

# Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh – Refugee Crisis

ETS Situation Report #57 May - June

Reporting period: 01/05/2023 to 30/06/2023

The ETS was activated in Bangladesh in August 2017 in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis. ETS Situation Reports are distributed every month.

## Highlights

- As part of preparedness activities ahead of the monsoon season, the ETS adjusted the 15-metre connectivity mast at the WFP e-voucher outlet in Camp 20 extension on 13 May. Further, the telescopic mast mountings in both Leda and Jadimura were strengthened and reinforced.
- In anticipation of Cyclone Mocha, preparedness activities to secure assets and installations in the coastal areas of Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, and Ukhiya have been carried out since 09 May. The ETS core data network was temporarily shut down on 13 May as a protective measure against the anticipated lightning threats from the cyclone, which hit on 14 May. The ETS network was restarted on 15 May.
- The ETS expanded its data connectivity services by adding eight new sites to the network. There are now 91 sites connected to the ETS network.



The ETS installed new solar powered batteries, for the VHF repeaters in Shamlapur Photo: WFP/ETS

## Activities

### Coordination

The ETS submitted a budget for emergency preparedness based on the ongoing monsoon season and the lessons learned from Cyclone Mocha, which hit the coastlines of Myanmar and Bangladesh on 14 May.

Members of WFP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBB) TEC team visited Bangladesh from 29 May to 02 June to meet with different stakeholders to discuss ETS services in Bangladesh. WFP, as the lead agency of the ETS in Bangladesh, will issue a report based on the mission including recommendations for the future of ETS services.

### Data connectivity

From 01 May to 30 June, the ETS provided data connectivity services to a monthly average 584 users from 14 NGOs and 11 UN agencies. A total of 91 sites are connected to the ETS network across three operational areas—Cox’s Bazar, Ukhiya, and Teknaf.

Eight new sites were added to the ETS data connectivity network since May. Three of the new sites are located in Camp 25: an IOM-managed hub, a joint UNHCR and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)-managed site, and a hospital managed by Save the Children were connected to the network. In addition, ETS data connectivity is now available at an IOM Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) site in Camp 24, IOM LPG site in Camp 9, an International Rescue Committee (IRC) managed women friendly space and gender-based violence (GBV) centre and two WFP warehouses located in Uttaran and Zhilonga. The total number of connectivity sites across the operation is now 91.

As a preventive measure in preparation for extreme weather conditions during the monsoon season, the ETS adjusted and lowered the 15-metre connectivity mast at the WFP e-voucher outlet in Camp 20 extension on 13 May. As a part of further preparedness activities, the telescopic mast mountings in both Leda and Jadimura were strengthened and reinforced. The monsoon season runs from June to October.

Preparedness activities to secure assets and installations in the coastal areas of Teknaf, Cox’s Bazar, and Ukhiya have been carried out since 09 May in anticipation of Cyclone Mocha. Configurations for all core network devices were backed up and the ETS core data network was temporarily shut down on 13 May as a protective measure against the anticipated lightning threats due to Cyclone Mocha. The category 4 tropical cyclone made landfall across the coastal areas of Myanmar and Bangladesh on 14 May. The ETS network was restarted on 15 May, with all sites operational except for two—Jamtoli and Hakimpara—where the fibre-optic cable had been damaged. Immediate repairs to the fibre-optic cable restored network connectivity at the two sites on 17 May.

ITU activated the Disaster Connectivity Map (DCM), a joint initiative with the ETC and GSMA, from 12 to 19 May to monitor impact of Tropical Cyclone Mocha. The humanitarian response to the cyclone impact focused on Rakhine state in Myanmar where damage to fibre and power networks was substantial. Cyclone Mocha did not make landfall in the refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar as anticipated, but still tore apart hundreds of makeshift shelters in other locations.

On 05 June, the ETS resolved a disruption to data connectivity services in the IOM Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) site in Camp 24 following strong monsoon winds. Similarly, data connectivity equipment had to be realigned and a broken cable was replaced in IOM’s Site Management (SM) office in Camp 25 due to strong monsoon winds.

Throughout May and June, the ETC continued routine network maintenance activities and its efforts to enhance its data connectivity services. The ETS switched to a new Internet Service Provider (ISP) across seven sites—Jamtoli, Camp 7 (TV tower), Balukali logistics hub, Hakimpara, Camp 16 (nutrition site), Camp 8W, and Camp 21 (Chakmarkul).

Data connectivity at Chakmarkul site has been down since 10 June due to a broken fibre-optic cable. The ETS, in collaboration with the Internet Service Provider (ISP), is exploring the possibility of connecting the site via radio link.

On 21 June, data connectivity was restored at the TV Tower site following a brief connectivity challenge with the Internet Service Provider (ISP). Camp 1 and Unchiprang Camp 2 were reconnected on the same day after the broken optical fibre was repaired and the firmware for all access points was updated.

The ETS enhanced its data network coverage by relocating the access points at the International Organization for Migration (IOM)-managed Camp 22 Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) site. For improved data connectivity, the ETS transferred connectivity services in three locations—Unchiprang, Chakmarkul, and Jamtoli—to a new Internet Service Provider (ISP).

For improved core network scalability, continuity, and system recovery, the ETS launched a project on 03 June to relocate the core data connectivity network from Ukhiya to Cox's Bazar. Physical installation of the equipment and firewall configuration is complete. Configuration of the Wi-Fi controller, network monitoring tool, and the user manager settings are in progress.

To ensure uninterrupted service provision, the ETS fully reconnected Jadimura site to the solar power solution to overcome the continued power cuts from the national grid electricity supply system.

### Security communications

From 01 May to 30 June, ETS security communications services were provided to a monthly average of 899 UN staff members—159 international staff and 740 national staff, utilized by 11 UN agencies.

The ETS extended the security communications network in Bangladesh through installation of the VHF radio network on Bhasan Char Island on 08 May.

On 22 May, the ETS installed new solar powered batteries for the VHF repeaters to ensure uninterrupted VHF radio connectivity. The repeaters provide VHF coverage for the marine patrol in Shamlapur.

The ETS checked two VHF repeaters located in Teknaf and Shamlapur for potential disruption risks or antenna deviation. The VHF network in the two sites, which were the most exposed to Cyclone Mocha, is up and running.

A monthly average of 5,974 calls were made on VHF handheld radios using the ETS radio network between April and June, with an average of 199 calls made per day.

### User support

The team resolved 161 issues reported to the ETS helpdesk from 01 May to 30 June.

## Dashboard

See the [ETS Dashboard](#) for an overview of service locations.

## Funding

The 2023 budget for the ETS is US\$1.15 million, which was allocated by the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) after a decrease in available funding for sectors in the response. US\$970,000 was received from the United States Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs (BHA), bringing the ETS funding status for 2023 to 84%.

## Meetings

The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place at a date yet to be finalized.

## Contacts

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All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website:

[www.etcluster.org/emergencies/bangladesh-refugee-crisis](http://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/bangladesh-refugee-crisis)

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