

Syria – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #60 May – June

Reporting period: 01/05/2023 to 30/06/2023

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

Highlights

- To support the scale-up of field operations in northwestern Syria following the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes, the ETC expanded the radio network coverage in Hama and rural Hama by installing an additional VHF repeater and solar power solution on 08 May.
- From 22-25 May, the cluster conducted a mission to the UN hub in Aleppo to assess existing ETC services and the potential to establish new services at the hub.
- In May, assessments and maintenance work was carried out in Hama and Homs Security Operations Centres (SOCs). After receiving approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the ETC also conducted a series of missions from 12 to 25 June to carry out further maintenance work on the telecommunications equipment in all the SOCs in the UN hubs in Aleppo and Qamishli.



The ETC installs a VHF repeater at the UN hub in Hama to enhance security communication. Photo: WFP/ETC

Activities

Coordination

The ETC participated in the inaugural national NGO and sector coordination meeting on 04 June, facilitated by OCHA. The objective of the meeting was to enable discussion among the sectors and national NGOs and agree on the coordination and implementation process for the Syria Humanitarian Fund (SHF).

The ETC also participated in the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) retreat held on 08 June in Damascus. The discussions in the retreat highlighted how to integrate overall humanitarian activities with Early Recovery systems following emergencies.

The ETC received approval from MoFA for a mission to assess the existing and potential new ETC services in the UN hub in Qamishli. The mission was successfully conducted from 22 to 25 May.

The ETC submitted another request to MoFA for approval to conduct a maintenance mission in Deir Ezzor from 02 to 06 July and IT network maintenance in Homs Hub around mid-July. To prepare for the mission to Deir Ez-Zor, the ETC shipped ahead the network equipment required to upgrade connectivity services in the humanitarian hub.

Data connectivity

The ETC continues to provide internet connectivity services to 11 UN agencies in six sites in Syria (Aleppo, Deir Ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Qamishli) and is continuing to support existing connectivity services in Gaziantep for cross-border operations, in line with the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach.

The telecommunications equipment for ETC network maintenance missions across the hubs arrived in Aleppo on 05 June and Deir Ezzor on 06 June. The ETC and government authorities inspected the equipment on 17 June.

Security communications

The ETC provides security communications services to 14 UN agencies across six sites in Syria (Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Ez-Zor, Homs, Tartous, and Qamishli). ETC Syria is continuing to support security communications services in Gaziantep for cross-border operations in coordination with ETS Türkiye.

To support the scale-up of field operations in northwestern Syria following the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes, the ETC expanded the radio network coverage in Hama and rural Hama by installing an additional VHF repeater and solar power solution on 08 May. The repeater is linked to the VHF network in Homs and is monitored by the UNDSS SOC in Homs. For enhanced network coverage, routine maintenance of VHF repeaters and all communications system in the Homs SOC, was conducted from 12 to 16 May.

The ETC conducted a field visit from 22 to 25 May to assess the ETC services in Aleppo and to meet with partners. The UNDSS SOC is fully equipped with HF, VHF, and satellite phone with docking station. A solar power system provides stable 24/7 electricity for all communications systems in the SOC regardless of the power availability from the main source. While the existing repeater can cover most of the operational area, SOC personnel reported issues with the VHF coverage between Hama and Aleppo. The key recommendation from the visit is to conduct a further inspection of the repeater and vehicle radios during the scheduled mission in June and to conduct maintenance on the HF radio antenna. The ETC will provide an updated VHF coverage map for both the current repeater in Aleppo, and the newly established repeater in Hama.

MoFA granted approval for the ETC to carry out routine maintenance work on the telecommunications equipment in all the Security Operation Centres (SOCs) in the UN hubs in Aleppo, Homs and Qamishli. The missions were successfully conducted from 17 to 23 June for all three locations. The maintenance mission to Tartous is rescheduled to July due to festive Eid Adha holiday.

The ETC programmed three VHF handheld radios for the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS), one vehicle and five handheld radios for the International Labour Organization on 25 May in Damascus. The ETC also programmed one VHF handheld device for the 'Shorouk for Security Services' company that provides security services for UN agencies in Damascus.

Dashboard

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

Funding

The ETC has identified a funding requirement of US\$500,000 to cover its operations in Syria in 2023.

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) contributed US\$181,000 to the ETC operation in Syria in 2023.

With this grant, as well as funding carried over from contributions from BHA and the Government of Ireland in 2022, the ETC has met 58% of its funding requirement for 2023.

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.

Access to the earthquake-affected areas in northwest Syria is a significant challenge for the overall humanitarian response.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on a date yet to be scheduled.

Contacts

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www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-conflict

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