

Palestine, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #10

Date: 03/01/2024 Time: 13:00 UTC

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

www.etcluster.org/emergency/palestine-conflict

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact:

Palestine.ETC@wfp.org

Attendance

Chair (ETC)

Cadus
Cisco
Ericsson Response
ETC Palestine

FAO
GSMA
Government of Luxembourg
International Rescue Committee

IOM
Medical Aid for Palestinians
Mercy Corps
NetHope
Office of the Quartet (Palestine)
Save the Children

Search for Common Ground
UNDSS
UNICEF

UNESCO
UNRWA
UNWomen
USAID

Global ETC

Brent Carbno

Corinna Schaefer
Eric Knudson
Lars Ruediger
Komi Amedjonekou
Hossam Metwally
Ayman Barakat
Bryce David Hartley
Gilles Hoffmann
Alan Mooney
Moayyad Fares
Newton Muli
Sam Wahlstrom
Nadeen Abu-Rub
Anja Delaquis
Enas Abu Laban
Lour Kuttab
Mark Hawkins
Rami Assali
Mohammad Alawi
Marta Dabbas
Marc Dieng
Tamimi Bilal
Lukasz Cyra
Omar Baig
Nabeel Al-Ghara
Jeffrey Woodham
Peter Schecter
Caroline Teyssier
Maria Saleh

WFP

Marie Elena Bock
Amirullah Syarif
Burak Sezgin
Ozdzan Hadziemin
Natasha Bugingo
Angel Buitrago
Emma Gilson
David Pickering

WHO

Sami Alio
Mohammed Elsheikh
Akil Hassan

Agenda

1. Situation update
2. Global ETC update
3. Partner updates
4. AOB

Minutes

1. Situation update

- A new United Nations (UN) Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) ad interim has been appointed and took up his duties on 29 December in Jerusalem. He successfully undertook a mission to Gaza from 31 December to 01 January to align with the humanitarian realities on the ground.
- Following a decision from the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), the second and current version of the Flash Appeal has been extended until the end of March with no changes to the funding request.
- On 02 January, heavy bombardments from air, land, and sea, and intense ground operations between Israeli forces and Hamas armed groups continued across most of the Gaza Strip.
- According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 1.9 million people in Gaza, or nearly 90% of the population, are estimated to be internally displaced, including people who have been displaced multiple times as families are forced to move repeatedly in search of safety.
- Over 60% of the varied infrastructure in Gaza has been destroyed or damaged since the onset of the conflict on 07 October.

2. Global ETC update

Coordination/equipment

- The ETC tabulated and presented to the new HC and the WFP Country Director (CD) the challenges faced, which continue with the aim of providing secure communications for humanitarians in Gaza. The HC and WFP CD are important focal points to enable relevant advocacy work with the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT). The ETC is currently seeking a meeting with COGAT before the week ending 07 January.
- The Palestinian Office of the Quartet reported that the Palestinian Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)—Jawwal and Ooredoo—are identifying the equipment needed for repairs with the Palestinian Ministry of Telecommunications & IT. Once ready, the Office of the Quartet will share the list of equipment needed for repairs with the ETC.
- On 04 January, the ETC will close the online survey for UN heads of agencies to express their interest in being allocated part of the 100 Thuraya satellite phones donated to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) by the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Communications services

- The new VHF digital radio security communications system (SCS), managed by the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), and approved by COGAT before the conflict is currently operational in Jerusalem. The one functional repeater in Gaza (Rafah) is currently non-operational because there are no digitally programmed VHF/HF radios for use in Gaza. COGAT has instructed UNDSS to undertake all their VHF/HF radio programming at the server room in Jerusalem. Reliable communications networks are needed to enable humanitarians to stay connected in high-risk situations, restore security communications networks for UN staff, and coordinate response activities.
- It was confirmed the 100 Thuraya satellite phones donated to ITU by the Government of UAE are intended exclusively for UN agencies. However, it is still being checked with ITU whether it is possible to extend the provision to other non-UN agencies.
- To date, only 20 Iridium satellite phones—purchased from Israeli telecommunications service provider Gilat Telecom—have been authorized for import into Gaza. The phones are being managed by UNDSS for issuance to UN agencies to support critical field missions across Gaza. On 31 December, the ETC requested Gilat Telecom to provide the consumption report for the 20 satellite phone devices to track current usage.
- The ETC is engaging an Egyptian local service provider for Very High Frequency (VHF)/ High Frequency (HF) radios to seek clarity on the available equipment, cost, licensing, subscription, and the procurement process. This is part of future planning once importation of equipment into Gaza is authorized.

Staffing

- The ETC operation in Gaza continues with Komi Amedjonekou as ETC Coordinator supporting remotely while the Deputy Coordinator—Hossam Metwally—is based in Cairo. Both members of staff await the issuance of entry documents to deploy and be based in Jerusalem.

- FITTEST ICT Specialist—Burak Sezgin—deployed to Jerusalem on 13 December to fill ETC gaps while requesting an extension of his visa prior to enter Gaza. He received the extension of his visa for two-months up to 23 February. Deployment to Gaza is now scheduled for 08 January for an initial technical engagement with local actors to plan an initial needs assessment and to set up technical coordination processes for the response.
- Mufaro Masuka—ETC Information Management Officer—continues to remotely support the response until recruitment, entry visa, travel documents, and contract are finalized for the identified replacement candidate. The WFP Standby Partnership unit is currently identifying the new staff for recruitment and deployment initially to Cairo, pending issuance of entry visa to Jerusalem to take up duties by 05 January.

3. Partner Updates

- N/a

4. AOB

- N/a

The next teleconference will be held on Wednesday 10 January at 13:00 UTC.

13:00 UTC
14:00 Rome
15:00 Cairo/Jerusalem
17:00 Dubai

Acronyms

ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
ACF	Action Against Hunger / Action contre la Faim
CD	Country Director
COGAT	Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HF	High Frequency
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Minutes: Marie Elena Bock, Global ETC Partnerships Officer.