

Syria Crisis

ETC Situation Report #21

Reporting period 16/01/15 to 22/03/15

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Highlights

- Equipment has been installed in the new inter-agency radio room at the UN hub in Qamishli.
- A meeting was held with Syrian MOFA in Damascus to discuss importation of telecommunications equipment to Syria to support the humanitarian community.

Cluster Responsibilities

- The ETC in Syria is providing emergency telecommunications support to humanitarian organizations in operational areas within Syria and surrounding countries.
- Responsibility for the provision of ETC services (voice, internet, radio network and other services) across the region is shared between WFP and UNHCR.
 - WFP is providing support to other UN agencies for common service provision as required.
 - WFP coordinates regional activities in collaboration with partners.

Achievements

SYRIA

- ETC procured and deployed items at the new inter-agency radio room at the UN hub in Qamishli in February. Radio operators are now working from the new radio room. The upgrade took place in collaboration with UNDSS. Deployment of additional telecoms equipment is pending importation approval by the Syrian MOFA.
- ETC has commenced local procurement of items to upgrade the inter-agency radio room in Aleppo. The infrastructure will replace old and ailing equipment including furniture, emergency power supply, computer, printer and other items. The deployment is expected to take place in April.
- The importation of telecoms equipment to support the humanitarian community in Syria is still awaiting MOFA approval. A meeting was held with Syrian MOFA in March to discuss the request and additional information was supplied by ETC.



TURKEY

- The security telecommunications radio expansion project in south-eastern Turkey was officially endorsed by the UN Resident Coordinator for the Republic of Turkey in February. The project, managed and funded by ETC, will expand radio services and coverage in the cities of Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Kilis and Hatay. Approval from the Turkish MOFA is pending to renew the UN radio frequency licenses before the new services can be activated.

LEBANON

- UNDSS and UNIFIL have developed a new code plug to allow non-UNIFIL digital radios (handheld and base radios) to utilise the UNIFIL digital radio network in SLR. Responsibility to programme radios that will be used in SLR will be shared between UNDSS and UNIFIL.
- ETC will provide base radios to UNDSS in response to a request from the agency.

JORDAN

- UNHCR are revising the call-signs of handheld radios allocated to humanitarian staff working in Zaatari and Azraq camps. The call-signs are being revised in line with the recently updated Jordan call-sign allocation template. UNHCR will run a project to re-programme 200+ radios to reflect the new call-signs.
- UNDSS has requested additional information after reviewing the local radio working group recommendation to upgrade VHF network upgrade in Amman. The additional information requested will be used to present the recommendation to the SMT.

Challenges and Gaps

- The volatile security situation impacts the assessment and installation of telecommunications capability for the humanitarian community in key areas within Syria.
- The lengthy processing times by government authorities to respond to requests to import critical telecommunications equipment hampers the ability of the Cluster to perform upgrades at operational areas inside Syria.

Planned Activities

SYRIA

- The option of relocating the CH3 repeater to the Four Seasons Hotel in Damascus is being investigated. The relocation is expected to improve radio coverage and maintenance access to the repeater equipment.
- ETC will deploy new equipment at the inter-agency radio room in Aleppo in April.



- ETC is coordinating with the Logistics Cluster on the importation of equipment for use at operational locations in Syria. Feedback from Syrian MOFA is pending following a meeting held with the Ministry in February.

LEBANON

- Agencies can now contact UNDSS or UNIFIL in Lebanon for radio programming assistance if they have Motorola digital radios that they would like to use on UNIFIL's VHF radio network in SLR.

JORDAN

- An upgrade of UNHCR's VHF radio network to digital infrastructure is planned at five locations in Jordan, including Zaatari and Azraq camps. The arrival of equipment in-country is pending.

TURKEY

- The expansion of radio services and coverage in the cities of Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Kilis and Hatay in south-eastern Turkey will proceed as soon as clearance from Turkish MOFA is received. Equipment has already been procured by ETC for the project and partners have been engaged for installation. The expanded radio coverage will improve safety and security for humanitarian staff working in the mentioned locations.



Meetings

Global ETC Teleconference

The next Global ETC teleconference will be held on Tuesday 24 March 2015 at:

0900 New York
1400 UTC
1500 Rome / Geneva / Bangui
1600 Damascus / Amman
1700 Erbil / Juba
1800 Dubai

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website: www.ETCluster.org

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: Syria.ETC@wfp.org

Acronyms

ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HF	High Frequency
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NLR	North of Litani River
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SHARP	Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan
SLR	South of Litani River
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
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
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
UTC	Universal Coordinated Time
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization



Key ETC Contacts

The list below shows the key people involved in providing and supporting inter-agency ICT services in the Syria operation:

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