

## Palestine, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #19

Date: 17/04/2024 Time: 13:00 UTC

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

[www.etcluster.org/emergency/palestine-conflict](http://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](mailto:Palestine.ETC@wfp.org)

## Attendance (48)

Chair (ETC)	Brent Carbno
Access Now	Ben Grazda
ACTED	Héloïse Vacheret
	Jiri Beran
Action Against Hunger (ACF)	Maya Papotti
Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)	Rakesh Bharania
Cadus	Corinna Schaefer
Cisco	Eric Knudson
	Kevin Murphy
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger
ETC Global	Caroline Teyssier
	Komi Amedjonekou
	Lena Bock
	Mufaro Masuka
	Maria Saleh
	Phyza Jameel
ETC Palestine	Bipin Jha
	Burak Sezgin
	David Pickering
	Hossam Metwally
	Khawar Ilyas
	Shantal Boodhun
Government of Luxembourg	Alain Lang
	Roland Nurenberg
Impact Initiatives	Rupal Chowdhary
International Rescue Committee	Alan Mooney
	Amro Al Moghraby
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)	Muli Newton
MedGlobal	Mohamed El Dakroury
	Yazan Al-Dairy
Medical Aid for Palestinians	Sam Wahlstrom
NetHope	Anja Delaquis

NRC	Amanda Terron Garcia
Première Urgence Internationale	Sophie Giroussens
Save the Children	Mark Hawkins
UNDSS	Enrico Abboud
UNESCO	Aslam Badran Thomas Chanussot
UNICEF	Marc Dieng Nabiha Faruqui
UNMAS	Mufleh Talouzi
UNRWA	Rita Okechukwu
WFP	Angel Buitrago Aramais Alojants Areen Roman Dalia Mansour Elizabeth Bourke
WHO	Bilal Tamimi

## Agenda

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

## Minutes

### 1. Situation update

- On 17 April, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) Flash Appeal called for US\$2.8 billion for UN agencies, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), and NGO partners to address the most urgent and critical needs of more than three million people in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, covering a 9-months period from April through December 2024.
- Israeli bombardment from the air, land, and sea continues to be reported across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure.
- The capacity of humanitarian agencies to operate safely and effectively across Gaza remains heavily compromised by recurrent restrictions of access to the north, the import of critical equipment, and recurrent intense hostilities.
- Voice services from Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) Jawwal and Ooredoo are operational in Rafah. However, the network is congested due to increased users and few operational telecommunications towers, due to fuel allocation limitations. The internet services from both MNOs are non-operational in Gaza. This situation existed before the onset of conflict on 07 October 2023.

- Paltel and Ajyal Internet Service Providers (ISPs) resumed internet services in parts of Rafah and Deir Al Balah, though with intermittent connectivity, significantly affecting humanitarian responders to access critical information for delivering lifesaving aid.
- Iridium and Thuraya satellite phone voice services are operational across the Gaza Strip.

## 2. Global ETC update

### Coordination/equipment

- The ETC continues to coordinate and support humanitarian actors including UN agencies and humanitarian partners operating in Gaza with technical needs, guidance, and practical advice, given the limited availability of telecommunications services in Gaza.
- On 04 April, the ETC and other clusters engaged in Area-Based Coordination (ABC) meetings in Khan Yunis and Deir Al Balah. The ABC approach has been adopted following the population movements and the expansion of humanitarian response northwards, resulting in clusters shifting their meetings from the Joint Humanitarian Operations Centre (JHOC) in Rafah to communities in Deir Al Balah and Khan Yunis.
- The ETC received confirmation from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on 02 April regarding the approval secured from the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) to import an additional 20 satellite phones into Gaza. However, COGAT requested that these phones must be procured from Gilat Telecom in Israel and must only be intended for use by UN international staff in Gaza. The ETC is coordinating with OCHA and the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to develop a distribution plan among the UN agencies in Gaza.

