the Strip, particularly in northern governorates. Only 23 per cent of sites report that all households have enough soap, while 34 per cent say most households have enough and 5 per cent have no access to soap at all. On average, sites in Gaza and North Gaza governorates score significantly worse than in other parts of the Strip. Sites reporting higher proportions of households with access to soap also tended to report higher drinking water adequacy and higher rates of household-level latrine ownership, indicating a positive association between basic WASH service conditions across indicators.

Access to soap is considerably lower in collective centres than in makeshift and scattered sites – no UNRWA collective centres report that all residents have access to soap, with average availability ranging from “some” and “half” of residents. Severe overcrowding and the widespread use of shared communal latrines in these sites likely impacts soap availability, while also highlighting a critical assistance gap. This gap is associated with real negative health impacts: 69 per cent of UNRWA collective centres report presence of severe skin diseases, substantially above non-UNRWA collective centres (39 per cent) and makeshift sites (48 per cent). While some of this difference may be attributable to better detection capabilities within UNRWA sites, the co-occurrence of limited soap access and elevated skin diseases aligns with the established relationship between inadequate hygiene conditions and the spread of communicable skin diseases in high-density displacement settings in collective centres.

Figure 17: Distribution of water, soap and latrine adequacy scores by site typology



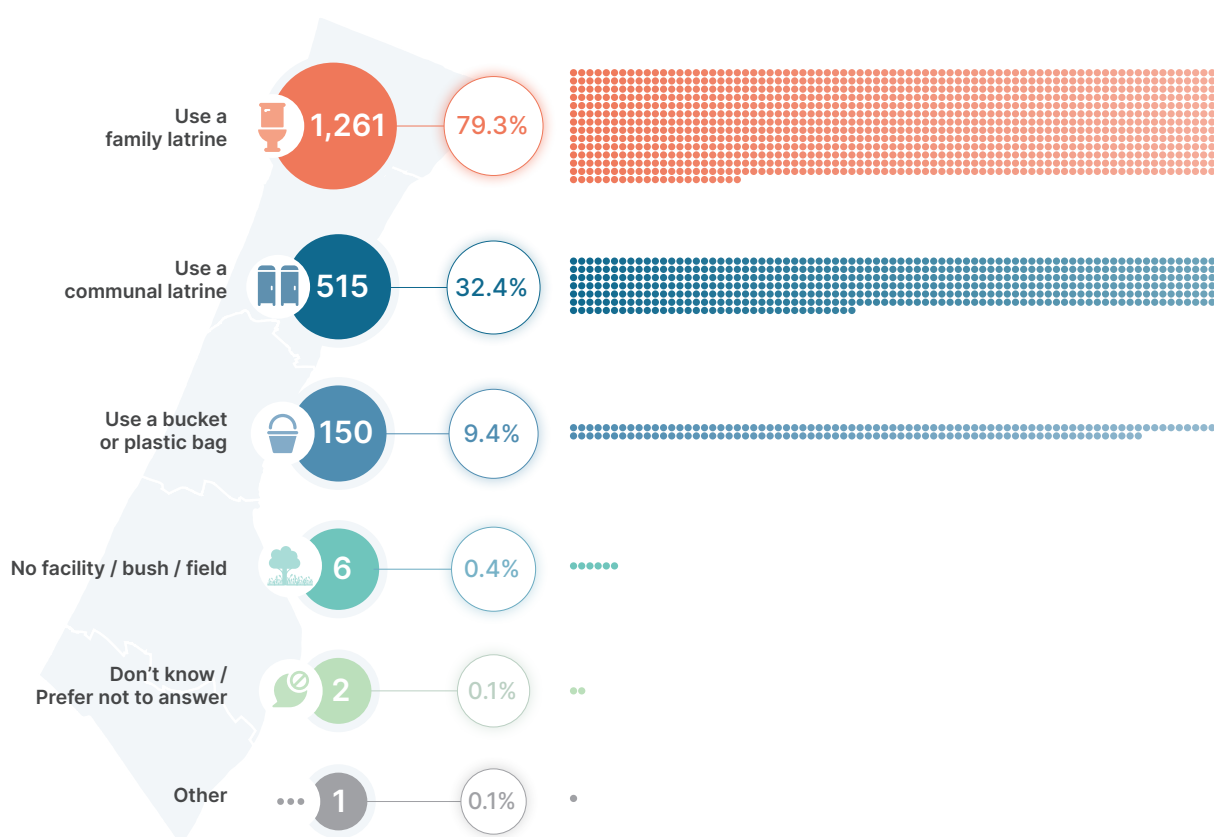
## 7.3 Latrine Types and Availability

Access to sanitation facilities varies sharply across displacement site type, location, and management status. Seventy-nine per cent of sites report the use of family latrines, which are basic pit latrines often constructed by individual households rather than formal units connected to a septic tank or sewage network. Among sites with family latrines, 73 per cent are pit-latrines that are often unlined and dug into Gaza’s sandy, permeable soils, presenting a high risk of water source contamination. The remaining more than a quarter of family latrines are open-pit latrines with no slab, creating a major safety risk, particularly for children. Potential for falls, exposure to human waste, and disease transmission is compounded by the lack of communal lighting across 91 per cent of sites.

Communal latrines are present in 32 per cent of sites, typically as facilities installed by humanitarian partners or inherited from pre-existing collective centre infrastructure. The remaining households rely on buckets or plastic bags (reported in 9 per cent of sites) or have no facility of any kind, thus resorting to open defecation among an estimated 3,000 people, primarily concentrated in Gaza and North Gaza governorates.

The type of latrine present is strongly linked to site type: makeshift sites are far more likely to rely on self-constructed pit latrines, while collective centres rely primarily on communal facilities. Sites near the “yellow line” report few household-level latrines.

