Central African Republic (CAR) – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #61
Reporting period: 01/01/2023 to 31/01/2023

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

Highlights

- The ETC Learning Centre and Cyber Café in Bangassou was launched on 26 January in a ceremony attended by government, UN, and NGO representatives. The centre will provide opportunities for members of the local community to gain computer literacy skills.

- Two missions were conducted to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Bria to install solar power systems to support the ETC's services for the affected population and to oversee the ongoing work to upgrade the phone booth facilities.

- On 13 January, the ETC installed a new VHF repeater to enable NGOs in Kaga Bandoro to use the security communications radio network.

Construction work on the ETC Learning Centre and Cyber Café in Bangassou is finalised before the launch of the service. Photo: WFP/ ETC

Activities

Learning Centre and Cyber Cafe

The construction of the ETC Learning Centre and Cyber Café in Bangassou, overseen by implementing partner INTERSOS, was completed on 23 January. In preparation for the opening of the centre, the ETC conducted a mission to Bangassou on 12 January to recruit members of the local community to work as trainers in the centre under the management of the Central African Red Cross. The centre is equipped with internet connectivity and computers and will provide opportunities for people of all ages—especially youth from the community—to gain valuable computer literacy skills.

On 26 January, the centre was officially launched in a ceremony attended by local and national government officials and UN and I/NGO representatives.

Internet connectivity

The ETC is currently providing VSAT connectivity to an average of 68 users per week in Batangafo with equipment provided by the Government of Luxembourg. The site, which serves more than 12 national and international NGOs, is the only remaining location in CAR provided with ETC connectivity since the cluster's services were disconnected in 10 sites across the country in August 2022 due to a lack of funding.

Security communications services

On 13 January, the ETC installed a new VHF repeater to enable NGOs in Kaga Bandoro to use the security communications radio network. The ETC also programmed six VHF handheld radios for IOM.

COVID-19 call centre

Since the re-launch of the 24/7 toll-free '1212' COVID-19 helpline led by the Ministry of Health in June 2021, operators have registered a total of 246,921 calls. In January, an average of 3,259 calls were taken per week, of which 48 percent related to COVID-19 vaccinations; eight percent related to information on measures to control COVID-19; six percent related to COVID-19 alerts; five percent related to COVID symptoms; one percent related to the COVID-19 pass; and 32 percent related to other concerns such as domestic violence and road accidents.

Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM)

The CFM in Bria enables people living in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp to explain their needs and to request assistance. Feedback is channeled to humanitarian partners to address via a feedback and complaints system automated by the ETC.

A total of 5,312 cases have been registered via the CFM since it launched for the first time in September 2021. An average of 116 cases per week were registered throughout January.

The ETC is working with INTERSOS on the plan to expand the CFM service to a further five sites in Bambari, Batangafo, Bossangoa, Kaga Bandoro, and Paoua. Training for the new CFM focal points in Bambari and Kaga Bandoro is scheduled to take place in February.

Phone booths

On 6 January, the ETC conducted a mission to Bria to install a new solar power system to support the charging station, phone booth, and CFM services in the camp. Another mission was undertaken from 25 to 27 January to monitor the ongoing work to upgrade the phone booth facilities. The cluster is working with the construction company and implementing partner INTERSOS to speed up the progress of the work.

In January, an average of 165 calls were made per week using the ETC phone booths. A total of 5,428 calls have been made using the ETC phone booth service in Bria since it opened in September 2021.

Charging station

In January, an average of 509 devices were charged each week at the ETC's free charging facilities in Bria. Since the service was launched in September 2021, 30,203 devices have been powered up used the charging station, including mobile phones, radio receivers and flashlights.

Dashboard

See the ETC Dashboard for an overview of service locations.

Funding

The ETC in CAR requires USD 1.2 million to fund its provision of critical communications services to humanitarian and the affected population in 2023. So far, no funding has been received towards this requirement.

Challenges

Funding constraints remain a critical challenge to the ETC's continuation of ongoing activities and expansion of ETC services 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 **23 February 2023**.

Contacts

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

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

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