

Sudan, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #13

Date: 02/07/2024 Time: 12:00 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:

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Attendance

Chair	Komi Amedjonekou
Ericsson	Lars Ruediger
ETC	Richard Egwangu Habib Shashati Rita Oneissi Yousif Mirza
Humanitarian Intervention Team Luxembourg	Roland Nurenberg
Internews	Asia Kambal
IOM	Newton Muli
UNHCR	Hussein Al Sayed John Warnes
UNICEF	Nabiha Faruqui
WFP	Arthur Sawmadal Kesi Kalama Martin Kristensson Karen Barsamian

Agenda

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

Minutes

1. Situation update

- In Khartoum, there are ongoing daily battles on several fronts, with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) attempting to seize the main bases of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and expanding their control within the city. Similarly, in the greater Darfur region, conflicts continue between the SAF and RSF, notably around Al Fasher and other parts of North Darfur. Calls for a ceasefire have been made to facilitate humanitarian responses to the affected areas, including Central and East Darfur.
- In the regions of Jazeera, White Nile, and Sennar, the RSF has targeted the strategic Jebel Moya area which connects these regions. Initially the SAF managed to hold off these attacks, but clashes persist indicating that SAF is gradually losing territory to RSF forces.
- The shift in control is also evident in Port Sudan, Kassala, and El Gadaref. With the RSF gaining more territory, there has been an increase in military presence and stricter checkpoints, a curfew remains in effect from 23:00 to 05:00. The UN personnel are advised not to move at night.

2. ETC Sudan update

Coordination

- The ETC continues to work with humanitarian actors from UN agencies and NGOs in Port Sudan, Kassala, and Kosti to strengthen efforts and avoid duplication in the new operational hubs emerging in response to the famine prevention initiative. The ETC is currently focused on seven confirmed locations, with the possibility of adding two more in Darfur. The confirmed locations are Kassala, Kosti, and Kadugli (which is covering Kurdufan). The team is also assessing additional locations in Darfur and other parts of the country.
- The team will start an assessment mission in Kassala on 08 June, then proceed to Kosti and Kadugli once permissions are obtained. Staff names for the assessments will be submitted accordingly.

Data connectivity

- Following the events in Wad Madani in December 2023, after which Kosti underwent an evacuation, any humanitarian agencies have since returned to Kosti. Initially, the ETC had paused its operations, but with the return of these agencies, the ETC decided to resume services. It was agreed that the services would be provided at WFP premises, where the agencies could access ETC's data connectivity services.
- **Mission to Iriba, Tine, and Zalengei.** The primary goal of the upcoming mission is to support the establishment of an operational hub in Zalengei, intended to assist agencies active in the area. The team's revised route will start from Iriba to Tine, then proceed to Al Junaynah to conduct assessments. Following this, the journey will continue to Zalengei, where the team will stay for up to 10 days, making day trips to various locations based on access, availability, and security conditions.

In addition to establishing the hub, the mission aims to assess the needs of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in the area and determine how the ETC can provide services. The mission will also involve engagements with local stakeholders and Internet Service Providers (ISPs)/Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to explore various connectivity solutions.

- **Update on advanced data connectivity kit services extension.** With the assistance from the TEC unit at WFP and the GLU Protocol unit in Sudan, the ETC resubmitted the request for extending the services of advanced connectivity kits, which had previously been declined by the government. The current grace period ends in 30 days, with a three-month extension proposed. **Action.** Following an internal consultation with the Global ETC team, Habib – Sudan Deputy Coordinator – has officially requested to extend this period. Brent – Global ETC Coordinator –, is currently handling the request, and an update will be provided to Habib once there is more clarity from the Global ETC.

Security communications services

- Infrastructure remains intact in Port Sudan, Kassala, Gadaref, Damazine, and Kosti. The ETC continues to receive and program radios from UN agencies. Efforts are underway to consolidate the call sign list in collaboration with UNDSS, aiming to create a master database to efficiently track which radios are assigned to specific staff members.
- Training sessions on VHF radios were conducted in Kassala for users who needed a refresher on operating the radios. Approximately 50 participants from various agencies, including WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, and FAO, attended these sessions. The training was initiated by the ETC as a simple refresher course on how to use a radio.
- The ETC is in the process of relocating radio equipment to the new UNDSS office in Port Sudan. The cabling team has completed all necessary data connectivity infrastructure. However, the UNDSS office has yet to confirm a specific date for the move.
- The ETC is actively coordinating with WFP in Dubai regarding the equipment shipments. The remaining equipment is expected to arrive in Dubai by 25 July, with subsequent batches to be shipped to Nairobi. Additionally, the option to charter a flight remains, though decisions depend on the specific quantities and types of equipment being shipped. This strategy aims to facilitate smoother clearance.

Services for communities

- The ETC is planning a service for communities' pilot project at the Alashy Camp in Port Sudan to serve around 600 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The ETC is collaborating on this project along with the Global ETC, WFP, UNICEF, and Communication with Communities (CwC) Working group. A charter document outlining the services to be provided—and those not covered—by the ETC is currently in its final drafting phase with the Global ETC team. Following the pilot, the ETC plans to evaluate the outcomes and lessons learned to replicate the initiative in other accessible areas.

Staffing

- Richard has been appointed as the ETC Coordinator for the Sudan operation. Habib will continue in his role as Deputy Coordinator primarily concentrating on operational duties.

Funding

- The remainder of the US\$2 million Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) grant issued in 2023 has been extended until 01 August 2024.
- The remainder of the US\$2 million grant from the US Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) in 2023 is on a no-cost extension until 01 October 2024.

- So far, only the UK Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) has allocated 2024 funding to the ETC in Sudan of GBP 240,385 (equivalent to US\$307,000). This contribution means that the ETC is 5% funded out of the required US\$6.3 million.
- The team is currently using the funds carried over from 2023 and has successfully extended their expiration dates. However, concerns were raised as these funds are not expected to last until the end of the year.

3. ETC Partners Update

- N/a

4. AoB

- **Action.** Global ETC and Habib to meet on 05 July to discuss the expansion of communications services in Sudan to INGO/NGOs, beyond the existing support provided to UN agencies.
- During the recent Hub meeting, attended by the heads of agencies, it was discussed that radio operators should be managed under the ETC. It was tentatively agreed that radio operators would revert to ETC management, and eventually transition to a cost-sharing budget upon the ETC's phase-out. Approximately 60 staff members will be affected by this change. The need for additional funding was clearly communicated.

The next Sudan ETC Global Partners teleconference will be held on 06 August 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: Rita Oneissi, Global ETC, Information Management and Performance Reporting Officer