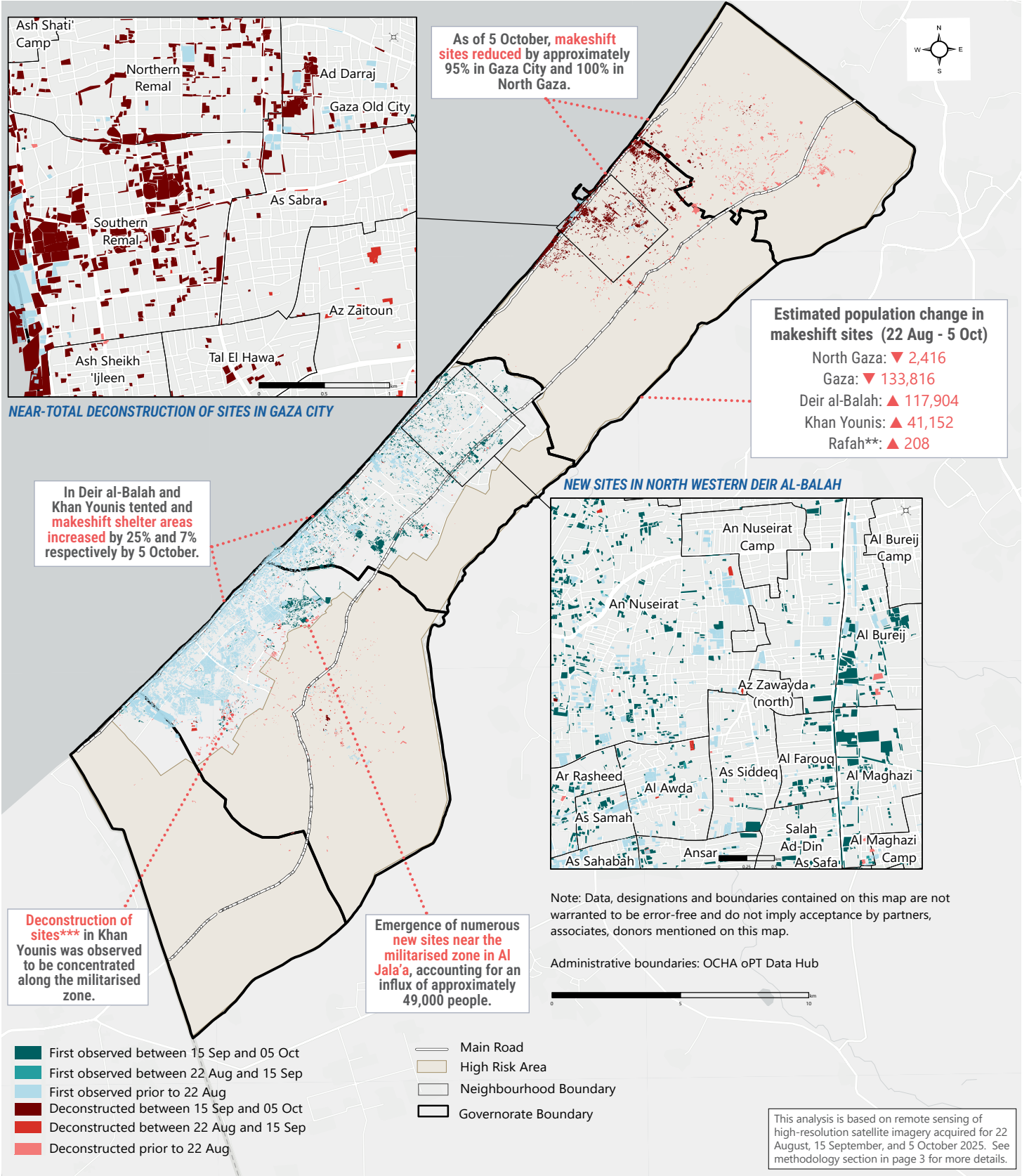


# Gaza Strip: Analysis of Makeshift Sites Population Movement During the Gaza City Offensive

Analysis period: 22 August to 5 October 2025

October 2025 | Occupied Palestinian Territory

Map 1 - Satellite-observed makeshift sites\*



- First observed between 15 Sep and 05 Oct
- First observed between 22 Aug and 15 Sep
- First observed prior to 22 Aug
- Deconstructed between 15 Sep and 05 Oct
- Deconstructed between 22 Aug and 15 Sep
- Deconstructed prior to 22 Aug

