

Site Management Working Group

Paper on site terminology and definition

Mar 2024

The purpose of this document is:

- a) to propose and clarify a **unified terminology** to be used by different response actors to describe collective displacement sites in Gaza
- b) to inform **operational response planning**, with response modalities differing between types of site
- c) when conditions allow, to **advocate for systematic approach** to temporary housing for IDPs including transitional/durable solutions

Advocacy note: In line with the wider humanitarian community, the Site Management Working Group (SMWG) discourages the creation of camps. However, in the current context of Gaza, sufficient alternatives are not available. Support from humanitarian actors is required to ensure that collective shelters and sites are well managed and displacement affected populations have access to protection and basic services in a dignified manner.

The SMWG advises to substitute the reference to “camp” as a description of communal displacement settings and instead utilize the term “site” for clarity. Please see details of site typology below.

“**Sites**” shall mean all types of collective displacement settings, such as collective shelters, formal camps and informal camps as well as any other facility used as collective temporary accommodation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other persons affected by the conflict which share services and/or resources. In some cases where multiple sites are closely located and share the same services, the term “area” will be used¹.

Site types²

1. **Collective Centres** – populations have settled in public infrastructures such as schools, mosques, unfinished or abandoned buildings etc. This can be subcategorised to:
 - a. **UNRWA shelters** – collective centres managed by UNRWA with integrated service provision referred to as Designated Emergency Sites (DES – which were planned to accommodate IDPs pre- current crisis) and UNRWA sites that have been established in various facilities since the current crisis and now function as DESs. The ‘site population’ counts only the site residents, regardless of service provision to areas surrounding the site (see below).
 - b. **Non-UNRWA shelters** – collective centres managed by actors other than UNRWA or not managed. The ‘site population’ counts only the site residents, regardless of service provision to areas surrounding the site (see below).
2. **Makeshift sites** – self-settled by displaced populations, typically without a (formal) site management entity, and with a population of over 10 households³. A makeshift site may share services with a collective centre (e.g. in the case of a makeshift site surrounding or next to a collective centre, which accesses the collective centre for all or some service provision, this is considered and counted as two separate sites. In this case, it can be understood that the management of the collective centre are also managing the makeshift site.) or may not receive systematic service provision.

¹ **Area** can be defined as “a high density, urban areas with a high concentration of displaced communities – including those living in collective centres and small spontaneous sites” or as a “dispersed rural areas with numerous smaller sites within an administrative boundary, e.g. districts where displaced populations also live close to host communities, relying on their services and infrastructures”. See the Global CCCM Cluster Paper on Area Based Approaches: <https://ccmcluster.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/CCCM-area-based%20approaches.pdf>

² Formal refugee camps established in Gaza prior to October 7 2023 to accommodate Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA as per mandate are not articulated within this document. This document aims to describe new displacement sites in order to support emergency prioritization of services. Nothing herein changes or impacts the mandate of UNRWA provided through UN General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV) and subsequent resolutions renewing the UNRWA mandate.

³ This number will be revisited once the initial round of site mapping has been completed.

3. **Small, scattered sites** – these are smaller groupings of several tents/makeshift shelters composed of less than 10 households. They may be in close proximity to other smaller sites (i.e. scattered pockets of tents in urban area)

Further, '**Area Coordination Center or Area Community Resource Center**' shall mean centres which provide '**daytime**' services, such as registration of displaced population, referrals to sites/shelters, provision of other assistance, etc.

- a. For UNRWA, the "Area Operations Rooms" in each area serve this function as part of their Area Based Approach across the five governorates of Gaza, where services can be facilitated and conducted supporting communities both within and surrounding the UNRWA formal sites.
- b. Through a harmonized approach, Site Management actors may aim to establish these mechanisms in sub areas in order to further localize response coordination, which may vary in function and composition depending on the context.

Site Attributes

Planned or unplanned

- **Unplanned** – a site that is **makeshift** (in the case of informal sites) **or adapted** (in the case of collective centres) which means that the site was organized in premises not designated for the purposes of residence (such as schools, health facilities, religious buildings, etc.). The site infrastructure is not established prior to IDP arrival. Such sites likely lack certain facilities necessary for residence purposes.
- **Planned** – the site was designed for residence and was built with all the facilities necessary for this purpose. These facilities may still be overwhelmed by recent influxes and infrastructure may not be sufficient to support new arrivals. These sites are not designed to be a permanent solution.

Density

- **Clustered** – a group of sites in the same geographic area that share services
- **Single** – one site, functioning on its own and not linked to another site

Degree of urbanisation

- **City** – densely populated areas
- **Town & semi-dense area** – dense and semi-dense towns, peri-urban areas and city outskirts
- **Rural area** – villages, dispersed rural areas and mostly uninhabited areas

Ownership/HLP

- Private – owned by private entities, or leased by private entities
- Public – the state, through different ministries and authorities, owns and directly controls the property
- UN – UNRWA owned installations, wherein land is owned by host authorities and provided on a right to use basis" or those installations rented by UNRWA for the purpose of service provision
- Disputed – the land is claimed by more than one owner
- Unknown

Occupancy agreement between landowner and site residents may be written, verbal or none.

Necessity to make any payments in connection with accommodation:

- absence of necessity to make any payments in connection with accommodation;
- necessity to pay rent in connection with accommodation at the site; and/or
- necessity to pay utility costs, for electricity supply, gas, or make other similar payments in connection with accommodation at the site; and/or
- necessity to make any other payments.

Shelter type will vary between the sites affecting the usage and the services needed. E.g. schools, municipality buildings, tents, makeshift shelters, t-shelters, containers etc.

Site management:

- **Site Management** – a dedicated humanitarian actor is available to support information sharing, coordination, and advocacy with broader humanitarian community with the aim of ensuring adequate assistance and protection for displaced populations in the sites.
- **Site focal point** – an individual, typically a custodian of the building or community leader, is working to provide minimum level of coordination with humanitarian actors, may be building owner or headteacher of school etc.
- **Unmanaged** – no such actor is present