

Palestine – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #48

Reporting period: 09/11/2024 to 27/11/2024

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was activated on 31 October 2023 in response to the conflict crisis in Gaza. Situation Reports are published every two weeks.

Highlights

- On 26 November, the ETC, in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), trained 14 Jerusalem-based United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) personnel on security communications, including using Very High Frequency (VHF) radios and satellite-based devices. To date, 10 sessions have been conducted, training 142 UNSMS personnel from 13 UN agencies in Gaza and Jerusalem.
- On 25 November, the ETC concluded the annual user satisfaction survey, which gathered feedback from all humanitarians using ETC services in Gaza during 2024. The survey was launched on 31 October to assess the quality of ETC services provided in Gaza and identify areas for improvement to enhance the effective implementation of humanitarian activities in 2025.
- On 20 November, an additional 58 satellite-based tracking devices were delivered to Gaza. These devices are intended for use by 10 UN agencies operating in Gaza. The ETC team engaged with the vendor to activate these devices and handed them to UNDSS for further distribution to the requesting UN agencies.



Participants with communications devices during the ninth session of Security Communications training in Deir Al Balah. Photo: Eyhab Rasheed/UNDSS

Situation overview

The security [situation](#) in Gaza remains highly volatile due to the continuing hostilities. The intensified hostilities and lack of safe access, along with the deteriorating security situation, including looting and frequent Israeli-issued evacuation orders, create a highly volatile and risky operating environment for aid workers, further disrupting or restricting the delivery of life-saving assistance in Gaza. Since 06 October 2024, more than 100,000 people arriving at various locations in the west and north of Gaza City have been displaced, where essential services such as telecommunications, shelter, water, and health care are severely limited. On 17 November, Israeli air forces dropped leaflets in Beit Lahiya, ordering an immediate evacuation and reportedly triggering further displacement.

Telecommunications Overview

Voice services provided by Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)—Jawwal and Ooredoo—operate at limited capacity due to restricted fuel supplies, lack of safe access, and shortages of spare parts needed to refuel and repair their infrastructure. The MNOs have expressed concern over the fuel billing from April to August, as they cannot pay and are seeking support from UN agencies to waive the

charges. Neither MNO offers internet connectivity, as before the onset of hostilities in October 2023. However, Iridium and Thuraya satellite phone voice services remain operational across the Gaza Strip.

Internet connectivity remains a primary communications challenge. The only Internet Service Provider (ISP)—Paltel—continues to provide limited internet services in parts of Deir Al Balah, Gaza City, northern Gaza, Khan Yunis, and Rafah amid the destruction of critical telecommunications infrastructure and a lack of safe access, fuel, and spare parts. The movement restrictions from southern to northern Gaza make fuel transportation and distribution extremely difficult, pushing telecommunications service providers to the brink of shutting down. The damage to the network infrastructure in north Gaza has severely disrupted telecommunications and internet services, preventing humanitarians and affected populations from accessing these services. The service providers are engaging with UN agencies to seek support on fuel allocation and access to the affected sites to repair and restore services.

ETC Activities

Coordination

On 27 November, the ETC team attended an online meeting with the representatives from the Office of the Quartet, Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Economy (MTDE), telecommunications, and internet service providers. The meeting focused on fuel allocation, transport, and distribution necessary to sustain critical communications services. This challenge is especially severe in northern Gaza, where restricted access since October, infrastructure damage, and fuel shortages have disrupted telecommunications services in most areas, nearing a complete blackout. The UN continues to engage with authorities and stakeholders to secure access to northern Gaza for its and Paltel's staff, enabling them to conduct critical assessments and repairs.

On 25 November, the ETC concluded the annual user satisfaction survey, which gathered feedback from all humanitarians using ETC services in Gaza during 2024. The survey was launched on 31 October to assess the quality of ETC services provided in Gaza and identify areas for improvement to enhance the effective implementation of humanitarian activities in 2025. The ETC is analysing the responses, and a report on the survey findings will be shared with partners and stakeholders.

Internet connectivity

The ETC team is engaging with the relevant stakeholders to expedite the pre-clearance of the emergency internet deployment kit (referred to as the ETC Rapid Response Solution) to establish reliable shared internet services for humanitarian responders in Gaza. Upon securing the pre-clearance, the solution will be delivered to Jerusalem and prepositioned for delivery into Gaza. The solution will be mobilized by the ETC global partners—the Government of Luxembourg and Ericsson Response.

