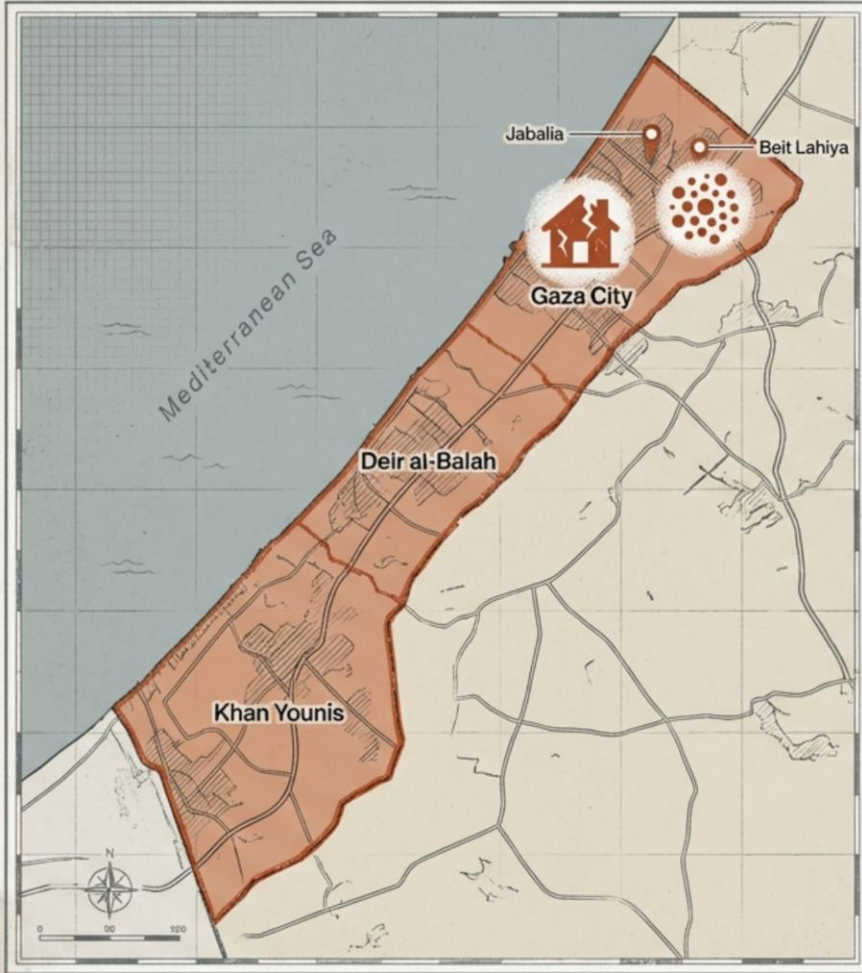


A map of Gaza City and surrounding areas, including Jaballa, Deir al-Balah, and Beit Lahiya. The map shows a grid of streets and is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange grid pattern in several areas, indicating zones of interest or high priority. The text 'Jaballa', 'Deir al-Balah', and 'Beit Lahiya' is visible on the map.

Shelter as Protection: Integrated Needs Analysis & Response Priorities

Findings from the 2026 Intersectoral Assessment
(North Gaza, Gaza City, Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis)



Assessment covers high-damage zones where displacement has eroded coping capacities.

Geographic Scope: Focus on Gaza City, Deir al-Balah, and Khan Younis, including hard-to-reach areas like Jabalia and Beit Lahiya.

Population: IDPs in Collective Centers, Makeshift Sites, and conflict-affected individual shelters.

Context: Widespread infrastructure destruction has forced a shift from ‘housing’ to ‘survival sheltering,’ depleting community resilience.

Limitations: Data collected Dec 2025–Jan 2026; access constraints in North Gaza limit some granularity.

