CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (C.A.R.)

ETC
EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS
CLUSTER

OPERATION OVERVIEW

TYPE OF EMERGENCY:
CONFLICT

ETC ACTIVE SINCE:
2013

SITUATION OVERVIEW:

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
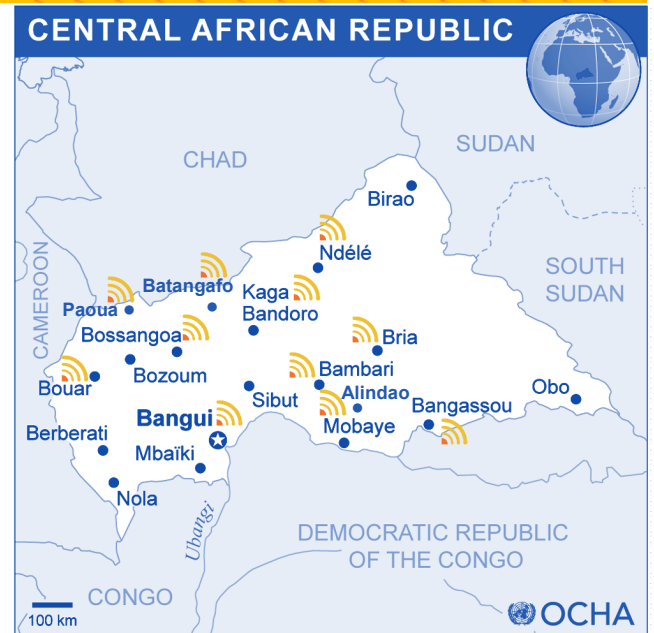
A protection crisis erupted in the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) at the end of 2013 resulting in severe violence and widespread displacement. The collapse of state, law and order and public services further exacerbated the situation. Since then, the country has remained extremely volatile. An escalation of violence in C.A.R. since late 2018 has brought the country towards the brink of a new humanitarian crisis, increasing the protection risks in multiple new hotspots across the country. Over five years after the beginning of the conflict, the humanitarian situation remains critical, leaving 2.9 million people (over half the population) in urgent need of assistance. The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has been activated since December 2013 in response to the crisis.

KEY DATA

NUMBER OF SITES
11

SERVICES PROVIDED
- Internet connectivity
- Security telecommunications
- Coordination
- Capacity building for local staff
- Radio programming
- Customer support
- Information Management

TRAININGS CONDUCTED
- Security telecommunications training delivered to UN agencies in collaboration with the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) project

FUNDING STATUS
- The ETC is 66% funded of US$1.5 million required
- The ETC received US$600,000 from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF)

PLANNED ACTIVITIES
- Set up radio channels for NGOs in Bria, Alindao and Berberati

CHALLENGES
- The ongoing security situation remains unpredictable
- A lack of resources to support all field locations

NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS SERVED
55

RESPONSE

- The ETC provides shared Internet connectivity services and/or security telecommunications to the response community in nine sites across the country: Alindao, Bambari, Bangassou, Bangui, Batangafo, Bossangoa, Bria, Bouar, Kaga-Bandoro, N'Dele and Paoua.

- OCHA has approved 2x project proposals submitted by the ETC and has allocated a total of USD 600,000—USD 300,000 for each project—from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) to be used for the following:

  ⇒ Services for Communities (S4C) 6-month project in three locations; 1) a call centre in Bria 2) an internet café and support for the local community radio in Bangassou and 3) an ETC CONNECT app in Kaga-Bandoro;

  ⇒ Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) recommendations implementation, part two. This is the second wave of a project which began with initial upgrades to security telecommunications systems in CAR from 11—24 March.

- The ETC deployed a UN and NGO radio channel in Bangassou, hosted by the MINUSCA tower at the IOM office to provide security telecommunications to humanitarians.

- The ETC completed missions to Bossangoa and Bouar to fix the NGO radio channels. The team also installed an additional UN radio channel to solve coverage issues experienced in Bouar.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

- The ETC will set up NGO radio channels in Bria, Alindao and Berberati.

- Following a hepatitis epidemic in Bocaranga, the local cluster lead agencies has requested the ETC to explore communication solutions such as radio broadcast messaging to communities.

- The ETC is planning an assessment mission to Amada Gaza and Gamboula to set up ETC services to meet the communication needs of humanitarians working in these areas.

- The ETC aims to set up a VHF network for UN agencies to ensure security telecommunications services for all humanitarians in Batangafo.

CHALLENGES:

- The security situation in the country remains a challenge for all humanitarians.

- There is a lack of resources to support all field locations.