

Central African Republic (CAR) – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #64 May - June

Reporting period: 01/05/2023 to 30/06/2023

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 submitted a US\$160,300 funding request to OCHA and UNHCR to support the cross-border humanitarian response in Birao and Am Dafock for six months. Thousands of Sudanese are crossing the border following the outbreak of the conflict.
- The ETC joined UNHCR in a technical mission in Birao and Am Dafock village from 26 May to 02 June to install a VSAT internet solution to support humanitarian activities in the area.
- Due to the protracted funding challenges faced by the ETC in CAR, the cluster has started to develop an exit strategy for its services and activities in CAR.



Learners attending a computer class at the ETC Learning Centre and Cyber Café in Bangassou. Photo: WFP/ ETC

Activities

Sudan Refugee Response

The ETC submitted a US\$160,300 funding request to OCHA and UNHCR to support the cross-border humanitarian response in Birao and Am Dafock for six months. Thousands of Sudanese are crossing the border following the outbreak of the conflict.

The ETC participated in the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) meeting hosted by OCHA on 11 May to discuss the multi-cluster evaluation of Am Dafock village—which sits on the border with Sudan and has been a crossing point for refugees. An inter-agency plan for the provision of shelter and other humanitarian protection services to the refugees is being developed through the ICCG.

The ETC joined UNHCR in a technical mission in Birao and Am Dafock village from 26 May to 02 June to install a VSAT internet connectivity solution to support the activities of humanitarian actors in the protection of Sudanese refugees.

As a part of the mission, the ETC also installed an Iridium PTT base, configured HF and VHF radio equipment, trained UNDSS radio operators and staff, and collected data to contribute to the humanitarian presence map of the crisis zone.

Coordination

Due to the protracted funding challenges faced by the ETC in CAR, the cluster has started to develop an exit strategy for the ongoing ETC activities and services in CAR. The Global ETC is preparing to deploy an ICT coordinator from WFP's Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergencies & Support Team (FITTEST) for a final assessment mission in CAR. The three-week mission will support planning for the closure of ETC activities in CAR.

Learning Centre and Cyber Café

From 01 May to 30 June, the Learning Centre in Bangassou delivered computer classes to 160 learners. There have been a cumulative total of 3,610 visitors since the centre opened on 21 January.

See more about the new Learning Centre in a video [here](#).

Internet connectivity

Data connectivity was restored in Batangafo on 11 May, following repairs to the power supply infrastructure that had been damaged on 18 April, by lightning. 34 humanitarian staff continue to use the ETC data connectivity services, provided by Government of Luxembourg VSAT equipment. To enable uninterrupted data connectivity service, the ETC is exploring solar energy solutions to power the system. All other 10 sites across CAR have been disconnected from ETC services since August 2022 due to limited funding.

Security communications

On 01 June, the ETC conducted a mission in Kaga-Bandoro to change the HF/VHF duplexer radio relay for improved security communications amongst humanitarian workers.

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 287,593 calls. From 01 May to 30 June, an average of 3,099 calls were taken per week, of which 47 percent related to COVID-19 vaccinations; seven percent related to COVID-19 alerts; 11 percent related to information on measures to control COVID-19; three percent related to COVID symptoms; seven percent related to the COVID-19 pass; and 25 percent related to other concerns such as domestic violence and road accidents.

Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM)

The ETC has been able to secure funds to renew the licenses for CFM operators to enable the continuation of the CFM service. The CFM enables communities 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 461 CFM cases were registered on the platform from 01 – 30 June across Bangassou, Bambari and Bouar. A total of 1,138 cases have been registered since the

opening of the service in the three sites. No CFM cases were reported in Bria during the reporting period. On 21 June, the ETC held a meeting with the local implementing partner, INTERSOS, to discuss contract renewal and draft a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The service has been closed since May. A total of 6,359 cases have been registered via the CFM since it launched in September 2021, up to closure in May 2023, in Bria.

Phone booths

From 01 May to 30 June, an average of 104 calls were made per week using the ETC phone booths. A total of 7,467 calls have been made using the ETC phone booth service in Bria since it opened in September 2021.

Rehabilitation work to extend the phone booth services in Bria has been completed. The new telephone infrastructure will provide free of charge telephone services to 50,000 IDPs in Bria.

Charging station

From 01 May to 16 June, an average of 89 devices were charged each week at the ETC's free charging facilities in Bria. Since the service was launched in September 2021, 35,151 devices have been powered up used the charging station, including mobile phones, radio receivers and flashlights.

The call centre and services for communities' facilities for recharging electronic devices in Bria have been closed since 17 June, pending renewal of contracts for the staff responsible for the services.

Dashboard

See the [ETC Dashboard](#) for an overview of service locations.

Funding

The ETC in CAR requires US\$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 a date yet to be scheduled.

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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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