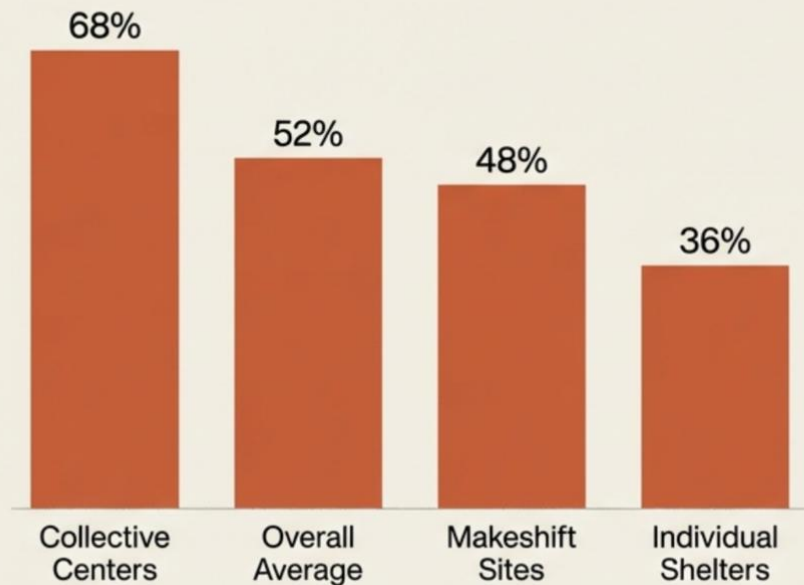
Mixed-methods approach triangulates physical needs with protection risks.



The synthesis applies a protection risk lens, examining how shelter failures interact with threats and vulnerabilities.

Shelter inadequacy is now chronic, with over half of IDPs living in unsafe conditions.

Percentage of Shelters Described as Unsafe/Inadequate



Barriers to Repair:

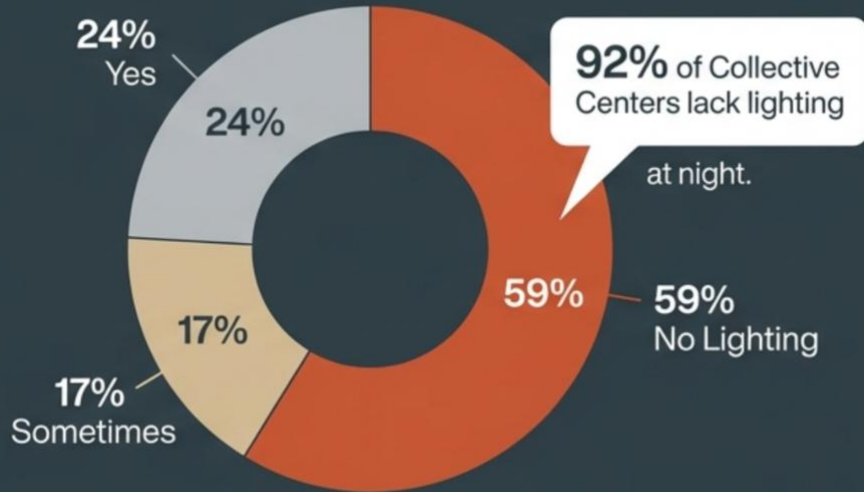
93% cite financial constraints.

43% cite lack of materials.

“Tents are inadequate... very hot in summer, very cold in winter. Wind poses a constant danger to the stability of tents.”

Critical infrastructure gaps—specifically lighting and sanitation—create “zones of fear”.

