Sudan, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #11

Date: 30/04/2024 **Time:** 12:00 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:

Global.ETC@wfp.org

Attendance

Chair	Caroline Teyssier, Global ETC
Cisco Crisis Response	Kevin Murphy Matt Altman
ICRC	Claudiu Mateescu
Internews	Asia Kambal Omnia Abbas
UNHCR	Ekue Ayih
UNICEF	Marc Dieng Nabiha Faruqi
WFP	Arthur Sawmadal Brent Carbno Ernest Wambari Habib Shashati Karen Barsamian Kesi Kalama Maria Saleh Sylvestre Ngoh 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. Severe clashes in North Darfur and North Kordofan have been intensifying between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), both seeking to enhance and strengthen their military presence in areas of control.

2. ETC Sudan update

Coordination

- A meeting of the local ETC Working Group took place on 21 April. Various topics were discussed, with the primary focus being on connectivity issues in Kordofan and Darfur. Representatives from the NGO platform expressed concerns regarding areas where access is currently unavailable. The main challenge for the ETC is getting permission from the government to enter and operate in these areas, compounded by the security concerns within the regions.

- With the support of WFP, the ETC has been advised by the relevant authorities to submit its request for equipment importation approvals, which is essential for expanding data connectivity services. Additionally, ETC telecommunications equipment is currently stored in Dubai. Approvals to import this equipment from Dubai to Sudan is in progress.

- Correspondence has been sent to the National Telecommunications Corporation (NTC) and government authorities to request assurance that in the event of national network failures in Sudan, the ETC and other humanitarian agencies (including NGOs) will still have access to services.

Data connectivity

- To strengthen data connectivity services using short-term mitigation measures, the ETC upgraded the fibre connectivity in Port Sudan and Kassala. The team also collaborated with WFP HQ, who provided a 150-watt Block Up Converter (BUC) to upgrade the existing VSAT setup in the country.

- For long-term stability of connectivity services for humanitarians in Sudan, the ETC is exploring enhancements to the local loop and the undersea cable to ensure more independent connectivity. This strategy is designed to maintain robust connectivity regardless of the operational status of external service providers.

Services for communities

- The ETC initiated discussions with UNDP and UNICEF including plans to establish humanitarian centres in Port Sudan and Kassala for affected communities. The ETC is exploring which cluster services may be required in these centres—the team has started conducting surveys initially at two locations, with plans for an upcoming mission to cover approximately three additional localities. The team aims to gain a deeper insight into the specific needs on the ground.

Funding

- ETC has requested USD 6.3 million for 2024. Currently, a total of GBP 500,000 has been allocated from the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Discussions have been initiated with donors at the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) meetings, emphasizing that additional funds are necessary for ETC to address the crisis.

3. ETC Partners Update

- Internews is evaluating the impact of the conflict in Sudan on civilians and their reliance on social media to meet essential needs. They reported that connectivity issues are affecting access to necessities like food and water. The ETC Sudan team will discuss further collaboration with Internews around services for communities.

4. AoB

N/a

The next Sudan ETC Global Partners teleconference will be held on <u>29 May</u> 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

Minutes: Rita Oneissi, Global ETC, Information Management and Performance Reporting Officer