

Palestine, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #04

Date: 15/11/2023 Time: 13:00 UTC

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

[**www.etcluster.org/emergency/palestine-conflict**](http://www.etcluster.org/emergency/palestine-conflict)

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

[**Palestine.ETC@wfp.org**](mailto:Palestine.ETC@wfp.org)

Attendance

Chair (ETC)

Cisco Crisis Response
CRS

Government of Luxembourg

Ericsson Response
FAO

GSMA
Humedica
ICRC

IOM

InterNews
ITU
NetHope

Office of the Quartet (Palestine)

Palestine Telecoms Regulatory Authority
Palestinian Ministry of Telecoms & IT
Palestine Red Crescent Society
Save the Children

Swiss Church Aid

Brent Carbno

Matt Altman
Veronica Muoio
Kylie Garner
Alain Lang
Roland Nurenberg
Lars Ruediger
Ayman Barakat
Henry Sameh
Bryce Hartley
Manuel Heinemann
Claudiu Mateescu
Anne Melotte
Alfredo Bermudez Salazar
Alan Mooney
Moayyed Fares
Emily Cowlrick
Adel Darwish
Dagbjartur Brynjarsson
Anja Delaquis
Enas Abu Laban
Lour Kuttab
Laith Daraghmeh
Ohoud J arrar
Wael Misk
Mark Hawkins
Jason Lee
Nicolas Karadjian

UNDP	Hisham Samir H
UNDSS	Martina Dragovic
UNFPA	Shereif Gawish
	Mohamed Abdelkader
UNHCR	Andrew Sentamu
	Massoumeh Farman Farmaian
	Mohamed Abdel Wahab
UNICEF	Marc Dieng
	Jalal Tamimi
	Christopher Fabian
	Nasri Sidawi
UNOCHA	Mahmoud Bahaaeldein Effat Darwish
UNOPS	Kristoffer Nørkjær Randsløv Jepsen
	Jonas Chaudhary
UNRWA	Kaan Cetinturk
	Emmanuel Mugarura
UNWOMEN	Nabeel Al Garawy
	Ismail Hamdy
	Ismail Sabir
	Nabeel Al-Gharawy
USAID	Sarah Collman
	Rakesh Bharania
	Rose Delaney
US State Department	Joseph Burton
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	Maria Saleh
	Phyza Jameel
	Mufaro Masuka
	Maria Gonzales
	Hossam Metwally
	Marie Elena Bock
	Elizabeth Millership
WFP	Jay Mahanand
	Moussa Sana
	Dane Novarlic
	Halim Yousufzai
	Hikmat Akad
	Waleed Salah
	Michael Dirksen
	Elizabeth Bourke
	Angel Buitrago
	Natasha Buingo
	Anna Miroshnichenko
	Ansoumane Camara
	Amirullah Syarif
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WHO

Hassan Akil
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Agenda

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

Minutes

1. Situation update

- The Office of the Quartet gave a comprehensive overview of the telecommunications situation in Gaza, using data collected from the Palestinian Ministry of Telecommunications & Information Technology (MTIT), as follows.
- **Sector composition:** There are two Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)—Jawwal and Ooredoo. The MNOs only offer 2G services. The Palestine Telecommunications Company (Paltel) is the fixed communications provider and backhaul services for all telecoms operators. There are six Internet Service Providers (ISPs) available in the region.
- **Operations since recent conflict began:** The cut-off of electricity has led to telecoms companies relying entirely on diesel generators 24/7. Around 70% of the networks are down, resulting in low quality services and limited coverage in some areas. Registration of damage and maintenance in networks are very limited due to movement restrictions and high risk. The MNOs have no back-up satellite services—those previously operational are exhausted and solar panels are either destroyed or not working properly due to explosion dust.
- **Fuel crisis:** As of 15 November, all telecommunications services in Gaza are shutting down due to the exhaustion of fuel reserves. Batteries are already in use and will provide a maximum of 24 hours energy supply. By 16 November, Gaza will be in total communications blackout.
- **Overarching need:** To maintain Palestinian telecommunications services and introduce additional supplementary services.
- **Actions required to maintain existing telecommunications services:**
 - Secure ~14,550 liters/day of diesel for 217 prioritized network components/sites;
 - Provide safe access to maintenance teams for diesel distribution and maintenance of the prioritized network components/sites;

