

Syria Crisis

ETC Situation Report #25

Reporting period 31/07/15 to 31/08/15

Since the onset of the emergency in Syria in 2011, humanitarian operations have been led from several hubs, including the country operation within Syria, and operations in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. In September 2014, the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach was adopted to combine these separate operations into a single framework to maximize efficiency, reduce duplication and ensure greater accountability, effectiveness and reach of humanitarian programming. Therefore, this Syria ETC situation report also covers Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

Highlights

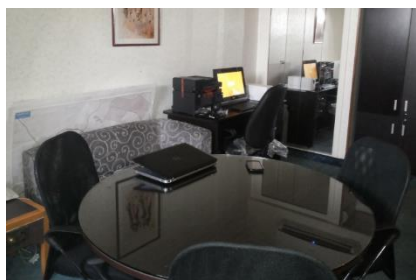
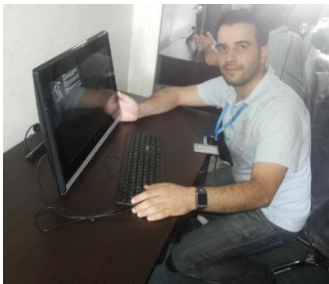
- The ETC installed a shared 10MB internet connection for inter-agency use at the UN hub in Qamishli.
- The ETC has installed new equipment in the inter-agency radio room at the UN hub in Aleppo.
- Approval is still pending from Syria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to import telecommunications equipment to support the humanitarian community in Syria.

Response

- 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 the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).
 - WFP is providing support to other UN agencies for common services provision as required.
 - WFP coordinates regional activities in collaboration with partners.

SYRIA

- All items locally procured by the ETC have been delivered to the UN hub in Aleppo. The inter-agency radio room has now been upgraded with new equipment including furniture, emergency power supply, computer, printer and other items. The equipment has been handed over to the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS).



Upgrading the radio room at the UN hub in Aleppo, Syria, with equipment supplied by the ETC. Source: Mahmoud Badenjki, WFP.

- The upgrade to the wireless network and telephone system at the hub in Aleppo is in progress. The ETC has completed the first phase of the upgrade which involved installing high speed cabling for all agencies. Access points and network switches have been configured and are ready to be installed to upgrade the network. The next steps will involve the installation of the new PBX telephony system.
- The ETC completed the installation of a shared 10MB internet service for inter-agency use at the Qamishli UN hub. The activity was conducted in coordination with the Qamishli hub coordinator.
- The ETC is preparing a tender to upgrade the voice and data cabling and network infrastructure at the Qamishli hub in preparation for the deployment of a PBX telephone system.
- A WFP mission to Homs moved the VHF base radio from level 4 to level 3 of the hub building due to the relocation of the inter-agency radio room managed by UNDSS. The base radio is now operational in its new location.
- Radio programming is an ongoing service provided by the Cluster. Requests for programming assistance can be sent to syria.etc@wfp.org.
- The importation of telecoms equipment into Syria to support the humanitarian community is still awaiting approval from Syria's MOFA. The ETC has been waiting for this approval for more than a year and the lack of telecommunications equipment continues to be a major challenge, limiting the ability of the Cluster to expand and maintain services such as radio coverage.

TURKEY

- Government approval is still pending to install the final repeater in Sanliurfa. The new repeater in Sanliurfa will operate on Channel 1. WFP and UNDSS are working together on the project. To date, the ETC radio network expansion project in south-eastern Turkey has installed three UHF radio repeaters in Gaziantep, Hatay and Kilis.
- The ETC is assisting UN agencies with ad hoc requests for radio programming.



Assessing telecoms and IT connectivity at the UN hub in Gaziantep, Turkey. Source: Salma Farouque, WFP.

JORDAN

- Planning is ongoing for the infrastructure upgrade of UNHCR's radio network in Jordan. The project includes the upgrade of radio infrastructure in Azraq and **Zaatari** camps.



LEBANON

- Radio programming assistance in Lebanon is available from UNDSS and United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Planned Response

SYRIA

- Approvals are pending before deploying a VSAT at the UN hub in Aleppo. WFP and UNICEF have been collaborating on the activity.
- Upon the conclusion of the tender process, the ETC will be upgrading the voice and data cabling and network infrastructure at the UN hub in Qamishli in preparation for the deployment of a PBX telephone system.

LEBANON

- Agencies can 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 the South of Litani River (SLR) region of Lebanon.
- The ETC has pre-positioned telecommunications equipment in Beirut so that it can be sent into Syria should approval be granted by Syria's MOFA.

Challenges

- The lengthy processing times by government authorities to respond to requests to import critical telecommunications equipment is hampering the ability of the Cluster to perform upgrades at operational areas inside Syria.

Meetings

The next Joint Global ETC teleconference will be held on Wednesday 16 September 2015 at:

0800 New York
1200 UTC
1400 Rome / Geneva
1500 Damascus / Amman
1600 Dubai

Acronyms

CH	Channel
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
HF	High Frequency
IA	Inter-Agency
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information Technology



MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NLR	North of Litani River
SHARP	Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan
SLR	South of Litani River
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UTC	Universal Coordinated Time
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme
WoS	Whole of Syria



Key ETC Contacts

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

LOCATION	AGENCY	NAME	TITLE	EMAIL	MOBILE PHONE
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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

Background on the crisis:

Humanitarian needs in Syria have increased twelve-fold since the beginning of the crisis, with 12.2 million now in need of humanitarian assistance, including more than 5.6 million children. More than half of all Syrians have been forced to leave their homes, often multiple times, making Syria the largest displacement crisis in the world. An estimated 4.8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in hard-to-reach and besieged locations. Palestine refugees are particularly affected, with 560,000 in need of assistance.

In 2014, four out of every five Syrians were living in poverty, and almost two-thirds were living in extreme poverty. 9.8 million People are considered food insecure, including 6.8 million in high priority districts. Water availability has decreased to less than 50 per cent of its pre-crisis levels, and 11.6 million people are in urgent need of access to clean water and sanitation. More than half of Syria's hospitals have been destroyed or badly damaged and, it is estimated that only 43 per cent of hospitals are fully functional. An estimated 1,480 women give birth in dire conditions every day due to the weakening of the healthcare system. Outbreaks of communicable and vaccine-preventable diseases (including polio and measles) have increased. Roughly one-quarter of schools have been damaged, destroyed or are used as collective shelters or for purposes other than education. An estimated 1.2 million houses have been damaged or destroyed and more than 1.6 million people are in need of shelter. Due to multiple displacements, 9.9 million are in need of life saving and essential NFIs.