### Internet connectivity

- On 13 April, the ETC presented the findings of the IT assessment to UNDSS, OCHA, and WFP on the availability of more than 700 pre-pay Wi-Fi hotspots in Rafah, Deir Al Balah, and Khan Yunis. The availability of Wi-Fi hotspots is aimed at supporting agencies and partners with access to reliable communication platforms, informed planning, and response in these areas.

### Security Communications Systems (SCS)

- On 13 April, the ETC presented the SCS coverage mapping to UNDSS and the Area Security Cell (ASC) which provides SCS coverage across Gaza with the repeater sites located in Rafah, Gaza City, Jabalia, and Deir Al Balah to support UNDSS contingency planning.
- On 07 April, the ETC identified two potential sites to provide better coverage for the SCS repeater installation, equipped with a solar-powered solution and internet connectivity in Deir Al Balah. The location details of these sites are shared with Paltel for their engineering team to conduct an assessment for the installation and to provide the quotation for provisioning of the services.
- The 30 pre-approved Very High Frequency (VHF) digital radios arrived at Tel Aviv airport on 02 April. The ETC is collaborating with UNDSS in Jerusalem for the swift release of the VHF radios, their configuration, assignment of call signs, and facilitating their delivery to Gaza.

- As of early March, the latest high-resolution satellite mapping shared by partners has revealed that the VHF repeater sites in Gaza City and Jabalia are still standing, while the repeater site in Khan Yunis has been destroyed. However, preliminary information received suggests the SCS equipment in Gaza City and Jabalia is no longer there. The ETC plans to conduct physical assessments at these sites to make informed recommendations, once authorized safe access to these locations is secured.

#### Access to information for communities

- On 16 April, the ETC presented the technical recommendations and advice to humanitarian partners on the COGAT prerequisites for licensing and importing FM broadcasting equipment into Gaza. Previously, on 29 March, the ETC team engaged with humanitarian partners to provide guidance and support in identifying viable solutions for the importation of FM broadcasting equipment for public messaging and to provide access to information for communities in Gaza, including guidance on operating licenses.

#### Staffing

- There are currently four ETC staff deployed in the response. The current ETC coordinator is scheduled to leave the mission on 21 April, while the replacement ETC coordinator is expected to arrive in Cairo on 20 April. The deputy ETC coordinator continues to support the response while based in Cairo. The ETC field coordinator is scheduled to arrive in Cairo on 17 April and is scheduled to further deploy to Gaza on 22 April to strengthen face-to-face engagements and support partners with technical advice and guidance. The ETC field coordinator is set to take over the function of the deputy coordinator starting 01 May. The ETC telecommunications specialist has been in Gaza since 15 April supporting agencies and partners with technical advice and guidance on telecommunications services in Gaza. The ETC Information Management Officer (IMO) continues to support the response while based in Cairo until 22 April.

#### Funding

- The ETC urgently requires US\$1.8 million requested in the revised [Flash Appeal](#) to address urgent and critical lifesaving efforts in Gaza until 31 December 2024. The revised oPt Flash Appeal incorporating the ETC's budget requirement of US\$1.8 million was published by OCHA on 17 April.

#### Challenges

- The safety concerns of humanitarian aid workers in Gaza have significantly intensified, following the killing of seven humanitarian aid workers on 01 April.
- Limited access to electricity, fuel, and telecommunications services continues to impede the humanitarian response in Gaza. The importation of telecommunications equipment into Gaza is prolonged and extremely challenging.
- The risk of cybersecurity issues in this emergency is considered extremely high. Caution in using technology platforms applies, including the use of social media and press platforms.

### 3. Partner Updates

- N/a

#### 4. AOB

- N/a

**The next teleconference will be held on Wednesday 01 May 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
ASC	Area Security Cell
COGAT	Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISP	Internet Service Provider
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
RBC	Regional Bureau Cairo
SCS	Security Communications Systems
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

**Minutes:** Bipin Jha, ETC Palestine Information Management Officer.