



PALESTINE
SHELTER CLUSTER

Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements

Inadequacy of tents in providing weather protection in Gaza and mitigation measures for approaching winter

November 2025

INTRODUCTION

Gaza faces its third winter with a majority of people displaced and in deteriorating shelters. With the Gaza Strip continuing to face a high-degree of aid access restrictions, the preparation for winter has been limited and negligible compared to scale of needs.

Following the first rains on 14th November that caused significant flooding of sites and shelters, SC calls for urgent action to prepare for winter, building on the Shelter Cluster's [Winterization Recommendations](#).

- Snapshot of flooding from first rains in Gaza
- Types of tents currently in Gaza
- Perception of People in Gaza on tents and options beyond tents
- Improving emergency shelters
- Considerations for transitional shelters

NEED FOR TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS

- Need to move rapidly beyond tents to the next phase of the response. Shelter Cluster suggests a menu of transitional solutions: including repairs of damaged housing units and stand-alone transitional shelters.
SC has developed Transitional Shelter Standards.
- Stand-alone models include
 - a) prefabricated shelters, considering appropriate use and critical key considerations endorsed by the SC Gaza SAG.
 - b) household/contractor-led shelters: requiring large-scale entry of materials such as timber, steel, cement, aggregates etc.
- Note that stand-alone shelters must consider integrated programming including site preparation, services and WASH infrastructure.

These solutions will not scale up before winter hence Cluster and humanitarian community to advocate in parallel for transitional solutions AND entry of materials for improving emergency shelters.



Why is everyone talking only about tents?
Why aren't mobile homes being brought in to give people a minimum level of dignified living?

Tents are not fit for human life they don't withstand rain, or cold, and they can't protect a child from flooding or sickness.

People here need real shelters, not pieces of fabric that collapse with the first wave of rain.

The world is fully capable of providing safe, mobile housing, yet what reaches Gaza is the cheapest and weakest option, as if people's lives can always be squeezed under a worn-out tent.

It's time to speak clearly:

The people of Gaza need homes... not more tents.



8:52 AM · Nov 15, 2025 · 135.4K Views

SNAPSHOT OF FLOODING IN GAZA (FIRST RAIN FALL)



Source: *Daily Sabah*

A Palestinian man removes water from the roof top of a tent on a rainy day, during a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, in Gaza City, Nov. 14, 2025. (Reuters Photo)



Source: Speda
TV-Flooded site.



Source: The times of
Israel.



Source: Speda
TV-Flooded site.



Pictures from Al Saftawi Health Centre
showing the rainfall into the centre SMC
whatsapp group.

The first rain that hit Gaza on 14 November led to flooding across several sites, influx of water in shelters, soaked NFIs, and leaking roofs.

It was observed that tents performed poorly in providing weather protection, and urgent steps are needed to improve sheltering conditions.

TYPES OF TENTS IN GAZA



1. Humanitarian Standard Family tent



2. Humanitarian Standard Geodesic tent



3. Tent provided by Qatari committee



4. Tent provided by Egyptian Committee



5. Tent provided by Saudi Committee



6. Tent Produced in China



7. Tents by UAE

TYPES OF TENTS IN GAZA

#	Tent	Anecdotal feedback	Specifications
1	Humanitarian Standard Family Tent (HCR)	Similar to Qatari tents, pole in the middle makes the space limited and uncomfortable to use the inner space, the roof holds water, structure stability issues, the feedback received is that somehow is preferred over the rest of the tents.	https://emergency.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Family%20Tent.pdf
2	Humanitarian Standard Geodesic tent	Highly preferred by the people, it is waterproof, better structure stability, better design to use the inner space, good height, good ventilation, easy to install, transport, limited warehousing space is needed. SC has been collecting feedback from partners on ground, a report was conducted by PARC, similar feedback came from four more partners.	https://www.alpinter.com/products/family-tents/blue-tent/
3	Tents provided by Qatar	The wall fabric is lighter than HCR tent, same feedback as Family tent. Which people have been rejecting it asking for Geodesic tent instead.	Similar to Family Tent (1), wall weight (GSM) is lesser.
4	Tents provided by Egypt	The fabric tears easily as sewing quality is poor. The fabric is not waterproof. Other issues include small windows, weak structure, no flooring, the roof collects water due to the design of the tent, and no mesh for openings.	Not known , the source is from partners feedback on ground and media observation.
5	Tents provided by Saudi Arabia	Feedback from partners: non-waterproof light fabric, weak structure,	Not available. See video here and images on next slide
6	Tents donated by China	Observation over social media and feedback from a distributing partner: Very light, windows can be opened from outside, 3*3M, non-waterproof tent, no mesh, no layers.	No specs available, See video
7	Tents from UAE	Similar to the HCR tent.	No specs available.

PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF TENTS IN GAZA



A telegram and Whatsapp group called Gaza Aid with 33K followers launched anonymous poll for different tents in Gaza, 9,021 people voted for Geodesic being the highest quality tent

Poll done on comparison of tents in Gaza.

URGENT Actions to Improve OR Replace Tents

Tent	Urgent Action	Required materials	Challenges
Humanitarian Standard Family Tent UAE Family Tent Tents provided by Qatari	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If framing is not structurally stable: replace tent • If roof and walling is not waterproof (deteriorated): provide at least 3 to 4 tarpaulins (for walls, roof, and floor) • Raise floor of tent with diverse shelter material options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tent or tarpaulins depending on action • Sandbags, gravel, cement, wooden pallets and tarpaulin • Rope. 	<p>Need large-scale access to tents and tarps</p> <p>No access to flooring materials</p> <p>Need large-scale access of timber/pallets</p>
Humanitarian Standard Geodesic tent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is waterproof, but in case the fabric is damaged, 2 tarpaulin can be used to cover the tent, especially if the outer layer is not provided. And if the damage is limited tapes can be used to fix the fabric. • Raise floor of tent with diverse shelter material options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tarpaulin. • Tape. • Sandbags, gravel, cement, wooden pallets and tarpaulin 	<p>Need large-scale access to tents and tarps</p> <p>Need large-scale access to timber/pallets</p>

URGENT Actions to Improve OR Replace Tents

Tent	Urgent Action	Required materials	Challenges
Tents provided by Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Based on observations in Gaza, tent quality is poor and will likely need to be replacedAs an urgent action, until tents are replaced, complement the distributions with 4 tarpaulins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tents or ESK (emergency shelter kit including timber, tools, and sealing off kit)	Need large-scale access of tents Access challenges for ESK
Tents provided by Saudi Arabia			
Tents from Chinese Market			

**The shelter cluster has not received official specifications for the non-humanitarian tents; (“non-humanitarian tents” refers to tents that were not procured, verified, or distributed through humanitarian partners, and therefore do not meet established humanitarian specifications or minimum standards (e.g. Shelter Cluster minimum technical requirements). Humanitarian tents [specification are available here for your information](#)). Only feedback from partners on the ground, community feedback and observations from social media are available. It has been noted that tents with the same name show discrepancies in specifications and performance sometimes, which is difficult to track the specification. Reports indicate that the structure of some tents cannot support the additional weight of tarpaulin sheets. It is recommended that shelter partners assess the structural integrity of these tents and explore alternative solutions for installing additional tarpaulin sheets without placing the load directly on the tent structure.*

URGENT Actions to Improve OR Replace Tents

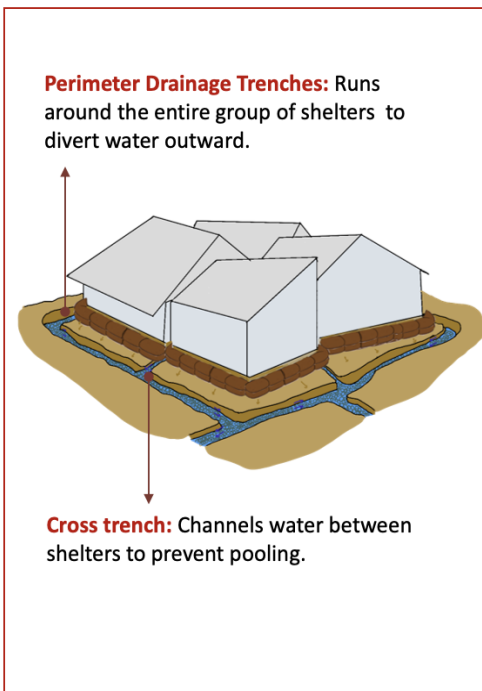
Element	Urgent Action	Required materials	Challenges
*Structure/ frame	Providing framing materials such as timber to strengthen or replace shelter framing The framing materials need to be sufficiently embedded in the ground.	Framing kits (timber) and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited availability in local market; No access to timber and tools into Gaza
*Floor	Raising shelter floor Adding a damp proof layer	Sandbags, gravel, cement, wooden pallets and tarpaulin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No access to flooring materials Need large-scale access of timber/pallets
Walls	Adding additional waterproof layers for sub-standard walls	Tarpaulin and plastic sheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need large-scale access to tarpaulins and plastic sheets
*Roof	Messaging on having sloped roofs (several makeshift shelters have flat roofs), provision of tarpaulins to cover roofs	Timber required for sloped roofs, tools, tarpaulin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No access to timber and tools into Gaza

