

Syria & the Surrounding Countries

ETC Situation Report #48

Reporting period 01/06/2021 to 31/07/2021

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 30/09/2021.

Highlights

- The ETC completed the installation of the solar power system in two Security Operation Centres (SOCs) in Deir Ez-Zor and Qamishli to support security communications services amid a country-wide power crisis.
- To improve its services, the ETC is consolidating the results it has gathered from a series of needs assessments carried out in five common operational areas where the ETC delivers services – Aleppo, Deir Ez-Zor, Homs, Tartous and Qamishli.
- 20 VHF radio devices have been shipped to Syria, where they will be installed in the six UNDSS-managed SOC.



The ETC installs a solar solution to power the Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Deir Ez-Zor.

Photo: WFP/ETC

ETC Activities

Coordination

- The ETC participated in the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) Defence of Sector Response Strategy meeting on 8 June. In 2021, the ETC is requesting a budget of US\$429,405 to carry out its planned activities. These activities include the provision of vital security communications services in 13 common operational areas in Syria and the surrounding countries, Internet connectivity services in six common operational areas, deliver capacity building sessions to humanitarian and install solar power systems in all six UNDSS-managed Security Operation Centres (SOCs) across the country.

Data connectivity

- To improve its services, the ETC is consolidating the results it has gathered from a series of needs assessments carried out in five common operational areas – Aleppo, Deir Ez-Zor, Homs, Tartous and Qamishli. The main concern raised across the assessments is the availability of power, which is critical to enable communication between humanitarians.
- The ETC is planning to upgrade the data connectivity infrastructure in all five common operational hubs where it provides connectivity services. Essential network equipment is being shipped to Syria and is expected to arrive in September for installation.
- The ETC has contributed to establish an interagency Long-Term Agreement (LTA) which will streamline connectivity services with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) across the UN agencies operating in Syria. The agreement will ultimately improve services for responders.

Security communications

- A shipment of telecommunications toolkits and spare parts for solar power equipment is currently at the Syrian border undergoing clearance processes. The equipment is expected to be delivered to Damascus in the coming weeks.
- Six satellite phones to equip the SOCs are still at the Syrian border. The authorities have received the required approval to clear the equipment. The ETC continues to follow up with the authorities and transporter regularly.
- The push-to-talk (PTT) radios ordered as a replacement for HF radios, based on the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) recommendations, have been inspected by security authorities and are now in the process of customs clearance.
- 20 VHF radio devices have been shipped to Syria, where they will be installed in the six SOCs.

Solar power solution

- The ETC completed the installation of the solar power system in the SOC in Deir Ez-Zor (13-23 June) and in the SOC in Qamishli (11-18 July) to support security communications services amid a country-wide power crisis. The solar power system has now been installed and is operational in five of the six SOCs in Syria, including in Aleppo, Deir Ez-Zor, Homs, Tartous and Qamishli. The ETC and UNDSS are planning to install the equipment in the final remaining SOC in Damascus in August.

Capacity building

- Alongside global ETC partner NetHope, the ETC in Syria is further developing its plan to deliver Disaster Management Training to interagency ICT staff. The date and location of the training is subject to COVID-19 restrictions. The training terms of reference (ToR) and participant selection are being finalized while procurement processes for the required equipment have been initiated.
- The planned advanced VHF training remains on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions.



Challenges

- Frequent power cuts across Syria impact on the delivery of ETC services.
- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact on the importation of equipment and movement of staff.
- Lack of access to operational areas and lengthy deployment authorisations from relevant authorities is a major issue which frequently affects the timely implementation of ETC activities across Syria.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **15 September 2021**.

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 on Syria – including an ETC dashboard, infographic and factsheet – can be found on the [ETC website](#).

Contacts

Syria.ETC@wfp.org

Atmaja Sembiring, ETC Coordinator for Syria
atmaja.sembiring@wfp.org

Hikmat Akad, ETC Operational Officer for Syria
hikmat.akad@wfp.org

Elizabeth Millership, ETC Information Management Officer for Syria
elizabeth.millership@wfp.org