

Syria – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #53

Reporting period: 01/04/2022 to 31/05/2022

The ETC was activated in Syria in January 2013 in response to the conflict crisis. Situation Reports are distributed every two months.

Highlights

- An ETC team deployed to Qamishli on a mission from 25 May to 15 June. After conducting maintenance and upgrades to the telecommunications infrastructure in the UN hub, a backup solar power solution was installed to support connectivity and security communications on 30 May.
- As a part of the mission, on 30 May a site survey was conducted at Al Hol camp, situated 85km south of Qamishli. The survey was conducted in preparation for a project to expand VHF radio coverage in the camp in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).
- On 19 May, equipment was delivered to Deir Ez-Zor to upgrade the capacity of the solar power system in the UN hub to cover the power requirements for ETC connectivity services. The installation is planned to take place at the end of June.



The ETC team upgrades the telecommunications infrastructure at the UN Hub in Qamishli. Photo: WFP/ETC

Activities

Coordination

The ETC has received approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to conduct an oversight mission to Aleppo, which will be conducted in July.

The ETC is preparing the content for a technical workshop for inter-agency partners in that will be held in October 2022 to develop the technical capacity of national personnel in Syria.

ETC services upgrade project

The ETC deployed to Qamishli on 25 May after receiving approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) for a mission to enhance the telecommunications infrastructure in the UN hub, install a back-up solar power solution to support connectivity, and to expand VHF radio coverage in Al Hol camp, situated 85 kilometres south of Qamishli.

Equipment for the VHF network in Al Hol and the upgrades to the UN hub including an inverter, electrical toolkit, repeater, and 10 VHF devices, was delivered to Qamishli on 3 April. On 29 May, all

maintenance activities on the telecommunications equipment in the Qamishli hub were completed. To improve and enhance VHF repeater coverage, the repeater unit was relocated to an air-conditioned room and the antenna was upgraded. This work was part of the ETC's plan to conduct maintenance activities and enhance the connectivity infrastructure across five UN hubs in Syria in 2022. Missions have already been conducted this year to the four other UN hubs in Aleppo, Homs, Tartous, and Deir Ez-Zor.

On 30 May, a solar power backup system was installed at the UN hub in Qamishli to support connectivity and security communications services in the hub.

The ETC is also planning to upgrade the capacity of the solar power equipment at the UN hub in Deir Ez-Zor to cover the power requirements for ETC internet connectivity services. The ETC delivered all the required equipment and accessories to Deir Ez-Zor on 19 May, and the installation is planned for the last week of June.

Further, the ETC is working with UNICEF to establish an additional fibre-optic internet link through a different Internet Service Provider (ISP) to improve the connectivity service in the Deir Ez-Zor hub.

MoFA approval was received to ship the Cisco network equipment required to upgrade connectivity services in the UN hubs. The ETC is following up with Cisco to prepare the shipment documents.

The ETC has also received MoFA approval to extend the importation clearance license for the upgrade of connectivity equipment in all common operational hubs in Syria by six months.

Security communications

The ETC obtained security clearance from the authorities to conduct a site survey of Al Hol camp on 30 May in preparation for the expansion of VHF radio coverage in the camp. The ETC worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to obtain approval from the authorities for the expansion of the network in response to observations from the latest security assessment in the camp. The ETC team in Qamishli is preparing to install the VHF radio repeater that was delivered to Qamishli on 3 April to expand the network in the camp with support from ICRC.

The ETC has received MoFA approval to import equipment from WFP in Dubai to equip interagency field missions with portable power solutions, based on operational needs of the UNDSS-managed Security Operations Centres (SOCs).

The ETC is following up with the authorities and transporter to re-export a shipment of ICOM Push-To-Talk (PTT) devices that had been held in customs since April 2021 back to Dubai after MoFA rejected the use of the equipment in country.

The ETC completed the installation of VHF radios in five WFP Armoured Vehicles (AVs). The radios were programmed with the designated frequencies and callsigns. This will strengthen the safety and security of staff in the field.

Funding

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) contributed US\$250,000 to the ETC operation in Syria.

With the additional US\$300,000 in funding that was carried over from 2021, the ETC is fully funded to carry out planned maintenance, improvement, and expansion activities in Syria and the surrounding countries in 2022.

Challenges

Syria is facing a country-wide power crisis which impacts on ETC connectivity services.

The importation of equipment, lack of access to operational areas and lengthy deployment authorisations from relevant authorities frequently affects the timely implementation of ETC activities across Syria.

The ongoing impact of COVID-19 is restricting staff movement and causing delays in the delivery of critical equipment.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **22 June 2022**.

Contacts

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www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-conflict

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