

Palestine, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #05

Date: 22/11/2023 Time: 13:02 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:

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Attendance

Chair (ETC)

Business Development Nationwide - Palestine
Ericsson Response
FAO
Government of Luxembourg

Humedica
ICRC
IOM

ITU
Medicos del Mundo (Mdm) Spain
Medical Aid for Palestinians
NetHope
Office of the Quartet (Palestine)

OXFAM
Save the Children
Search for Common Ground Jerusalem
UNDP
UNESCO

UNHCR

UNICEF

UNOCHA
UNRWA

Caroline Teyssier

Armando Gamboa
Lars Ruediger
Ayman Barakat
Roland Nurenberg
Mike Duffin
Manuel Heinemann
Alfredo Bermudez Salazar
Alan Mooney
Newton Muli
Moayyed Fares
Adel Darwish
Armando Gamboa
Sam Wahlstrom
Anja Delaquis
Enas Abu Laban
Lour Kuttab
Saed Muna
Mark Hawkins
Rami Assali
Hisham Samir Hussein
Baig Omar
Jackson Krainer
Andrew Sentamu
Hussein ElSayed
Marc Dieng
Kamal Kamaledine
Mahmoud Bahaaeldein Effat Darwish
Kaan Cetinturk

Uqudo UAE
UNWOMEN

USAID
US State Department
Global ETC

WFP

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Elizabeth Millership
Aramais Alojants
Areen Roman
Dalia Mansour
Elizabeth Bourke
Hikmat Akad
Waleed Salah
Hani Dodin
Mohamed El Sheikh

Agenda

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

Minutes

1. Situation update

- Although a restricted allocation of fuel has been permitted for the operation of select humanitarian activities, the persistent prevalence of critical fuel shortages continues to hamper the delivery of life-saving assistance and remains a significant factor contributing to barriers obstructing access to critical services.
- On 18 November, 123,000 litres of fuel entered Gaza from Egypt. A further 69,000 litres entered Gaza since 19 November. The Israeli authorities confirmed that they would start allowing the entry of a daily amount of 70,000 litres of fuel from Egypt, which is well below the minimum requirements for essential humanitarian operations. Fuel is being distributed by United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to support food distribution, operation of generators at hospitals, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) shelters, water, and sanitation facilities. UNRWA requires about 160,000 litres of fuel per day to run basic humanitarian operations.

- According to UNRWA—as of 21 November—1.7 million people in Gaza are estimated to be internally displaced, including about 840,000 IDPs who are staying in at least 154 UNRWA shelters, across all five governorates of the Gaza Strip. 770,000 IDPs are sheltering in 97 facilities in the Middle, Khan Younis, and Rafah areas. UNRWA shelters are overcrowded and accommodating far more people than the intended capacity.
- The Office of the Quartet¹, which collects all the information and needs of the network operators and sites from the Palestinian Ministry of Telecommunications & Information Technology (MTIT) and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA)—indicated that some fuel was allocated to telecoms services since 18 November and resulted in partial return of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) communication services. Fuel quantities' allocation remain far below the required daily amounts to effectively run the telecommunication services.

2. Global ETC update

Coordination/equipment

- Engagement with all relevant parties including the Egyptian Red Crescent, OCHA, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the Egyptian authorities continues in finding a fast-track solution to 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 cluster continues to face funding challenges to provide common shared telecommunications services for humanitarian responders once importation of equipment into Gaza is authorized and successful. An initial US\$250,000 is urgently required to continue the ongoing activities to address the immediate needs in Gaza. At this stage, the ETC has no funding for the response in Gaza and is operating on emergency reserves. The ETC is working with partners to explore funding options.
- The ETC continues building details around the three-month response plan. Based on engagement with partners on the ground, the ETC plans to provide shared communications services for humanitarians in three key operational locations, tentatively identified as Kahn Yunis and two sites in Rafah.
- On 22 November, the ETC met with the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) to follow up on the request made on 01 November regarding ICT equipment importation into Gaza. A list of essential telecommunications equipment to import into Gaza is being revised by the ETC. The cluster will submit the revised list directly to COGAT.
- The ETC continues to engage all relevant parties to identify an authorized corridor to fast-track the telecommunications equipment importation process for Gaza through either Egypt or Israel.
- The ETC convened a meeting with the UN ICT Working Group on 19 November to foster engagement and collaboration with humanitarian agencies working in Egypt. The major

