

## Central African Republic – Conflict

### ETC Situation Report #31

Reporting period 01/01/2020 to 31/01/2020

These Situation Reports will be distributed approximately every month. The next report will be issued on or around 29/02/20.

### Highlights

- The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2020 for CAR was launched on 21 January in Bangui outlining the ETC services plan to support humanitarians and affected communities throughout the coming year.
- On 28 January, ETC partner, the Government of Luxembourg committed EUR 100,000 to support three projects to enable affected communities to access critical information and services in sites across CAR.
- The ETC has finalized all security communications services in Batangafo, as recommended by the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) project.



The ETC trains World Vision staff in Batangafo in basic security communications skills.

*Photo credit: ETC/WFP*

### Response

- The ETC has continued to operate in Alindao, Bangui, Batangafo and Bria despite an escalation of conflict in these areas since December 2019.
- The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2020 for CAR was launched on 21 January in Bangui and can be accessed [here](#). The HRP sets out the plan for ETC activities in 2020 including the continued set up of three projects for affected communities and implementation of the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) recommendations, in addition to the extension of coverage to sites in Berberati, Amada Gaza and Gamboula to support the humanitarian response.

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- All funds received by the ETC from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) in 2019 were utilized by the end of December 2019. The ETC is facing a funding shortfall to cover activities in 2020. The ETC in CAR requires USD 1.3 million to fund its 2020 activities.
  - On 28 January, ETC partner, the Government of Luxembourg confirmed a contribution of EUR 100,000 to support three ETC projects to enable affected communities to access critical information and services in sites across CAR. A Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) in Bria and other Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) sites across CAR will make it easier for the affected populations to contact humanitarians and communicate their needs. The Information and Learning Hub in Bangassou will allow communities to learn digital skills and connect with humanitarians and people outside of CAR via the Internet. Designated phone booths in Bria will assist the community to communicate with their families and to contact humanitarian hotlines free-of-charge. The set up of these three projects has been ongoing since June 2019 and are scheduled to be rolled out by March 2020.
  - The design of the Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) application and database is complete and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document is being drafted, to be signed by all partners. The team is planning to set up training for all CFM focal points at the end of February/beginning of March.
  - The ETC met with the Central African Red Cross (CARC) – the local implementing partner for the Information and Learning Hub in Bangassou – on 28 January to determine next steps on setting up the hub. The ETC will also assist CARC in recruiting a trainer and in developing training content for the hub.
  - INTERSOS – the implementing partner for the phone booth in Bria – has launched the tender to procure items needed to set up in the phone booth. The proposal will be analysed at the end of the month and a supplier selected. Phone booth equipment ordered from the WFP Cameroon Country Office (CO) was delivered on 17 January.
  - The Regional Director from WFP’s Regional Bureau Dakar (RBD) visited CAR from 24–28 January. The ETC took the opportunity to advocate the issue of new import rules – which are impacting on the importation of satellite phone equipment – which the Regional Director discussed with the relevant government ministries during his visit. This follows engagement by the ETC on the issue with the Director of the Telecommunications Regulations Agency for CAR in November 2019.
  - Two telecommunications towers were dispatched from Bangui to continue the implementation of the TESS recommendations in Bambari and Alindao. The towers will be used to provide security telecommunications services to ensure the safety and security of responders at these two sites.
  - On 16 January, two ETC assistants deployed to Batangafo to set up VHF security communications services for UN agencies and NGOs. The TESS Implementation Officer for CAR joined them on 21 January to support the deployment of security communications infrastructure and training of staff. The ETC has now finalized all security communications services in Batangafo in line with the TESS recommendations.
  - The TESS Implementation Officer for CAR met with the head of the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) to discuss the status of the TESS recommendations and to determine the next steps. UNDSS is ready to provide personnel to support implementing the TESS recommendations across the remaining eight sites. Recommended upgrades have so far been carried out across six sites. Additional

funding is needed to procure the equipment required to carry out the planned upgrade of the network in Bangui. Otherwise, all equipment for the remaining recommendations has been received by the ETC in Bangui.

- An agreement with local NGO Première Urgence Internationale (PUI) was signed on 10 January to allow the ETC to use the common storage facility managed by PUI under the Logistics Cluster to store the large amounts of TESS equipment being received in country. The ETC has inventoried all the equipment to be stored. All equipment ordered in 2019 to implement the TESS recommendations is now in country.
- On 3 February, the ETC is planning to move the satellite terminal installed in Alindao from Cordaid to OCHA's office to ensure better Internet access is available for humanitarian workers in this location. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) established with Cordaid in 2019 is due to expire.

## Challenges

- The volatile security situation in the country remains a challenge for all humanitarian workers.
- New import rules on importation of satellite phone equipment may impact on the ETC's capacity to strengthen CAR's telecommunications infrastructure and complete implementation of the TESS recommendations.

## Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **26 February 2020**.

## Information

- ICT responders operating on the ground in CAR are encouraged to share their contact details with [CAR.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:CAR.ETC@wfp.org) to facilitate local coordination.
- All the information related to the ETC response in CAR can be found on the **dedicated emergency page** on the ETC website: <https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/central-african-republic-conflict>.
- The latest **ETC CAR Dashboard** can be found here: <https://www.etcluster.org/document/etc-car-dashboard-january-2020>



## Contacts

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