



DRC DANISH
REFUGEE
COUNCIL

GAZA

ONE RESPONSE, SHARED IMPACT

**INTEGRATING EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE RISK
EDUCATION IN SITE MANAGEMENT**



OVERVIEW

In a context of widespread Explosive Ordnance contamination and displacement in Gaza, DRC combines life-saving awareness with essential site management services to protect and empower displaced communities. This integrated, locally driven approach enhances safety and maximises resources in an operationally restrictive context.

CONTEXT

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza presents an urgent and complex challenge, where widespread displacement and Explosive Ordnance (EO) contamination are deeply intertwined. Ongoing hostilities and the remnants of previous conflicts have left entire neighbourhoods littered with EO posing severe threats to civilians—particularly those who have been repeatedly uprooted.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza poses a critical challenge for Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) due to widespread EO contamination resulting from both legacy conflicts and the ongoing hostilities since October 2023. Recent contamination includes Unexploded Ordnance (UXO), abandoned munitions, air-dropped bombs buried underground, and likely booby traps or Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in areas yet to be fully accessed. The data collected in the centralised UNMAS database already confirms 80 EO incidents since October 2023, resulting in 211 casualties (184 injured and 27 killed). Verified EO victim reports show men and boys account for most victims. Children represent nearly half of all victims, underscoring the particular vulnerability of boys in the Gaza context. Findings from a [DRC study](#) illustrate the compounded risk in Gaza:

99% have witnessed explosive weapons use

95% know someone killed or injured by them

70% have returned to areas of active fighting

85% EO-injured individuals received no emergency medical aid

97% had no access to mental health support

People have been displaced an average of six times since the escalation, and over half reported searching through rubble for basic items—despite the risk of encountering EO.

“My family and I were profoundly impacted by Explosive Ordnance. Tragically, I lost my father, mother, and brother while they were trying to escape the bombing. Overwhelmed by fear, they made the fatal mistake of heading towards the bombing in the Nuseirat market, resulting in their car being directly hit.”

Farah, Deir Al Balah

The displacement crisis in Gaza has reached unprecedented levels, with over 90% of the population displaced since October 2023. According to [DRC assessment](#), families have been uprooted an average of six times, with some reporting up to 19 times, often with little to no warning, leading to perilous journeys in search of safety that remains elusive within Gaza. This relentless cycle of forced displacement has resulted in overcrowded conditions, resource scarcity, and a complete lack of privacy in displacement sites, which are emerging as new drivers of further displacement. The situation is compounded by the systematic deprivation of essential services and continued blockade.

This pattern of repeated movement clearly links displacement with heightened exposure to explosive threats. As people return to destroyed or unstable areas out of necessity, they face an increased risk of injury or death from EO, often without access to life-saving medical or psychosocial support. These realities demand an urgent, coordinated response that couples HMA with community-based site management. As humanitarian actors have limited resources, it is critical that integrated programming is prioritised and coordinated interventions can reach communities effectively.

RESPONSE



Ard Al-agha site, Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, May 2025

Considering the widespread EO contamination and the heightened risks faced by displaced populations—many of whom return to damaged or unsafe areas out of sheer necessity—DRC applies a principled, community-led approach to Site management. Amid the ongoing crisis in Gaza, over 1.9 million people, have been forced into more than 900 makeshift sites.

DRC is operating in 37 displacement sites across South, Middle, and Northern Gaza to deliver life-saving site management support. Recognising that displacement not only increases exposure to EO but also limits access to basic services, DRC has shifted its approach from externally driven aid delivery to one that is rooted in local ownership. By establishing and training local site committees, DRC empowers displaced people to actively participate in planning, implementing, and monitoring the services that affect their daily lives.

This community-led model not only enhances the relevance and sustainability of the response but also ensures that displaced populations are at the centre of decisions that directly impact their safety, including awareness and mitigation of EO risks within and outside the sites they were forced to move to.