Figure 18: Types of latrine use reported among sites



Latrine access varies considerably by governorate. In Rafah, Khan Younis, and Deir Al-Balah, most sites report household-level family latrines (95 per cent, 93 per cent, and 83 per cent respectively). Gaza governorate is a clear outlier: 58 per cent of sites have family latrines, 31 per cent of sites rely exclusively on communal facilities, and 18 per cent of sites report households using buckets or plastic bags – the latter percentage being roughly double the strip-wide average of 9 per cent. North Gaza shows relatively high communal latrine usage (41 per cent), reflecting the larger concentration of collective centres in that governorate rather than an absence of household-level facilities.

Notably, there is almost no correlation between the proportion of households with their own latrine and rates of reported open defecation. Open defecation is reported in 20 per cent of all sites and is consistently higher in unmanaged sites (22 per cent) than managed ones (16 per cent), underscoring the protective role site management has in promoting safer sanitation practices and facilitating partner engagement on communal facility installation. However, the use of buckets or open-defecation as a primary waste management method in dense and most prevalent in tent-based settlements, posing severe public health risks and fundamental dignity concerns for the affected population.



Ma'an Centre for Development building emergency shelters and furniture out of recycled wooden pallets. ©Maan2026

# 8. Health

## 8.1 Health Facility Accessibility and Awareness

Seventy-eight per cent of sites report being within a 30-minute walking distance of a health facility. However, analysis of responses from adjacent sites, which would be expected to give similar answers, revealed frequent inconsistencies. This pattern suggests that either limited awareness among respondents regarding the location of health facilities or differing interpretations of what constitutes a “health facility.”

Comparison with information on actual health facility locations suggests a potential gap in focal point awareness of available health services. Although this analysis could not calculate exact walking distances between sites and facilities, it compared site responses against the presence of health facilities within a two kilometres radius. Only 2 of the 1,591 assessed sites were located outside a two-kilometre distance from a functional health facility, and both were considerably more geographically isolated than the typical assessed site.

Therefore, in nearly all cases where focal points reported no nearby health facility, a functional facility was in fact located within two kilometres, suggesting challenges related to awareness or physical accessibility rather than the absence of services. Approximately 295,000 individuals reside in the 335 sites where no nearby health facility was reported despite the presence of a nearby functional health facilities. Underreporting of nearby health facilities



### 335

sites with no nearby facility reported despite one existing nearby

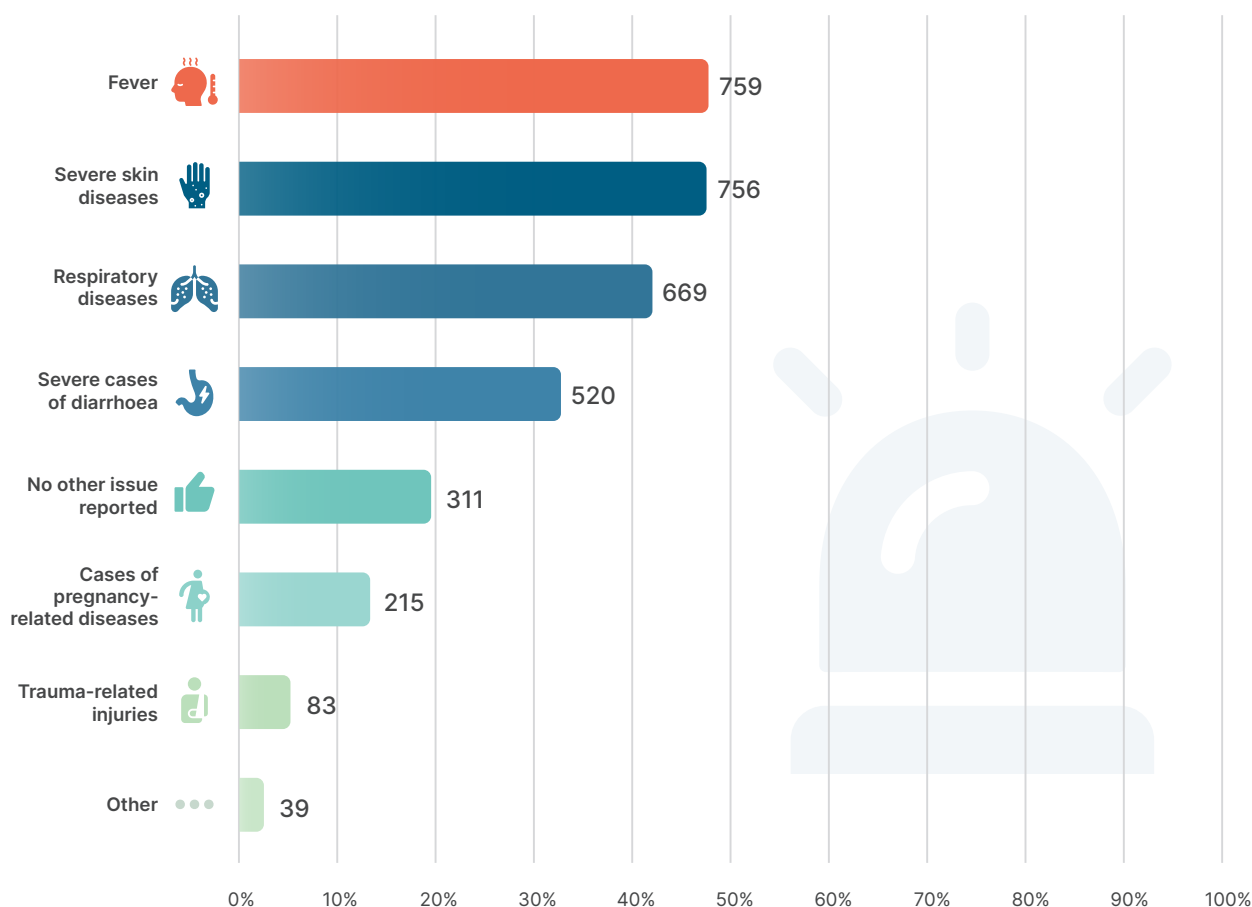
was more prevalent in Rafah (43 per cent of sites vs 20 per cent overall) and less common for hospitals compared to primary healthcare centres, field hospitals, and medical points.

