

Central African Republic – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #46

Reporting period 01/09/2021 to 31/10/2021

These Situation Reports will be distributed every two months. The next report will be issued on or around 31/12/21.

Highlights

- A Global ETC mission to CAR was conducted with the Regional Bureau in Dakar (RBD) from 25 September to 9 October to review operational requirements and 2022 planning, alongside the ETC team in CAR. The findings informed the ETC's draft submission to the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).
- The ETC launched the phone booth and charging station project for affected communities in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Bria on 25 September to enable access to critical sources of information. Read more about the services for communities in Bria [here](#).
- The ETC automated the feedback system used in the UNICEF-led Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) in Bria, which is enabling people to explain their needs and to request assistance in a timely manner.



ETC partner, INTERSOS, registers a user of the phone booth service in Bria.

Photo credit: WFP/Elizabeth Millership

ETC Activities

Coordination

- A joint Global ETC mission to CAR was conducted with the Regional Bureau in Dakar (RBD) from 25 September to 9 October to review the current requirements of the operation, adjust the 2021 plan and inform 2022 planning, while also providing support with visibility and data collection processes alongside the ETC team in CAR. The team engaged with stakeholders and partners in Bangui, Bria, Bangassou and Bambari. The mission report is being finalized.
- In preparation for 2022 planning, the ETC is engaging with the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) process and has drafted its submission. In 2022, the ETC will continue to support humanitarian response operations in CAR by providing and maintaining infrastructure and services for internet connectivity,

security communications networks and the extension of services for the population affected by the humanitarian crisis.

Internet connectivity

- Throughout September and October, the ETC provided internet connectivity services to an average of 671 users across 11 sites in CAR to facilitate the humanitarian response, including for 12 UN agencies and 56 I/NGOs.
- The ETC is working with the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to re-establish internet connectivity in Batangafo after an outage occurred on 27 September.

Security communications

- A mission took place to Kaga Bandoro to re-activate the UN radio channels.
- The ETC provided technical support to the International NGO Safety Organization (INSO) by programming nine VHF radios and training their IT assistant in radio configuration.
- Technical support and guidance were provided to NGO, Triangle Génération Humanitaire (Triangle GH), to configure five radio devices.
- The ETC provided support to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to assess the HF and VHF systems in their vehicles.
- The ETC provided technical support to Concern Worldwide to maintain their VHF/HF mobile radios in four vehicles, maintain VHF/HF base station radios in their Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Bangui, as well as providing training for three Concern Worldwide radio operators and 50 staff on using the radios.
- The ETC configured 25 VHF handheld radios for partner INTERSOS.
- Inter-agency planning is ongoing with UNDSS, UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP to strengthen security communications services across the country and support implementation of the remaining Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) recommendations. Personnel are being identified to provide technical support and to carry out the pending recommendations. Each UN agency has carried out a stock-take of telecommunications equipment to verify availability of equipment for deployment.

Phone booth and charging station services

- On 25 September, the ETC – supported by INTERSOS – launched a phone booth project for affected communities in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Bria. The IDP site – known as PK3 – is home to the country's largest displaced population of nearly 39,000 people. The designated phone booths enable displaced people to communicate with their families and to contact humanitarian helplines free-of-charge. At the site, the ETC has also set up free charging facilities for communities to charge their phones in a secure environment. Read more about the services for communities in Bria [here](#).
- Since the free-of-charge phone booth services were launched, a total of 238 people have used the service, of which 30 percent were women, 47 percent men, and the remaining 24 percent were children.



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- A total of 902 devices have been charged using the power charging facility, including mobile phones, radio receivers and torchlights. Users of the service were 20 percent women, 51 percent men, and the remaining 29 percent of users were children and households.

Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM)

- The ETC enhanced the UNICEF-led Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM), a service which enables displaced people in Bria's IDP camp to contact humanitarians to explain their needs and to request assistance. A new automated system integrated into the CFM by the ETC will ensure that feedback from communities is reported in a timely manner and assistance provided within a specific timeframe, ensuring assistance reaches those who need it most.
- An average of 255 cases are registered through the CFM per week and distributed to humanitarian partners.

COVID-19 call centre

- Since the re-launch of the toll-free '1212' COVID-19 helpline in June, operators have registered a total of 30,618 calls. An average of 3,400 calls are taken per week, of which 65 percent relate to vaccination and secondary effects, five percent are requests for information about measures to control COVID-19, and the remaining 30 percent are related to other concerns. The ETC supports the Ministry of Health-managed COVID-19 call centre with funding, training, and technical support.

Funding

- In 2021, the ETC has received critical funding of US\$320,000 from the OCHA Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) out of a required total of US\$870,000 to carry out planned activities in 2021.
- At just 37 percent funded, the ETC requires urgent funding of US\$550,000 – in the context of CAR, the provision of communications services is vital to connect displaced communities with family members and enable humanitarians to deliver assistance.

Challenges

- Funding constraints remain a critical element in enabling the team to move forward with several ongoing ETC activities in CAR.
- The volatile security situation in the country remains a challenge for all humanitarians.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **17 November 2021**.



Information

- ICT responders operating on the ground in CAR are encouraged to share their contact details with CAR.ETC@wfp.org to facilitate local coordination.
- All the information related to the ETC response in CAR can be found on the [dedicated emergency page](#) on the ETC website.

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