

Syria & the Surrounding Countries

ETC Situation Report #28

Reporting period 01/03/2017 to 04/06/2017

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 31/08/17.

Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) delivered radio communications procedures training to over 200 humanitarians in Aleppo, Damascus and Homs.
- The ETC received a contribution of US\$200,000 out of the required US\$670,170 that will be used to continue providing security telecommunications and Internet connectivity services and training in Syria and the surrounding countries until the end of 2017.
- An inter-agency mission was conducted in a military-controlled zone in the northeast of Jordan to explore the possibility of expanding the ETC Internet connectivity services.



The ETC delivered training on radio communications procedures to humanitarians across Syria.

Photo credits: WFP/ Kamal Ahmed

Situation Overview

The United Nations (UN) estimates that approximately 4.5 million people currently live in hard-to-reach locations, including approximately 624,500 people in besieged areas of Dayr az Zawr, Damascus, Homs, Idlib, and Rif Dimashq governorates.

Reports indicate armed hostilities in Quneitra and in Dar'a's southern neighbourhoods of Manshiyeh and Sajnah continue. Humanitarian actors remain concerned with negative impacts of a possible escalation in violence along the main highway connecting Damascus to the border with Jordan. So far, there has been no reported disruption of access for the inter-agency convoys from Jordan.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the offensive on Raqqa has intensified recently, with more than 100 air and artillery strikes reported to have caused many civilian casualties.

Response

Syria

- The ETC in Syria conducted radio training, as well as training of the trainers for 214 humanitarian staff across Syria, including the World Food Programme (WFP) and other UN agencies, International Non-Government Organizations (INGOs) and NGOs, such as the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Radio training was carried out in Damascus, Homs and Aleppo.
- To ensure continuous security telecommunications services, the ETC conducted maintenance of the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Communications Centre (COMCEN) in Damascus and delivered training to the UNDSS radio operators.

Turkey

- The inter-agency COMCEN in Gaziantep was hit by lightning which damaged the equipment. The equipment was repaired locally and services are now restored.

Jordan

- The ETC completed the inter-agency mission to explore the possibility of extending Internet connectivity services to humanitarians in northeast Jordan- The Berm. Following a significant increase in the number of Syrian asylum seekers at the border points of Hadalat and Ruqban, overall humanitarian operations have increased in that area.
- The ETC is still providing security telecommunications and Internet connectivity services in Za'atari and Azraq camps.

Lebanon

- The ETC delivered a training on radio communications procedures to 8x inter-agency participants between 28 April and 5 May in Beirut.

Planned Response

Syria

- The ETC plans to replace old radio repeaters in Damascus in order to continue providing support to three channels and improve the coverage of the security telecommunications services.

Turkey

- The ETC identified three locations to install Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio communications: Reyhanli, Izmir and Mersin. So far, the team only has permission from the government for Reyhanli and Mersin. By the end of this month the team plans to install the equipment in all three locations.

Jordan

- The ETC is planning upgrade the repeaters in both Za'atari and Azraq camps from analogue to digital due to its improved features which allow humanitarian to carry out their jobs safely.

Lebanon

- The ETC is exploring a possible deployment of Services for Communities (S4C) as part of a WFP project with American University in Beirut. This project aims at building skills of the Syrian youth community in Lebanon.

Challenges

- The volatile security situation is hindering the ETC response on the ground.
- Lack of access to operational areas affects the timely 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\$670,170 to provide lifesaving communications services to the response community in Syria and neighbouring countries.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on 14 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
	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

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/sites/default/files/documents/SYR_ETC_Services_A3L_20170323.pdf



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Acronyms

COMCEN	Communications Centre
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDP	Internally Displace People
IT	Information Technology
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
S4C	Services for Communities
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
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