- Main Road
- High Risk Area
- Neighbourhood Boundary
- Governorate Boundary

# POPULATION MOVEMENT AT A GLANCE

Analysis period: 22 August to 5 October 2025

Following the launch of Israel’s Gaza City offensive on 20 August 2025, the Gaza Strip witnessed massive displacement. Israeli forces sought to establish full control over Gaza City through ground operations and airstrikes.<sup>1</sup> The offensive reached a critical escalation on 9 September 2025, with Israeli forces ordering all residents of Gaza City to displace to the Al Mawasi area, exacerbating Gaza’s ever-worsening humanitarian and displacement crisis.<sup>2</sup> Shortly after, on 9 October 2025, a ceasefire agreement was reached, bringing an end to the Gaza City offensive and marking a shift in the dynamics of displacement across the Strip.

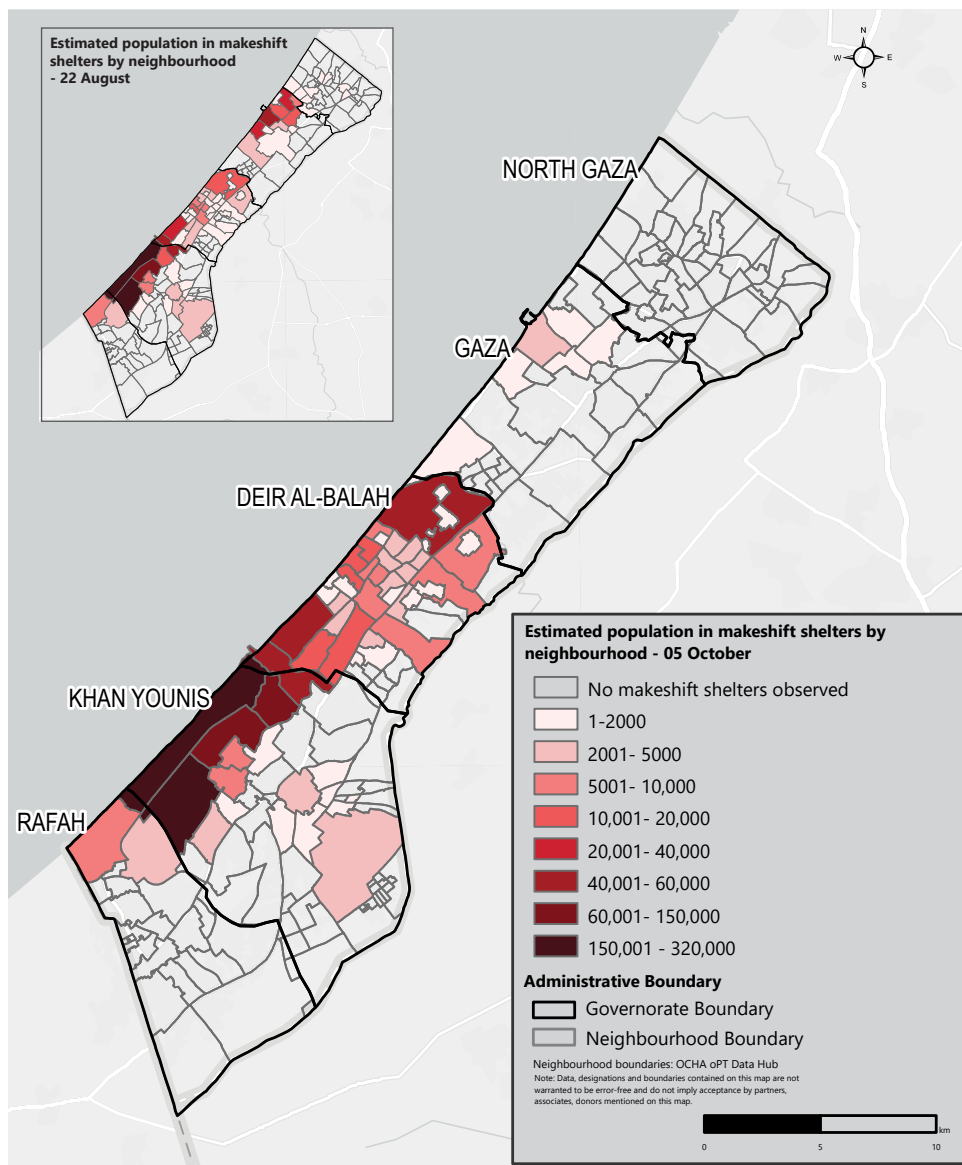
Satellite imagery from 22 August (offensive onset), 15 September (six days after the mass displacement order), and 5 October (towards the end of the offensive) illustrates the scale and direction of displacement from Gaza City and North Gaza toward Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis. This analysis captures the spatial footprint of displacement as the offensive unfolded just before implementation of the ceasefire began. **It provides a snapshot of where populations living in tented and makeshift structures were concentrated at that critical juncture, offering a baseline from which to interpret subsequent, though uncertain, post-ceasefire movements.** A follow-up brief is being developed to analyse displacement patterns emerging during the initial ceasefire implementation phase, including the recently observed south-to-north movements.<sup>3</sup>