A key example of integrated response is the close collaboration between DRC's Site Management and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) teams. Recognising that certain groups—such as Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and Site Maintenance Committees—face elevated risks due to their daily movement through displacement sites, DRC mobilised these community structures to receive targeted, lifesaving EORE sessions. These committees play a vital role in maintaining site functionality and dignity: WASH Committees ensure the upkeep of water and sanitation infrastructure, while Site Maintenance Committees lead small-scale infrastructure repairs and improvements. Through coordinated planning, site management teams identify safe spaces for training, scheduled sessions around committee duties, and ensured inclusive participation.



EORE poster designed by DRC

In parallel, EORE content was adapted to the emergency context, using simplified messages and informational tools (such as leaflets and posters) to reinforce safety messaging and disseminate it at scale and speed. This effort was bolstered through partnerships with local actors and coordination with Protection and HMA coordination structures. By equipping community members with practical knowledge to avoid EO-related threats, the initiative not only saves lives but also empowers those already leading the response within their communities.

“We thank DRC and the EORE team for this awesome session. The local community felt it was something unique and extremely important. Since we work inside the site, preparing and maintaining tent areas, we often come across objects we previously ignored. Now we understand these could be dangerous.”

Mahmoud, Nour Al Houda

“We are extremely thankful that you cared enough to show us this kind of information. As the WASH committee, we work daily to collect garbage and clear debris from the site. We regularly deal with all sorts of waste and strange objects. The session was extremely helpful and eye-opening. Since then, we have applied different methods when handling waste, and now we are much more cautious and confident in identifying and reporting any suspicious items.”

Younin, Deir Al Balah

INTEGRATION GAINS

Integrating EORE with site management also significantly helps overcome key operational and contextual challenges faced in Gaza. Given the severe restrictions on fuel and limited availability of vehicles, combining these activities reduces the need for multiple trips and separate teams, optimising scarce resources. Additionally, the dangerous security environment, characterised by constant shelling and threats to movement, means fewer trips and coordinated efforts enhance the safety of staff and beneficiaries alike. This integration also fosters greater community engagement by involving local residents more directly in site management and EORE activities, building trust and encouraging active participation in safety efforts. By aligning EORE with site management, teams can efficiently deliver critical awareness raising services in a more streamlined, safer manner, adapting to Gaza's complex and volatile context while maximising impact despite logistical constraints.

“We really thank you for the session. We now have a better understanding of the signs of danger. We feel more confident, as we learned what to look for not only within the site but also outside. I truly believe sessions like these should reach every shelter.”

Ahmad, Nour Al Houda



Al Kareem Site, Gaza City, Gaza Strip June 2025



Ard Al Agha Site, Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip, May 2025



Al Mostafa Site, Deir Al Balah, Gaza Strip, June 2025

“We conducted emergency awareness sessions on the risks of Explosive Ordnance in Ard Al-Agha site. The sessions received positive and constructive cooperation from the site administration due to the support from the DRC Site Management team and had significant interest from participants. The sessions were productive and interactive, with participants showing high engagement and interest in the topic.”

Mahmoud, Deir Al Balah

As a result of these integrated efforts, DRC reached 1,178 internally displaced persons (IDPs) with EORE sessions across nine DRC displacement sites and shelters in Gaza in May and June 2025. Through targeted sessions, community members—particularly WASH and Site Maintenance Committees—received essential, context-specific safety information. Feedback from participants highlighted a noticeable increase in confidence and awareness regarding EO risks, both within displacement sites and in surrounding areas. Community leaders and site staff reported that the sessions filled a critical information gap—many had previously encountered potentially dangerous objects during routine site maintenance or while clearing debris but were unaware of the risks. Since attending the sessions, committee members have adopted more cautious procedures, such as modifying how they handle waste and debris, and proactively reporting suspicious items through dedicated HMA reporting mechanisms.

In addition to the coordination of critical humanitarian services, site management activities in Gaza have led to several important outcomes, particularly in the areas of WASH and site maintenance. One of the important site management services has been able to improve access to safe water through coordination with local service providers. This has ensured timely water trucking, especially in underserved and overcrowded areas. Safety and accessibility improvements have also been a critical component to improving lives of those living in displacement sites. Pathways within sites have been cleared and levelled to improve mobility for all, including persons with disabilities and the elderly. Site drainage and flood prevention, along with site grading and installation of basic drainage systems have mitigated the risk of flooding, especially during winter months. Community engagement and accountability community-based committees have been formed to identify and prioritise maintenance needs, ensuring locally driven responses. Feedback mechanisms have been implemented to allow displaced populations to report issues and influence decision-making. These outcomes reflect the multi-sectoral nature of site management, which not only addresses immediate needs but also builds resilience within displacement sites.




