

Lebanon

Global ETS Teleconference

Date: 13/08/20

TIME: 13:00 UTC

Attendance

Chair	Caroline Teyssier	(Global ETC), UAE
CISCO TacOps emergency.lu	Matt Altman Gilles Hoffman Roland Nurenberg	US Lebanon Luxembourg
Ericsson Response ESOA Global Eagle ICRC	Lars Ruediger Natalia Vicente Maria Laura Silva Alfredo Bermudez Salazar Joelle Kuhn	Lebanon Belgium US Switzerland Switzerland
Impact Initiatives Inmarsat	Dave Curtis Gary Bray Tommy Flowers Joe Carr	Switzerland UK UK UK
Internews	Susanne Nasr Fischer Meghann Rhynard-Geil Stellar Murumba	US US US
Intelsat MSB NetHope	Colleen Parent Mats Ljung Dagbjartur Brynjarsson Rami Shakra	US Sweden Iceland Lebanon
Plan International REACH Save the Children SES Thuraya UNFPA UNHCR	Jon Winder Lukasz Kruk Mark Hawkins Alan Kuresevic Najwa Natalie Ayoub Mohamed Adel Abdelkader Min Sun Alexander Thomas Jeanine Mourad	UK Switzerland UK Luxembourg US Egypt Denmark Denmark Lebanon
UNICEF WFP	Ike Uzoegwu Dalia Mansour	US Egypt

Gabriela Alvarado	Italy
Emma Gilson	Italy
Phyza Jameel	Italy
Patricia Facultad	Italy
Katherine Gagnon	Italy
Gilles Cimetiere	Italy
Jeanfrancois Cuche	Italy
Duncan Oyando	Lebanon
Prakash Muniandy	Lebanon
Elizabeth Millership	UAE
Dane Novarlic	UAE
Gianluca Bruni	UAE
Richard Egwangu	Uganda

Teleconference started at 13:03 UTC

Agenda

1. **Global ETS update**
2. **Partner updates**
3. **AOB**

Minutes

1. GLOBAL ETS UPDATE

- Under the coordination structure of the Emergency Operation Cell (EOC) in Lebanon, emergency telecommunications has been identified as a priority sector in the humanitarian response to the Beirut Port explosions. All sectors report to the EOC, which is accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) through the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).
- An Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) Coordinator deployed to Beirut on 11 August to coordinate with partners and national operators and to assess the communication needs of the response community and affected population.
- The ETS Coordinator in Lebanon joined an inter-agency United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) assessment mission on 11 August in the Port of Beirut. The initial assessment showed that data connectivity has been wiped out in the port area worst-hit by the explosions.
- In addition to the search and recovery teams currently accessing the site, there is likely to be an upscale of humanitarian responders to support the rehabilitation of the port and to support its initial operations. There is a need for connectivity services to support these activities.

- Just outside the port area, the buildings along the populous St Michael Rd were severely damaged in the explosions, with some buildings completely destroyed. Most of the residents living here have left. Recovery efforts in this location are moving forwards quickly.
- On 13 August, the ETS, an Ericsson Response volunteer and an UNDAC representative met with community leaders to carry out an assessment of the communication needs of the affected community in Karantina, a predominantly low-income neighbourhood in north-eastern Beirut. Multiple NGOs – including local NGO Shield – are responding in this location to the food and medical needs of several hundred members of the affected community. There may be a need for communications services to support the affected community in this location.
- The ETS has met with one of the two national Mobile Network Operators (MNO) – Touch – who report that although its network services are functioning, its data centre was destroyed in the explosions and there is a shortage of equipment to fully restore services. Touch is ready to support and work with the ETS to provide data connectivity in the port area while restoring its full services.
- Following these assessments, the ETS has submitted its proposal to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) flash appeal on 13 August. The ETS outlined a US\$370,000 budget to cover an initial three-month response to:
 - Provide temporary data connectivity in the port area to support search and recovery teams, distribution of humanitarian assistance and rebuilding efforts until the services of national MNOs are fully re-established.
 - Provide data packages and access to connectivity via Wi-Fi hotspots from available MNOs for the most socio-economically vulnerable of the affected population to enable access to information and humanitarian assistance and allow contact with loved ones;
 - Strengthen security telecommunications networks in country to support the safety and security of the humanitarian community operating in country amid the escalating security situation.
- In line with inter-sector planning, the ETS will also continue to identify longer-term activities for recovery and impact mitigation.
- The ETS plans to source locally available equipment and engage with national providers and partners in the response to the Beirut Port emergency. International partner assistance and surge capabilities will be called upon, if needed, but are not foreseen at this stage.
- The ETS will engage across the sectors to align on which areas are being prioritized to support affected communities. Mapping resources being prepared by ETS partner, WFP, could be utilized by the ETS and other sectors to identify those areas of the 2km radius blast zone that is most densely populated by affected communities who are socio-economically vulnerable.
- An ICT Working Group meeting in support of the humanitarian response to the Beirut Port explosions will be held on 14 August. Partners on the ground are invited to join.