As of 5 October 2025, site-extent analysis showed that tent density within the tented areas of Gaza City had fallen to less than 1%, compared to 9% in mid-September and 19% on 22 August 2025, indicating a progressive reduction as the offensive unfolded. North Gaza showed a comparable pattern with evidence of total deconstruction of all tented and makeshift sites by 5 October 2025.\*\*\*\*

**The removal and deconstruction of these sites correspond with an estimated 95% decline in the population residing in tented and makeshift shelters across Gaza City and North Gaza since the start of the offensive. This decline equates to over 136,000 people displaced from such sites between 22 August and 5 October 2025.** During this same period, Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis saw a collective estimated increase of 159,000 individuals in makeshift sites, exceeding the decline observed in Gaza City and North Gaza. This imbalance indicates that many additional residents, likely those previously sheltering in buildings, also displaced south and are now residing in makeshift sites.

**In Deir al-Balah alone, the estimated population residing in makeshift sites grew by 87% over the course of the analysis, with the sharpest rise occurring between the first and second analysis dates.**

## Map 2 Estimated population density in makeshift sites by neighbourhood



An Nuseirat saw the largest influx among Deir al-Balah neighbourhoods, taking in an additional 23,500 individuals in makeshift sites. It was followed by Deir al-Balah (East), Deir al-Balah (North), and Al Birkeh, each receiving between 15,000 and 17,000 new arrivals. By proportion, Al Farouq, Al Louh, and Ja’afarawi experienced particularly sharp increases, each exceeding 1,000%.

Khan Younis saw a far milder proportional population increase during the period of the assessment, rising to a 6% increase by 5 October 2025. In absolute terms, however, **Khan Younis absorbed roughly one-third as many people as Deir al-Balah**, reflecting its larger pre-baseline population. Growth in tents and makeshift structures was concentrated in Al Jala’a, Al Qarara (west), and An Naser, with Al Jala’a alone taking in approximately 49,000 additional people.

The population heatmaps (see Map 2) illustrate the spatial redistribution of displaced populations over the course of the offensive. They show the near-total clearance of tented and makeshift sites in Gaza City and North Gaza alongside the emergence and rapid expansion of new sites in the southern governorates. By 5 October 2025, the footprint of tents and makeshift shelter had expanded from 42% to 67% in Deir al-Balah and from 38% to 45% in Khan Younis, **illustrating rapidly intensifying overcrowding within both areas.**

These findings capture the conditions on the eve of the ceasefire, reflecting the extreme spatial compression that continues to define displacement across the Strip. Preventing further deterioration now depends on sustained calm and full humanitarian access. **Upholding the ceasefire and ensuring unhindered entry of aid and essential goods remain vital to halting Gaza’s collapse and enabling the first steps toward recovery.**

\*Remote sensing and satellite imagery analysis.