## 8.2 Urgent Medical Cases

A concerning health situation is prevalent across nearly all displacement sites, with 81 per cent of sites reporting urgent cases that require medical assistance in the 30 days preceding data collection. Severe skin diseases are the most reported condition, cited in 48 per cent of all sites, followed closely by fever (48 per cent) and respiratory diseases (42 per cent). Severe diarrhoea was reported in 33 per cent of sites, pregnancy-related complications in 14 per cent, and trauma-related injuries in 5.2 per cent.

Geographic variation of urgent medical cases in sites is significant. Rafah (95 per cent) and North Gaza (94 per cent) have more sites reporting urgent medical cases, followed by Gaza (85 per cent), Deir Al-Balah (79 per cent), and Khan Younis (75 per cent). The concentration of acute presentations in Rafah, despite its relatively smaller assessed site population, may reflect the cumulative impact of displacement, infrastructure damage, and constrained humanitarian access in the southern governorate.

**Figure 19:** Proportion of sites reporting urgent cases needing medical assistance in the 30 days prior to data collection




The pattern of prevalent health conditions aligns closely with the environmental findings reported in earlier sections. The high prevalence of severe skin diseases in nearly half of all sites is consistent with widespread gaps in soap access, limited water availability for hygiene, rodent infestation, and accumulated solid waste. Respiratory illnesses, reported in 42 per cent of sites, may be exacerbated by overcrowded shelter, the open burning of garbage and plastic waste, exposure to toxins from rubble and debris, and inadequate ventilation in tent-based environments. The relationship between drainage failure, environmental contamination, and diarrhoea documented in the Site Environment section is also reflected here in the reported health data. While practitioners widely recognise these linkages, these findings highlight the negative impact of site environment on the health of displaced residents and underscores the urgent need to improve site conditions.

# 9. Food Security

## 9.1 Food Assistance

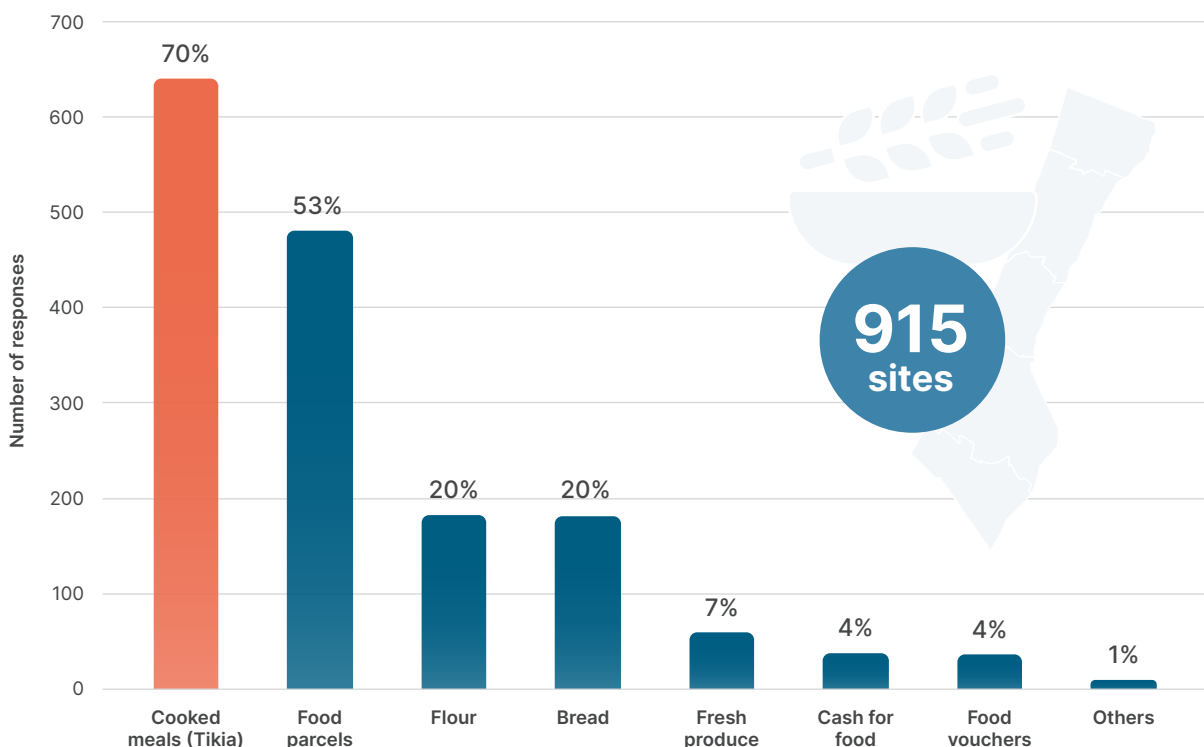
The provision of food assistance reached 58 per cent of sites in the 30 days preceding data collection. The remaining 43 per cent (676 sites with approximately 700,000 residents) received no food assistance during that period. Coverage rates were highest in North Gaza (72 per cent of sites), followed by Rafah (67 per cent), Deir Al-Balah (61 per cent), Khan Younis (57 per cent), and Gaza governorate (50 per cent). Enumerators also reported that many sites receiving food assistance considered it insufficient, including cases where households received only partial rations.

Among sites that received assistance, cooked meals and Tikia (hot prepared meals) were the most common form, reaching 70 per cent of assisted sites. Humanitarian actors distributed food parcels in 53 per cent of assisted sites, while bread and flour reached 20 per cent each. Only a small minority of assisted sites relied primarily on market-based modalities, with food vouchers serving as the main food source in 3.9 per cent of sites and cash-for-food assistance in 4.2 per cent, indicating the limited reach of market-based food assistance across the site population.



