

75th Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Programmatic, Budgetary and Administrative Matters of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat

Wednesday, 11 March 2026, 9:00-12:00 Eastern Africa Time (EAT)
Conference Room 9, UNON

Status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip

I. Introduction

1. This information note is an addendum to the Preliminary report on the status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip submitted to the Executive Board in its first session of 2024 (HSP/EB.2024/INF/6) and a response to the requests to “the Executive Director to present the comprehensive report to the Executive Board at its first session of 2025, if conditions allow it, and by no later than its third session of 2025” as per Decision 2024/6 a) paragraph 6 (HSP/EB.2024/24).

2. It has not been possible to produce a comprehensive report, as requested by the Executive Board. UN-Habitat’s Emergency Director conducted two missions to Palestine in November and December 2025, to East-Jerusalem and the West Bank. A third mission to Palestine was planned for February 2026; however there was no response given to the visa application and, UN-Habitat was denied access to the Gaza Strip in February 2026 by the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT). In situ visits is necessary to further review the situation on the ground and to validate and update the analysis made so far. Without visa approval and direct access to the Gaza Strip is granted, UN-Habitat will not be in a position to fulfil the request by the Executive Board to produce a comprehensive report on the status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip.

3. This short note summarizes key points, building on the previous reports, available data and external information on the situation on the ground. The latest Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (IRDNA) conducted by the World Bank, European Union and United Nations (incl. UN-Habitat) dates from February 2025 and is available [online](#) but is now already outdated. The new RDNA is being finalized but the results have not yet been made public. UN-Habitat is in the process of finalizing an [urban profile](#) for the Gaza Strip, updating the one done in 2014. In addition, three neighborhood profiles are being completed for Al Amal, Al Tahrir neighborhoods in Khan Yunis Governorate and Tal El Hawa neighbourhood in Gaza City.

II. Key points on the impact of the conflict on the human settlements in the Gaza Strip

Addressing immediate humanitarian needs to respond to and avoid famine and to provide basic shelter remains an overarching priority.

1. The Shelter Cluster estimates that 1.4 million people require emergency shelter assistance in Gaza¹ and have limited access to clean water and sanitation. In southern Gaza, conditions are alarming with families squeezed into makeshift tents along the beach, packed into overcrowded schools, or sleeping in the open and amid rubble, and services are stretched beyond capacity. Lack of adequate shelter amplifies risk of exposure to the elements and health-related hazards.

2. Lack of adequate shelter solutions has had a devastating impact on the humanitarian situation due to the cold and flooding of displacement sites. The challenges faced by displaced families in the Gaza Strip have grown increasingly. Fragile and overcrowded living conditions, exposure to stormwater flooding, and the lack of adequate shelter place thousands at heightened risk, undermining their health, safety, and dignity.

¹ UN Gaza Humanitarian Response Update- 6 August 2025

Makeshift tents offer little protection against water leakage, strong winds, and freezing temperatures, leaving families dangerously exposed to the harsh winter elements.²

3. The most urgent humanitarian priorities are now, in addition to food security, access to improved shelter, health services and temporary learning spaces.

Spatial distribution and displacement patterns

4. Displacement has taken on a cyclical pattern. After relocating multiple times, many families were forced to settle in makeshift tent clusters living in extremely harsh conditions. As of 11 February 2026, at least two thirds of the population (1.4 million of 2.1 million people) are estimated to reside in about 1,000 displacement sites, often in overcrowded settings and in tents that offer limited privacy and protection from the elements.³

5. It was reported that only 40 per cent of the current makeshift sites have a site management cluster partner presence, reflecting a high coverage gap that continues to present challenges for coordination and service delivery. In terms of geographic location, most sites remain concentrated in central and southern Gaza; 46 per cent are in Khan Younis, 29 per cent in Deir al Balah, 16 per cent in the Gaza governorate, 7 per cent in North Gaza and only 2 per cent in Rafah. Noting that the makeshift sites account for 81 per cent of all registered sites, underscoring the predominance of shelter types. The rest are divided between collective centres (15 per cent) and scattered sites (just above 1 per cent).⁴

6. Since the ceasefire agreement in October 2025, an estimation of 833,000 people have changed location, with more than 694,000 going from southern to northern Gaza. Most population movements observed during the reporting period were primarily characterized by returns to areas of origin, largely driven by the need for family reunification. Additionally, a portion of movements was associated with inadequate shelter conditions and overcrowding within displacement sites, and upon demand of landowners, prompting some households to seek alternative locations where space and overall living conditions were perceived to be comparatively more adequate.⁵