\*\*Satellite imagery shows visible tented and makeshift sites in Rafah, with a slight increase observed during this analysis period, despite the area being within the militarised zone since May 2025.

\*\*\*A “deconstructed site” refers to sites that were previously detected through remote sensing analysis but no longer visible in later satellite imagery.

\*\*\*\*The absolute number of people residing in makeshift sites in North Gaza was already very low as of 22 August 2025, reflecting prior displacement orders and the area’s prolonged designation as a militarised zone.

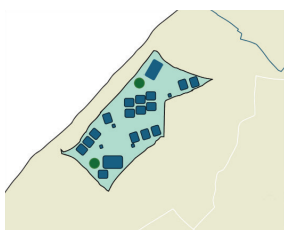
## METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This brief employs a multi-faceted approach to gather information on displacement trends and the locations of displaced populations within Gaza. The trends and estimations are based on the analysis from:

**1) the remote sensing and satellite imagery** analysis between 22 August and 5 October 2025 to identify the areas where visible makeshift sites were located across all five governorates;

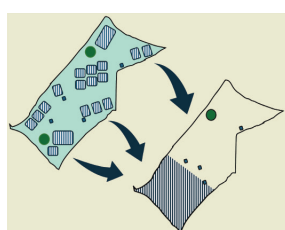
**2) the population change estimates based on a four-step process** using satellite imagery to monitor and estimate the population in makeshift sites. Initially, remote sensing data is manually reviewed to identify and delineate polygons around makeshift sites. The area covered by these shelters within each polygon is then estimated, and this value is multiplied by the total polygon area to determine the overall shelter area. By dividing this shelter area by the average size of a shelter, an estimate of the number of shelters is obtained. Finally, multiplying the number of shelters by the estimated number of occupants per shelter provides an estimate of the total IDP population in each location;

### STEP 1



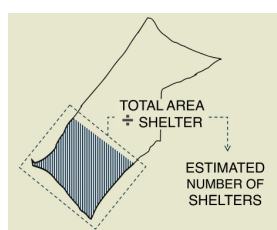
A remote sensing specialist manually reviews satellite imagery and draws polygons around makeshift shelters.

### STEP 2



The proportion of polygon area covered by shelters is estimated. This number is multiplied by the area of the polygon itself to determine the shelter area.

### STEP 3



Shelter area from Step 2 is then divided by the average shelter size to determine the estimated number of shelters.

### STEP 4



Estimated number of shelters is multiplied by the median\*\*\*\*\* number of people living in each shelter.

**3) any publicly available secondary data sources** such as media news and/or UN reports pertaining to the situation in the Gaza Strip.

**All information provided in this brief should be considered indicative only.** Remote sensing and satellite imagery analysis can be affected by cloud cover and adverse weather conditions, sometimes limiting the clarity and accuracy of observations. Additionally, satellite imagery provides only limited top-view visibility of infrastructures, thereby making difficult to distinguish various visible makeshift sites. Population estimates can be affected by variance in the geographic size and density of shelter sites. Additionally, there is limited published data or analysis available to support accurate estimations of shelter area density. As such, all trends and estimations provided in the brief should be further triangulated with robust on-ground verification. Most importantly, the situation in Gaza is highly volatile and changing rapidly, so the information provided offers only a snapshot of the situation during the reporting period and may become outdated very quickly.

Population estimates are based on the site extent analysis which is an observation of tents and makeshift structures in proximity to each other. The minimum criteria to consider a group of tents/makeshift a site is 5 tents within 10 metres distance of each other. For this reason, scattered and single tents/makeshift are not included in the site extent analysis and therefore population estimates.

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> [Humanitarian Situation Update #321 | Gaza Strip | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Occupied Palestinian Territory](#)

<sup>2</sup> [ibid.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [NPM Population Movement Monitoring Flash Update. 12 October 2025.](#)