**58%** Sites reporting having received food assistance in the last 30 days

**Figure 20:** Main type of food assistance received at sites having received assistance in the last 30 days

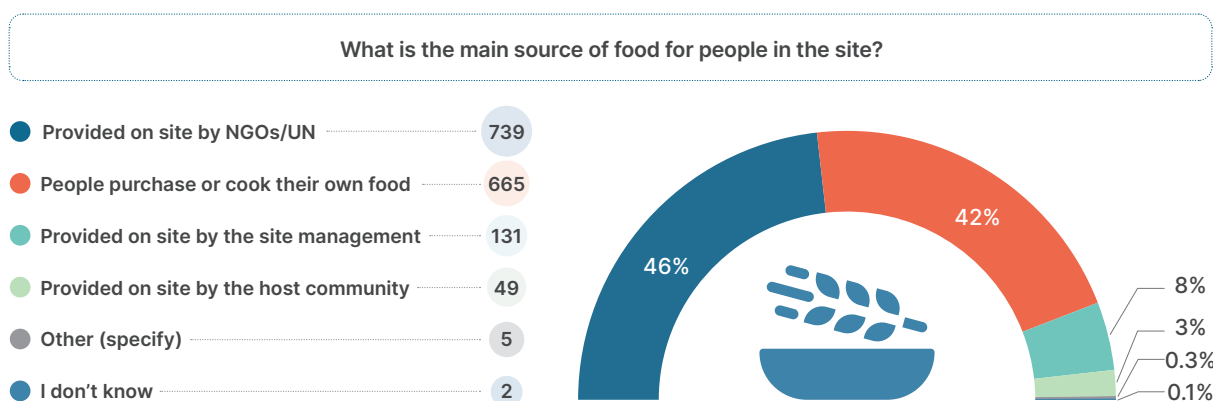


## 9.2 Food Sources

The primary food source in assessed sites varies significantly by governorate, reflecting both the distribution of humanitarian assistance and the economic conditions in different parts of the Strip. Overall, non-governmental organizations (NGO) or United Nations service delivery on site is the main food source in 46 per cent of sites, while self-purchasing or self-cooking accounts for 42 per cent.

A pronounced north-south divergence is evident across governorates. In North Gaza, 74 per cent of sites rely primarily on self-purchasing food, whereas humanitarian assistance constitutes the main food source in Deir Al-Balah (54 per cent) and Khan Younis (54 per cent). While reliance on food assistance is a vulnerability in itself, the heavier dependence on market access and personal finances in northern and southern governorates also present significant risks. This dependency exposes a large proportion of the population to the fluctuations of local food markets and the erosion of household purchasing power, both of which remain highly sensitive to hostilities and access conditions. It may also reflect the more limited operational reach of humanitarian actors in governorates located closer to conflict lines.

**Figure 21:** Distribution of main food sources reported across sites

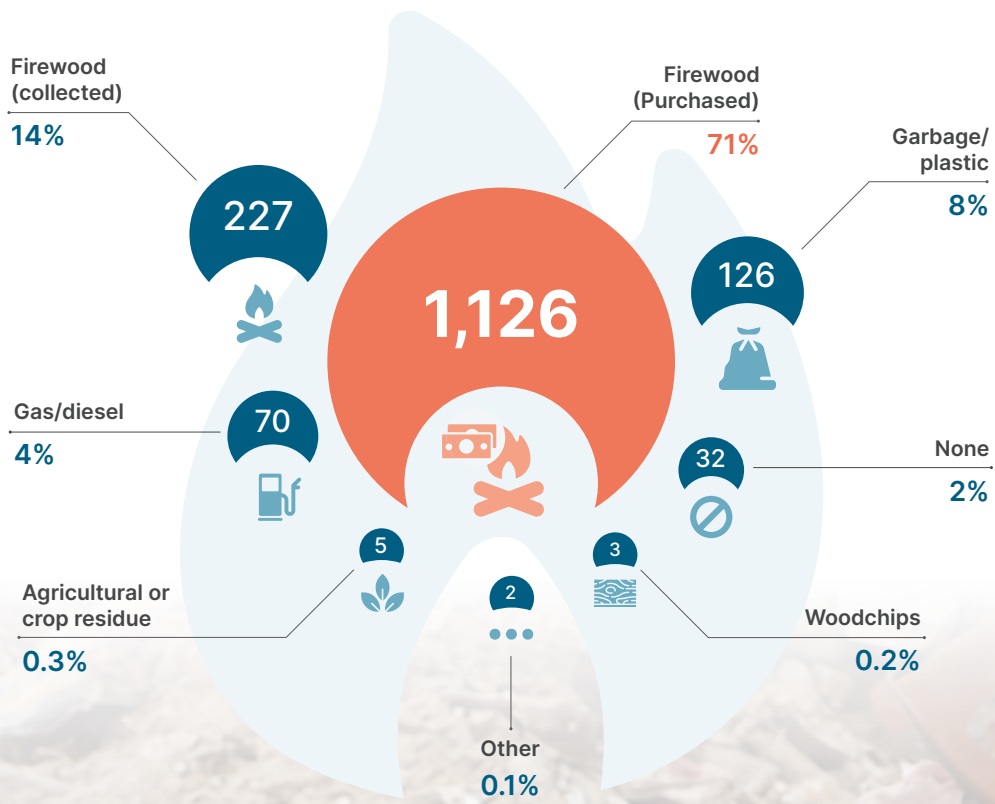


## 9.3 Cooking Fuel

Firewood is the primary cooking fuel in 85 per cent of sites. Purchased firewood accounts for 71 per cent of primary fuel sources and collected firewood a further 14 per cent. Garbage and plastic constitute the main cooking fuel in 8 per cent of sites. While the latter finding represents a minority, the burning of plastics releases toxins that raises significant health concerns. This practice is most prevalent in non-UNRWA collective centres (15 per cent), followed by unmanaged sites (9.7 per cent) and managed sites (4.3 per cent).

Most critically, 32 sites in Gaza governorate report having no cooking energy source at all, affecting an estimated 19,000 people. This concentrated finding requires immediate attention in this area.

