

## **Iraq**

### **Local ETC Working Group meeting #2**

**Date: 01/09/16 TIME: 08:00 UTC**

#### **Attendance**

Chair	Rami Shakra	Iraq
UNAMI	Abraham Misoi	Iraq
UNHCR	Hafedh Al Juboori	Iraq
UNICEF	Paulus That Fu	Iraq
WFP	Fawaz Nari	Iraq
	Lasse Axelsson	Sweden
	Michael Ngisiro	Iraq
WVI	Ashraf Hassan Ali	Iraq

Teleconference / Meeting started at 12:09 UTC

#### **Agenda**

- 1. ETC services update**
- 2. Zummar and Tikrit planning – Mosul operations**
- 3. Radio programming and training**
- 4. Update from partners**
- 5. AOB**

#### **Minutes**

##### **1. ETC services update**

- The ETC currently provides Internet connectivity using Ericsson Response equipment to the humanitarian community in 2x sites: Arbat camps and Domiz camp.

- The ETC is also more than halfway through its pilot Connectivity for Communities project in Domiz camp. The first phase involved providing Internet connectivity to the community in the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Youth Centre. Phase 2 will involve establishing an Internet cafe on UNHCR premises also in Domiz camp.
- Security telecommunications: both analogue and digital services are available in Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah.
  - In July, Lasse went to Sulaymaniyah where, with the approval and support of UNAMI, relocated the analogue and digital repeaters to the top of Zergwes mountain. Coverage has since improved significantly. Lasse then did similar activities in Dohuk to allow humanitarians to connect to analogue services.
  - The UN is considering moving all staff (except UNHCR) to a new hotel in Sulaymaniyah. In that case, UNDSS wants to relocate the radio Communications Centre (COMCEN) so the ETC will discuss this with UNAMI.

## **2. Zummar and Tikrit planning – Mosul Operations**

- The ETC carried out assessment missions in Zummar and Tikrit. The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) had held some Mosul operation meetings and identified four quadrants: North (towards Zummar), South (Tikrit/Baghdad), East (Kurdistan) and West (towards Syria). 2x common operational areas were identified: Zummar and Tikrit.
- Tikrit: Rami carried out an assessment mission to Tikrit in early August. The governor allows UN staff to only sleep in its compound and there is still no working place identified. However, WFP is pushing to set up a sub-office. Once a location has been identified, the ETC will set up VHF, digital and analogue services.
  - The ETC also plans to set up a remote radio room in Tikrit that will connect to the COMCENs in Baghdad, Erbil or Dohuk. Having radio operators based in Tikrit or Zummar is not feasible due to the security situation.
  - In terms of mobile coverage, the best operators are Asiacell, Zain and Korek Telecom. The best Internet Service Provider (ISP) is Earthlink.
  - As Tikrit provides sleeping space only (not working space), Rami will check with the governor to see if it can deploy its Internet services in the compound.
  - Thuraya satphones work in Tikrit but the ETC has ordered Iridium satphones as well as Thuraya doesn't work everywhere.
- Zummar: Michael carried out an assessment to Zummar on 10 August where he found only a few agencies operating: International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Samaritan's Purse and the Women and Health Alliance International (Waha). Currently, the agencies do daily operations in Zummar but sleep in Dohuk.
  - There is an issue with VHF communications in the area and the local GSM network is unreliable.
  - There are also challenges with the power with frequent power outages.
  - The ETC plans to set up a shared VHF services for analogue and digital for all agencies and is looking at agencies that can house the infrastructure. Discussions are ongoing with DRC and IOM. The ETC team in Dohuk will discuss this with International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) who are currently carrying out an assessment in Zummar.

- Korek Telecom and Zain work well but wasn't possible to connect to Asiacell.
- Michael tested Thuraya satphones and found they didn't work in Zummar.
- Internet companies are not present in Zummar but Michael has contacted some in Dohuk who said they can provide a microwave connection to Zummar but they need the exact GPS coordinates to confirm. BeTel is another option and promised coverage in Zummar as long as there is open space and no mountains.

### 3. Radio programing and training

- The code plug issue has been an issue for some time. A lengthy technical discussion took place about the different code plugs, index number and analogue and digital services. There are currently two code plugs available: one for UNAMI and one for agencies. UNAMI doesn't use analogue services which is why it has its own code plug.
- The ETC mandate is to provide both analogue and digital services as some agencies still use analogue.
- The ETC has successfully tested a code plug in Erbil with analogue and digital network on the road (using UNAMI repeaters) and when they arrived in Sulaymaniyah they switched zones and this worked well. This also works fine in Dohuk. In towns, it is still necessary to use digital but analogue may be used on the roads.
- It was noted that it may be necessary to hold a meeting to discuss the indexing of radios and staff. It was agreed that the ETC and UNAMI must sit with agencies in Kurdistan and decide how to programme code plugs for staff with index and staff without index.
- Lasse and Habib will start training radio operators and there is a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in place. There is also a need to coordinate providing training to staff, too, as not many people know that they need to change zones when they reach Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk. Lasse will work on drafting something to share with all partners. **ACTION: Lasse to share the updated code plug with Rami who can then share it with Hafedh.**

### 4. Update from partners

- UNHCR: no updates provided at this stage.
- WVI: there is a plan for ISPs to provide Internet connectivity for 3x camps. Michael can assist with sharing ISPs we already work with. Michael and Ashraf to meet in Dohuk.

### 5. AOB

- The ETC received a request from UNAMI about solar kits as the Balata connection keeps dropping. The ETC will hand over one of the kits to improve the connection for the Balata microwave link on the northern route.

Teleconference / Meeting ended at 12:58 UTC

**The next Local ETC Working Group meeting will be held on: TBC.**

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## Acronyms

DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
DMR	Digital Mobile Radio
FITTEST	Fast IT & Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
FLB	Forward Logistics Base
HF	High Frequency
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IT	Information Technology
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	UN Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
VHF	Very High Frequency
WAHA	Women and Health Alliance International
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to ETC Iraq operations can be found on the website: [www.ETCluster.org](http://www.ETCluster.org)

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: [Iraq.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:Iraq.ETC@wfp.org)

**Minutes:** Suzanne Fenton, WFP