Iraq - Conflict

ETC Situation Report #41

Reporting period 24/03/2017 to 27/04/2017

These Situation Reports are distributed monthly. The next report will be issued on or around 25/05/17.

Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) continues to provide Internet connectivity services for humanitarians in Qayyarah: at the Mercy Hands office in town, and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Danish Refugee Council (DRC) office in Qayyarah Airstrip camp.

- A total of 70 humanitarians have registered to access ETC Internet connectivity services since the beginning of 2017.

- More than 1,308 vouchers have been used by the affected population at United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Youth Centre and Internet cafe in Domiz camp since the project started in June 2016.

The ETC and TSF on an assessment mission to Hammam Al Alil camp.

Photo credit: WFP/Lasse Axelsson

Situation Overview

Military operations in western Mosul continue resulting in increasing numbers of displaced people. Around 530,000 people have been displaced since the Mosul operation began in October 2016. Over the last few weeks, more than half of the 369,000 people displaced from west Mosul have found shelter in camps and emergency sites.

Severe flooding along the Tigris river have negatively impacted access of humanitarian organisations, including the ETC, to Qayyarah in the last week as the main bridge crossings were closed. Humanitarian access to west Mosul was also impacted by the temporary suspension of UN missions to west Mosul due to security threats.

The ETC continues to prepare to provide services at the new priority sites as needed.

Response

- The ETC continues to provide security telecommunications services to the response community in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Erbil, Dohuk, Domiz camp, Sulaymaniyah, Arbat camp and Ashti camp. Internet connectivity is provided at Arbat camp and Domiz camp.

    o An Ericsson Response WIDER kit (a tool to manage and distribute Internet connectivity) is installed in Arbat camp.

- To support the humanitarian response to the Mosul operation, the ETC is providing Internet connectivity at the Mercy Hands office in Qayyarah town, and IOM and DRC offices in Qayyarah Airstrip camp. The team went on mission to Qayyarah to improve the Internet connectivity service there.

    o Security telecommunications (radio) services cover Qayyarah town, Qayyarah Airstrip camp, Qayyarah Jad'ah camp and Haj Ali.

    o A WIDER kit is installed at Mercy Hands office.

- The ETC continues to provide Internet connectivity to the affected community in the UNFPA Youth Centre and Internet café in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) pre-fab in Domiz camp, Dohuk as part of the ETC Services for Communities (S4C) project.

    o A WIDER kit is installed here also.

- The ETC team is now using the portable emergency.lu satellite terminal to share operational information with the Local Telecommunications Working Group.

- The ETC conducted a mission to Arbat camp to install a solar solution to address the power issues.

- The ETC has programmed radios using the new codeplug for staff in WFP, UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Planned Response

- The cluster plans to roll out more S4C projects as required.
- The ETC is working on an independent solar power back-up solution to be used in the field where electricity (city power and/or generator) is a problem.
- The planned IHP hub in Hamam al Alil has been cancelled as a new location to the east of Mosul has been identified. Once confirmed, the ETC will be able to deploy Internet connectivity and security telecommunications services for humanitarians.

Challenges

- The lack of funding remains a challenge for the ETC. While the cluster has appealed for US$2.7 million to carry out its activities in 2017, US$1.2 million is being sought to cover immediate needs of staffing and equipment.
- As the Mosul operation continues to evolve, the security situation remains volatile across the country.
- Severe flooding along the Tigris is restricting humanitarian access to key sites.

Meetings

- The next Joint Global ETC teleconference will take place on 10 May.
- The next Local ETC Working Group meeting will take place on 15 May.

Information

- Information and Communications Technology (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.

- Members of the Local Telecommunications Working Group are encouraged to share information by emailing Iraq.TWG.User.List@wfp.org All documents related to the ETC operation in Iraq are available on the ETC portal.

Shared ICT Services

DISTRICT, TOWN	LOCATION	PROVIDED BY	SERVICES	EQUIPMENT	CUSTOMER
Dohuk	Domiz camp	Ericsson Response, WFP	• Internet connectivity	WIDER	Humanitarian community
		UNHCR	• Security telecommunications (radio)		
		WFP, UNFPA, Ericsson Response	• UNFPA Youth Centre (Domiz)		Affected community
		WFP, UNHCR, Ericsson Response	• Internet café - UNHCR		
	WFP sub-office (shared with UNHCR)	WFP, UNAMI, UNHCR	• Security telecommunications • COMCEN • Radio programming • Radio training • ICT helpdesk • Assessments		
Sulaymaniyah	UNHCR office, Arbat camp	Ericsson Response, WFP	• Internet connectivity	WIDER	Humanitarian community
		WFP, UNAMI, UNHCR	• Security telecommunications (radio) • COMCEN • ICT helpdesk		
	WFP sub-office	WFP, UNAMI	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio programming • Radio training • Assessments		
	Ashti camp (LINK)	WFP, UNAMI, UNHCR	• Security telecommunications (radio)		

Erbil	WFP Country Office	WFP, UNAMI	- Security telecommunications (radio) - COMCEN - Radio programming - Radio training - Coordination - ICT helpdesk - Assessments	-Humanitarian community
Qayyarah	Mercy Hands office (town)	WFP, TSF	- Security telecommunications (radio) - Internet connectivity - Assessments	
	Haj Ali	WFP	Security telecommunications	
	Qayyarah Jad'ah	WFP	Security telecommunications	
	Qayyarah Airstrip: IOM office (link) DRC office (link)	WFP, TSF	- Security telecommunications (radio) - Internet connectivity - Assessments	

ETC Services Map: https://www.etcluster.org/document/etc-iraq-services-map-april-2017

Contacts

Iraq.ETC@wfp.org

Michael Dirksen, ETC Coordinator
michael.dirksen@wfp.org
Cellphone: +964 782 780 6736

Suzanne Fenton, ETC Information Management Officer
suzanne.fenton@wfp.org
Cellphone: +971 56 6529560

Acronyms

COMCEN	Communications Centre
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	WFP Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IHP	International Humanitarian Partnership
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
TSF	Telecoms Sans Frontieres
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
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 the operation to liberate Mosul escalating, 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)