Figure 22: Main cooking fuel sources across sites



Firewood is a primary source of cooking fuel across Gaza. ©IOM2025



# I 10. Mine Action

## 10.1 Explosive Ordnance (EO)

Fifteen per cent of assessed sites (244 sites) report encounters with explosive ordnance (EO), affecting an estimated 247,000 people. Reports are concentrated in northern governorates: 36 per cent of North Gaza sites and 24 per cent of Gaza sites encounter EOs, compared to 10 per cent in Deir Al-Balah, 10 per cent in Rafah, and 8 per cent in Khan Younis. Because Deir Al-Balah and Khan Younis host the largest site populations in the Strip, the absolute number of people potentially exposed is more evenly distributed across governorates than the site-level percentages suggest, with exposure estimates ranging from approximately 47,000 site residents in Deir Al-Balah to 87,000 in Gaza.

UNRWA collective centres report EO encounters at a notably higher rate (33 per cent) than non-UNRWA collective centres (22 per cent) and makeshift sites (13 per cent). These higher rates may reflect greater exposure to EO hazards, stronger hazard identification practices, or more consistent reporting mechanisms within UNRWA facilities. Sites also reported EO victims in 6.7 per cent of surveyed locations (106 sites).

## 10.2 Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE)

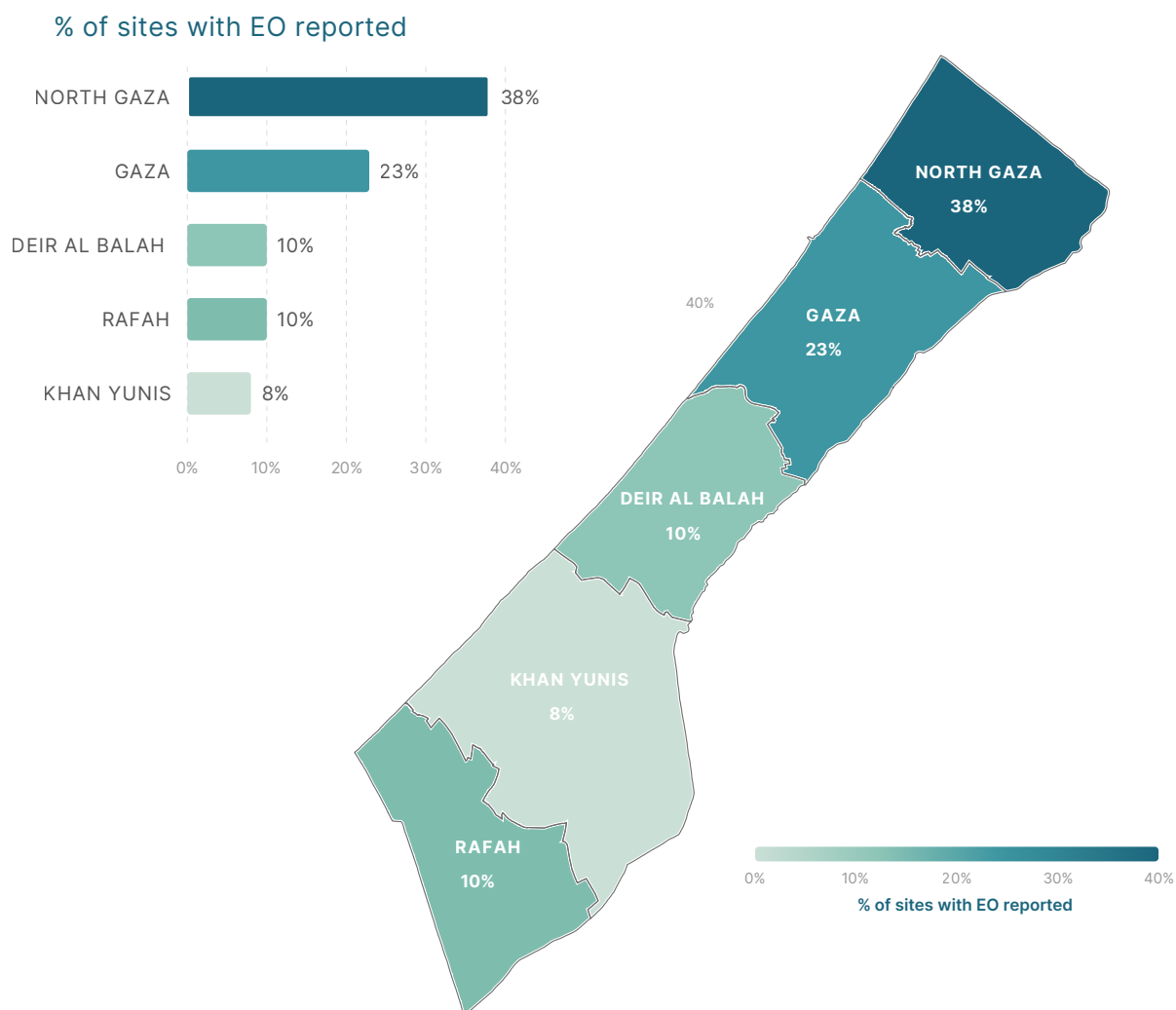
In the six months preceding data collection, 62 per cent of sites conducted explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) activities. The remaining 38 per cent of sites (598 total) did not conduct any EORE activity in that period. This coverage gap is concerning when considered alongside EO encounter data: 106 sites reported both EO encounters and an absence of EORE in the preceding six months, representing approximately 104,000 site residents potentially exposed to explosive hazards without any risk education. These 106 sites are geographically concentrated in North Gaza and Gaza governorate, where encounter rates are highest.



A child reads an EORE flyer in a displacement site. ©UNRWA2025

Managed sites report substantially higher EORE coverage than unmanaged sites (78 per cent versus 55 per cent), further underscoring the operational value of SMA presence.

**Figure 23:** Sites with reports of EO encounters, by EORE coverage



# I 11. Nutrition

## 11.1 Mid-Upper Arm Circumference Screening

One third of sites conducted Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) screening for malnutrition in the month preceding data collection, whereas over two-thirds of sites did not conduct screening in that period. Findings vary widely by governorate. Deir Al-Balah had the highest share of sites with recent screening (44 per cent), followed by Khan Younis (39 per cent). Coverage drops substantially in Gaza (15 per cent), Rafah (18 per cent), and North Gaza (9 per cent) governorates.