2. ETS PARTNER UPDATES

- **Ericsson Response** – An Ericsson Response volunteer – based in Beirut – is supporting the ETS to assess the affected areas of the city.

Ericsson Response is ready to support the ETS in providing data connectivity in the port or for the affected population, if needed.

- **NetHope** – NetHope is ready to support the ETS in its activities and is already engaging closely with the ETS Coordinator. A prioritized area of collaboration is the provision of communications services – such as connectivity hotspots and SIM cards – for the affected population, particularly those whose homes were damaged and the volunteers who are accommodating them. A key issue for those who are socio-economically vulnerable is affordability of services – and therefore access to information – rather than the availability of connectivity.

NetHope has identified a need for mobile charging stations to allow affected communities access to mobile phones. A number of NetHope members are engaging in this activity – NetHope is identifying the locations in which partners are providing this service and will share this information with the ETS.

Three key concerns have been expressed by NetHope members, including:

The resignation of the Lebanese government may worsen instability in the country. This may impact on the availability of fuel and power services that support equipment used at critical sites such as call centres and blood banks. NetHope is assessing the situation and engaging with the Lebanese Red Cross to ensure members are equipped with backup solar solutions.

There are concerns about the cohesiveness of coordination in the response. Work is ongoing by the HC to establish and streamline the coordination structure amongst the response community. All are encouraged to invite organizations to engage with the established EOC and sectors where possible.

There is a perceived need to further consolidate the flow of information being generated from a multitude of assessment and mapping efforts as part of the humanitarian response.

- **Internews** – The local media in Beirut has been severely hit by the port explosions, with many offices damaged and equipment such as laptops and cameras destroyed. Mapping and assessment of the damage is being carried out. The damage has impacted on the provision of access to information for affected communities. Rehabilitation of the local media is a priority to ensure this service can continue.
- **UNHCR** – In the aftermath of the port explosions, UNHCR in Lebanon is focussing on shelter, health and protection and is engaging with the Lebanese Red Cross to establish temporary shelters for those with nowhere to go, such as the large Syrian refugee population in Beirut.

UNHCR is engaging with the protection division to identify the number of refugees injured in the blasts (124 as of 11 August, 20 of these seriously injured), the number of refugees still missing (seven as of 11 August) and the number of refugees who lost their lives (at least 34 reported).

A UNHCR call centre was upscaled and a dedicated helpline set up to be able to receive calls 24/7 from refugees in need of information and assistance.

UNHCR will connect the Global ETC advisor for services for communities to its protection officer to identify collaborative areas of engagement.

AOB

- Key documents and information on the Beirut Port Explosions emergency is being consolidated on the OCHA humanitarianresponse.info page: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/lebanon>

Teleconference / Meeting ended at 13:50 UTC

The next Global ETS Teleconference on Lebanon will be held on Thursday 20 August 2020 at 13:00 UTC.

Acronyms

EOC	Emergency Operation Cell
ESOA	EMEA Satellite Operators Association
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IT	Information Technology
MNO	Mobile Network Operators
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN International Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to the ETS operation in Lebanon can be found on the website:
www.etcluster.org/emergency/lebanon-beirut-port-explosions

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact:
Lebanon.ETS@wfp.org

Minutes: Elizabeth Millership, WFP