

Revision of the policy on tents distribution

I. Background:

On 26 March 2015, coalition forces began launch of an airstrikes against Al-Houthis and former President Ali Abdullah Salih military forces installations to halt their advance across the country. Since then, 20 out of the country 22 governorates were affected by airstrikes or armed conflicts. The current escalation in violence adds further strain on poor services and weak infrastructure and exacerbates the already precarious humanitarian situation. Recent violence has also had an impact on civilian infrastructure, with homes, hospitals, education, local markets and essential infrastructure in several locations damaged or destroyed. Over one million people have been internally displaced, in addition to the some 330,000 IDPs who were already in a protracted internal displacement situation.

Inter-agency assessments indicated shelter as a critical and priority need among newly internally displaced persons in urban and rural areas. One of the most common types of emergency shelters used in Yemen is tents.

II. Current situation:

Currently, the situation in Yemen has changed dramatically with the entire of the country affected by the civil war particularly in the south unlike in the past where the magnitude of the conflict in Yemen was limited to certain Governorates.

IDP households have sought shelter with relatives and friends, although this traditional hospitality is becoming exhausted and stretched, as almost every household has been affected by the overall economic and security crisis. Others with financial means have rented houses in safer areas. However, the availability of houses for rent is limited and becoming increasingly costly. Due to high demand and inadequate housing units for rental, prices of flats rentals have almost tripled in some cities making vulnerable families unable to find affordable and safe accommodation. As their financial resources diminish, these families are becoming more vulnerable and are forced to move from rented accommodation to seek shelter in unfinished or partially destroyed infrastructure. This situation has exhausted savings of the Yemeni population in general and IDPs in particular making it extremely difficult to meet their day-to-day expenses.

In some instances, the public buildings which are currently accommodating IDPs are hosting families beyond the capacity. The movement of thousands of families from Sa'ada to Amran and with less degree from Sana'a has further stretched the capacity of the town to host additional families. Hundreds of households have taken shelter in public buildings such as schools, hospitals, and in Aden also in hotels. Yet, there are many IDPs especially in less developed and rural areas remain without such options and as a result those families are living in undignified conditions under trees, caves and unconstructed buildings exposing women, girls, boys and old persons to protection risks. The reports from Sa'ada, Hajjah, AlHudaydah, Sana'a and other areas indicate that several families have had to resort to sewage pipes in Sana'a¹, caves in Marib and under trees or in the open as in the case of AlHudaydah, Hajjah, Abyan and other affected governorates having IDPs living in similar conditions.

In addition, the rainy season has started in some locations imposing additional hardships and presenting new challenges e.g. the floods in Amran and AlJawf.

¹ INTERSOS MIRA Assessment Report –Sana'a, 28 April.

III. Cluster Policy

Shelter/NFIs were identified as one of the major priority needs in the current situation². Currently, the Shelter/CCCM/NFI Cluster maintains its position not to distribute tents to avoid the creation of camps or camp-like settlements. This position was abided in the Projects Technical Review Board meeting for the Flash Appeal. However, the current situation i.e., the deteriorating situation and growing requests by cluster members, necessitates the temporary revision of this policy to enable partners to distribute tents to families most in need on a case-by-case basis.

The National Shelter/CCCM/NFI Cluster meeting in Sana'a, sub-national Shelter Cluster meeting in AlHudaydah and AHCT meeting in AlHudaydah have recommended the revision of this policy, and brought it to the attention of the Cluster Coordinator in Amman. The Cluster Coordinator raised the cluster recommendations to the ICCM which have approved the revised policy.

IV. Shelter/CCCM/NFIs position on Distribution of Tents

In its meetings held in Sana'a and Amman on 10 and 12 May respectively, the Cluster has decided to revise current position on the distribution of tents and therefore, allowing partners to provide tents to those most in need of them for implementation during the emergency stage of the Yemen crisis.

The distribution of tents will address urgent needs: decrease the congestion of families in overcrowded and inadequate shelters; help improve shelter and living condition of IDPs and conflict affected families living in undignified conditions such as under trees, caves, damaged buildings and unsafe areas, as well as having a mitigating effect on risks of GBV incidents. The provision of tents, as appropriate, will also reinforce the absorption capacity of host communities.

V. Recommended Way Forward

- Cluster members to review the 2015 Standard Households Items, Emergency Shelter kit and Shelter Rehabilitation Tools for IDPs and Returnees document for specifications on emergency shelter kit including tents.
- Partners to review the cluster standard tent specifications (in the Shelter Guidelines).
- Needs assessment should be completed clearly define the need of the assessed IDPs families for tents on case by case basis.
- Partners should ensure that the tents are distributed equally and fairly for women and men headed-households.
- When recommending for distribution of tents, partners should take into consideration the nature and cultural norms of people living in the area and the acceptance of tents for shelter purposes.
- Partners to coordinate with landlords/local authorities to facilitate location on tents installation if the IDPs families do not own a land and ensure that the tents are placed in safe area to the distinct possible.
- The distribution of tents could be considered for the IDPs families along the following criteria:
 - Based on the capacity of the area, intent of the IDPs and hosting family.
 - Families accommodated in overcrowded private or public infrastructure.
 - Families still staying in their destroyed property.
 - Families staying in caves and sewage pipes with no other options.
 - Families staying in a land owned by them – authorities to confirm the ownership.
 - Families staying in the open or under trees provided that consent of the owner of the land is obtained.

² Inter-Agency MIRA Assessments undertaken in Al Dhale'e, Abyan, Hajjah indicated shelter as one of the top three priorities.
Shelter/NFI/CCCM Cluster www.sheltercluster.org