Central African Republic - Conflict

ETC Situation Report #22

Reporting period 01/09/2018 to 07/11/2018

These Situation Reports will be distributed approximately every two months. The next report will be issued on or around 31/12/18.

Highlights

- Following the recent security incidents in Batangafo, the ETC is planning to urgently provide vital communications services to humanitarians operating there.

- The ETC is now providing Internet connectivity services for the entire humanitarian community in Alindao.

- The ETC has been allocated US$400,000 USD from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF).

- The ETC is appealing for US$1.5 million in 2019 to continue providing services and cluster coordination in Bria, Alindao and Bangassou as well as staffing and equipment to provide shared ICT services in an additional three new locations.

In October, ETC was represented by Nono Kukimunu Mpaka, the Head of IT Unit and ETC Coordinator during the retreat of 2019 HRP preparation that took place at Ledger Plazza Hotel in Bangui, organized by OCHA.
Photo credit: ETC CAR.

- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) confirmed to the ETC team the possibility of starting to provide Internet connectivity in Bangassou, now that their compound is securely established.

Situation Overview

Hundreds of protesters rallied in Bangui on 23 October in support of the Speaker of the National Assembly to remain in his post. However, he was ousted from his position on 28 October, resulting in violence in Bambari since 31 October. The renewal of violence in Bambari and Batangafo towns since late October has caused several casualties and forced displacement of the population. It has also endangered the safety of humanitarian personnel on the ground. On two occasions, on 31 October and 1 November, the IDP site of Batangafo town in the Ouham prefecture was set on fire. Over 27,000 people have been displaced again and have lost everything. In Bambari town, violence has also caused the displacement of children, men and women who are in dire and precarious conditions.

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

Response

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has completed the core installation for the provision of Internet connectivity services in Alindao. ETC Internet services are hosted at Cordaid and available to the entire humanitarian community.

- In Bria, ETC successfully extended the Internet connectivity to nearby offices of International Medical Corps (IMC), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and OXFAM.

- International Organization for Migration (IOM) confirmed to the ETC team the possibility of installing Internet connectivity in Bangassou, now that their compound is securely established. Bangassou is the last of the three 2018 priority locations to be provided with ETC services, after Bria and Alindao.

- The team has participated in the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) process. The ETC is appealing for US$1.5 million in 2019 to continue providing cluster coordination and ETC services in Bria, Alindao and Bangassou. This funding would cover costs for 12 months including staffing and equipment to provide shared ICT services in an additional three new locations, currently identified as Amada Gaza, Gamboula and Berberati for an initial six-month period. The ETC successfully presented its project to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) on 30 October 2018.

  o The ETC has been allocated US$400,000 USD from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) to support its ongoing activities and for up to a total of nine months.

- The ETC Coordinator is engaging with the INGO Internews to explore areas where the ETC could establish Services for Communities (S4C) activities. Initial discussions led to the possibility of supporting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) access to radio broadcasting and Internet connectivity in collaboration with other organizations' activities.

- The ETC continues providing shared internet connectivity services to the response community in 6x sites across the country: Bambari, Paoua and Bouar, hosted by the World Food Programme (WFP); Kaga-Bandoro and Bossangoa, hosted by UN Children's Fund (UNICEF); and N'Dele, hosted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). ETC services in these locations are expected to be transitioned to a longer-term solution by the end of 2018. The ETC team is proposing a cost-sharing arrangement between the organizations that have established a long-term presence in these locations.

Planned Response

- Following the recent security incidents in Batangafo, the ETC is planning to urgently support humanitarian organizations' common ICT needs as required. The ETC Coordinator will conduct on assessment mission in Batangafo on 13 November and already plans to extend Internet connectivity and voice services in the area in the coming weeks.

- Internet connectivity services in Alindao are to be extended to Action Contre la Faim (ACF) offices. The team also plan to improve the network distribution by installing additional access points and to provide a voucher system to enable humanitarians visiting Cordaid to access the system.

- Following the confirmation from the hosting agency IOM, the ETC team plans to deploy Internet connectivity services in Bangassou in November.

- The ETC will continue exploring S4C opportunities and needs in coordination with Internews and other local partners.

Challenges

- The volatile security situation in the country remains a challenge for all humanitarians, including the ETC.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on 12 December.

Information

- ICT responders operating on the ground in C.A.R. 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.

- **ETC CAR Dashboard :**   https://www.etcluster.org/document/etc-car-dashboard-november-2018-0

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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
IMC	International Medical Corps
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
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 beginning 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 590,000 people are still displaced across the country and the number of refugees outside the C.A.R. is over 480,000.

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 eight common operational areas, namely: Bangui, Bambari, Kaga-Bandoro, Bossangoa, Zemio, N'Dele, Paoua and Bouar.

Sources: IOM, OCHA, and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)