Central African Republic (CAR) – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #52
Reporting period: 01/04/2022 to 30/04/2022

The ETC was activated in C.A.R. in December 2013 in response to the conflict crisis. Situation Reports are distributed every month.

Highlights

The ETC meets with the Red Cross in Bangui. Photo: WFP/ETC

- In April, the ETC provided internet connectivity services to 525 humanitarians across 11 sites in CAR to facilitate the humanitarian response, including for 12 UN agencies and 56 I/NGOs.

- A mission was carried out from 1-3 April in Bambari to re-establish radio channel 5, managed by the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS).

- The ETC provided support to the Red Cross to assess their office premises in Bangui in preparation for the installation of a HF/VHF radio communications network.

Activities

Internet connectivity

In April, the ETC provided internet connectivity services to 525 humanitarians across 11 sites in CAR to facilitate the humanitarian response, including for 12 UN agencies and 56 I/NGOs.

The ETC re-established connectivity services in Alindao following a power outage in the OCHA site where the equipment is installed.

From 25-27 April, the team re-established the VSAT internet link in Bria after it went down for several days due to a faulty modem. The modem has now been replaced by the Internet Service Provider (ISP) technician to re-establish the service.

Security communications

A mission was carried out from 1-3 April in Bambari to re-establish radio channel 5, managed by the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS).

The ETC programmed a total of six high frequency (HF) radios for the World Health Organization (WHO) and 10 VHF radios for Action Contre Faim (ACF).

The ETC provided support to the Red Cross to assess their office premises in Bangui in preparation for the installation of a HF/VHF radio communications network.

COVID-19 call centre

Since the re-launch of the 24/7 toll-free '1212' COVID-19 helpline in June 2021, led by the Ministry of Health, operators have registered a total of 117,295 calls. In April, an average of 3,348 calls were taken

per week, of which 60 percent related to COVID-19 vaccinations; three percent related to COVID-19 pass; six percent related to COVID-19 alerts; nine percent related to information on measures to control COVID-19; and 18 percent related to other concerns such as domestic violence and road accidents.

As part of its procurement plan, the ETC met with a telecommunications and networking solutions provider to initiate the purchase of equipment to improve the COVID-19 call centre service in Bangui as well as the phone booth services in Bria. The upgrade will improve the automatic queue management system and establish a remotely accessible database which facilitates direct data reports.

Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM)

The Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) in Bria is no longer operational following the end of its six-month pilot phase. The ETC is working with UNICEF to purchase the equipment and software needed to expand the CFM service to five additional sites in CAR. The CFM enables people to explain their needs and to request assistance. Feedback is channelled to humanitarian partners to address via a feedback and complaints system automated by the ETC.

Phone booths

In April, an average of 121 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) per week used the ETC's free-of-charge phone booth service in Bria's IDP camp, of whom 54 percent were men, 28 percent were women, and the remaining 18 percent were children and young people. A total of 2,096 people have used the ETC free-of-charge phone booth in Bria since it opened in September 2021.

Charging station

In April, an average of 386 IDPs per week used the ETC's free-of-charge charging facilities in Bria, of which 34 percent were men, 24 percent were women, and the remaining 42 percent were children and young people. Since the service was launched in September, 9,096 people have used the charging station to power up their devices, including mobile phones, radio receivers and flashlights.

Funding

In 2022, the ETC requires funding of US$1.95 million. With the OCHA contribution of US$450,000, the ETC in CAR is 23 percent funded in 2022. 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.

The ETC has paused implementation of upgrades to the security communications network—as recommended by Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS)—in the remaining six sites across the country. Recommendations have so far been carried out in eight sites. Funding is needed for additional equipment.

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 be held on **18 May 2022**.

Contacts

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

www.etcluster.org/emergencies/central-african-republic-conflict

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