Central African Republic - Conflict

ETC Situation Report #16

Reporting period 02/06/2017 to 31/07/2017

These Situation Reports will now be distributed every two months. The next report will be issued on or around 30/09/17.

Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) continues to provide vital security telecommunications and Internet connectivity services to the humanitarian community in 8x operational areas across Central African Republic (C.A.R.).

- The ETC continues to plan for the transition of long-term shared Information and Communications Technology (ICT) services from the end of June this year.

- The ETC is preparing equipment for deployment in two new hotspots where violence is escalating in the southwest of the country: Bria and Bangassou once the security situation allows.

The ETC at work in Bangui.

Photo credit: ETC CAR

Situation Overview

The recent escalation of violence in C.A.R. has brought the country towards the brink of a new, large-scale humanitarian crisis. Due to this resurgence of violence in 2017, humanitarian needs and serious protection risks have dramatically increased in multiple new hotspots across the country.

The ethno-religious conflict in CAR continues to cause widespread death and destruction among the population, with hundreds of thousands people fleeing the southwest of the country where the violence is concentrated.

The rate of population displacement is worsening an already dire situation, with women and children being the most affected and critical needs continuing to exceed available resources.

A volatile security situation and a lack of access to priority areas is impacting the ETC's plans to provide critical communications services to humanitarians in priority areas.

The ETC is a global network of organizations that work together to provide shared communications services in humanitarian emergencies

Response

- The ETC is providing shared internet connectivity services and security telecommunications to the response community in 8x sites across the country: Kaga-Bandoro and Bossangoa managed by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); Zemio, managed by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); N'Dele, managed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM); and Bambari, Bangui, Bouar and Paoua, managed by the World Food Programme (WFP).

    o Security telecommunications services in Bossangoa have been handed over to UNDSS already.

- The ETC's telecoms expert carried out an assessment in Zemio in case humanitarians return to identify where the ETC can install a VSAT and other repeaters for NGOs, as the existing one is for UN agencies only. The ETC already has an agreement with MINUSCA to install a repeater on their tower.

    o The ETC has prepared the equipment and received the donation of equipment from NetHope, including 50x radios, repeaters and some access points for Internet connectivity.

- NetHope has handed over all of its remaining equipment to the ETC and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed.

- The ETC team continues to focus on developing the transition plan and is liaising with leading agencies in its remaining sites.

- The ETC continues to engage with OCHA and participate in all relevant inter-cluster meetings to ensure visibility and inclusion in key documents, such as the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

Planned Response

- The ETC had planned to go to Bangassou but this is currently on hold due to the volatile security situation there.

- The ETC is planning to go to Bria in mid-August to install two repeaters, one for UN agencies and one for NGOs.

    o UNHCR, WHO and three other NGOs are already present in Bria and lack Internet connectivity and VHF/HF network for tracking.

- The ETC still plans to deploy the Digital Mobile Network (DMR) in the capital, Bangui, as well as two other operational sites together with UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) however funding sources need to be explored.

Challenges

- The ongoing escalation of violence in the country remains a challenge for all humanitarians, including the ETC.

- Staff capacity is low which is impacting the ETC's activities.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on Wednesday 13 September.

Information

- ICT responders operating on the ground in Central African Republic are encouraged to share their contact details with CAR.ETC@wfp.org to facilitate local coordination.

- A dedicated information-sharing space has been created on the ETC website https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/central-african-republic-conflict. Organisations involved in the ICT response are encouraged to share updates with the ETC community to support the overall humanitarian response.

Shared ICT Services

DISTRICT, TOWN	LOCATION	PROVIDED BY	SERVICES	EQUIPMENT	CUSTOMER
Bangui	WFP sub-office	WFP	• Security telecommunications • Radio training • Radio programming • Information Management • Internet • Coordination		Humanitarian community
Bambari	WFP sub-office	WFP	• Security telecommunications (radio) • ICT Helpdesk • Internet		Humanitarian community
Kaga-Bandoro	UNICEF Compound	UNICEF, WFP	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio training • ICT helpdesk • Internet		Humanitarian community
Bossangoa	UNICEF Compound	UNICEF, WFP	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Internet • Radio training • ICT Helpdesk		Humanitarian community
Zemio	HCR compound	HCR ,WFP	• Internet • ICT Helpdesk • Security telecommunications (radio)		Humanitarian community
N'Dele	IOM Compound	WFP	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Internet • Radio training		Humanitarian community
Paoua	WFP compound	WFP	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Internet • Radio programming • ICT Helpdesk		Humanitarian community

Bouar	WFP compound	WFP	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Internet • Radio programming • ICT Helpdesk		Humanitarian community

ETC Services Map: https://www.etcluster.org/document/etc-car-services-map-march-2017

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Acronyms

C.A.R.	Central African Republic
COMCEN	Communications Centre
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	WFP Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal – *satellite equipment to provide internet connectivity*
WFP	World Food Programme

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

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

Background on the emergency:

A protection crisis erupted in the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) at the end of 2013 resulting in severe violence and widespread displacement. The collapse of state, law and order and public services further exacerbated the situation. Since then, the country has remained extremely volatile. Almost three years after the beggining of the conflict, the humanitarian situation remains critical leaving 2.3 million people, over half the population, in urgent need of assistance. Since December 2013, over 420,000 people are still displaced across the country and the number of refugees outside the C.A.R. is over 450,000.

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was activated in December 2013 in response to the escalating crisis. Led by the World Food Programme (WFP), the ETC in C.A.R. is focusing on enhancing security telecommunications in Bangui and supporting the establishment of common ICT services in seven common operational areas, namely: Bambari, Kaga-Bandoro, Bossangoa, Zemio, N'Dele, Paoua and Bouar.

Sources: IOM, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)