Site Lighting Availability



Locations Where Residents Feel Unsafe

Unlit Areas



Communal Latrines



Site Environment Overall



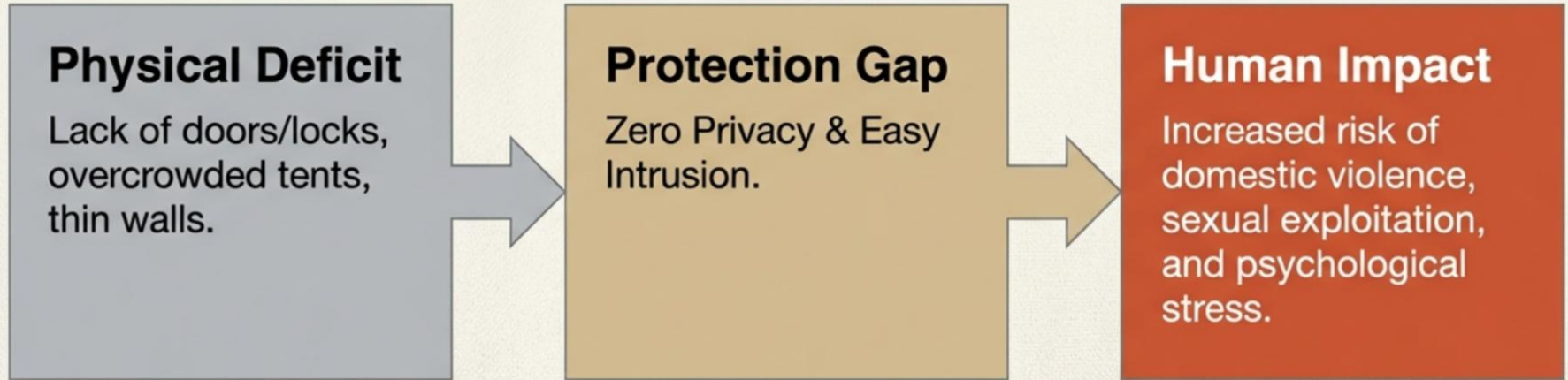
Residents describe a loss of dignity and constant anxiety due to physical conditions.

“The tent is not suitable for human living, it is a nightmare where there is no privacy. If your neighbor sneezes, you hear it.” – Male, 30-59, Makeshift Site in Sentinel Italic

*“Women and girls... feel minimally safe in camps that lack privacy. Shadows are visible through tent walls at night.”
– FGD Participant, Person with Disabilities*

*“We avoid using latrines after dark. We rely on moving in groups just to feel safe.”
– Female Head of Household*

Poor shelter conditions function as direct multipliers of GBV and protection risks.



- **Dignity:** Inability to change clothes or manage menstruation privately.

- **Theft:** Makeshift shelters offer no resistance to intrusion; constant anxiety regarding assets.

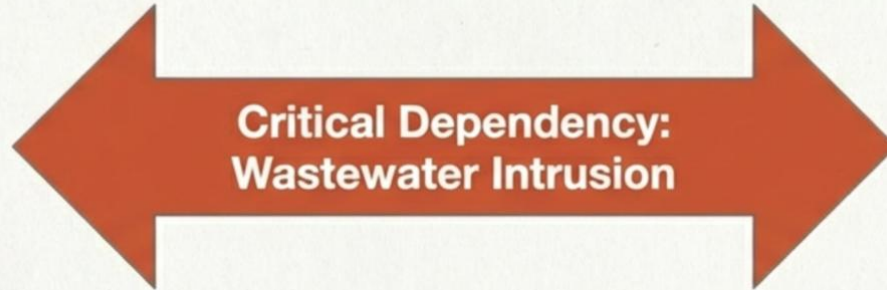
- **GBV:** Overcrowding correlates with increased household tension and violence.

Shelter designs currently exclude Persons with Disabilities and endanger women.

	Access Barriers	Safety Risks
Women & Girls	Shared WASH facilities often lack gender segregation.	Disproportionately affected by unlit pathways; 67% of female-headed HHs identified as high risk.
Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	Muddy pathways and stairs in collective centers trap PWDs; non-adapted latrines.	61% of respondents identify PWDs as facing greatest barriers to evacuation.
Elderly	Uneven terrain and rubble limit mobility.	Respiratory risks from damp/cold tents.

Shelter investments are undermined by widespread WASH infrastructure failure.

- **Sanitation Overflow:** Cesspits and sewage networks are failing; wastewater intrusion into tents is a common winter hazard.
- **The Distance Factor:** Walking long distances for water/toilets is a primary safety risk for women and PWDs.



- **Health Impact:** Damp shelters + sewage exposure + overcrowding = rapid disease transmission.