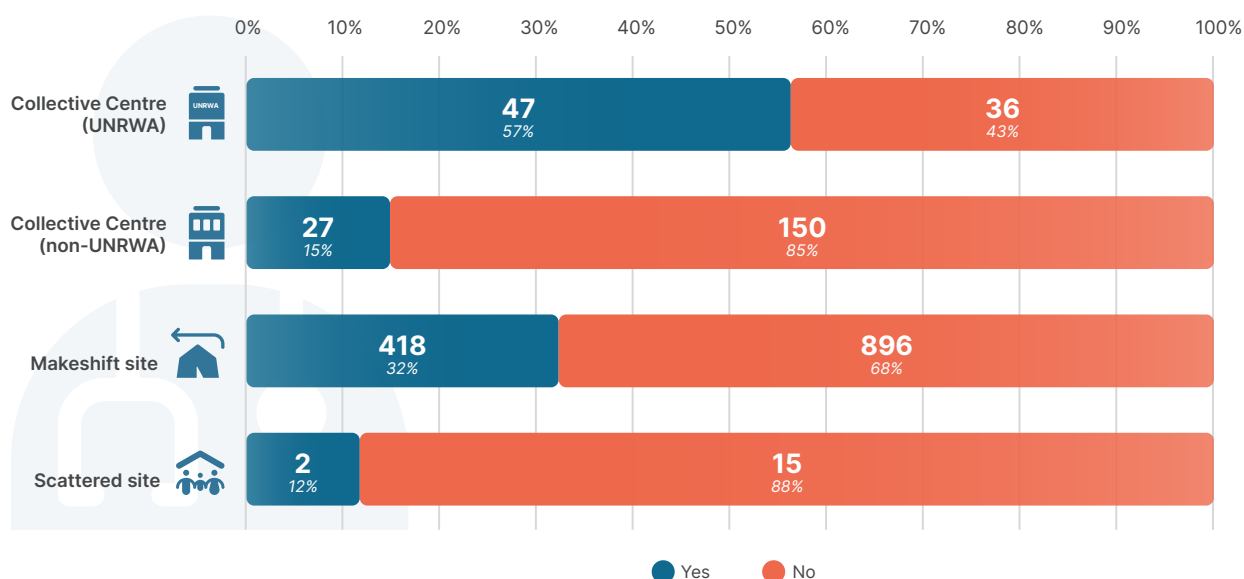


**31%**  
of sites covered  
by MUAC screening  
within 30 days of  
data collection



Acted staff conducting an MUAC screening for a displaced child. ©ACTED2026

**Figure 24:** Proportion of sites covered by MUAC screening within 30 days of data collection, by site type



The difference between managed and unmanaged sites align with the broader cross-sectoral trends. Among SMA-managed sites, 39 per cent (208 of 532) report conducting MUAC screening in the past month, compared to 27 per cent of unmanaged sites (286 of 1,059). As observed in education and EORE activities, the presence of SMA is associated with improved coverage of targeted humanitarian services. This likely reflects the enabling role of site management teams in facilitating partner access and strengthening community engagement within managed sites.

Across all 1,591 assessed sites, focal points estimate approximately 61,000 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) residing in sites. This figure is based on focal point estimates rather than individual enumeration and is subject to the reporting limitations noted in the Limitations section. While this estimate should be triangulated with population-based prevalence rates before use in programmatic targeting, it nevertheless provides a useful indicative denominator for nutrition programme planning across the site population.

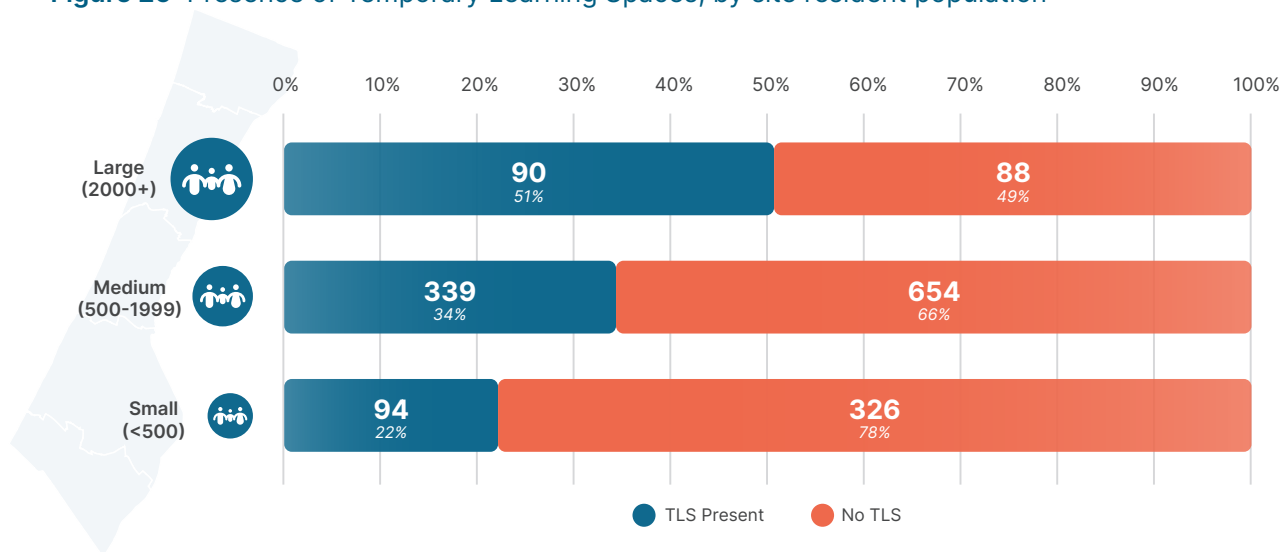
# I 12. Education

## 12.1 Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS)

Temporary learning space (TLS) presence is an imperfect proxy for education access. Children in some sites may access learning spaces in nearby locations, meaning the absence of a TLS in a site does not necessarily indicate a lack of educational access for residents. Likewise, TLS provide informal education, often inadequate teacher-student ratios and limited access to formal educational materials or supplies. The figures reported should thus be interpreted as a measure of minimum in-site provision rather than a larger picture of education access for displaced children.

