Iraq - Conflict

ETC Situation Report #34

Reporting period 29/07/2016 to 25/08/2016

These Situation Reports are distributed monthly. The next report will be issued on or around 22/09/16.

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).

- A total of 132 humanitarians have registered to access ETC Internet connectivity services since the beginning of the operation.

- The ETC has carried out assessment missions to two potential common operational areas: Tikrit and Zummar.

- To support the escalating situation in Mosul, the ETC has ordered equipment to be deployed in 2x new common operational areas if required.

- The ETC has distributed more than 200x vouchers to the local community so that they can access the ETC Internet service in Domiz camp, Dohuk.

Situation Overview

With the Mosul offensive now underway, the ETC has taken action to ensure it is fully prepared in terms of equipment and staff, and that its contingency plans are up to date and communicated with partners and senior management.

The ETC Coordinator carried out an assessment mission to Tikrit to assess which ETC services would be required and another member of the ETC team carried out an assessment mission to Zummar.
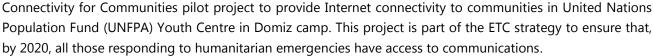
Both Tikrit and Zummar are earmarked to become common operational areas for the Mosul operation.

Rami Shakra, ETC Coordinator in Iraq, on an assessment mission in Tikrit.

Photo credit: ETC Iraq

The ETC is now more than one month in to Phase 1 of its three-month Connectivity for Communities pilot project to provide Internet connectivity to communities in United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Youth Centre in 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.

Response

- The ETC has preconfigured the equipment that was initially intended to be deployed in Ameriyat Al Fallujah. This equipment is therefore ready for immediate deployment.

  o The ETC is now preparing for the escalating situation in Mosul. Four corridors have been identified where displacement is expected to take place: North, South, East and West. The ETC has ordered additional equipment to support the operation in 2x operational areas in these corridors – Tikrit and Zummar.
  o Assessment missions to both locations were carried out in August.

- The ETC is working on a three-month Connectivity for Communities pilot project:
  o Phase 1 was launched over a month ago to provide Internet connectivity to the UNFPA Youth Centre in Domiz camp.
  o More than 200x vouchers have been distributed in that time, generated by Ericsson Response WIDER, the ETC's Internet management and distribution solution. 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.
  o Phase 2 involves setting up an Internet café in Domiz camp. The ETC 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 manages Communications Centres (COMCENs) in three sites: the UN compound in Erbil, the World Food Programme (WFP) sub-office in Dohuk and the UNHCR office in Sulaymaniyah. The COMCEN in Erbil is shared with United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and is the only ETC COMCEN operating on 24x7 basis. Security telecommunications services are also provided in Arbat camp and Domiz camp.

  o 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.

  o 2x Ericsson Response WIDER kits are installed in both camps. Both kits have been successfully upgraded.

Planned Response

- The team continues to work with WFP Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team (FITTEST) Training Services in Dubai to deliver a bespoke Intermediate Data Training course to WFP and UNHCR staff in Dohuk in September.

- An ETC team member from FITTEST will deploy to Dohuk as ETC Coordinator in that area in late August. From Dohuk, he will coordinate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) activities needed to

support a potential common operational area in Zummar, and will continue to support the Connectivity for Communities project.

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 7 September.
- The next Local ETC meeting will take place on Thursday 1 September.

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	• Internet connectivity	WIDER	-Humanitarian community -Community
		UNHCR	• Security telecommunications (radio)		-Humanitarian community
	WFP sub-office (shared with UNHCR)	WFP, UNAMI, UNHCR	• Security telecommunications • COMCEN • Radio programming • Radio training • ICT helpdesk • Assessments		-Humanitarian community
Sulaymaniyah	UNHCR office, Arbat camp	Ericsson Response, WFP	• Internet connectivity	WIDER	-Humanitarian community
		WFP, UNAMI, UNHCR	• Security telecommunications (radio) • COMCEN • ICT helpdesk		-Humanitarian community
	WFP sub-office	WFP, UNAMI	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio programming • Radio training • Assessments		-Humanitarian community
Erbil	WFP Country Office	WFP, UNAMI	• 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
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 – *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: 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)