# YEMEN – Conflict

## ETC Situation Report #17

## Reporting period 01/04/17 to 30/06/17

These ETC Situation Reports are issued every other month. The next report will be issued on or around 31/08/17.

## Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) completed a two-week mission to Aden to restore the Very High Frequency (VHF) security telecommunications system in Aden as the main repeater was down.

- The ETC developed a Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).



The ETC installing communications equipment in armoured vehicles for IOM in Aden.
*Photo: WFP/ Waseem Sultan*

## Situation Overview

Yemen is in the grip of a severe cholera epidemic of an unprecedented scale. In the first three weeks since 27 April, suspected cases reached over 35,000 while in the previous epidemic just over 25,000 cases were recorded in the first seven months. On 14 May, authorities in Sana'a, which has recorded the highest resurgence in cases, declared a state of emergency given the inability of the health system to cope with the magnitude of the crisis. The rapid spread of the disease in 20 out of the 23 governorates is a manifestation of the dire humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen where more than half of all health facilities no longer function due to conflict.

Humanitarian partners are sparing no efforts to deliver a coordinated response in affected areas across Yemen. The response is being implemented at the national, governorate and community level with coordination between the United Nations (UN), International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), local partners, relevant public institutions and local authorities

The ETC is consulting humanitarian partners on the ground to elaborate a plan of action to better support their activities in response to the cholera outbreak.

## Response

- The ETC is leading the development of the technical solution for the CFM, following the request from the Community Engagement Working Group led by OCHA. The CFM proposal was endorsed by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The CFM will be SMS-based and these SMS messages will be channeled to the responsible organization.

- The ETC continues to provide vital communications services in 5x sites across Yemen: Sana'a, Sa'ada, Al Hudaydah, Ibb and Aden.

- The ETC staffing plan for 2017 was approved by the World Food Programme (WFP) management, as lead of the Cluster. It comprises the deployment of 1x international staff in Aden, 1x international staff in Sana'a and the recruitment of 2-4 local staff to support the ETC operation.

- The ETC completed a two-week mission to Aden in May to restore the VHF security telecommunications system in Aden. This involved replacing and reprogramming the repeater was replaced and reprogrammed.

    o A number of VHF handhelds were also programmed for several UN agencies and VHF and satellite equipment was installed in six armoured vehicles for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and WFP.

    o Radio training was provided to local staff.

- In Sa'ada, Save the Children has been identified as a potential Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) to host an ETC back-up hub.

    o The only authorized satellite provider in the country was contacted by the ETC to deploy a satellite kit at the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) premises in Sa'ada.

- In Al Hudaydah, 1x local staff was recruited to provide support to users in at the common UN building.

## Planned Response

- The ETC plans to deploy a satellite connectivity solution in Sa'ada. The required equipment is under procurement process with the only authorised satellite services supplier in the country.

- The ETC is evaluating options on how to support the humanitarian community responding to the cholera outbreak in the country.

## Challenges

- Humanitarian workers face insecurity and movement restrictions. Access has been further restricted following the intensification of conflict.

- Importation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment, especially security telecommunications, in Yemen remains a major obstacle to the ETC operation in the country.

**Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)**
**www.ETCluster.org**

## Meetings

**Global ETC teleconference:**

Global ETC Joint teleconferences are held monthly. The next meeting is planned for 26 July at 12:00 UTC.

**All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ETC website: www.ETCluster.org.** For security reasons, most information is kept private, and logging in is required to access them.

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

## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| CFM | Common Feedback Mechanism |
| COMCEN | Communications Centre |
| DTF | Diplomatic Transit Facility |
| ETC | Emergency Telecommunications Cluster |
| HCT | Humanitarian Country Team |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organisation |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| IT | Information Technology |
| NGO | Non-Government Organisation |
| OCHA | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| SMS | Short Message Service |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDSS | UN Department of Safety and Security |
| UNICEF | UN Children's Fund |
| VHF | Very High Frequency |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

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**Background on the emergency:**

The ETC has been continuously present in Yemen since April 2015, supporting the humanitarian community with basic IT and telecommunications services. Operations are progressing amidst challenges of lack of equipment, lack of access to critical operational areas and restrictions of movement for staff. Internet hubs and security telecommunications are available in four locations, and plans are in place to deploy more services when conditions allow it.

The escalation of conflict in March 2015 is currently affecting all 22 governorates in Yemen. Restrictions on commercial imports are crippling the country. Civilians are bearing the brunt of the violence and humanitarian organizations estimate that 18 million people, almost 80% of the population, currently require some form of humanitarian assistance.  2.4 million Yemenis are estimated to be displaced.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is leading ETC activities, which include:

1. Establish, upgrade and maintain security telecommunications services

2. Provide shared internet connectivity services

3. Coordination and information-sharing.


Sources: Al Jazeera, OCHA

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# Shared ICT Services

| CITY | LEAD AGENCY | ETC SERVICES |
|---|---|---|
| Sana'a | WFP/UNDSS | • Coordination hub<br>• Customer support<br>• Radio user training<br>• Radio programming<br>• VHF radio coverage<br>• HF radio coverage<br>• 24/7 COMCEN<br>• Internet Hotspot in DTF<br>• Internet Hotspot in INGO |
| Al Hudaydah | WFP/UNDSS | • VHF Radio Coverage<br>• Radio user training<br>• 24/7 COMCEN<br>• Internet Hotspot at the common UN building (WHO premises) |
| Aden | WFP/UNDSS/UNHCR | • 24/7 COMCEN |
| Ibb | WFP/UNICEF | • COMCEN operating during office hours<br>• Satellite base station<br>• Internet Hotspot in UN hub (UNICEF premises)<br>• Internet Hotspot in INGO (ACTED premises) |
| Sa'ada | UNICEF/UNDSS | • VHF base radio<br>• VHF radio coverage<br>• Satellite phone |

# ETC Yemen Focal Points

| TITLE | AGENCY | NAME | EMAIL | MOBILE PHONE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ETC Coordinator | WFP | Pastor Lovo | Yemen.ETC@wfp.org | +967 737789103 |
| Information Management Officer (Remote, from United Arab Emirates) | WFP | Erika Iglesias | erika.iglesias@wfp.org | +971 529272014 |