

Syria – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #65: March – April

Reporting period: 01/03/2024 to 30/04/2024

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

Highlights

- The ETC successfully participated in the [Humanitarian Response Plan \(HRP\) 2024](#) process. The cluster is requesting US\$465,000 for 2024 activities to continue to provide vital services across eight common operational areas primarily in Syria, with one location in Türkiye (Gaziantep).
- The ETC coordinated with the UNDSS-managed Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Damascus to enhance and upgrade the communications infrastructure, including replacing the VHF radio base station and a faulty power inverter. Power needs at the SOC are now met to fully sustain all communications devices.
- On 23 April, the ETC installed a satellite phone docking station at the alternate UN Crisis Coordination Centre (CCC) in Damascus to ensure back-up communications in crisis.



The ETC resolved solar power issues at the UN hub in Aleppo in April. Photo: WFP/ETC

Activities

Coordination

The ETC successfully participated in the Syria [Humanitarian Response Plan \(HRP\) 2024](#) process. The cluster is requesting US\$465,000 for 2024 activities to continue to provide vital services across eight common operational areas primarily in Syria, with one location in Türkiye (Gaziantep).

The ETC has organized a cybersecurity workshop that will be held from 13 to 14 May in Damascus. 25 participants from UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are registered to participate. The workshop aims to enhance IT personnel awareness and knowledge to safeguard against cyber threats in common operational areas.

Coordination efforts have also been focused on preparing for maintenance activities for all communications systems in Syria's five UN hubs, scheduled for June and July.

The ETC coordinated with WFP to manage the re-exportation of the sample Push-to-Talk (PTT) devices that failed to meet the set Syrian telecommunications standards. The equipment is being returned to Dubai via Lebanon once movement is approved by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

Security communications

The ETC coordinated with the UNDSS-managed Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Damascus to enhance and upgrade the communications infrastructure. The VHF base station was replaced with a newer and different model approved by the relevant government authority. Further, on 16 April, the ETC resolved the back-up power issue in the SOC by replacing a faulty inverter. The backup power solution is now fully operational to sustain the power needs for all devices in the SOC.

On 23 April, the ETC installed a satellite phone docking station at the alternate UN Crisis Coordination Centre (CCC) in Damascus to ensure back-up communications in crisis.

On 23 March, the ETC shipped power cables and connectors to resolve the solar power problem at the SOC in Aleppo. The solar power was successfully restored on 03 April to power critical communications devices in the SOC.

On 18 March, the ETC programmed and enhanced the firmware on five VHF handheld radio devices for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to boost secure communications services for staff.

Additionally, the ETC guided and advised UNICEF to install a new VHF antenna for their vehicles to ensure a reliable and functional Security Communications System (SCS) on their convoys.

Data connectivity

The ETC continues to provide internet connectivity services to 300+ humanitarians from 15 UN agencies across eight sites in Syria.

Dashboard

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

Funding

In 2024, the ETC requires funding of US\$465,000 to maintain and expand services in eight common operational areas across Syria and Türkiye.

In February, USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) confirmed funding of US\$200,000 for ETC activities in 2024. Additionally, the ETC is carrying over US\$50,000 in funding from 2023. Therefore, the ETC is 54% funded out of the required US\$465,000 for 2024.

Challenges

The ongoing power crisis across Syria continued to pose significant challenges and impact the ETC's ability to maintain continuous services.

Moreover, the Syrian telecommunications standards have affected the importation and usage of communication equipment which means there is need for constant adaptation to changes as well as flexible response strategies.

The operation faces ongoing lengthy equipment importation challenges and the need for successful applications for authorizations from relevant authorities to move equipment. This can affect the timely implementation of ETC activities across Syria.

Contacts

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

www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-conflict

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