PRCS Calls On the International Community for Immediate Action: A Human Catastrophe Unfolding as Winter Starts in Gaza Strip

As the first storm of the winter season hit the Gaza Strip on November 7th, 2026; 5 deaths have been reported for 2 women and 3 children due a steep sand cliff collapsed onto tents sheltering displaced people at a shelter center in Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip.

Over 3,000 inhabited, damaged buildings are now at risk of collapse due to ongoing rainfall and strong winds, forcing families to risk their lives for lack of alternative shelter.

Hundreds of thousands of displaced families faced it in worn-out tents that provide no protection from the cold or the heavy rain or in damaged buildings at risk of collapse. The storm flooded over 70,000 tents soaking the few remaining personal belongings, including blankets, mattresses and clothing of the already devasted displaced families. Flooded displacement sites have, unfortunately, been a recurring scene during the winter for the past four years.

As was officially reported, 94% of Gaza's 2.1 million people need immediate shelter and basic household assistance; where more than 4 out of 5 families face critical or catastrophic living conditions in their current shelters which lack fuel, energy and essential household items.

Every year for the past four years, warnings about the dangers of cold, flooding, and Public Health crises were sounded; however, the occupying power have kept blocking durable shelter supplies, such as temporary housing units and home repair materials, and have tightened restrictions on other items.

After more than One year of the ceasefire was announced, neither reconstruction nor dignified shelter are taking place. This leaves about 1.9 million displaced Palestinians exposed to another winter of hardship. For example, PRCS has only received 1618 of tents since the start of 2026 which does not meet the immense needs of displaced families. Although key to help ensure basic minimum shelter assistance, tents emergency structures, tents offer limited protection from heavy rain, flooding, or cold, and rapidly deteriorate under prolonged use.

The winter danger does not end with heavy rain. In Gaza's overcrowded displacement sites, floodwater creates breeding grounds for mosquitoes, damp tents fuel mold growth, and contaminated water increases the risk of waterborne diarrhea and respiratory illnesses. With a weakened health system and few supplies, Gaza cannot withstand further disease outbreaks.

Urgent action on clean water, sanitation and shelter is needed now; yet humanitarian organizations including PRCS faces a severe shortage of essential relief supplies that impacts our humanitarian response. Tons of aid items are lined up in the West Bank, Jordan and Egypt, waiting to enter in order to strengthen and scale up the humanitarian response.

This is not a natural disaster but rather a man-made one; that was predicted and warned from for months. The delay in starting the efforts of reconstruction, and provision of dignified shelters and infrastructures will continue to derive human suffering at every cost.

Under international humanitarian law, the occupying power must ensure, to the fullest extent of the means available to it, that the civilian population has access to food and medical supplies and must facilitate relief schemes where the population is inadequately supplied. The ongoing deprivation of basic necessities constitutes a severe failure to meet these obligations, and Israeli authorities must face full accountability for all civilian deaths resulting from these policies.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) calls on all member states and humanitarian agencies to exert concrete pressure on the Occupying Power in order to:

- Act immediately to address the humanitarian needs of the affected population in accordance with principled humanitarian action and International Humanitarian Law,

- Open, immediately and unconditionally, all border crossings into Gaza for aid entry; and allow the immediate and unimpeded entry of essential durable shelter supplies, tarps, insulation materials, temporary housing units, and home-repair materials as well as water drainage equipment and heavy machinery,

- lift restrictions on items essential for the humanitarian response and recovery, including spare parts, generator oil and fuel,

- expand the overall amount of humanitarian aid entering to Gaza to be commensurate with the needs of the people

- ensure safe and sustained humanitarian access for all humanitarian organizations.

The international community bears a responsibility for the continued suffering of the Palestinian people, and for its failure to exert effective and meaningful pressure on the occupying authorities to meet their obligations toward the people living under occupation.

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