Thirty-three per cent of assessed sites (523) report the presence of a TLS. Coverage is substantially higher in larger sites: 51 per cent of large sites (population 2,000 or more), 34 per cent of medium sites (500 to 1,999 residents), and 22 per cent of small sites (under 500 residents) reported a TLS. This pattern reflects both the greater demand generated by larger site populations and the tendency of education partners to target high-density sites for program efficiency.

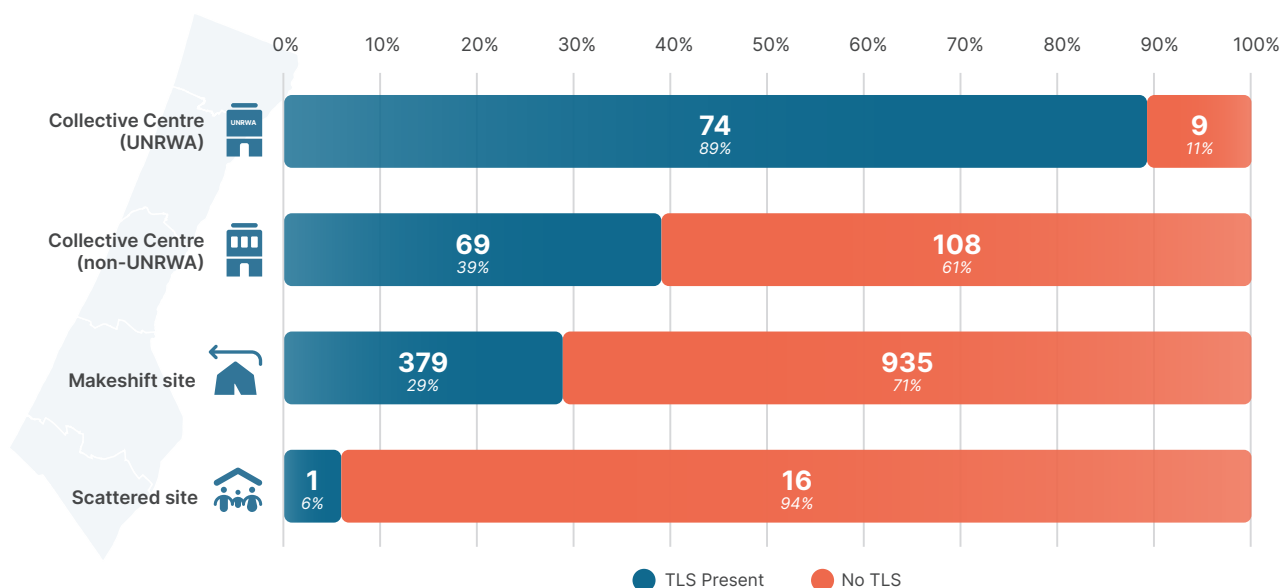
**Figure 25: Presence of Temporary Learning Spaces, by site resident population**



Education services rank among the three most pressing site-level needs in 220 instances across all surveyed sites, underscoring the degree to which educational access remains a major concern for site residents.

TLS coverage varies considerably by site type. A TLS is present in 89 per cent of UNRWA collective centres, a finding driven by UNRWA’s longstanding integration of education into Designated Emergency Shelter/displacement response operations. Moreover, UNRWA-managed sites are also school facilities, often run by experienced education staff. Only 39 per cent of non-UNRWA collective centres report the presence of a TLS, and 29 per cent of makeshift sites. While the higher rates in TLS presence in collective centres are important, they should not obscure the large deficit in makeshift sites, which host most of the displaced population across Gaza.

Figure 26: Presence of Temporary Learning Spaces, by site type



The gap in TLS provision between unmanaged and managed sites is among the largest in the assessment: 46 per cent of managed sites have a TLS, compared to 26 per cent of unmanaged sites. This difference aligns with the broader pattern of improved service facilitation in managed sites and reflects the role of SMAs in coordinating sector partner engagements within their sites.

## 12.2 TLS Management

TLS management is nearly evenly divided between local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international NGOs, and United Nations agencies (49 per cent of TLS-reporting sites) and community-led initiatives (50 per cent). This near parity reflects both the reach of formal education partners and the commitment of displaced communities to maintaining learning opportunities for children under extremely difficult conditions.

Community-led learning spaces in displacement settings are often under-resourced, rely on volunteer teachers, and use improvised facilities. The near-equal reliance on community-led initiatives reflects both the resilience of affected communities and the gap in formal education programme coverage that communities are bridging through their own efforts.

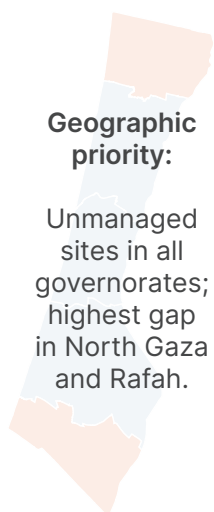


# I 13. Operational Recommendations

## 13.1 Site Management and Governance



### Expand Site Management Agency coverage, prioritising North Gaza, unmanaged collective centres, and sites near the confrontation line



#### Evidence:

67 per cent of sites (1,059 sites, ~1 million people) have no Site Management Agency (SMA). Managed sites consistently outperform unmanaged sites across sectors: shelter assistance coverage (+23pp), EORE coverage (+22pp), women’s governance (+25pp), water adequacy (+7pp), and lower rates of open defecation, sewage, and cooking on plastic. The gap between managed and unmanaged sites is the single most consistent finding in the assessment.

