

Palestine – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #5

Reporting period: 22/11/2023 to 28/11/2023

The ETC was activated for the conflict crisis in Gaza on 31 October 2023. Situation Reports are published weekly.

Highlights

- The shortage of electricity, fuel, and limited access to telecommunications is hampering the humanitarian response in Gaza.
- The ETC continues to coordinate a collective approach among partners for the importation of equipment into Gaza. On 24 November, the cluster submitted a revised list of the consolidated ICT equipment needs of partners to the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) as a follow up to the initial list submitted on 01 November.
- On 23 November, ETC partners—Ericsson Response and Government of Luxembourg—confirmed the availability of telecommunications equipment in Sweden and Luxembourg respectively, ready for shipment to support the Gaza emergency response.



Telecommunications and power infrastructure have been destroyed in Gaza due to the ongoing conflict. Photo: Getty Images/Momen Faiz.

Situation overview

An ongoing and temporary truce agreed between Israel and Hamas-led militant groups started at 0700 on 24 November. The initial four-day truce was extended for an additional 48 hours, starting on 28 November. However, on 28 November, exchange of fire reportedly took place between Israeli forces and Hamas-led militant groups in the Beit Hanoun area in the north of Gaza. The truce has enabled humanitarian actors—primarily the Egyptian and Palestinian Red Crescent Societies and UN agencies—to enhance the delivery of assistance into and across Gaza.

On 26 November, the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) delivered 62 cargo trucks containing food, non-food items, water, primary health-care medicines, and emergency medical supplies to four humanitarian distribution centres in the north. This is the largest delivery of assistance to the north since the onset of the conflict.

On 26 November, 130,000 litres of fuel entered Gaza from Egypt. The authorities are 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 the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to support food distribution, operation of generators at hospitals, shelters, as well as water and sanitation facilities.

According to UNRWA—as of 28 November—over 1.8 million people (nearly 80 percent of the population) in Gaza are estimated to be internally displaced, including about 1.1 million Internally

Displaced Persons (IDPs) who are staying in at least 156 UNRWA shelters across all five governorates of the Gaza Strip.

Telecommunications overview

On 27 November, Office of the Quartet¹ reports stated that telecommunications services from Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) have intermittent connectivity across Gaza. MNOs—Jawwal and Paltel—have been allocated 9,000 litres by the authorities, to share to fuel their telecommunications towers daily. According to the Office of the Quartet, network providers need approximately 14,500 litres of fuel daily to power the 217 priority telecommunications towers across Gaza. 17 towers owned by the Ooredoo MNO network are not operating due to the lack of fuel. The 9,000 litres allocated to Jawwal and Paltel is 62% of the daily minimum requirement of 14,500 litres to power all telecommunications towers. Reportedly, part of the population can access 2G mobile network coverage and limited voice call capacity on the networks.

Since 11 October, the Gaza Strip has been under an electricity blackout, after the Israeli authorities cut off the electricity supply, and fuel reserves for Gaza's sole power plant depleted. Power to charge devices such as mobile phones is limited and completely unavailable in certain locations.

Some humanitarian agencies are relying on their independent connectivity platforms for access to telecommunications services. It remains a priority for humanitarian responders to obtain authorization from the authorities to set up independent platforms for telecommunications to ensure coordinated humanitarian service delivery to the population of Gaza.

ETC Activities

Coordination

The ETC coordinator is currently based in Cairo until the entry documents to travel to Jerusalem are finalized.

An ETC Information Management Officer (IMO) deployed to Cairo on 21 November and is now based there with the ETC Coordinator for up to one month to support reporting activities.

Importation of equipment

The ETC continues to coordinate a collective approach among partners for the importation of equipment into Gaza. On 24 November, the cluster submitted a revised list of the consolidated ICT equipment needs of partners as a follow up to the initial list submitted on 01 November. The ETC is awaiting feedback from the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT). An additional 11 partners have submitted their ICT equipment needs through the ETC survey—circulated on 16 November—and these needs are being consolidated with the participation and collaboration of all partners for submission to COGAT by the end of November. 33 respondents participated in the ETC survey.

On 25 November, the ETC shared a list of telecommunications equipment with the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) for a possible fast-track solution to import into Gaza through Al Arish airport. The ERC submitted the equipment list to the Egyptian authorities on 28 November for possible clearance, although the same list still required clearance for importation into Gaza by COGAT.

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

On 23 November, global ETC partners—Ericsson Response and Government of Luxembourg—confirmed the availability of telecommunications equipment in Sweden and Luxembourg respectively, ready for shipment to support the Gaza emergency response. The equipment will be shipped on loan and returned to the partners, once no longer required in the emergency.

Security Communications Services

The ETC is engaging with UNDSS to develop a Security Communications Services (SCS) implementation plan to support the humanitarian response in Gaza. A draft implementation plan was finalized by the ETC on 24 November and shared with UNDSS. The ETC received feedback from UNDSS and updated the document accordingly. The SCS implementation plan incorporates the immediate, mid-, and long-term 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

The ETC plans to meet with UNOCHA and REACH to plan and schedule a communications and information needs assessment for the population of Gaza. Dates for the activities are yet to be confirmed.

The ETC team is also participating to the inter-agency Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) working group discussions.

Staffing

The ETC Coordinator—currently based in Cairo—is waiting for visa issuance to deploy to Jerusalem.

To support the response, a FITTEST ICT specialist is approved to deploy to Cairo on 5 December and eventually to Gaza once entry clearance is issued by the authorities.

Dashboard

See the [ETC Dashboard](#) for an overview of planned service locations.

Funding

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 and address the immediate needs in Gaza. The initial amount will enable the ETC to carry out essential coordination and information management, as well as be ready to deploy shared communications services in up to two locations for the next 1 to 2 months, pending the evolution of the situation. On 24 November, a funding appeal for US\$250,000 was developed, presented, and submitted to potential global partners and potential donors.

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 [updated Flash Appeal](#) released on 06 November is requesting US\$1.2 billion to meet the needs of the entire population of Gaza and 500,000 people in the West Bank.

Challenges

Limited access to electricity, fuel, and telecommunications services continues to hamper the humanitarian response in Gaza.

The Rafah Border crossing between Egypt and Gaza is the only point open to deliver humanitarian relief items. The cross-border operations are now extremely restricted due to security checks and the lack of fuel.

Importation of telecommunications equipment into Gaza is lengthy and extremely challenging.

All items going into Gaza need to be approved by the Israeli authorities. Any items brought in via Egypt also needs 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 reach of operations will remain limited without a prolonged ceasefire, safe access, and significant funding for the humanitarian response.

The risk of cybersecurity issues in this emergency is considered extremely high.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Teleconference with partners on the response in Gaza will be held on **29 November at 13:00 UTC**.

The previous Global ETC Teleconference was held on **22 November**. All minutes are uploaded [here](#).

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

www.etcluster.org/emergency/palestine-conflict

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