The number of neighbourhoods that have lost all functionality and the ratio of buildings fully destroyed have increased

7. According to UNOSAT, as of 11 October 2025, approximately 81 per cent of all structures in the Gaza Strip are damaged. Among the damaged structures; 123,464 structures were identified as destroyed structures, 17,116 severely damaged structures, 33,857 moderately damaged structures, and 23,836 possibly damaged structures for a total of 198,273 affected structures.⁶

8. When comparing the total affected structures from the ongoing war with the numbers from the 2014 war, an extremely sharp escalation in affected structures between 2014 and the recent war is identified. In 2014, 14,798 structures were affected, and this number has since increased due to the latest war by nearly 1,080%, representing an almost 12-fold rise. This indicates that the scale of structural impact in 2023 is unprecedented compared with 2014, pointing to far wider geographic spread, higher intensity of damage, and significantly greater pressure on housing recovery, infrastructure restoration, and service provision.

9. In the reporting period, and even after the ceasefire was declared, demolitions of housing and infrastructure continued. Approximately, over 77 per cent of the total road network has been damaged (including destroyed, affected roads and roads restricted by obstacles), across the Gaza Strip.⁷ The scale of the damage also highlights how fragile water supply services in Gaza are. Out of the 14,000 cubic metres reportedly being supplied, only 6,000 cubic metres are arriving, reflecting a significant water loss. The missing 8,000 cubic metres would be sufficient to support over 500,000 people, based on the recommended minimum standard of 15 litres per person per day. As for solid waste, the amount of solid waste generated in Gaza has risen in 2026. This in addition to the insufficiency in the storage capacity of the current temporary dumping sites.⁸

2 Site Management Cluster Palestine, [Statement On Escalating Forced Displacement in Gaza](#), September 2025.

3 OCHA, [Humanitarian Situation Update #357 | Gaza Strip](#), 12 February 2026

4 OCHA, [Gaza Humanitarian Response | Situation Report No. 66](#), 9 February 2026

5 CCCM Cluster, [Gaza Population Movement Monitoring Flash Update](#), (01 February - 14 February 2026).

6 UNOSAT, [Gaza Strip Comprehensive Damage Assessment](#), 11 October 2025.

7 UNOSAT, [Gaza Strip Road Network Comprehensive Damage Assessment](#), September 2025

8 OCHA, [Gaza Humanitarian Response | Situation Report No. 66](#), 09 February 2026

10. The typology of damages per type of housing unit is as follows:

Damage Level	Building %	Villa/House %	Caravan/Tent %
Completely Destroyed	58.6%	41.2%	0.2%
Severely Damaged	74.6%	25.3%	0.1%
Moderately Damaged	74.8%	25.2%	0.1%

The figures above indicate that, across all damage classes, the majority of affected housing units fall within the “Building” typology (equivalent to apartment units). As for the damaged housing units within the typology “Villa/Houses” they represent a substantial secondary share with over 40 per cent of the total destroyed housing units and a quarter of both severely and moderately damaged. This also reflects that since 2014 a larger share of the housing units have become apartments.

