Palestine, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #02
Date: 02/11/2023 **Time:** 12:00 UTC

Further information related to the ETC Palestine operation can be found on the website:

www.etcluster.org/emergency/palestine-conflict

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact:

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Attendance

Chair (ETC)	**Brent Carbno**
ACF	Thomas Gerard
CDAC	Liz Hendry
Cisco Crisis Response	Matt Altman
Ericsson Response	Mike Duffin
Government of Luxembourg	Alain Lang
	Roland Nurenberg
	Gilles Hoffmann
GSMA	Bryce Hartley
Humedica	Manuel Heinemann
FAO	Sameh Henry
	Ayman Barakat
ICAO	Sonia El Sakka
ICRC	Claudiu Mateescu
	Alfredo Bermudez Salazar
IOM	Newton Muli
	Tamer Hefny
IRC	Alan Mooney
	Moayyed Fares
ITU	Adel Darwish
	Vanessa Gray
	Tarek Dwieb
	Adel Darwish
Nethope	Dagbjartur Brynjarsson
Save the Children	Mark Hawkins
Search For Common Ground	Rami Assali
TSF	Clement Bruguera
UNDP	Hisham Samir Hussein
	Gerald Demeules
	Moe Kyaw

UNESCO	Omar Baig
UNDSS	Martina Dragovic
	Adrian Tirlea
UNFPA	Ileyn Mileva
	Shereif Gawish
	Dobromir Marinov
UNHABITAT	Ahmed Zenari
UNHCR	Andrew Sentamu
	Nizar Zeidan
	Alexander Thomas
	Massoumeh Farman Farmaian
	Mohamed Abdel Wahab
UNICEF	Christian Larsson
	Marta Dabbas
	Marc Dieng
	Jalal Tamimi
	Kamal Kamaleddine
	Mudiwa Mapuranga
	Cherine Kotb
UNOCHA	Majed Abuqubu
UNOPS	Kristoffer Nørkjær Randløv Jepsen
	Mikkel Brodersen
	Caspar Okkels
UNRWA	Ismail Sabir
UNWOMEN	Nabeel Al Garawy
	Tamer Hefny
	Soren Thomassen
US Department of State	Joe Burton
Global ETC	Brent Carbno
	Caroline Teyssier
	Elizabeth Millership
	Komi Amedjonekou
	Phyza Jameel
	Mufaro Masuka
	Maria Gonzales
	David Pickering
WFP	Jay Mahanand
	Anna Miroshnichenko
	Hossam Metwally
	Areen Roman
	Dalia Mansour
	Diyar Faris
	Waleed Salah
	Philip Malone
	Elizabeth Bourke
	Ozdzan Hadziemin
	Angel Leon
	Ossama Khattab
	Hassan Akil

WHO	Hani Dodin
	Kamal Ait-Ikhlef
	Biswamber Gurubacharya
	Mohamed El Sheikh
	Christopher Hodson

Agenda

1. Situation update
2. Global ETC update
3. Partner updates
4. AOB

Minutes

1. Situation update

- Telecommunications and internet services in Gaza were cut for approximately eight hours on 01 November and returned on the morning of 02 November. This is the second occurrence of communications blackout in a week.

- The entry of fuel into Gaza is still not possible. Fuel is urgently needed to power any telecommunications equipment which is possible to transport into Gaza. Advocacy efforts are underway with the authorities for the delivery of fuel, which also crucial for the operations of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in Gaza.

2. Global ETC update

Coordination

- The ETC was officially activated for the response in Gaza on 31 October. An appeal for US$800,000 for a three-month ETC response in up to three locations was submitted into the Flash Appeal revision.

- Ahead of activation, the ETC sent out an ICT capacity and needs survey to global ETC partners on 30 October to seek feedback on current operations and locations, with the aim of assessing needs and to understand ongoing efforts. The information collected will inform the ETC response plan for Gaza emergency.

- The ETC response plan for Gaza is currently focused on the provision of services in three identified locations—Kahn Yunis and two sites in Rafah. Reliable communications networks are needed to enable humanitarians to stay connected in high-risk situations, restore security communications networks for UN staff, and to coordinate response activities.

