

Sudan, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #7

Date: 12/12/2023 Time: 13:00 UTC

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

www.etcluster.org/emergency/sudan-conflict.

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

Global.ETC@wfp.org

Attendance

Chair	Brent Carbno, Global ETC
Ericsson	Lars Ruediger
CISCO	Matt Altman
Internews	Omnia Abbas
	Asia Kambal
IOM	Muli Newton
Government of Luxembourg	Gilles Hoffmann
UNHCR	Massoumeh Farman
UNICEF	Marc Dieng
WFP	Ernest Wambari
	Sylvestre Ngoh
	Arthur Sawmadal
	Yousif Mirza
	Sami Alio
	Bright Ocokdhogu

Agenda

1. Situation Update
2. ETC Sudan update
3. AOB

Minutes

1. Situation update

- The clashes between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in Khartoum continue.
- The Darfur region is currently inaccessible and UNDSS has issued a strict advisory to the UN and partner organisations not to operate there due to the insecurity situation. All Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) with operations in the RSF-controlled areas have lost their data centres and facilities. Sudatel reported that they have disconnected those locations from accessing their network until further notice.
- Other areas in Sudan remain accessible—Port Sudan, Kassala, Gedaref, Wad Madani, and Kosti are calm, and operations are ongoing as expected. In Port Sudan, a curfew is still enforced in the night from 23:00 hours to 05:00 hours. Although there is no curfew in other areas, UNDSS still advises humanitarian partners to remain vigilant and avoid unnecessary nightly movements.

2. ETC Sudan update

Coordination

- The WFP TEC Chief Information Officer (CIO) and WFP Regional IT Officer (RITO) are on a mission in Port Sudan from 10 to 14 December to support, strengthen, and provide guidance to the country teams. The visiting TEC CIO is the global lead for the WFP Technology Division as well as Chair of the ETC. The mission has been holding internal and external meetings with the teams and stakeholders to streamline and revamp ongoing projects and processes in the Sudan response.
- The ETC re-initiated two projects – the engagement with Sudani (the main operator of Sudatel telecom group) for the 1 GB undersea cable project and the smart mesh network project to be implemented in Sudan. The Purchase Orders (POs) for these projects are expected to be out in this week ending 16 December.
- The mesh topology is a network configuration where devices are interconnected in a decentralized manner. The project is to ensure that the ETC has its own independent infrastructure in all common operational areas in Sudan. The WFP TEC CIO and the RITO approved the project concept. Towers will be used to enhance the current infrastructure and adding the mesh topology will ensure continuous connection. UNDSS was also engaged in the discussions on using the towers for the Security Operations Centres (SOCs). The ETC will have a separate bilateral discussion with {TESS+} to further the project.
- Internet connectivity services in the Darfur region are very unpredictable and dependent on which MNOs are operational—Zain, MTN, or Sudani—as well as the Base Transceiver Stations (BTSS) and power generators that are working. Owing to the security situation in the Darfur region, the ETC is not approved by UNDSS to extend cluster services there. Currently, the ETC can only link up any partner who needs access to connectivity in the Darfur region with local stakeholders that may be able to provide a VSAT connection. Partners can reach out to the ETC through sudan.etc@wfp.org for more information.

Data connectivity

- The ETC continues to receive requests from humanitarian partners to expand connectivity services in Port Sudan, Kassala, and Kosti. The cluster also plans to expand connectivity services to Wad Madani and Gedaref. However, due to the lack of the required equipment in country, the cluster has put the scale-up on hold until the necessary equipment is available.

Security communications services

- The ETC met with the new Sudan Chief Security Advisor (CSA) on 5 December, to discuss the requirements for a new security communications system that is to be established to address the needs that humanitarian partners have raised.
- The UNDSS-managed Remote Security Operations Centre (RSOC) established in Nairobi since May is available and operating. Daily radio checks are conducted twice a day for Port Sudan, Kassala, Kosti and Damazine (depending on power availability).

3. AOB

- The global partners are interested in knowing more about the Mesh network project and whether it would be relevant for other operations and therefore requested the ETC to share with them the project concept note.

Action point: The ETC will share a comprehensive concept note of the Mesh topology project and its expected outcomes with the global ETC partners.

The next Sudan ETC Global Partners teleconference will be held on 09 January 2024 at 13:00 UTC.

Acronyms

ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MNO	Mobile Network Operators
NOC	No Objection Certificate
NTC	National Telecommunications Committee
RETS	Refugee Emergency Telecommunications Sector
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SOC	Security Operations Centre
{TESS+}	Telecommunications Security Standards
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

UTC
WFP

Coordinated Universal Time
World Food Programme

Minutes: Bright Ocokdhogu, ETC Sudan Information Management Officer