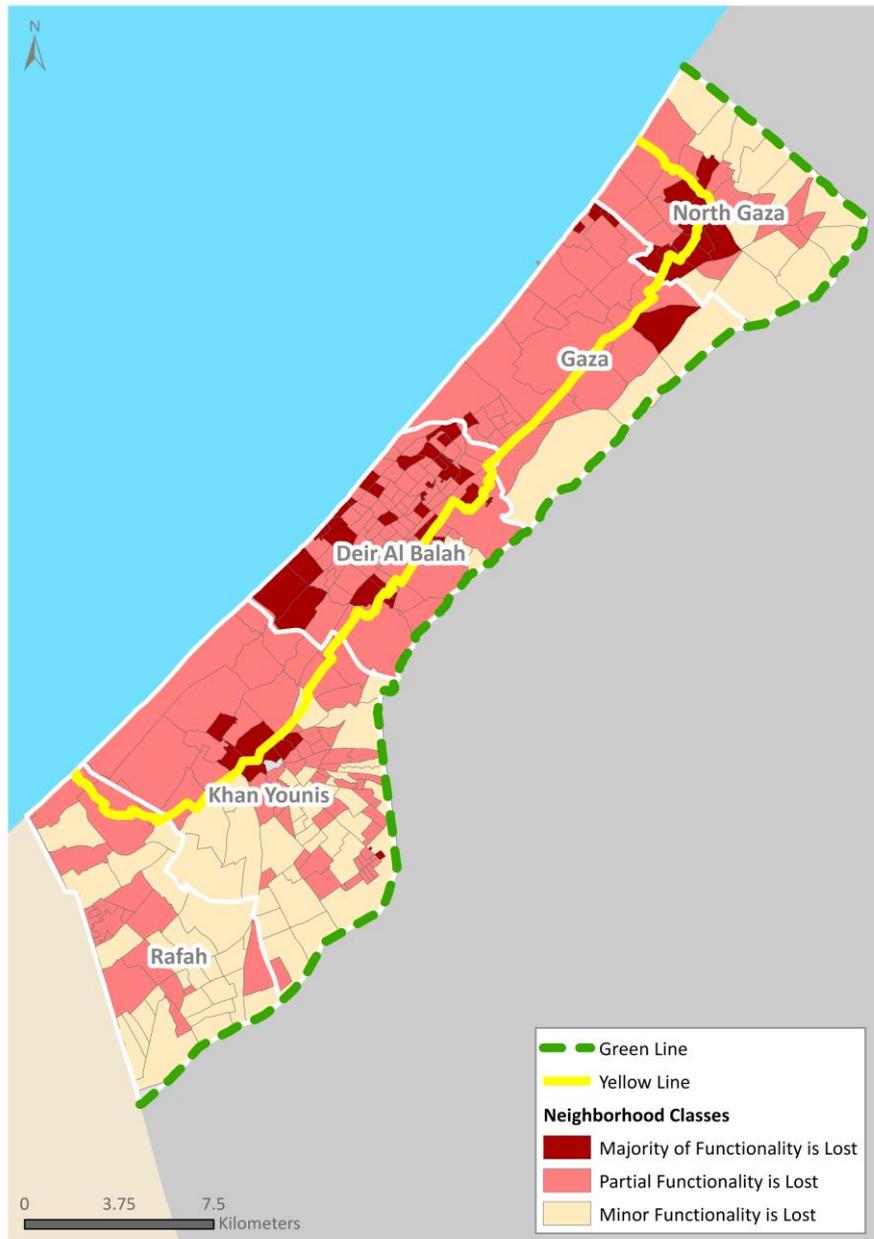
Looking at the eight refugee camps across the Gaza Strip, the dominant housing typologies within the refugee camps are primarily Buildings and Villas/Houses, reflecting the prevalence of these conventional residential forms in camp settings. In terms of affected housing units, both buildings and Villa/Houses consistently account for a fairly comparable share of the affected housing typologies across all governorates, except for the refugee camps in the Gaza strip where the damage in the housing units within building typology represents two-thirds of the total across with the remaining third from the affected housing units associated with the typology “Villa/Houses”.

11. The urban profile being finalized will allow us to categorize further the functionality of neighborhoods (majority of functionality lost, partial loss of functionality, minor loss of functionality).

12. The Neighborhood Functionality Assessment Model (NFAM) offers a structured, area-based framework to analyze how conflict affects neighborhoods across six interconnected pillars: physical and spatial conditions, basic services and infrastructure, housing and tenure, economic livelihoods, social cohesion, and governance and planning. By comparing conditions before and after conflict, the model goes beyond mapping physical damage to assess how neighborhoods function for residents in practice. It highlights spatial inequalities, interdependencies among sectors, and the coping strategies communities adopt under stress.

13. NFAM findings inform programming at both emergency and long-term levels. In the short term, they guide stabilization and early recovery efforts by identifying priority actions such as restoring essential services, enabling safe shelter use, protecting housing and land tenure through interim arrangements, reviving livelihoods, and strengthening community safety.

14. Not all sector data is complete yet but based on available data on damage in the built-up area, the road network and the current location of the makeshift sites, the following categorization can be reflected spatially in the map below:



All neighborhoods located to the west of the yellow line are classified as neighbourhoods with majority loss and partial loss in functionality, while to the east of the yellow line we find that the majority of the neighborhoods only have minor loss of functionality. This is due to concentration of the damage in these areas. The overall area of neighborhoods with majority or partial loss of functionality is 225.8 km² which is equivalent to 62.7 per cent of the overall area of the Gaza Strip, including all neighborhoods to the west of the yellow line.

15. UN-Habitat is finalizing neighborhood profiles for Al Amal and Al Tahreer neighborhoods in Khan Younis and Tal El HAWa in Gaza city.

