

Iraq - Conflict

ETC Situation Report #32

Reporting period 26/05/2016 to 23/06/2016

These Situation Reports are distributed monthly. The next report will be issued on or around 21/07/16.

Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) continues to provide vital security telecommunications and data services to the humanitarian community in five sites across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).
- The ETC Coordinator took part in a joint United Nations (UN) security mission to Ameriyat Al Fallujah, a compound about 30 kilometres south of Fallujah where there is mass displacement of civilians.
- The ETC is ordering equipment to preposition in Erbil that may be deployed in Ameriyat Al Fallujah and 2x new additional sites if required.
- The ETC is preparing to launch the project to extend Internet services to refugees in two centres, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Youth Centre and International Rescue Committee (IRC) Library, in Domiz camp, Dohuk.

Situation Overview

Due to escalating violence in Fallujah, a large number of civilians are fleeing the city and need urgent humanitarian aid and support. The ETC Coordinator participated in a joint UN security assessment mission to Ameriyat al Fallujah Compound where he assessed the need for ETC services. In his report, the coordinator detailed the ETC services required. If approved, the ETC will provide a Very-small-aperture terminal (VSAT), Very High Frequency (VHF) radios, analogue and digital security telecommunications services for UN agencies and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). Ameriyat Al Fallujah would be the first UN operational hub in Anbar.

The ETC is finalising the testing of equipment needed to launch the three-month Communicating with Communities (CwC) pilot project to provide Internet connectivity to communities in UNFPA Youth Centre and IRC library, Domiz camp. This also involves testing a voucher solution to monitor the number of people who access the internet. Inter-agency letters have been signed by the ETC, UNFPA and IRC to ensure that the responsibilities of each party are clearly outlined. This project is part of the ETC strategy to ensure that, by 2020, all those responding to humanitarian emergencies have access to communications.



Rami Shakra, ETC Coordinator, on mission in Ameriyat Al Fallujah.

Photo credit: ETC Iraq

Response

- As outlined in its contingency plan, the ETC is ordering equipment to be prepositioned in Erbil for deployment in Ameriyat Al Fallujah and 2x new additional sites if necessary.
 - The ETC team is working with WFP's Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team (FITTEST) on a plan to deploy a remote radio room in Ameriyat Al Fallujah as it is a high-risk area.
- The ETC carried out an assessment of Zawa mountain as the team plans to relocate the radio repeaters in Domiz camp to the mountain to provide security telecommunications coverage for three camps and Dohuk city. The repeaters will also provide coverage for Mosul Dam as well as partial coverage of Mosul city as part of the preparedness plan. The ETC is currently waiting for permission from the Kurdistan Government to deploy equipment on Zawa mountain.
- The ETC is collaborating with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Both parties have agreed that UNAMI will provide security telecommunications coverage for roads and the ETC will cover cities and camps. The ETC is developing a formal document to detail the agreements.
- The ETC manages Communications Centres (COMCENS) in three sites: the UN compound in Erbil, the WFP sub-office in Dohuk and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Sulaymaniyah. The COMCEN in Erbil is shared with UNAMI and is the only ETC COMCEN operating on 24x7 basis. Security telecommunications services are also provided in Arbat camp and Domiz camp.
- With equipment from ETC member, Ericsson Response, shared Internet connectivity services continue to be provided in two sites: Arbat camp and Domiz camp.
 - 2x Ericsson Response WIDER kits, for the distribution and management of internet connectivity, are installed in both camps.

Planned Response

- The team continues to work with FITTEST Training Services in Dubai to deliver a bespoke Intermediate Data Training course to WFP and UNHCR staff in Dohuk in early September.
- The ETC will assist United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the installation of mobile satellite communication devices, known as chatty beetles, in Erbil and Mosul dam.

Challenges

- A main challenge is the length of time it takes to import equipment due to customs clearance processes which can take up to three weeks.
- The length of time it takes to deploy staff due to medical clearance procedures and the visa process is another challenge. This would be particularly problematic if there is a breach of Mosul Dam or there is an escalation of the current emergency. However, the ETC is working with the government to allow immediate deployment in this situation.



- The safety and security of staff remains a challenge.

Meetings

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

Information

- ICT responders operating on the ground in Iraq are encouraged to share their contact details with Iraq.ETC@wfp.org to facilitate local coordination.
- A dedicated information-sharing space has been created on the ETC website <https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/iraq-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
Dohuk	Domiz camp	emergency.lu, Ericsson Response, WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet connectivity 	VSAT, WIDER	Humanitarian community
		UNHCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) 		Humanitarian community
	WFP sub-office	WFP, UNAMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications Radio programming Radio training ICT helpdesk Assessments 		Humanitarian community
Sulaymaniyah	Arbat camp	emergency.lu, Ericsson Response, WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet connectivity 	VSAT, WIDER	Humanitarian community
		WFP, UNAMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) ICT helpdesk 		Humanitarian community
	WFP sub-office	WFP, UNAMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) Radio programming Radio training Assessments 		Humanitarian community
Erbil	WFP Country Office	WFP, UNAMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications Radio programming Radio training Coordination ICT helpdesk Assessments 		Humanitarian community

ETC Services Map: <https://www.etcluster.org/document/iraq-etc-services-map-16-march-2016>



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Acronyms

COMCEN	Communications Centre
CwC	Communicating with Communities
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	WFP Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal – <i>satellite equipment to provide internet connectivity</i>
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: Iraq.ETC@wfp.org



Background on the emergency:

On 7 June 2014, heavy fighting between the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the Armed Opposition Groups erupted in Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq. The violence resulted in numerous casualties and the takeover of the entire city by Armed Opposition Groups, including government buildings, Mosul International Airport, and all police and military bases. Tikrit was seized on 11 June by the Armed Opposition Groups. An estimated 500,000 Iraqis had been displaced in northern Iraq within the first week. With violence and conflict raging across much of Iraq, the humanitarian situation continues to worsen. Relief organisations are deploying emergency response teams and mobilizing resources to meet the urgent needs of the affected people.

WFP is leading ETC activities in Iraq in collaboration with UNAMI.

Sources: IOM, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)