

Syria – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #56

Reporting period: 01/10/2022 to 30/11/2022

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

Highlights

- From 10-14 October, the ETC Syria team delivered a technical training workshop in Dubai to 15 Syrian ICT specialists from six UN agencies. The training, supported by WFP FITTEST and the Global ETC, aimed to boost the capacity of national interagency ICT staff in deploying telecommunications solutions.
- The ETC successfully installed and operationalized a solar power system to provide reliable power to connectivity services in the UN hub in Aleppo during a mission from 7-15 November.
- After receiving approval from the authorities, the ETC installed satellite docking stations in UNDSS Security Operations Centres (SOC) in Aleppo, Damascus, and Deir Ez-Zor. Installations in the remaining three SOCs are being planned.



Syrian ICT specialists are trained on the deployment of telecommunications solutions at the technical workshop hosted by ETC Syria in Dubai . Photo: WFP/ETC

Activities

Coordination

After receiving the required approvals from the authorities, the ETC carried out an oversight mission to assess and monitor its services in Tartous and Homs from 1-3 October.

The ETC submitted its input to Syria's 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan and participated in the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) meeting to discuss the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) process. The ETC has identified a funding requirement of USD 500,000 to cover its operations in Syria in 2023.

The ETC conducted its annual user satisfaction survey from 1-22 November. The survey is designed to gather feedback from all users of ETC services in Syria to inform the cluster's efforts to continually improve its performance. The initial results of the survey show that 92% of users were satisfied with the ETC's services, coordination, and information

management activities in Syria in 2022. A full report on survey results will be published in December.

Data connectivity

The ETC provides internet connectivity services to humanitarians from 13 UN agencies in six sites in Syria (Aleppo, Deir Ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Qamishli) and Turkey (Gaziantep).

After receiving mission approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the ETC successfully installed and operationalized a solar power system in the UN hub in Aleppo during a mission from 7-15 November. The solution will ensure a reliable source of power for all of the connectivity equipment in the hub in the midst of Syria's ongoing energy crisis.

A shipment of ETC network equipment was cleared by customs on 3 November, and on 23 November all the necessary approvals were received from the authorities. The equipment will be used to upgrade ETC connectivity services in the four UN hubs with ETC connectivity services: Aleppo, Deir Ez-Zor, Homs and Qamishli.

Security communications

The ETC provides security communications services to users from 15 UN agencies across seven sites in Syria (Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Ez-Zor, Homs, Tartous, Qamishli) and Turkey (Gaziantep).

The ETC completed the re-installation of VHF systems and Vehicle Tracking Systems (VTS) in three new Armoured Vehicles (AVs) in response to a request from the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). The VTS and VHF systems had been previously dismantled from three old AVs with support from WFP Fleet. The ETC also successfully completed the installation of VHF radios in four newly arrived UNDSS AVs.

The ETC received approval from MoFA for its plan to import VHF repeaters to build a contingency stock in the country. While waiting for the final approval from the Council of Ministries for the importation, the ETC submitted a request to the authorities to approve the installation of an additional VHF repeater in Hama to expand the network.

After UNDSS received licenses for the installation of satellite phones and docking stations in their six Security Operations Centres (SOCs) across Syria, the ETC installed the devices in Aleppo, Damascus, and Deir Ez-Zor. The next installations will be scheduled in Tartous and Homs.

The ETC also supported UNDSS by programming 20 new VHF handheld radios that will be distributed to UNDSS SOC staff in Syria.

The ETC is engaging with the telecommunications unit of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva to identify alternatives to Push to Talk (PTT) radio devices after they were rejected for use in country by the Syrian Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SyTRA). The PTT devices were originally intended to serve as a replacement for HF radios based on Telecommunications Security Standards {TESS+} recommendations.

20 ICOM VHF handheld radio devices for UNDSS were cleared by customs and received at the UNDSS office five months after arriving in country. These devices will be deployed to six UNDSS-managed SOCs to enhance security communications services in Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Ez-Zor, Homs, Qamishli, and Tartous.

Capacity building

The ETC Syria team including the coordinator—Atmaja Sembiring— delivered a technical training workshop in Dubai to boost the capacity of 15 Syrian ICT specialists from six UN agencies. WFP's Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergencies & Support Team (FITTEST) and the Global ETC supported the training, held from 10-14 October, which included participants from UNDP, UNDSS, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, and WFP.

Dashboard

See the [ETC Dashboard](#) for an overview of service locations.

Funding

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) contributed US\$250,000 to the ETC operation in Syria in 2022.

With an additional US\$300,000 in funding from the Government of Ireland carried over from 2021, the ETC is fully funded out of the required US\$550,000 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.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place in **January 2023**.

Contacts

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

www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-conflict

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

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