

Palestine, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #22

Date: 11/06/2024 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:

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Attendance (33)

Chair (ETC)	Brent Carbno
Access Now	Ben Grazda Giulio Coppi
ACTED	Jiri Beran
Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)	Rakesh Bharania
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger
ETC Global	Komi Amedjonekou
ETC Palestine	Bipin Jha Burak Sezgin Khawar Ilyas Shantal Boodhun
Government of Luxembourg	Roland Nurenberg
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Claudiu Mateescu
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Alan Mooney Amro Al Moghraby Moayyed Fares
NetHope	Anja Delaquis
Office of the Quartet	Enas Abu Laban Lour Kuttab
UNESCO	Aslam Badran
UNHCR	Hussein El Sayed
UNICEF	Jalal Tamimi Nasri Sidawi Wondayferam Gameda Guluma
UNRWA	Rita Okechukwu
USAID	Phil Price
WFP	Aramais Alojants Emma Gilson Fady Tadrous Hossam Metwally Michael Dirksen Sami Alio

Agenda

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

Minutes

1. Situation update

Security

- The Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore (JLOTS) operation has been suspended since 08 June following the security incident reported in the JLOTS areas in Deir Al Balah. The office of the Humanitarian Coordinator is reviewing the security situation and revising the risk assessment to ensure personnel safety and operations continuity.
- The security situation in Gaza remains volatile and intense due to the continuing hostilities. Ground incursions and heavy fighting also continue to be reported in Jabalia, south of Gaza City, northern An Nuseirat, eastern Deir al Balah, and eastern and central Rafah.
- Humanitarian operations in Gaza continue to face severe humanitarian access restrictions, including the ongoing closure of key border crossings, denial of planned missions, delays in movements imposed by the authorities, and recurrent intense hostilities.
- As of 11 June, the Rafah border crossing remains closed since 06 May. Humanitarian agencies' staff movement in and out of Gaza is only possible through the Kerem Shalom border crossing, transiting through Jerusalem to Amman, Jordan, using humanitarian road traffic convoys.
- The increased intensity of the Rafah incursion has compelled most of the humanitarian actors to relocate to Deir Al Balah, resulting in most of the humanitarian offices in Rafah being non-operational.
- Considering the increase in hostilities, the Joint Humanitarian Operations Centre (JHOC) meetings are now scheduled with an option to join online and have been rescheduled to occur three times a week (Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays) instead of six times a week.

Telecommunications

- Voice services provided by Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)—Jawwal and Ooredoo—are operational at limited capacity due to limited fuel and a congested network due to very few operational telecommunications towers. Both MNOs do not

offer internet connectivity, as was the condition before the onset of hostilities in October 2023.

- Internet connectivity remains a primary communications challenge across the Gaza Strip and is worsening as displaced people relocate from Rafah to other locations in the North. Internet Service Provider (ISP)—Paltel—continues to provide internet services in parts of Rafah, Deir Al Balah, Jabalia, and Gaza City, though with intermittent connectivity.
- Due to the prevailing escalated hostilities, the local MNOs and ISPs are experiencing network outages from damaged infrastructure, limited access to fuel, scarcity of spare parts and human resources, and insecure conditions to carry out repairs. The current conditions make it difficult to maintain the remaining functional network. Critical telecommunications importation processes remain lengthy and restricted.
- Iridium and Thuraya satellite phone voice services are operational across the Gaza Strip.

2. Global ETC update

Coordination

- The ETC coordinator—Khawar Ilyas—is based in Deir Al Balah to boost coordination activities on the ground and support humanitarian actors operating in Gaza with their technical needs, guidance, and advice, given the limited availability of telecommunications services in Gaza.
- The ETC is liaising with agencies and partners for technical advice and assessments, including their locations, and coordinating with the ISP to establish and strengthen connectivity services at their new offices and guesthouses in Deir Al Balah after relocation from Rafah.
- The ETC is engaging with key humanitarian leads to strengthen advocacy efforts concerning the challenges humanitarian agencies and partners face in importing ICT and telecommunications equipment into Gaza to establish common communications services.