The ETC is collaborating with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to strengthen internet connectivity services at common operational hubs in Khan Yunis Training Center (KYTC) and Skaik Building, Gaza City. The ICT equipment procured locally by ETC has been delivered to the Skaik building to strengthen its connectivity services. UNRWA is supporting the configuration and installation of these devices. The ETC also plans to equip the hubs with dedicated staff to provide ICT support and services to humanitarians.

Security communications

On 26 November, the ETC, in collaboration with UNDSS, trained 14 Jerusalem-based UNSMS personnel on security communications, including using VHF radios and satellite-based devices. To date, 10 sessions have been conducted, training 142 UNSMS personnel from 13 UN agencies in Gaza

and Jerusalem. SCS training is a key component of the Security Risk Management (SRM) process and is endorsed by the Area Security Management Team (ASMT).

On 20 November, an additional 58 satellite-based tracking devices were delivered to Gaza. These devices are intended for use by 10 UN agencies operating in Gaza. The ETC team engaged with the vendor to activate these devices and handed them to UNDSS for further distribution to the requesting UN agencies. In September, 25 devices were transported into Gaza to support WFP operations. To expedite the procurement process, WFP initially advanced the cost of the devices and is currently working with the requesting agencies to arrange for cost recovery.

The UNDSS have assigned call signs to the 58 Track24 devices. Upon configuration and activation, these devices will be added to the integrated monitoring platform. The ETC team have shared access to the integrated monitoring platform with the Joint Coordination Board (JCB) to allow Israeli authorities and UNDSS to monitor and track UN mission movements, contributing to the safety and security of staff in Gaza. The platform will enable tracking satellite-based devices used by UN agencies in Gaza.

Staffing

There are currently three dedicated ETC staff engaged in the response:

- The ETC coordinator returned to Gaza on 12 November following a short R&R break and will coordinate activities until the end of the year.
- The Information Management Officer (IMO) has been supporting the response remotely and is scheduled to deploy to Gaza on 12 December.
- The ETC security communications trainer arrived in Gaza on 20 October to train UNSMS personnel on SCS and satellite-based devices currently being used in Gaza. The trainer is scheduled to conclude his assignment and depart Gaza on 12 December.

Dashboard

See the [ETC Dashboard](#) for an overview of planned and operational services.

Infographic

See the [ETC Infographic](#) for an overview of activities data, information, and location of planned and operational services.

Factsheet

See the [ETC Factsheet](#) for further information and funding requirements.

Funding

The ETC requires US\$1.8 million requested in the revised occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) [Flash Appeal](#) to address urgent and critical lifesaving efforts in Gaza until 31 December 2024.

In 2024, the ETC received a total of US\$824,888 from varied donors, mainly from the Government of Poland and the US Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), to set up common security

communications and internet connectivity services in Gaza. Currently, the ETC is 45.8% funded out of the US\$1.8 million requested in the revised Flash Appeal to undertake cluster activities and address the immediate communications needs in Gaza.

Challenges

Lack of fuel: The lack of fuel continues to severely compromise the operation of critical telecommunications infrastructure, causing MNOs and ISPs to operate at a limited capacity. The Gaza Strip has been under an electricity blackout since October 2023, which has severely disrupted humanitarian aid operations and communication with humanitarian responders in Gaza.

Safety of staff: The safety of humanitarian aid workers in Gaza is a primary concern and priority. Due to insecurity and a lack of safe access, deploying shared ETC communications services and face-to-face technical support to other humanitarian responders remains challenging.

Limited telecommunications services: Due to escalated hostilities, the local MNOs and ISPs are experiencing network outages due to damaged infrastructure and lack of fuel, spare parts, and safe repair access. The current conditions make it challenging to maintain the remaining functional network.

Lack of telecommunications equipment: The importation of telecommunications equipment into Gaza is restricted and prolonged. Since 07 October 2023, approval has been received for importing 20 satellite phones, 30 digital VHF radios, 83 Track24 devices and four solar power solutions.

Internet connectivity: Limited connectivity hinders efforts to reactivate the SCS network in Deir Al Balah, while the SCS network is unavailable across the rest of Gaza due to critical equipment damage and import restrictions.

Funding: Insufficient funding has limited the ETC to address humanitarian responders' immediate life-saving telecommunications needs in Gaza. The ETC continues to appeal for funding from varied potential donors.

Cybersecurity continues to be a pressing issue. Caution should be applied when using technology platforms, including social media and press platforms.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Teleconference with partners on the response in Gaza will be held on **Tuesday 03 December 2024 at 13:00 UTC**.

The previous Global ETC Teleconference was held on 29 October 2024. All minutes are uploaded [here](#).

Contacts

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Further information related to the ETC 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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