

ETC Services in Gaza

Armed conflict between Palestinian militant groups and Israeli military forces began on 07 October 2023, resulting in a devastating humanitarian crisis and significant disruption in telecommunications services. The WFP-led Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was activated on 31 October 2023 to meet the urgent need of humanitarian responders and affected populations to access reliable and shared communications services in Gaza.



Coordination and Information Management (IM)



The ETC convenes humanitarian partners and local actors. It provides needs assessment, gap analysis and tailored ICT solutions while avoiding duplication of efforts and leveraging existing capacity. It coordinates with COGAT and the UN Access Support Unit (ASU) to bring any inter-agency ICT equipment into Gaza.

Local and global stakeholders are engaged in discussing the situation, developing the ETC response plan and delivering services.

The **ETC advocates** for national telecommunications service providers in receiving the required fuel allocation, spare parts, and safe access to repair and keep the critical telecommunications infrastructure operational.



Dedicated ETC IM capacity ensures that key operational information, such as situation reports, factsheets, and dashboards, is shared with internal and external audiences, contributing to coordination, decision-making and advocacy efforts.

The ETC monitors progress made towards its planned activities including the tracking of ICT equipment from submission to approval.

Security Communications Systems (SCS)



The SCS in Gaza is managed and led by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) with ETC technical support.

Gaza Security Operations Centre (SOC)

The **Gaza SOC** in Deir Al Balah is the primary center for monitoring and communicating with staff during missions in Gaza to ensure their safety and security. It has been operational 24/7 since June 2024. The **Jerusalem SOC** is a backup center that has been operational since December 2023.

The ETC has supported agencies and UNDSS in strengthening the SCS with the provision of satellite phones, satellite-based tracking devices, VHF digital radios and solar-powered solution kits.



Very High Frequency (VHF) Coverage

The VHF repeater site in Deir Al Balah is operational 24/7 at a limited capacity since May 2024.

Services planned: ETC intends to set up new repeaters in Rafah, Gaza City, and Jabalia to provide VHF radio coverage across Gaza. Additionally, the ETC will provide capacity-building training to the UNSMS staff, strengthen capacity for SCS device installation, provide VHF radio reprogramming support, and troubleshoot telecommunications devices.

Internet Connectivity



Paltel is the sole Internet Service Provider (ISP) in Gaza, offering limited Internet services despite challenges such as a lack of required fuel, spare parts, and safe access to repair and maintain the remaining network.

Services planned: Upon securing approval from the authorities, independent and sustainable **internet services**, equipped with solar-powered solutions, will be additionally installed in five key operational areas while continuing to avail from local providers to facilitate humanitarian aid in Gaza.

ICT Assessments and Helpdesk



ICT assessments and ICT helpdesk support are provided upon request to humanitarian organizations operating in Gaza to identify and advise on their telecommunications and internet connectivity needs. This also includes troubleshooting and providing guidance on using ICT devices.

Services for Communities (Planned)



The ETC is engaging with First Response Radio and other partners to establish **services for communities** to facilitate affected communities in accessing information on humanitarian aid distribution and services, and report back. The services include establishing an **FM radio broadcast system** and solar-powered **charging stations** for mobile phones and IT devices.