

Sudan, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #10

Date: 04/04/2024 Time: 11:00 UTC

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

www.etcluster.org/emergency/sudan-conflict.

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

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Attendance

Chair

Internews
Plan International
SES Techcom
UNHCR
UNICEF

WFP

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Alan Kuresevic
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Peter Mindila
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Yousif Mirza

Agenda

1. Situation Update
2. ETC Sudan Update
3. ETC Partners Update
4. AOB

Minutes

1. Situation update

- The situation in Sudan remains unpredictable and volatile. Both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are enhancing and strengthening their military presence in areas of control. There is an increase in security check points and movement screening of civilian and humanitarian responders across the country.
- Since the outbreak of conflict on 15 April 2023, Sudan's national communications infrastructure has been impacted by direct damage to telecommunications towers and a deteriorated national power grid supply. A total telecommunications blackout occurred on 03 February. A month later, starting on 02 March, MNOs—Zain, MTN, and Sudani—are partially restored but characterized by erratic and intermittent connectivity for both voice and data services. Services from the MNOs continue to be cut off sporadically across the country, with protracted blackouts in the Darfur region. Efforts are continuing to resume some of the services. However, a specific timeline for full restoration cannot be provided now. Internet Service Provider (ISP)—Sudatel—is fully operational in Port Sudan, providing optical-fibre data connectivity service, to most humanitarian responders.

2. ETC Sudan update

Coordination

- ETC Coordination is based in Port Sudan, which continues as Sudan's temporary administrative capital since August 2023.
- The ETC continues to provide critical communications services in Port Sudan, Kassala, Kosti, Al Gedaref, and Damazine to meet the needs of humanitarian responders. Due to the dire security situation, ETC activities in Wad Madani have been put on hold and while services in Kosti are disrupted. Plans are underway to fully restore services in Kosti.
- The ETC is establishing new operational hubs in Dongola and Wadi Halfa, close to the border with Egypt. Partner—WFP—visited Dongola to undertake an assessment for the full establishment of the hub. Data connectivity services are critically needed for effective humanitarian response in Dongola and Wadi Halfa, where thousands of displaced people are transiting, trying to cross the border into Egypt.

Data connectivity

- ETC internet connectivity services are provided in three common operational areas—Port Sudan (32 sites), Kassala (eight sites) and Kosti (one site) using the WFP office premises network. In March, the ETC expanded its data connectivity network and services to the premises managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Port Sudan which hosts the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), UNWOMEN, and UNHCR offices.

- The ETC is engaging with WFP to import 15 advanced connectivity kits (two fixed and 13 mobile) to boost humanitarian access to internet connectivity services in the planned scale-up of the response. The connectivity kits will be distributed to all common operational sites on a priority need basis.

Security communications services

- On 05 March, the ETC imported 250 VHF handheld radio devices from WFP FITTEST in the UAE. The radio devices are now prepositioned as stock in Port Sudan to equip responders in the field, alleviate shortage of radio devices, and support the planned scale-up of the response.
- The Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Port Sudan, Kassala, Kosti, and El Gadaref remain intact and functional in the wake of the recent renewed conflict.
- The ETC programmed 24 VHF handheld radios—10 for UNDP and 14 for UNDSS. Further, HF radio installations were conducted for three vehicles—one from each of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Services for communities

- The ETC is also engaging with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Port Sudan, Dongola and Wadi Halfa to assess and identify gaps in the needs for communities in those locations.

Staffing

- There are currently three ETC staff members based in Port Sudan—Habib Shashati as ETC coordinator, Yousif Mirza as ICT specialist and Amani Azzam as ETC services for communities' project manager.
- The security situation remains extremely challenging to bring national staff back to Sudan who fled the conflict.

3. AOB

- N/a

The next Sudan ETC Global Partners teleconference will be held on 30 April at 11:00 UTC.

Acronyms

BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CERF	Central Emergency Relief Fund
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICT	Information and Communications Technology

IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MNO	Mobile Network Operators
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SOC	Security Operations Centre
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
UTC	Coordinated Universal Time
WFP	World Food Programme

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