

Syria & the Surrounding Countries

ETC Situation Report #30

Reporting period 01/11/2017 to 31/01/2018

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. The next report will be issued on or around 30/04/18.

Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) delivered an Inter-Agency Let's Comm Digital training in November in Dubai to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) humanitarian support ETC operations in Syria and surrounding countries.
- Solar panels were deployed in the Communications Centre (COMCEN) in Qamishly to ensure security telecommunications services are provided uninterrupted to humanitarian.
- During a workshop organised by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Damascus on 19 December, the ETC presented its plans and activities in Syria and surrounding countries to local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).



Let's Comm Digital's participants expanding their skills on the deployment and maintenance of digital radio technology infrastructure and services.

Photo credits: WFP/ Christopher Alagna

Situation Overview

The overall humanitarian and protection situation for civilians displaced from Ar-Raqqa city, as part of the crisis in Northeast Syria, remains of high concern, particularly the impact of explosive hazards contamination on safe returns and safe access for humanitarian actors. In addition to the threat posed by explosive hazards, up to 80 per cent of all buildings in Ar-Raqqa city are severely damaged, and at risk of collapse.

In Deir-ez-Zor city, military operations and associated heavy aerial attacks have reportedly resulted in explosive hazards contamination. While the scope and scale remains unknown, this contamination is a major protection concern for IDPs who may return to their homes, while also impeding safe and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian needs remain high throughout the governorate. Access to the main water network

remains challenging for most communities in Deir-ez-Zor governorate. Disrupted supply routes continue to limit the quantity of food available.

Response

Syria

- The ETC delivered an Inter-Agency Let's Comm Digital training in Dubai during the third week of November. The training enhanced the digital radio technology skills of 10x staff from the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). These agencies are supporting ETC operations in Syria and surrounding countries.
- A new ETC Coordinator based in Damascus, Balamine Ouattara, has joined the operation. He will also be the ETC focal point for the ETC Whole of Syria response.
- As part of OCHA's Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) exercise for 2018, the ETC presented its planned activities and budget requirements for next year during the cluster defense meeting held on 13 November in Lebanon. The ETC requires approx. US\$800,000 to carry out its project in Syria and Surrounding Countries in 2018. In addition, the ETC presented its plans and activities for the Whole of Syria project to local NGOs in Syria.
- The ETC conducted a mission to Qamishly to deploy solar panels to power the Very High Frequency (VHF) repeater to ensure security telecommunications services remained uninterrupted. Regular maintenance was also conducted on the VHF radio services deployed at the COMCEN.
- The ETC in collaboration with UNICEF upgraded the Private Branch Exchange (PBX) phone system in the United Nations (UN) hub in Qamishly to have a digital phone system and additional 30x extensions.

Turkey

- In Gazientep, the ETC continues to provide Internet and customer support services at the UN hub. The need for these services, as well as the ones provided in Antakya and Reyhanli, will be reviewed during 2018.

Jordan

- In 2018, the ETC will continue to provide Internet connectivity and security telecommunications services in Za'atari and Azraq refugee camps in close collaboration with UNHCR.

Lebanon

- UNDSS and the ETC have started the migration from analogue to digital radio technology which will be completed by March 2018. Analogue radio services will not be operational as of August 2018. During the transition period, the ETC will provide the required support to humanitarian organisations using security telecommunications services in Lebanon.
- During 2018, the ETC will maintain the storage facility in Lebanon for to facilitate the importation of ICT equipment into Syria.

Planned Response

Turkey

- The ETC is exploring the possibility of conducting an inter-agency Ultra High Frequency(UHF) radio training in Turkey, either in Ankara or Reyhanli.

Lebanon

- The ETC will evaluate the feasibility of extending connectivity services to the affected population.

Jordan

- The ETC is awaiting permission from Jordan's military to deploy a satellite kit to address the critical connectivity needs of the humanitarian community in the north-eastern region of Jordan. This is the main priority of the ETC in Jordan for 2018.

Challenges

- The volatile security situation in Syria is hindering the ETC response on the ground.
- Lack of access to operational areas and receiving the deployment authorisations from relevant authorities affect the timely deployment of ETC services across Syria.
- Importing telecommunications equipment into Syria remains a challenge.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on 28 February.

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
	Qamishly	ETC UNDSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet connectivity 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 	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

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"> Security telecommunications (radio) 	Humanitarian community
	Sanliurfa	ETC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security telecommunications (radio) 	Humanitarian community

ETC Services Map: www.etcluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/SYR_ETC_Services_A3L_20180115_0.pdf



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Acronyms

COMCEN	Communications Centre
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PBX	Private Exchange Branch
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme
WoS	Whole of Syria

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