Sudan
Conflict crisis

2024

Operation overview

Since the outbreak of conflict on 15 April 2023, Sudan's communications infrastructure has been heavily impacted. The ETC was activated on 25 May 2023 to support the urgent need for essential internet connectivity and security communications services for responders across Sudan amid ongoing nationwide communications blackouts.

ETC services provided or planned in **8 COMMON OPERATIONAL AREAS** (see map)

4 UNDSS SECURITY OPERATIONS CENTRES (SOCs) supported by ETC

5 locations supported with **SECURITY COMMUNICATIONS** services

42 SITES in **4 LOCATIONS** provided with **CONNECTIVITY SERVICES**

Further **US$6 MILLION** out of planned US$6.3 million **URGENTLY REQUIRED** to expand services in 2024

Map icon color code

Delivered ETC service/activity
Planned ETC service/activity

Communication needs in Sudan

Sudan's national communications infrastructure has been impacted by damage to telecoms towers and a deteriorated national power grid. Looting of communications assets across the country is extensive. Sudanese telecoms service providers face sporadic cutoffs. Services of Mobile Network Operators—Zain and Sudani—are partially restored while MTN remains down and Sudatel operates fully only in Port Sudan.

Services for humanitarians

Coordination & user support — The ETC works with humanitarian partners, national authorities, and telecommunications providers to coordinate and improve service provision. An ETC helpdesk is maintained in Port Sudan, Kassala, and Gedaref to support the response community.

Internet connectivity — The ETC connects more than 700 humanitarians from 33 partner organizations across 42 sites in Port Sudan, Kassala, Kosti, and El Gedaref to enable the response. The cluster plans to upgrade fibre optic connections and increase VSAT capacity in Port Sudan and Kassala.

Security communications — The ETC supports four UNDSS-managed Security Operations Centres (SOCs) in Port Sudan, Kassala, Gedaref, and Damazine. The cluster also co-facilitates security communications services through a Very High Frequency (VHF) radio network that remains operational in most locations across the country. The ETC plans to enhance the SOCs and relocate the remote SOC from Nairobi to Port Sudan for better operational proximity.

Services for communities

The ETC is engaging with local partners—IOM, UNICEF, Sudan Red Cross, and WFP—to assess support to the displaced population in Sudan and identify what is needed for them to access information channels. Outcomes show critical needs for displaced people to access connectivity in the border town, Wadi Halfa.

Service expansion in 2024

Expand services nationwide, focusing on Khartoum, Darfur, and Kordofan regions once access is granted and secure locations identified. Establish **new operational hubs** in Dongola and Wadi Halfa.

Scale up **connectivity services** in key operational locations: Kassala, Gedaref, Wad Madani, and Kosti, and secure importation of additional advanced connectivity kits to expand independent Internet connectivity services in additional locations.

Expand and strengthen the **VHF radio network** in 10 common operational areas, including strategic locations such as Port Sudan, Kassala, Kosti, Wad Madani, and Gedaref. Additionally, promote awareness and **build capacity** among UN agencies for regular radio checks.

Challenges

Security concerns, restricted travel, and logistical constraints continue to create operational challenges. Importation approval has been lengthy, but since March 2024, the government of Sudan has resumed and eased the authorisation of ICT equipment importation. Submissions are through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and reviewed by the Sudan National Telecommunications Corporation (NTC).

ETC FUNDING NEEDS

The ETC requires a further **US$6 million** to address scaled-up communication needs in Sudan in 2024.

With thanks to the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) for committing the 5 percent funding received in 2024.