

# Sudan, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 02/12/2024 Time: 13:00 UTC

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

[www.etcluster.org/emergency/sudan-conflict](http://www.etcluster.org/emergency/sudan-conflict).

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact:

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## Attendance

Chair	Brent Carbno
ETC	Richard Egwangu Covi Franklin Yousif Mirza
UNHCR	Ekue Ayih
WFP	Sylvestre Ngoh Sami Alio
CDAC Network	Mukhtar Elsheikh

## Agenda

1. Situation Update
2. ETC Sudan Update
3. ETC Partners Update

## Minutes

### 1. Situation update

- The general security situation across the country remains tense, volatile and unstable. The latest update shows that fighting has gained momentum in strategic areas, in particular Khartoum and Omdurman, where Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) are gaining ground. In Wad-Madani and other frontline areas there have been retaliations from RSF forces, and El-Fasher remains under siege.

- On 01 December Zamzam Camp came under shelling, causing multiple casualties. This is anticipated to trigger increased displacement in West Darfur which will require a scaled-up CBT response, ensuring effective connectivity implementation.
- On 27 November, drone strikes were reported in Atbara targeting SAF forces.
- The situation in Port Sudan remains largely stable, with no major security incidents.

## 2. ETC Sudan update

- The ETC continues to experience long delays when attempting to import telecommunications equipment, either due to a lack of import authorization or equipment being held in customs for long periods. These delays have impacted ETC's ability to deliver and scale up its services. Point-to-point and Starlink equipment are most affected by importation and clearance delays.
- The ETC is exploring how best to ensure continued, effective delivery of services despite a lack of equipment. When agencies request access to connectivity, the ETC is exploring collaborative solutions that leverage the agencies' own supplies of connectivity equipment to help provide.
- The ETC has developed LTAs to ensure that procurement from local vendors can be conducted in a timely manner which avoids excessive lead times. Also, the ETC is exploring establishing an LTA to procure satellite services from local providers as a backup in case other forms of connectivity become unavailable.
- The Undersea Cable fibre connectivity project is currently operational in Port Sudan, Kassala, Kosti, Damazine, El-Gedarif, Dongola, and Atbara at 14 sites.
- The ETC is aware that many partners and NGOs are concerned about the possibility that Starlink kits might be shut down. Decisions on whether SpaceX allows Starlink services to continue in Sudan will not be made independently of the licensing authority and will therefore be based on guidance and instruction from the Sudanese government. While there is currently no expectation that Starlink services will be taken offline entirely in Sudan, there is a possibility that devices that have been activated outside of Sudan and illegally brought into the country will be shut down. To mitigate this risk, humanitarian actors should avoid bringing Starlink terminals into the country that are not correctly in Sudan.
- The importation of Starlink kits remains prohibited by the authorities and requires specific authorization. There are some cases where the authorities have returned confiscated kits or permitted their temporary use; however authorized use of Starlink devices remains limited.
- The ETC is exploring opportunities to better leverage public-private partnerships to help deliver services and shorten lead times.
- The ETC hub in Zalingei is partially operational; however, access constraints mean there are limited staffing levels. Plans are underway to increase the presence of programme staff at the hub. The presence of logistics staff is also increasing in Tine to support operations in Darfur.
- While ETC expects an increased presence of humanitarian actors in Darfur, the government has not yet granted permission for international staff to enter this area. Currently, only national staff can access West and Central Darfurs, and so the humanitarian response in these areas will rely exclusively on national staff until the authorities grant additional clearances.

### 3. ETC partner update and questions

#### UNHCR

- UNHCR noted that, while in major cities some congestion has been caused by oversubscription to advanced connectivity kits, there are no major challenges in smaller cities.
- UNHCR is also working to import additional equipment based on the understanding that some restrictions on the importation of humanitarian supplies have been lifted. UNHCR will keep partners updated on the outcome of these efforts.

The next Sudan ETC Global Partners teleconference will be held on 06 January 2025 at 12:00 UTC.

## Acronyms

BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CERF	Central Emergency Relief Fund
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MNO	Mobile Network Operators
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SOC	Security Operations Centre
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
UTC	Coordinated Universal Time
WFP	World Food Programme

Minutes: Covi Franklin, Sudan ETC, Information Management and Performance Reporting Officer