URGENT Actions to Improve OR Replace Tents

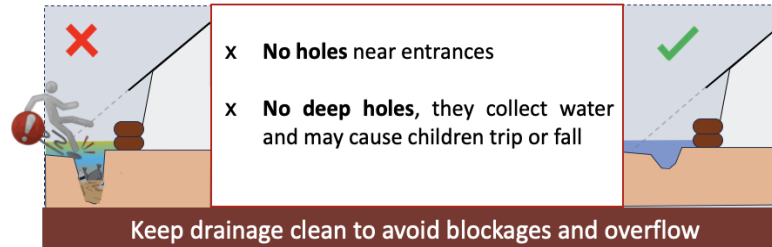
Element	Urgent Action	Required materials	Challenges
Household level site improvements (in coordination with SMC)	Digging of drains around shelter Adding sandbags around shelter periphery	Sandbags, gravel, cement, tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No access to flooring materials

Whether You Can Raise the Shelter or Not: Always Dig Drainage Channels to Prevent Water Buildup

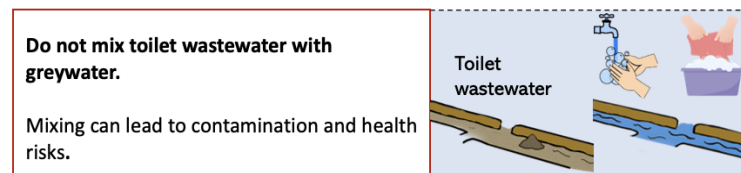
❑ Dig Drainage Around the shelters



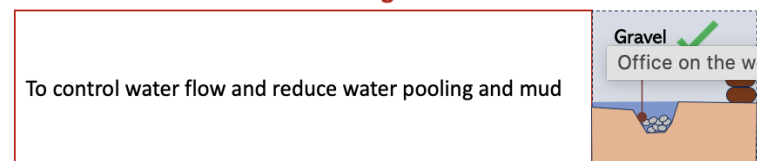
❑ Avoid Deep Digging Around Shelters



❑ Avoid Contamination Of Grey Water With Wastewater



❑ Add Gravel Inside The Drainage Trench



To mitigate flood risks requires urgent action not only inside the shelter, but also around the shelter.

Site improvements fall under Site Management Cluster, while it is recommended that Shelter Cluster partners support households in digging of drains around the shelter and securing the shelter from water influx through sandbags around the shelter periphery.

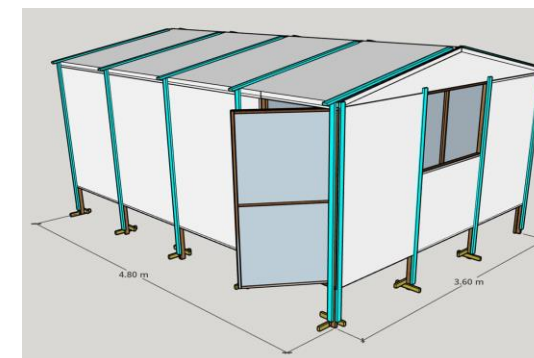
However, the prerequisite remains access to tools and sandbags for site improvements.

Recommendations for Emergency Shelters: ESK

Emergency Shelter Kits are designed as versatile kits to enable households to install emergency shelters based on their needs and preferences, and enabling incremental approaches to improve their shelters, until transitional and durable solutions are possible.



Anecdotal findings indicate this assistance is preferred to tents, mainly due to flexibility, structural stability, and internal height. Below are examples of ESK pilots carried out by SC partners. ESK access remains an issue, with no clarity on access of timber and tools.



Source: CRS

FROM EMERGENCY TO TRANSITIONAL STAND-ALONE SHELTERS



Emergency



Upgraded / strengthened ESK



Temporary



Longer term

Emergency

Transitional

TRANSITIONAL AND DURABLE

"MENU OF OPTIONS"

REPAIRS

Conditions or enablers

- Building is structurally sound
- EO clearance and debris clearance/asbestos removal if any
- HLP due diligence carried out
- Availability of shelter materials for repairs

Repair of non-structurally damaged housing stock

Repair of collective centers

Repurposing and repair of non-residential buildings

Transitional and Durable "Menu of Options"

STAND-ALONE TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS

Conditions or enablers

- EO clearance and debris clearance/asbestos removal if any
- HLP due diligence carried out
- Availability of land
- Availability of shelter materials

Prefabricated
Shelters

Contractor-led
transitional shelters
with timber/steel/ on
sites and scattered
locations

.....

Note* RHUs not included here as they are not transitional shelters, but improved emergency shelters.

NEED FOR TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS



Transitional Shelters can be built with diverse designs and materials.

Below is a timber Construction option, carried out by CRS post the 2014 escalation in Gaza.

The programming considered:

- On-Site and Off-Site construction options
- No specialist mechanical handling
- Incremental options
- Two-storey options