Internet connectivity

- The ETC is engaging with the Office of the Quartet in mapping UN agencies and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp locations to advocate with MNOs and ISPs to strengthen telecommunications and internet services across Gaza, mainly in areas where humanitarian agencies are located in Deir Al Balah.
- The local ISP is facing multiple challenges, including a lack of human resources, safe access, fuel availability, and spare parts to repair and maintain the communications infrastructure.

Security Communications Systems (SCS)

- The ETC is engaging with UNDSS on the use of an automated satellite-based staff movement tracking system to ensure staff safety and security while on a mission in Gaza and is engaging with UNDSS for their endorsement on the adaptation of an appropriate platform. The ETC aims to strengthen the Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Gaza and Jerusalem, which is managed by UNDSS, with the necessary equipment and services to enable the full operation of the SOC 24/7. The ETC has initiated the procurement of the equipment from a local vendor in Jerusalem and is seeking approval from COGAT to

import equipment into Gaza.

- The ETC is engaging with key partners on the ground to identify the possibilities of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) to access the shared security communications services with their existing licenses.
- The 30 pre-approved Very High Frequency (VHF) digital radios imported from Dubai and handed over to UNDSS in Jerusalem on 14 May were successfully programmed and assigned call-signs on 28 May at the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Jerusalem server. The ETC is coordinating with OCHA to secure the approval for transportation into Gaza by the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT).
- The ETC is engaging and planning to schedule a meeting with Gilat Telecom—a COGAT-approved Israeli vendor—to identify viable satellite-based data solutions for use in Gaza.

Staffing

There are currently four ETC staff engaged in the response:

- The ETC coordinator is based in Deir Al Balah and has been in Gaza since 24 May to boost ETC presence on the ground and coordinate and support humanitarian actors operating in Gaza.
- The ETC field coordinator arrived in Deir Al Balah on 06 June to resume duties, strengthen face-to-face engagements, and support partners with technical advice and guidance.
- The ETC ICT specialist has been in Jerusalem since 21 May, coordinating with OCHA to facilitate the transportation of VHF radios into Gaza and with UNDSS to assess the capacity to establish a SOC in Jerusalem. The ICT specialist is scheduled to conclude the mission on 16 June.
- A dedicated ETC information management officer (IMO) is based in Cairo since 02 June to support the response.

Funding

- On 13 May 2024, the ETC received US\$415,000 from the Government of Poland to set up common ICT services. A further US\$158,228 from the US Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) was received on 21 May 2024 to support the maritime logistics project with communications services.
- Therefore, the total funding status of the ETC is now 31.8% of the US\$1.8 million requested in the revised Flash Appeal to undertake activities and address the immediate communication needs in Gaza. The revised Flash Appeal, incorporating ETC's budget requirement of US\$1.8 million, was published by OCHA on 17 April.

3. Partner Updates

The Office of the Quartet

- As per the information shared by the MNOs—Jawwal and Ooredoo—only 17% of the mobile communications infrastructure is functional in Gaza as of early June. The entry of

critical telecommunications equipment for repairs remains extremely challenging. The Office of the Quartet is engaging with relevant authorities to expedite the repairs and strengthen the telecommunications services in the priority areas identified by the humanitarian agencies.

4. AOB

- N/a

The next teleconference will be held on **Tuesday 25 June at 13:00 UTC.**

13:00 UTC
15:00 Rome
16:00 Cairo/Jerusalem
17:00 Dubai

Acronyms

ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
COGAT	Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IMO	Information Management Officer
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ISP	Internet Service Provider
JHOC	Joint Humanitarian Operations Centre
JLOTS	Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
SCS	Security Communications Systems
SOC	Security Operations Centre
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
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.