Nour Al Huda Site, Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip, May 2025



Al Istiqama Shelter, Deir Al Balah, Gaza Strip, May 2025



Water Authority shelter, Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip, May 2025



Overall, these outcomes demonstrate how embedding EORE into community-led site management structures not only reduces immediate risk but also fosters sustained, locally driven safety practices. This integration is critical in a context where people face repeated displacement and are often forced to navigate hazardous environments with minimal external support. By using site management as the entry point to communities, DRC is able to know the community needs, how to effectively deliver services and build the capacity of members of the community. In the context of Gaza, this relationship between understanding communities and supporting coordinated services is essential with limit resources but can also be scaled up rapidly in the future.

DRC's integration of EORE with site management operations exemplifies the critical importance of integrated programming in emergency settings. Through its principled, community-led approach to site management in Gaza, DRC not only addresses the urgent needs of the displaced people living in displacement sites but also strengthens local ownership and participation. This model aligns closely with DRC's broader HMA and protection objectives by empowering displaced communities to actively engage in managing their safety, particularly in mitigating the risks posed by widespread EO contamination. The success of this approach—overcoming logistical constraints, enhancing safety amid ongoing hostilities, and fostering community participation and trust—demonstrates its potential for scaling and replication. Moving forward, sustained support and funding are essential to maintain and expand such integrated, community-driven initiatives that save lives, build resilience, and uphold the dignity of displaced populations in Gaza.

DRC's response in Gaza is funded by donors including ECHO, Danida, and Danish foundations (including the Augustinus Foundation), as well as contributions from the Danish general public.

“The EORE sessions were good and beneficial for the attendees. They asked many questions and provided examples, which enriched the sessions with useful information and advice relevant to them. The new EORE informational leaflets were also helpful as we tested their quality and clarity and found them to be clear and understandable. The attendees were interested in receiving the leaflets to benefit from the information they contained.”

Lujain, Gaza City



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Fares Al Arab for Development (FAFD)

As the crisis in Gaza continues to evolve, DRC's response is made possible by the tireless efforts of local partners who are embedded within affected communities and lead with deep contextual understanding. One such partner is Fares Al Arab for Development (FAFD), a non-profit organisation established in 2006 and now playing a frontline role in site management across Gaza.

FAFD is a well-established Palestinian civil society organization focused on development, youth empowerment, education, and emergency relief. Since October 2023, FAFD has taken on a central role in the displacement response, leading site management in multiple locations across both North and South Gaza.

FAFD's field teams conduct regular site visits to assess needs, liaise with site focal points, and ensure that basic services reach displaced families. Their work includes facilitating the distribution of food parcels, hot meals, hygiene kits, clean water, diapers, milk, and emergency shelter materials such as tarpaulins and tents. They also organize psychosocial support activities and deliver awareness sessions on navigating high-risk environments.

At the heart of FAFD's approach is community engagement. They play a key role in forming and supporting community committees to improve participation, coordination and accountability at the site level. These structures help identify gaps, prioritise needs and ensure that displaced people, especially vulnerable groups, can influence decisions that affect their safety, dignity and well-being. FAFD's long-standing relationships with local communities and ability to operate flexibly in insecure environments have made them an indispensable actor in the response. Despite challenges including access restrictions, fuel shortages and ongoing bombardments, they continue to support displaced families with professionalism, consistency, and care.

FAFD is doing full Site Management in 10 sites, supporting around 1498 households or 7569 individuals. Their team is working on coordinating services, engaging with the community, and sharing information with residents. They helped organise the distribution of hot meals and WFP-supported bread, and they coordinated with partners to set up educational tents inside the site.

“We focus on regular site visits, needs assessments, and coordination with communities and service providers. We also work closely with community committees to strengthen information flow and improve services. We hope to see clean, dignified living environments for displaced families—and stronger community structures across Gaza”

***Abdel Karim, Data Management
Officer, FAFD***