Continue to support families to return and support immediate rehabilitation whenever and wherever possible

16. Since the last report, families have tried to return to their neighborhoods of origin as much as possible. Pilot projects are being initiated to settle sites identified by a wide variety of actors for transitional shelters. An effort which deserves further scaling but which requires access to the Gaza Strip for transitional shelter solutions.

17. The neighborhood approach advocated for in UN-Habitat’s first report (HSP/EB.2024/INF/6) has now widely been adapted by the UN. UNDP is leading a neighborhood-based approach in 10 neighborhoods (Al Awda, Al-Daraj, Al Rimal North, Al Rimal South, Al-Sabra, Old City Gaza in Gaza City). In Khan Yunis,

the city center and Al Amal neighborhood are targeted where in Al Nusairat, the new camp and Sarsou in Deir Al Balah middle area are also targeted. They are the focus of more detailed damage assessments and starting to promote a more integrated response focusing on emergency housing repair, debris management, access to water, creation of temporary learning spaces, access to health services and transitional shelter solutions. UN-Habitat intends to expand its neighborhood profiling and planning support to these neighborhoods, in collaboration with its partner the Palestinian Housing Council.

18. UN-Habitat is finalizing its pilot project, funded by the Government of Japan Supplementary Budget, applying self-help and community-driven approach to retrofit 70 partially damaged housing units. Three water wells have been finalized to provide clean water to displaced communities serving 275,000 people across Gaza city, Khan Yunis and Al Nussairat. The results of the project show that not only are families able to return home but it creates an additional 2x hosting capacity for family and friends. This illustrates the importance of scaling this kind of support to reduce the overall need for transitional housing solutions on new sites.

A Strategic Framework on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Rights in the Gaza Strip has been developed to guide immediate response, recovery and reconstruction

19. Both the Palestinian Authority's Gaza Recovery Framework and the UN's Gaza Recovery Framework (GRF) had identified secure tenure, functioning registries, and dispute resolution as prerequisites for effective recovery.

20. UN-Habitat has seconded an HLP Advisor into the Resident Coordinator's Office (January – February 2026). This has allowed to develop a Strategic Framework on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Rights in the Gaza Strip. The Framework recognises for the centrality of HLP rights of the people of Gaza to enable humanitarian response, while ensuring that recovery and reconstruction efforts are rights-based and aligned with the UN's broader early recovery objectives in Gaza⁹.

21. The Framework is anchored in the [Secretary General Guidance Note on Land and Conflict](#) (2019) which sets out the “relevant international legal principles” on land and conflict issues to guide “the redevelopment of Gaza pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan”, as set out in Security Council Resolution 2803 (2025), in a manner that uphold the rights of the Palestinian people as recognised by General Assembly Resolution 3236 (XXIX). The Framework calls for a common approach across the humanitarian response, and the peace and security, human rights and development pillars.

22. UN-Habitat is collaborating with UNDP on the role out of the Strategic Framework on HLP, prioritizing a first set of activities with support of the Norwegian Government.

Any recovery and reconstruction plan needs to measure against key principles of sustainable urban recovery

23. The pathways from acute humanitarian response to recovery and reconstruction and the scenarios, set out in the first “Preliminary report on the status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip” [HSP/EB.2024/INF/6], are no longer valid and still need to be revisited taking into account the level of destruction and the phases of the agreed peace plan. The principles set out in the last report remain valid [HSP/EB.2025/INF/18].

24. The new data presented in this report will allow to tailor the recovery and reconstruction strategies further. This includes:

- The need to fully differentiate the recovery and reconstruction strategy in line with the level of loss of functionality and typology of housing units.
- Potential need for special planning instruments for the neighborhoods that have been completely destroyed and need redevelopment, while protecting the HLP rights of Gazans.
- The need for a recovery and reconstruction strategy that takes into account the diversity of HLP issues across the Gaza Strip.

⁹ The UN identifies three key early recovery objectives: (1) restoration of livelihoods and economic activity; (2) access to essential services, housing and social protection; and (3) strengthening governance, institutional capacity and protection systems. UN (2025) Supporting Peace and Prosperity: Scaling up Early Recovery in Gaza. Unpublished.

III. Next steps

25. An updated or comprehensive report is possible as soon as UN-Habitat can be provided access to the Gaza Strip.
26. In line with its Strategic Plan 2026-2029 and leveraging its expertise, UN-Habitat is ready to provide technical advisory services, mobilizing its housing and planning tools, to inform and support reconstruction strategies and plans for the Gaza Strip.