

Iraq - Conflict

ETC Situation Report #33

Reporting period 24/06/2016 to 28/07/2016

These Situation Reports are distributed monthly. The next report will be issued on or around 25/08/16.

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 team has installed analogue and digital repeaters on top of a mountain in Sulaymaniyah which has significantly improved radio communications coverage for UN agencies and NGOs.
- As the situation in Mosul is escalating, the ETC is ordering equipment to be deployed in new additional sites if required.
- The ETC has distributed more than 150x vouchers to the local community so that they can access the ETC Internet service in Domiz camp, Dohuk.

Situation Overview

With the situation in Mosul escalating, the ETC has updated its contingency plan, and submitted a proposal to the Mosul Flash Appeal that was launched during the Washington Donor Conference held on 20 July.

The ETC Coordinator will carry out assessment missions to determine what ETC services might be needed in two sites, Tikrit and Zummar that may eventually become common operational areas for the Mosul operation.

The ETC has also now launched Phase 1 of the three-month Communication with Communities (CwC) project to provide Internet connectivity to communities in UNFPA Youth Centre Domiz camp. This project is part of the ETC strategy to ensure that, by 2020, all those responding to humanitarian emergencies have access to communications.



Members of the local community access ETC Internet connectivity in UNFPA Youth Centre, Domiz camp.

Photo credit: ETC Iraa

Response

- The ETC has preconfigured the equipment that was initially intended to be deployed in Ameriyat Al Fallujah. However, due to security issues, this site has not been given UN clearance to set up a common operational hub. This equipment is therefore ready for immediate deployment in a new site.
 - The ETC is now preparing for the escalating situation in Mosul. Four corridors have been identified where displacement is expected to take place. The ETC will order additional equipment for 2x operational areas.
- The ETC is working on a three-month CwC project:
 - Phase 1 has now started which involves providing Internet connectivity to the UNFPA Youth Centre in Domiz camp.
 - 150x vouchers have been distributed over the last three weeks generated by WIDER. Each voucher provides 3-5 hours of internet usage daily. Between 35 and 45 members of the local community are accessing the service each day.
 - Phase 2 involves setting up an Internet café in Domiz camp. The team has identified a UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) site where there are already 6x laptops that may be used and air conditioning for users.
- The ETC continues to collaborate 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.
 - Radio communications coverage was extended with the installation of analogue and digital repeaters on top of a mountain in Sulaymaniyah.
- 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. Both kits have been successfully upgraded.

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 September.



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- The ETC Coordinator plans to carry out assessment missions to Tikrit and Zummar to identify the needs for ETC services in potential new operational areas in line with the needs outlined in the Mosul humanitarian plan.

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.
- The security situation remains volatile across the country.

Meetings

- The next Joint Global ETC teleconference will take place on Wednesday 10 August.
- The next Local ETC meeting will take place on Wednesday 10 August.

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	Ericsson Response, WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet connectivity 	VSAT, WIDER	-Humanitarian community -Community
		UNHCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) 		-Humanitarian community
	WFP sub-office (shared with UNHCR)	WFP, UNAMI, UNHCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications COMCEN Radio programming Radio training ICT helpdesk Assessments 		-Humanitarian community
Sulaymaniyah	UNHCR office, Arbat camp	Ericsson Response, WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet connectivity 	VSAT, WIDER	-Humanitarian community
		WFP, UNAMI, UNHCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) COMCEN 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 COMCEN Radio programming Radio training Coordination ICT helpdesk Assessments 		-Humanitarian community



ETC Services Map: <https://www.etcluster.org/document/etc-iraq-services-map-27-july>



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Acronyms

COMCEN	Communications Centre
CwC	Communication 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)