- Advocate for protection of telecoms infrastructure;
- Support the importation of needed equipment and spare parts from/through Egypt and the West Bank.
- **To introduce supplementary telecoms services:** There is a need to explore the potential to strengthen the coverage of Egyptian mobile networks for those in Gaza and to introduce satellite phone and satellite internet services as surge services for humanitarian organizations operating in Gaza.

2. Global ETC update

- Funding is one of the biggest challenges faced by the ETC to provide common shared telecommunications services for humanitarian responders, once importation of equipment into Gaza is established. The ETC urgently requires an initial US\$250,000 out of the total requested US\$800,000 in the Flash Appeal to continue its ongoing activities to address the immediate needs in Gaza. The ETC is working with partners to explore funding options.
- Engagement with all relevant parties including the Egyptian Red Crescent, OCHA, ITU, and the Egyptian authorities continues in order to fast-track the importation process of telecommunications equipment through Egypt. The ETC also continues to liaise with OCHA on the importation of equipment into Gaza via Israel.
- The ETC priority is to establish critical shared communications services in key locations in Gaza. To take forward the collective approach among partners for the importation of equipment, the ETC developed and circulated a survey on 16 November to all partners and humanitarian organizations to collect their ICT equipment types and quantities intended for importation. The results will be collated and used to inform equipment prepositioning and prioritization for bulk shipment into Egypt and then possibly Gaza.

3. Partner Updates

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

- CRS mentioned that e-SIM had been a solution to consider and will share that when safe to do so—it was most efficient when using on high ground like on the roof of a building. They are seeking guidance on the most effective e-SIM package to purchase for distribution to field staff. Overload in neighbouring networks has weakened the signal quality.

Ericsson Response

- Ericsson Response has some equipment ready for device user management and distribution of connectivity lines, including high-performance 4G routers. If there is a need for more, they can be included in any shipment for the intended destination of Gaza.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- ITU has secured 100 Thuraya satellite phones as a donation from the UAE and in collaboration with the Palestinian Telecommunications Regulatory Authority. The

equipment is ready to be shipped by diplomatic pouch, pending approval from the Egyptian authorities to ship them from WFP UAE in Dubai. As the phones have not all been allocated, ITU agreed to engage with the ETC to coordinate the distribution of these phones as needed.

UNRWA

- UNRWA confirmed it has received 23,000 litres of fuel on 15 November to be used for the trucks distributing aid via the Rafah Border Crossing with Egypt. The entry of fuel for all other purposes remains banned including for hospital generators and water and sanitation facilities.
- UNRWA advised that 4G routers installed on the roof in Rafah are currently the only reliable way to connect its staff. The on-site team has requested additional routers and is looking into how to obtain them.
- UNRWA and the Paltel Group are looking into installing solar at UN sites (e.g. clinics and schools) to support Paltel communications equipment.
- UNRWA has now adopted the IOM solution called 'SCAAN' to establish a safety reporting protocol for all staff. SCAAN employs a (typically internet-based) communication system with messages such as "I am safe" or "I am not safe". However, the current mode of operation has shifted to using SMS for communication.

World Food Programme (WFP)

- WFP reached an agreement with the Mobile Network Operator (MNO), Airalo, on a 15% discount code for the purchase of e-SIMs for humanitarian organizations. Information on how to apply the code will be shared by WFP and circulated by the ETC, once fully obtained from Airalo.

4. AOB

- N/a

The next teleconference will be held on Wednesday 22 November 2023 at 13:00 UTC

13:00 UTC
14:00 Rome
15:00 Cairo/Jerusalem
17:00 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.