

Syria & the Surrounding Countries

ETC Situation Report #39

Reporting period 01/12/2019 to 31/01/2020

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 31/03/2020.

Highlights

- The ETC in Syria achieved a user satisfaction rate of 85.5% for its services in 2019.
- The ETC has submitted its planned activities for 2020 in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Syria.
- An ETC mission to Tartous to install vital security communications infrastructure has been approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).



An ETC Telecommunications Assistant carries out upgrades to security communications equipment in Deir Ez-Zor, one of the ETC's priority sites.

Photo: WFP/ETC

Response

- On 28 January, the ETC in Syria submitted its Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2020 inputs. The deadline was delayed due to the security situation that has drastically worsened since November 2019. The ETC 2020 priorities will focus on enhancing the security of humanitarian workers through availability and effective performance of security communications services in all common operational hubs; supporting humanitarian workers by effectively providing shared connectivity solutions; and building the technical capacity of national UN and NGO staff through the delivery of technical training. The ETC will deploy communications infrastructure at up to four new proposed UN hubs as needed.

- The ETC User Feedback Survey was conducted for all users of ETC services in Syria and the surrounding countries in line with the Whole of Syria approach. Results showed an overall user satisfaction rate of 85.5% across the core ETC services. The full survey report has been finalized and can be found [here](#).
- Due to political tensions, the UN/Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) convoy scheduled to depart from Damascus to Rukban settlement in early December is on hold. One Senior ETC Telecommunications Associate had been requested to join the convoy to provide ETC services.

Planned Response

- The ETC is planning a mission to install vital security communications infrastructure in Tartous following approval received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The ETC currently provides some radio network coverage in Tartous from a base station but this does not extend to handheld devices. There is a need to deploy at least one repeater to improve these services, as identified during the ETC assessment mission to Tartous in August 2019.
- The ETC has been requested by the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the Qamishli field office in North-East Syria to carry out maintenance work on its radio infrastructure to ensure that security communications are fully operational during the deteriorating security situation in the area. The ETC has submitted a mission request to MoFA.
- Equipment to implement ETC Syria's country-wide security telecommunications radio infrastructure migration project has been cleared by security customs in neighbouring Lebanon and is now at the Syrian border. The ETC will plan deployments to Aleppo, Damascus, Homs and Qamishli once the equipment is received.

Challenges

- The humanitarian situation in northwest Syria has worsened drastically since November 2019 as hostilities continue to intensify. From 1 December 2019 to 27 January 2020, nearly 390,000 people were displaced in northwest Syria. With further mass displacement taking place since 27 January, this number is likely to continue to increase significantly.
- Lack of access to operational areas and receiving the deployment authorisations from relevant authorities is a major issue which frequently affects the timely implementation of ETC activities across Syria.
- Importing telecommunications equipment into Syria remains a major challenge.



Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference on Libya, Syria and Yemen operations will take place on **19 February 2020**.

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.
- The latest **ETC Syria Dashboard** can be found here: <https://www.etcluster.org/document/etc-syria-dashboard-0>

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