#### Key Actions:

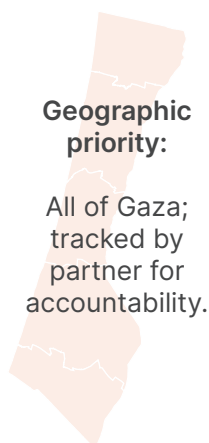
- Increase Site Management Cluster (SMC) partner capacity and resourcing to extend SMA footprint to unmanaged sites, starting with the governorates and typologies where gaps are most severe.
- Prioritise non-UNRWA collective centres: only 12 per cent (22 of 177) currently have SMA coverage, despite hosting disproportionately high rates of outdoor sleeping, unaccompanied minors (UAM), and urgent medical cases.
- Establish a phased coverage expansion target for 2026, with quarterly tracking via cluster partner activity reporting and Zite Manager.
- For sites where full SMA coverage is not immediately feasible, explore lighter-touch models, such as training community focal points with regular SMA remote support, as an interim step.



### Systematically train site focal points and community committees, prioritising the 67 per cent without formal training

#### Evidence:

67 per cent of focal points and site management committees are operating without formal training from a SMA. Formal training is associated with better reporting quality, stronger committee structures, and improved community governance outcomes – including higher rates of women’s participation.

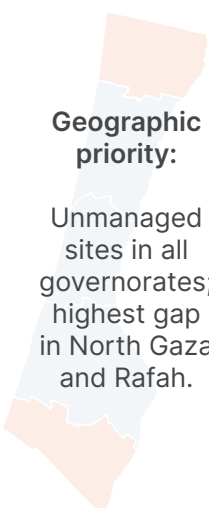


**Key Actions:**

- Integrate structured focal point training into all SMA programme plans for 2026, with minimum standards for curriculum content (committee roles, protection referral pathways, data quality, community feedback mechanisms).
- Prioritise training delivery in sites where the focal point has been in its role for less than six months, as established focal points are often repeatedly displaced.
- Track training coverage through SMC activity reporting to enable progress reporting against the 67 per cent gap.



**Strengthen women’s participation in site governance, with attention to unmanaged sites**



**Evidence:**

23 per cent of unmanaged sites report no women’s involvement in management, compared to 4 per cent in managed sites. Women’s committees are present in 80 per cent of managed sites but just 54 per cent of unmanaged sites. Women’s committees are associated with stronger accountability and protection outcomes across the humanitarian response.

**Key Actions:**

- Include women’s committee establishment and support as a minimum standard in all SMA programme frameworks.
- Ensure community mobilisation activities in newly covered sites actively facilitate women’s committee formation from the outset rather than retrofitting governance after structures have been established.
- Collect and track committee and focal point gender data as a governance indicator in Cluster reporting going forward.

**13.2 Site Environment and Hazard Mitigation**



**Deliver targeted drainage and flood risk interventions ahead of the next winter season**

**Evidence:**

65 per cent of sites have areas of rainwater accumulation while 53 per cent have no visible drainage infrastructure. Sites with rainwater accumulation report dramatically higher rates of urgent medical cases (90 per cent vs 65 per cent without accumulation), skin diseases (55

### Geographic priority:

The 510 sites reporting both rainwater accumulation and absent drainage (highest density in Deir Al-Balah and Khan Younis).

per cent vs 35 per cent), respiratory illness (48 per cent vs 33 per cent), and diarrhoea (38 per cent vs 24 per cent). Both rainwater accumulation and absent drainage is present in 32 per cent of sites (510), representing the highest-risk population for seasonal disease spikes.

### Key Actions:

- Conduct a rapid environmental assessment along with WASH actors of the dual-risk sites (both rainwater accumulation with no drainage) to prioritise where simple drainage interventions (channels, rubble clearance, site grading) are feasible.
- Pre-position drainage materials and tools through Site Management, Shelter and WASH Cluster coordination ahead of the next rainy season.
- Coordinate with WASH and Shelter Cluster partners on integrated site preparation packages for high-risk sites, including raised shelter platforms where practical.



### Implement fire hazard reduction programming across tent-based sites, focusing in North Gaza

### Geographic priority:

North Gaza (highest fire hazard prevalence); all tent-based sites across Gaza.

### Evidence:

Fire hazards are reported in 45 per cent of sites. Manufactured tents are present in 83 per cent of sites and are highly flammable, while fire breaks are nearly non-existent. The SMC alert data records 8,929 shelters destroyed and 26,876 partially damaged in storm and fire incidents from 01 January 2026 to 16 May 2026. Fire is a low-frequency, very high-impact risk in dense tent environments.

### Key Actions:

- Prioritise fire safety assessments and corrective action plans for sites with the highest reported fire hazard prevalence, starting with North Gaza.
- Establish minimum fire separation distances as a site planning standard for any sites undergoing layout modification or expansion.
- Distribute fire safety kits (extinguishers, fire blankets, sand buckets, tools) in high-risk sites through SMA partners.
- Include cooking area configuration and fuel storage in site planning considerations as well as SMA community awareness packages to reduce common ignition risks.



## Scale up solid waste collection and establish communal waste management in sites

### Geographic priority:

Gaza governorate (32 zero-fuel sites); All of Gaza for waste management

### Evidence:

Piles of solid waste are present in 55 per cent of sites. Garbage and plastic burning is the primary cooking fuel in 8 per cent of sites, with all 32 zero-fuel sites in Gaza governorate. Solid waste accumulation is a compound hazard contributing to rodent infestation (present in 81 per cent of sites), fire risk, environmental contamination, and communicable disease.

### Key Actions:

- Urgently address the 32 sites in Gaza governorate with no cooking fuel whatsoever by coordinating with UNOPS and humanitarian clusters on emergency fuel distribution.
- Engage municipal authorities and the WASH Cluster to establish or restore solid waste collection services in the highest-density sites.
- Distribute designated waste disposal receptacles as part of site-level site improvement packages, accompanied by community awareness on waste separation and disposal.



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Site Management Cluster in the Occupied Palestinian Territory