Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh – Refugee Crisis
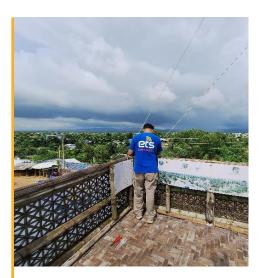
ETS Situation Report #59
Reporting period: 01/09/2023 to 31/10/2023

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

Highlights

- Four new sites were added to the ETS data connectivity network. A total of 100 sites are now connected to the ETS network across three operational areas—Cox's Bazar, Ukhiya, and Teknaf—marking a 2023 milestone achievement of data connectivity provision in Bangladesh.

- The ETS is migrating all its existing sites from Ukhiya core network to a new core ETS network in Cox's Bazar for improved services. So far, five out of 100 sites have been successfully migrated.
- Tropical Cyclone Hamoon made landfall over the coast of Bangladesh between Khepupara and Chittagong on 25 October as a tropical storm, causing downtime on most Internet Service Provider (ISP) links and disabling VPN authentication on the ETS network. By 26 October, services had been restored on the ETS network.

The ETS installs data connectivity at Kutupalong Registered Camp 2. Photo: WFP/ETS

Activities

Coordination

The ETS launched the annual 2023 service user satisfaction survey from 03 to 24 October with a response rate of 16% (108 responses from 665 users) and overall user satisfaction rating of 87%. The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is 80% user satisfaction. The results are being consolidated in a final report—scheduled for publication by end of November. The feedback from users will be used to inform gaps and planning for improved service provision in 2024.

Data connectivity

Four new sites were added to the ETS data connectivity network between 01 September and 31 October. A total of 100 sites are now connected to the ETS network across three

operational areas—Cox's Bazar, Ukhiya, and Teknaf—marking a 2023 milestone achievement of providing data connectivity to 100 sites in the Rohingya refugee camps.

The new sites are:

- Two learning centres in Camp 15;
- A Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)-managed child friendly space site in camp 15 and;
- The IOM-managed Shelter hub in Camp 9 / 10 respectively.

From 01 September to 31 October, the ETS provided data connectivity services to a monthly average of 787 users from 14 NGOs and 11 UN agencies.

The ETS is migrating its network services from all existing sites in Ukhiya to a new core ETS network in Cox's Bazar for improved services. So far, five out of 100 sites have been successfully migrated. The project to relocate the core data connectivity network from Ukhiya to Cox's Bazar is ongoing since July. Data connectivity is stable across the five migrated sites. Other sites will be migrated on a gradual scale, to ensure uninterrupted services, until all sites are relocated to the new core network in Cox's Bazar.

Tropical Cyclone Hamoon made landfall over the coast of Bangladesh between Khepupara and Chittagong on 25 October as a tropical storm, causing downtime on most ISP links, disabling VPN authentication on the ETS network, and affecting all Mobile Network Operators (MNOs). By 26 October, services had been restored on both the ETS network and for some MNOs.

The ETS installed data connectivity for the Education Sector lead—UNICEF—to enable mobile tablets to be updated and synchronized for use in the camp classroom areas.

A new upgraded switch was installed in Camp 14 IOM Shelter Management site in Ukhiya to mitigate the impact of frequent optic fibre cut incidents for uninterrupted data connectivity service provision.

Multiple data connectivity maintenance activities were conducted across the sites, from 01 September to 31 October. The fibre cut incident affecting the e-voucher service in Hakimpara was resolved. The network outage at the Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) Hospital in camp 20 extension was restored, within 10 hours of downtime. The power outage at the supplier's main tower in Kutupalong was fixed and the solar power solutions in the IOM-managed centre in Camp 18 and Camp 03 Nutrition Centre were restored.

The IOM SARI hospital in Camp 20 Extension will relocate soon. The ETS conducted the assessment and is getting ready to connect the hospital, once shifted to the new location.

Security communications

From 01 September to 31 October, ETS security communications services were provided to a monthly average of 901 UN staff members—151 international staff and 750 national staff, utilized by 11 UN agencies.

Two faulty data radio devices in Camp 14 were replaced to improve security communication for humanitarian responders.

User support

The team resolved 116 issues out 125 reported to the ETS helpdesk from 01 September to 31 October.

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%.

Contacts

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

www.etcluster.org/emergencies/bangladesh-refugee-crisis

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