Lack of documentation threatens the sustainability of shelter repairs and cash interventions.

51%

Households missing property/tenancy documents.

High fear of eviction due to verbal/informal rental agreements.



Eviction Risk

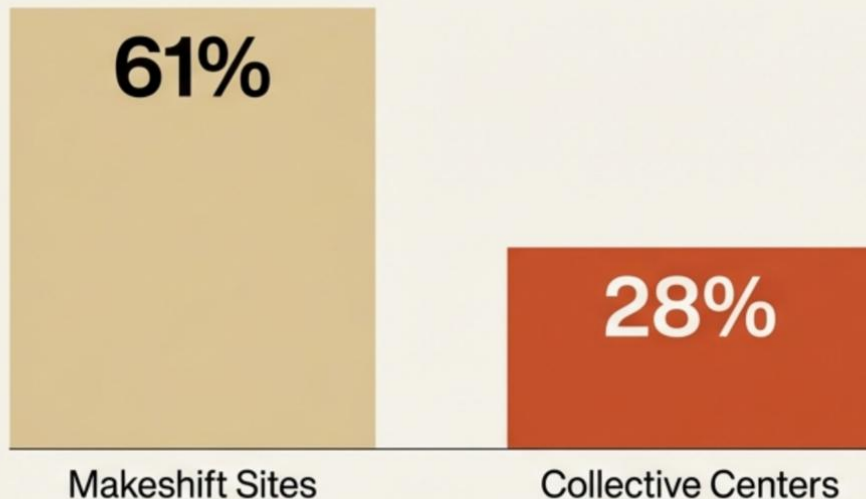
74%

Request Cash Assistance.

Preferred modality, yet risky without legal tenure support.

Active Site Management is the strongest predictor of safety and service access.

Residents perceiving Site Committees as Active



The Impact: Sites with committees report better conflict resolution and maintenance. Without management, residents have no recourse for infrastructure repair.

Current committees often exclude women/PWDs, leading to decision-making that ignores specific safety needs.

Moving from 'Hardware Distribution' to 'Protection-Informed Programming'.



Targeting Shift: Move beyond 'damage level' targeting to 'protection risk' targeting (e.g., prioritization of female-headed HHs in unlit areas).

Priorities Coordination **insight**

from the Assessment

- ✓ **Shelter-WASH sequencing:** Findings suggest joint technical checks for drainage and sanitation ahead of shelter upgrades
- ✓ **Light the Way:** Community feedback highlights lighting as a key protective factor, especially in shared spaces
- ✓ **Standardize Accessibility:** Results point to opportunities to strengthen PWD-accessible design in shelter technical guidance
- ✓ **Strengthen Governance:** More inclusive site structures are associate with better maintenance and safety outcomes

Methodology Notes & Limitations

Data Sources:

Analysis based on the 2026 Intersectoral Assessment conducted by NRC Palestine, Gaza Area Office. Data collection period: December 2025 – January 2026.

Limitations:

Situation is fluid; access constraints in North Gaza limit granularity for specific neighborhoods. Statistics regarding 'Intentions to Return' (85%) suggest shelter solutions must remain flexible/transportable where possible.

Definitions:

'Safety' refers to protection from violence, environmental hazards, and health risks. 'Shelter Inadequacy' is defined by lack of, weather protection, and structural stability.

Additional Data & Methodological Notes

- Data collection period: December 2025 – January 2026
- Findings reflect assessed locations and may not be statistically representative of the entire Gaza Strip
- Assessment based on 100 household surveys, 11 gender-segregated FGDs (including 4 with persons with disabilities), and 11 KIIs
- Shelter categorized as: Unsafe/Inadequate (52%); In need of improvement (45%); Safe and adequate (3%)
- Main barriers to shelter improvement: 93% financial constraints; 43% lack of materials/technical support; 41% security concerns
- 56% identified communal latrines/bathing areas as unsafe
- 72% cited unlit areas at night as a source of fear
- Housing status distribution: 8% own | 27% rent | 35% hosted | 16% vacant/damaged | 14% government land



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