

Syria – Conflict

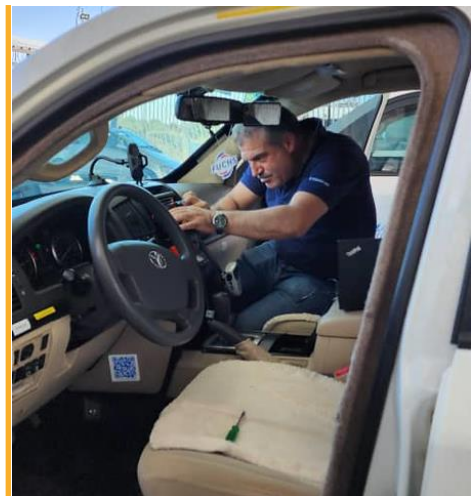
ETC Situation Report #61: July – August

Reporting period: 01/07/2023 to 31/08/2023

The ETC was activated in Syria in January 2013 in response to the conflict crisis. Situation Reports are distributed every two months.

Highlights

- To improve the reliability and speed of internet connectivity services in Homs, the ETC collaborated with UNHCR and WFP to rehabilitate the ICT network in the UN hub in Homs.
- ETC services in the UN hubs in Qamishli and Deir Ez-Zor got a significant boost following cluster rehabilitation activities to enhance the VHF radio network, upgrade Security Operations Centre (SOC) equipment, repair VHF radios in UN vehicles, and routine maintenance of the solar solution systems which powers the services.
- The ETC delivered basic VHF radio training session for 10 UN drivers in the Deir Ezzor hub.



The ETC installs a VHF radio in a humanitarian vehicle to enhance security communications. Photo: WFP/ETC

Activities

Coordination

The ETC re-submitted two requests to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) on 29 August for approval to import four units of ICOM VHF repeaters from WFP UAE and 10 satellite phones currently at the Lebanon border warehouse, enroute to Syria. The initial import approvals expired before the equipment had arrived in Syria. The equipment is being shipped to Syria through Lebanon. The equipment is part of back up stocks for future network expansion, repairs, and replacements.

On 15 August, the ETC sent out invitations to all agencies for the planned Security Communications System (SCS) capacity building workshop scheduled for 19 to 21 September in Beirut, Lebanon. The workshop is aimed at staff from partner UN agencies and INGOs based in Syria. The workshop will be led by {TESS+} trainers. The deadline for agencies to confirm intention to participate was 30 August.

Data connectivity

Together with UNHCR and WFP, the ETC successfully rehabilitated the ICT network in the UN hub in Homs on 10 July, improving the availability and quality of internet connectivity services used by humanitarian.

On 26 August, the ETC imported network access points and switches to expand data connectivity across the UN hubs and add to the reserve stocks for future network repairs.

Security communications

On 15 July, ETC services in the UN hubs in Qamishli and Deir Ez-Zor got a significant boost following cluster rehabilitation activities to enhance the VHF radio network, upgrade Security Operations Centre (SOC) equipment, repair VHF radios in UN vehicles, and routine maintenance of the solar solution systems which powers the services.

From 23 to 26 July, the ETC undertook a routine maintenance field mission to Qamishli. The ETC discussed with the Area Security Coordinator and recommended the establishment of an alternate SOC outside of the hub, as an emergency back-up to the existing SOC. The site for the alternate SOC is yet to be identified.

To improve security communications skills, the ETC delivered basic VHF radio training session for 10 UN drivers in the Deir Ezzor hub.

VHF base radios were installed at each of the two WFP warehouses in Aleppo between 31 July and 03 August.

A new power supply inverter was installed in the Homs UN hub SOC on 06 August to fully restore the solar power supply to all network equipment.

Routine maintenance was conducted for the VHF radio network, solar power system, and data network equipment in the Tartous UN hub SOC from 07 to 10 August.

The ETC is planning to install and set up VHF radio communications in two new vehicles belonging to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The date of the installation is yet to be confirmed with UNRWA.

On 16 August, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) requested support from the ETC to dismantle VHF radio and satellite phone communications equipment in two new armoured vehicles, awaiting clearance for import at Latakia port. The ETC is waiting for exact date confirmation to undertake the support activity.

Dashboard

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

Funding

The ETC has identified a funding requirement of US\$500,000 to cover its operations in Syria in 2023.

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) contributed US\$181,000 to the ETC operation in Syria in 2023.

With this grant, as well as funding carried over from contributions from BHA and the Government of Ireland in 2022, the ETC has met 58% of its funding requirement for 2023.

Challenges

Syria is facing a country-wide power crisis which impacts on ETC connectivity services.

The importation of equipment, lack of access to operational areas, and lengthy deployment authorisations from relevant authorities frequently affects the timely implementation of ETC activities across Syria.

Access to the earthquake-affected areas in northwest Syria is a significant challenge for the overall humanitarian response.

Contacts

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www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-conflict

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