Equipment & staffing

- On 01 November, the ETC worked in partnership with OCHA, UNRWA, UNDSS, and the UN ICT Working Group to compile and finalize a list of essential telecommunications

equipment to import into Gaza, submitted via OCHA to the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT).

- All items going into Gaza need to be approved by the Israeli authorities. Any items brought via Egypt also need to have importation permits from the Egyptian authorities and agreement with the Egyptian Red Crescent, who are the sole consignee of goods for the Rafah border crossing.

- The ETC is engaging with local actors to identify the best route to transport the equipment into Gaza.

- There is also a need to identify staff in Gaza who can support receiving and setting up the equipment, in the case that the ETC is able to transport the equipment into Gaza but is unable to send personnel. ICT colleagues from different organizations currently in Gaza may be able to assist.

- WFP FITTEST's David Pickering is designated as the ETC Coordinator for the response in Gaza. He travelled to Cairo on 02 November to manage coordination from there. The ETC Coordinator is now convening the UN ICT Working Group and takes part in the National Inter-Cluster Coordination Group.

Services for communities

- The ETC is working with OCHA on joint messaging for information dissemination to the population. Key messages will be communicated through leaflets or FM radio channels, which are still used by 30% of people in Gaza.

- Although up to 16 pre-existing humanitarians helplines remain operational, there is no centralized hotline for people in Gaza to call and request assistance. The need for an inter-agency platform will be assessed.

3. Partner Updates

GSMA

- The ETC reached out to GSMA to find out any plans of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in Egypt to provide coverage support near the border with Gaza. GMSA advised that the coordination is being handled by the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Egypt (NTRA). GMSA are coordinating this engagement through the UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO).

ICRC

- ICRC offices in Gaza, Cairo, and Israel have approached various authorities to explore options to import telecommunications equipment, including VHF radio, handsets, and VSAT broadband connectivity. ICRC are waiting for a reply from the authorities. In the meantime, they are working on local connectivity using small BGAN terminals.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- Darwish Adel is the main ETC focal point within ITU for this operation.

- ITU has been in contact with the Palestinian Ministry of Telecommunications, who have expressed the critical importance of resolving the fuel issue for telecoms towers to become operational on the ground. ITU has Thuraya satellite phones ready for use and is engaging with the Egyptian government through their mission in Geneva to facilitate the entry of these phones through Egypt. The aim is to provide UN colleagues entering Gaza with satellite phones for humanitarian communication.

- There is limited data available in the context of Gaza to activate the Disaster Connectivity Map (DCM). The DCM is primarily sourced from Meta and Facebook data, which are inaccessible in this conflict situation. Even before the conflict started, network coverage data for this region was scarce.

NetHope

- NetHope is collecting requests from its members on connectivity to share needs from the NGO side with the ETC. NetHope are working with Starlink, and will conduct a test run to try to get it in though commercial lines, underlining the need to register the organisations that will operate with Starlink.

OCHA

- OCHA has compiled a list of essential ICT equipment that includes ETC equipment needed to support the humanitarian community as per its plan. This list will go through the emergency taskforce in Jerusalem and be presented to COGAT in Israel for feedback. Based on this input, it will be determined which items can enter through Tel Aviv, potentially avoiding the need for everything to pass through Egypt. There is a possibility of certain items being allowed through Israeli channels, especially for security communications and on-the-ground humanitarian operations. OCHA is currently in negotiations and is awaiting a response from the Israeli authorities.

- OCHA has shared operational information from the ground with the ETC—this data is being used to identify where to establish operational hubs.

Save the Children

- IC Telecom has informed Save the Children about an offer from Starlink to provide services.

- The ETC is leading on the coordination of requests and importation clearances for Starlink and other connectivity equipment to ensure information and guidance is aligned and accurate across the partnerships. Further, the ETC is exploring all commercial opportunities to strengthen communications networks for humanitarians in Gaza, including but not limited to Starlink.

4. AOB

- N/a

The next teleconference will be held on 09 November 2023 at 12:00 UTC

12:00   UTC

13:00   Rome
14:00   Cairo/Palestine
16:00   Dubai

Acronyms

ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
COGAT	Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
DCM	Disaster Connectivity Maps
GSMA	Global System for Mobile Communications
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOHCA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Minutes: Marie Elena Bock, Global ETC Partnerships Officer.