

ETC Situation Report #05

Syria Crisis

Reporting period 05/04/2013 to 08/05/2013

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Summary:

- An IASC System-Wide Emergency was activated on 15/01/13. Humanitarian organizations are scaling up operations in response to the evolving crisis. Only the ETC and Logistics Cluster have been activated in Syria to date.
- The situation in Syria remains extremely volatile and subject to rapid change.
- The UN has reduced staff within Syria for security reasons and most agencies are operating from hotels. Local staff are working from home.
- The ETC is attempting to provide common telecommunications services within Syria, however lack of access and restrictions on movement have complicated these efforts and have led to a number of missions being cancelled.

Cluster Responsibilities:

- The ETC in Syria is providing emergency telecommunications support to humanitarian organizations on the ground including VHF/HF radio programming and installation.
- Responsibility for the provision of ETC/Common ICT services across the region is shared between WFP (Syria, Turkey and Iraq) and UNHCR (Lebanon and Jordan).
 - WFP is providing support to UNHCR telecommunications service provision if and when required.
 - WFP coordinates regional activities in close collaboration with UNHCR and other partners.

Achievements:

- Security telecommunications coverage has been substantially expanded and enhanced in the north and east of Lebanon through upgrades of installations and linking of repeaters to allow for direct communication with radio rooms in Beirut and Tripoli.
- An ICT assessment mission was deployed to Qamishli in preparation for the relocation of the WFP office. The office is due to be fully equipped by the end of May.
- Coordination of operations from Damascus and Amman. ETC Working Groups in both locations are meeting regularly.

- Coordination of licensing and importation of equipment on behalf of the humanitarian community in Syria.
- Additional ETC staff are ready to be deployed to common operational areas once these locations have been confirmed and critical equipment has been approved for importation.
- Mapping of the security communications structure across the region is ongoing.
- Key IT and telecoms equipment has been prepositioned in Beirut and Dubai to allow for immediate expansion of operations when necessary.
- A regional ETC Contact list is being kept up to date and can be requested by sending an email to Syria.ETC@wfp.org. ETC members are encouraged to share additional contact details.
- Oscar Caleman joined the ICT team in Amman as acting Regional ETC Coordinator on 14/04/13.

Challenges and Gaps:

- Lack of access remains the biggest challenge for the ETC in Syria and affects the entire operation. Movement inside Syria is severely limited due to the deteriorating security situation and restrictions.
- Procuring, licensing and importing equipment into Syria. The Syrian authorities have approved the importation of some radio equipment, however repeaters, VSATs and BGANs are not permitted.
 - Humanitarian organizations on the ground are subject to equipment quotas.
- Lack of VSAT terminals in field offices and no backup connectivity.
- Limited VHF and mobile coverage across the country and a lack of operational repeaters in the field i.e. Aleppo, Tartus, Qamishli and Homs.
 - DSL and 3G internet services are working, but there is minimal coverage in remote areas.
- Frequent power cuts within Damascus.
- Time consuming visa approval process means delays are experienced moving staff into Syria.

Planned Activities:

- Efforts are ongoing to import telecommunications equipment into Damascus.
- Delivery of radio training in Amman and Beirut.
- Relocation of the VSAT terminal currently based in the WFP office in Damascus to the Four Seasons hotel. Government authorisation is pending.
- The SHARP is being revised.
- Once access is granted, the ETC will establish COMCENs and provide data connectivity in two additional humanitarian hubs planned for Tartus and Homs.

Meetings:

The next Global ETC teleconference on Syria will be held on Thursday 16 May 2013 at:

0900 New York
1300 UTC

1500 Rome/Geneva
1600 Damascus
1600 Amman
1700 Dubai

Regular updates will continue to be shared through SitReps available on the ICT Emergency website.

The next ETC Working Group meeting in Amman will be held on 21/05/13.

ICT Emergency website:

All information related to the ETC response in Syria, including meeting minutes and contact lists, can be found on the ICT Emergency website:

<http://ictemergency.wfp.org/web/ictepr/countries/syria>

Syria ETC e-mail address: Syria.ETC@wfp.org

Principal ETC Contacts:

AGENCY	NAME	TITLE	LOCATION	CONTACT DETAILS	ETA	ETD
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WFP	Rob Buurveld		Beirut	Rob.buurveld@wfp.org		

For a full contact list, please contact: Syria.ETC@wfp.org

Status Matrix:

LOCATION	AGENCY	REPEATER	DATA	VOICE	RADIO ROOM	ICT SUPPORT STAFF	SHARED SERVICES
Damascus	DSS	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Radio Room
	WFP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	VHF repeater only
	UNDP	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Helpdesk to UNDSS
	UNICEF	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
	WHO	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes IT	No
	UNFPA	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Generator with OCHA
	OCHA	No			No	Yes	Generator with UNFPA

	UNHCR	Yes, one installed and licensed One not installed and not licensed	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
	FAO	No	Yes		No	Yes	No
	UNRWA	No, one in stock but not licensed	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No

Acronyms:

3G	Third Generation of Mobile Telecommunications Technology
BGAN	Broadband Global Area Network
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
COMCEN	Communications Centre
DSL	Digital Subscriber Line
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HF	High Frequency
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LAN	Local Area Network
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PO	Purchase Order
SHARP	Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (CAP)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal (Satellite ground station)
WFP	UN World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization