

Syria & the Surrounding Countries

ETC Situation Report #31

Reporting period 01/02/2018 to 30/04/2018

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (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 31/07/18.

Highlights

- The ETC plans to meet with the Government to seek approval for the migration of the security telecommunications network to digital mobile radio (DMR).
- The ETC has resumed the local Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Working Group with partners.



WFP enters Douma in Eastern Ghouta to deliver desperately needed food and assistance as part of an interagency convoy.

Photo credits: WFP

Situation Overview

Sustained hostilities in Duma, Eastern Ghouta, have led to a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Over 80,000 people have fled Eastern Ghouta since 9 March with 50,722 people currently being hosted in eight shelters in rural Damascus.

The UN and partners are appealing to all parties to the conflict to urgently allow for humanitarian access to the besieged population in Duma.

Following the military operations that began on 20 January, an estimated 137,070 individuals remain displaced from Afrin district to Tall Refaat, Nabul, Zahraa, and Fafin and other areas. The freedom of movement of IDPs in the Tall Refaat, Nabul, Zahraa, and Fafin areas remains restricted, and currently, IDP movements are only possible between the reception areas, while no return or onward movement has been permitted. Similarly, limited numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Afrin who were in Aleppo city when the military operations in Afrin started, are currently unable to return to their areas of origin.

Response

Syria

- The ETC team in Syria installed a new satellite kit in the World Food Programme (WFP) office in Homs. This will also be used as a back-up internet connectivity solution for all agencies working in this hub.
- The first ICT Working Group in a long time was held to discuss activities, plans, challenges and common services. This meeting will now be held monthly.
- The ETC plans to seek approval from the government to discuss the migration of the telecommunications network to DMR.
- The team is now in the final stages of recruitment of an IT assistant in Qamishli.
- Following a joint UN assessment mission to Raqqa the UN is not considering opening an office there due to insecurity and numerous mines across the city. However, a UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) assessment will go to Deir Al Zour in May to explore possibly reopening a UN office there so the ETC must be prepared.

Turkey

- A new head of WFP IT is now based in Turkey and will support ETC activities, especially in Gazientep.
- The ETC continues to provide IT Helpdesk services at the Gazientep hub.

Jordan

- The ETC continues to provide Internet connectivity and security telecommunications services in Al Za'atari and Azraq refugee camps in close collaboration with UNHCR.

Lebanon

- The ETC and UNDSS has updated the radio network.
- The ETC continues to maintain the storage facilities in Beirut to facilitate the importation of equipment into Syria.

Planned Response

Syria

- In Qamishli, the ETC is working to relocate the WFP office and shared Internet Service Provider (ISP) link to the new premises.

Turkey

- The ETC is exploring potential Services for Communities (S4C) projects in Turkey.
- An assessment is planned to the common hub in Gazientep to upgrade Internet connectivity which is shared with other agencies.



Lebanon

- An ETC mission will take place in May to Beirut to see what to do with unused ETC equipment.
- The ETC plans to extend the radio network with UNDSS in some locations around Beirut.

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 20 June.

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: <https://www.etcluster.org/document/etc-syria-services-map-may-2018>



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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