

Palestine – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #52

Reporting period: 15/01/2025 to 06/02/2025

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 03 February, the ETC organized and attended an online meeting with representatives from Ericsson Response, the Government of Luxembourg, and the World Food Programme (WFP) to discuss the status of pre-approval and pre-clearance of the emergency internet deployment kit (also known as the ETC Rapid Response Solution) to establish reliable shared internet services for humanitarian responders in Gaza.
- On 29 January, the ETC team attended an online meeting with the representatives from the Office of the Quartet, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Ministry of Telecommunications and Digital Economy (MTDE), and telecommunications service providers in Gaza. The meeting focused on reviving accumulated fuel shortages and supporting the transportation and distribution of fuel needs to sustain critical communications services across Gaza.
- Following the implementation of the ceasefire agreement on 19 January, the ETC team is collaborating with the WFP Palestine Country Office (CO), the Logistics Cluster, and stakeholders to reinstate the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) approval request for pending and previously denied items critical for scaling up activities and providing shared communications services for humanitarians in Gaza.



Participants engaging with communication devices during the Security Communications training held in December 2024 in Deir Al Balah. Photo: Eyhab Rasheed/UNDSS

Situation overview

On 19 January, a ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian armed groups came into effect through mediation by Egypt, Qatar and the United States of America (USA). As part of the ceasefire agreement, large volumes of [humanitarian aid](#) have entered Gaza during the first phase of the agreement implementation through the Erez and Zikim crossings in the north and the Kerem Shalom crossing in the south. A surge in aid supplies and improved access conditions have enabled humanitarian partners to significantly expand the delivery of lifesaving assistance and services across the Gaza Strip, including in previously inaccessible areas. Distribution of humanitarian assistance has increased, essential infrastructure repairs have been initiated, and fuel has been distributed to keep critical infrastructure functional, including telecommunications services.

During the first week of ceasefire implementation, WFP [reached](#) more than 330,000 people in Gaza, providing food parcels, hot meals, and cash assistance to the affected population. Movement within southern and northern Gaza has become largely unhindered, allowing the movement of aid cargo and

humanitarian personnel, including previously hard-to-reach areas. On 22 January, fuel supplies were delivered to northern Gaza for the first time since the ceasefire began, enabling the functioning of backup generators needed to restore critical humanitarian facilities and services.

On 01 February, one-directional [medical evacuations](#) from Gaza to Egypt started through the Rafah crossing to allow the transfer of individuals requiring medical care. The Rafah crossing has been closed since May 2024.

Telecommunications Overview

Voice services provided by Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)—Jawwal and Ooredoo—are operating at limited capacity due to a lack of spare parts. The MNOs are engaging with authorities to import critical ICT equipment to repair and maintain the existing infrastructure. Neither MNO offers mobile data connectivity, as before the onset of hostilities in October 2023, when only 2G mobile services were available. However, Iridium and Thuraya satellite phone voice services remain functional throughout the Gaza Strip.

Internet connectivity continues to be a primary communication challenge. The only Internet Service Provider (ISP)—Paltel—provides limited Internet services in parts of Gaza amid damage to critical telecommunications infrastructure and a lack of spare parts. The extensive damage to the network infrastructure in northern Gaza has severely disrupted telecommunications and internet services, limiting humanitarians and affected populations from accessing these services.

ETC Activities

Coordination

On 29 January, the ETC team attended an online meeting with the representatives from the Office of the Quartet, OCHA, MTDE, and telecommunications service providers in Gaza. The meeting focused on reviving accumulated fuel shortages and supporting the transportation and distribution of fuel needs to sustain critical communications services across Gaza.

Following the implementation of the ceasefire agreement on 19 January, the ETC team is collaborating with WFP Palestine CO, the Logistics Cluster, and stakeholders to reinstate COGAT approval requests for pending and previously denied items critical for scaling up activities and providing shared communications services for humanitarians in Gaza.

Internet connectivity

On 03 February, the ETC organized and attended an online meeting with representatives from Ericsson Response, the Government of Luxembourg, and WFP to discuss the status of pre-approval and pre-clearance of the emergency internet deployment kit (also known as the ETC Rapid Response Solution) to establish reliable shared internet services for humanitarian responders in Gaza. The request for pre-clearance has been pending since April 2024. Upon securing the pre-clearance from the authorities, the solution will be prepositioned in Jerusalem for delivery into Gaza. The solution will be mobilized by the ETC's global partners—the Government of Luxembourg and Ericsson Response.

Security communications

Since August 2024, 98 satellite-based tracking devices approved by COGAT have been delivered to Gaza to enhance staff safety and security during humanitarian assistance missions. The devices are being used by 11 UN agencies operating in Gaza. To expedite the procurement process, WFP initially advanced the cost of the devices and is currently coordinating with the requesting agencies to arrange

for cost recovery. In response to requests from UN agencies for additional users to access the monitoring platform, the ETC is engaging with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and other stakeholders to facilitate broader access and establish a standardized process for adding users. Currently, one focal point per UN agency is assigned to monitor their respective agency's mission movements in Gaza.

Staffing

There are currently two ETC staff engaged in the response:

- On 21 January, the temporary ETC coordinator started providing dedicated coordination support remotely for one month until the ETC coordinator is deployed to Gaza. The ETC coordinator is scheduled to redeploy to Gaza on 13 February.
- The information management officer (IMO) returned to Gaza on 04 February to provide on-the-ground support for the response until the end of April.
- The recruitment for the ETC field coordinator has been completed, and the selected staff member is expected to deploy to Gaza at a date yet to be scheduled.

Dashboard

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

Factsheet

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

Infographic

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

Funding

The ETC urgently requires US\$2.5 million, as requested in the [Flash Appeal](#) for the Occupied Palestinian Territory 2025, to sustain critical lifesaving operations in Gaza through the end of the year. This funding is essential to enable the ETC to provide coordination and information management activities and deploy shared communications services in key locations across Gaza, supporting the safety and effectiveness of humanitarian efforts. The ETC is engaging with potential donors to ensure continued service delivery, contribute to staff safety, and enhance the operational capacity of life-saving humanitarian efforts in Gaza.

Challenges

Safety of staff: The safety of humanitarian aid workers in Gaza remains a primary concern. Although the ceasefire has reduced immediate security threats, the unstable environment poses challenges for deploying shared ETC services and providing technical support to humanitarian partners.

Limited telecommunications services: Despite the ceasefire, telecommunications and internet services remain limited across Gaza due to the heavy damage to the telecommunications infrastructure and a lack of equipment to repair and maintain these services.

Lack of telecommunications equipment: A significant amount of telecommunications equipment has been damaged or destroyed during the hostilities. Despite the ceasefire, its importation into Gaza remains severely restricted and challenging. Ongoing constraints and a prolonged importation process hinder the ETC's ability to deliver its planned services in Gaza.

Internet connectivity: Paltel, the only ISP providing limited internet connectivity in parts of Gaza, faces similar challenges in importing equipment needed to repair and strengthen its services. These challenges hinder the reactivation of the SCS network in Deir Al Balah, while it remains unavailable in other parts of Gaza due to critical equipment damage and import restrictions.

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

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

Meetings

The next Global ETC Teleconference with partners on the response in Gaza will be held on **Tuesday 25 February 2025 at 13:00 UTC**.

The previous Global ETC Teleconference was held on 28 January 2025. 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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