¹ The Office of the Quartet was established in East Jerusalem in 2002 by the Quartet on the Middle East: <https://www.quartetoffice.org/>

focus of the meeting centred on the processes and challenges of importing ICT equipment into Egypt. The group agreed to initiate a collaborative approach in proposing a solution and securing authorization to import equipment into Egypt, which may eventually be imported into Gaza to assist with the shared common communications services for the humanitarian response.

- A total of 29 respondents have participated in the survey circulated by the ETC to coordinate a collective approach among partners for the importation of equipment. Seven organizations provided their list of equipment. The survey was sent on 16 November to all partners and interested humanitarian organizations to collect their ICT requirements, including equipment types and quantities intended for importation.
- The ETC will explore whether the use of microwave links for data connectivity can be authorized by COGAT.

Security Communications Services

- The ETC team is engaging with United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) to formulate a Security Communications Services (SCS) implementation plan to support the humanitarian response in Gaza.
- Currently, security communications services are very limited in Gaza. UNDSS's implementation of a new VHF digital radio Security Communications System (SCS) in Gaza had reached 90 percent completion before the conflict broke out. The system is currently not operable.
- The security communications services implementation plan incorporates the immediate, mid-, and long-term SCS actions to be taken.
- Reliable communications networks are needed to enable humanitarians to stay connected in high-risk situations, restore security communications networks for UN staff, and coordinate response activities.

Access to information & communications

- As of 22 November, reports show that selected MNOs telecommunications towers were running on the limited fuel and the population is able to access 2G mobile network coverage, limited voice call capacity and continuous network congestion. However, power to charge the devices is limited and completely unavailable in certain locations.
- Reports indicate that all FM radio stations are now off air. The ETC has lost communication contact with the radio broadcaster in Kahn Yunis since 20 November. A number of humanitarians have requested the assistance of the ETC to import FM radio equipment to reinstate local broadcast, especially to relay information on humanitarian assistance.

3. Partner Updates

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- The ITU has been engaging with the Egyptian Ministry of Telecommunications & Information Technology, the TRA, and the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRCO) to import equipment destined for Gaza through Egypt. However, the Egyptian authorities

have requested written commitment that the telecommunications equipment will eventually be allowed into Gaza.

- The ITU secured 100 fully activated Thuraya satellite phones as a donation from the UAE and in collaboration with the Palestinian Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, specifically for the Gaza emergency response. The equipment is ready to be shipped from the UAE by diplomatic pouch, pending approval from the Egyptian authorities. As the phones have not all been allocated, ITU agreed to engage with the ETC to coordinate the distribution of these phones as needed by the various UN agencies and humanitarian partners.
- The ITU advised ETC partners to focus on using the Rafah Border crossing for any potential equipment importation into Gaza.

Save the Children International

- Save the Children International has staff requesting satellite based internet connectivity devices. It was noted that all satellite based internet connectivity devices are currently not allowed into either Egypt nor Gaza.

World Food Programme (WFP) – Jerusalem

- The WFP office in Jerusalem confirmed there are in contact with staff in Gaza, however staff continue to experience unreliable and intermittent telecommunications services from the local MNOs.

4. AOB

- N/a

The next teleconference will be held on Wednesday 29 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
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
MTIT	Palestinian Ministry of Telecommunications & Information Technology

TRA	Telecommunications Regulatory Authority
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
UNOCHA	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: Mufaro Masuka, Global ETC Information Management Officer.