

Syria & the Surrounding Countries

ETC Situation Report #27

Reporting period 1/12/2016 to 28/02/2017

The ETC operates under the 'Whole of Syria (WoS)' approach which comprises activities in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan for an effective humanitarian response inside Syria. These Situation Reports are distributed every three months. The next report will be issued on or around 31/05/17.

Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) delivered a Let's Comm Digital training on deployment Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) in Dubai in December 2016 to 12 inter-agency participants from Syria, Jordan, Turkey, Algeria and Sudan.
- The ETC team installed a radio repeater in Homs to strengthen the security telecommunications network and enhance the security and safety of responders.



ETC team installing a satellite kit at WFP sub-office in Tartous.

Photo credits: ETC Syria

Situation Overview

Syria's civil war has been ongoing for almost six years with its civilians continuing to suffer from violence and repression, with some 13.5 million requiring humanitarian assistance. There are an estimated 4.8 million Syrian refugees hosted in countries across the region and a further 6.1 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs) within Syria. Humanitarian partners continue to deliver assistance to millions of people through regular programme and cross border operations.

All areas of former east Aleppo city have now become accessible to humanitarian according to a recent United Nations (UN) security assessment. However, remnants of war continue to hinder the UN's ability to assess needs and deliver humanitarian assistance in some areas.

The UN-coordinated inter-agency Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP 2016) was 55 per cent short in requested funding, or US\$1.8 billion, out of an overall requested of \$3.19 billion. This is concerning given the deteriorating situation across Syria, particularly given recent developments in Aleppo.

Response

Syria

- The ETC coordinator went on a mission to Aleppo in January to assess the installation of a satellite kit and the new location of the World Food Programme's (WFP), global lead of the ETC, office there.
- An assessment mission has been conducted in Homs and Tartous. In Homs, WFP Information Technology (IT), global lead of the ETC, supports over 70 staff at the UN Hub and provide technical support at the recently installed Communications Centre (COMCEN).
- A radio repeater was installed in Homs to expand the coverage up to 55 Km towards Damascus and towards Aleppo. In addition, a radio repeater was deployed in Qamishli to enhance the security telecommunications network.
- The team has installed three satellite kits in WFP sub-offices in Tartous, Aleppo and Qamishli. Internet connectivity can be only offered to UN agencies due to the country regulations.

Turkey

- In early February, the ETC conducted an assessment of the ETC services provided to humanitarian organisations and to determine how the cluster can continue in 2017.
- The ETC is operating in 5x locations and providing services mainly to UN agencies, including UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Programme (UNDP), WFP, UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) in Gazientep, Hatay, Sanliurfa and Kilis.
- Reyhanli has been identified as a new site. The ETC is working with nine UN agencies to provide Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio coverage there to ensure security telecommunication is in place.

Jordan

- The ETC is providing support in the 2x refugee camps: Azraq and Al Za'atri, hosted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Planned Response

Turkey

- The ETC will work to expand the radio network in two locations in 2017: Reyhanli and Izmir. A UN hub is planned in Izmir and the ETC will evaluate the possibility of deploying services there.

Jordan

- There are plans to start Services for Communities projects in one of the camps where the ETC is providing services (Azraq or Al Za'atri). A meeting with UNHCR is planned to discuss this further on 1 March.
- There is also a plan to upgrade the existing radio network from analogue to Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) due to its safer and enhanced features.

Lebanon

- A mission to assess ETC activities in Lebanon is planned in the first week of April.

Challenges

- The security situation remains the main challenge of ETC activities on the ground.
- Lack of access to operational areas is hampering the deployment of ETC services across Syria.
- The importation of telecommunications equipment for use at operational locations in Syria remains a challenge. The ETC is mitigating this issue by storing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment in Lebanon for a faster shipment to Syria when importation clearances are granted.

Funding

- For 2017 the ETC continues to appeal for US\$800,000 to provide lifesaving communications services to the response community in Syria and neighbouring countries.
- There is a carry-over from last year's ETC budget of US\$268,000 which will be utilised for ETC activities in 2017.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on 12 April 2017.

Information

- Humanitarian ICT responders supporting the Syria operation across the region are encouraged to share their contact details with Syria.ETC@wfp.org to facilitate coordination efforts.
- A dedicated information-sharing space has been created on the ETC website <https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-civil-unrest>. Organisations involved in the ICT response are encouraged to share updates with the ETC community to support the overall humanitarian response.

Shared ICT Services

| COUNTRY | SITE, CITY | PROVIDED BY | SERVICES | CUSTOMER |
|---------|------------------------------|---------------------|---|------------------------|
| SYRIA | WFP Country Office, Damascus | WFP ETC UNDSS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet connectivity Security telecommunications (radio) Coordination Hub Radio programming | Humanitarian community |
| | Homs | ETC UNDSS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) Radio programming | Humanitarian community |
| | Tartous | ETC UNDSS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) Radio programming | Humanitarian community |
| | Aleppo | ETC UNDSS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) Radio programming | Humanitarian community |
| | Qamishli | ETC UNDSS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) Radio programming | Humanitarian community |
| JORDAN | Azraq camp | ETC UNHCR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet connectivity Security telecommunications (radio) Radio programming | Humanitarian community |
| | Al Za'atari camp | ETC UNHCR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet connectivity Security telecommunications (radio) Radio programming Radio training | Humanitarian community |
| | WFP Country Office, Amman | WFP ETC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) Radio programming | Humanitarian community |
| LEBANON | WFP Country Office, Beirut | WFP ETC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) Radio programming Logistics Hub | Humanitarian community |

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|--------|-----------|------------|---|------------------------|
| TURKEY | Antakya | ETC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) | Humanitarian community |
| | Gazientep | WFP ETC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICT helpdesk Security telecommunications (radio) | Humanitarian community |
| | Kilis | ETC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) | Humanitarian community |
| | Reyhanli | ETC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Planned) Security telecommunications (radio) | Humanitarian community |
| | Sanliurfa | ETC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) | Humanitarian community |

ETC Services Map: https://www.etcluster.org/system/files/documents/SYR_ETC_Services_A3L_20161213.pdf



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Acronyms

| | |
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| COMCEN | Communications Centre |
| DMR | Digital Mobile Radio |
| ETC | Emergency Telecommunications Cluster |
| HRP | Humanitarian Response Plan |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| IDP | Internally Displace People |
| ISP | Internet Service Provider |
| IT | Information Technology |
| UHF | Ultra High Frequency |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | UN Development Programme |
| UNDSS | United Nations Department of Safety and Security |
| UNFPA | UN Population Fund |
| UNHCR | UN High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | UN Children's Fund |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ICT Emergency website: www.ETCluster.org

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: Syria.ETC@wfp.org

Background on the emergency:

As the Syria crisis enters its sixth year, civilians continue to bear the brunt of a conflict marked by unparalleled suffering, destruction and disregard for human life. 13.5 million people require humanitarian assistance, including 4.6 million people in need trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, where they are exposed to grave protection threats. Over half of the population has been forced from their homes, and many people have been displaced multiple times. Despite enormous challenges, the UN and its humanitarian partners continue to deliver lifesaving assistance and support to millions of people across the country every month.

The ETC was activated in Syria on 14 January 2013 to provide shared security telecommunications and internet connectivity services to the humanitarian community responding to the crisis. The ETC is operating under the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach which comprises activities in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan for an effective humanitarian response inside Syria.

Sources: OCHA, ETC