

## Syria – Conflict

### ETC Situation Report #63: November – December

Reporting period: 01/11/2023 to 31/12/2023

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

## Highlights

- The 2023 user satisfaction survey report is available [here](#). The annual survey resulted in an overall user satisfaction rate of 89% for ETC services provided in seven common operational areas in Syria—Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Qamishli, Tartous, as well as Gaziantep in Türkiye. The ETC is taking all feedback received into consideration to improve its services in Syria, including requests for more regular training courses to enhance skills for humanitarians in the field of telecommunications, and to strengthen engagement among partners in all the humanitarian hubs.
- The ETC deployed to Qamishli from 13 to 22 December to establish an alternate Security Operations Centre (SOC) in the UN hub and install VHF radio systems and satellite phones for enhanced services.
- On 28 December, the ETC received the shipment of four VHF repeaters which had been in customs clearance since 01 November. The repeaters will be used as contingency stock for the UN hubs in the case that increased coverage or a replacement is needed in the operation.



The ETC enhanced services in the UN hub in Qamishli. Photo: WFP/ETC

## Activities

### Coordination

The 2023 user satisfaction survey report is available [here](#). The annual survey resulted in an overall user satisfaction rate of 89% for ETC services provided in eight common operational areas in Syria—Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Qamishli, Tartous, as well as Gaziantep in Türkiye. The ETC is taking all feedback received into consideration to improve its services in Syria, including requests for more regular training courses to enhance skills for

humanitarians in the field of telecommunications, and to strengthen engagement among partners in all the humanitarian hubs.

The cluster assessed potential warehouses in Damascus to store essential equipment stocks and spare parts to ensure rapid recovery of services in humanitarian hubs if any issues are experienced. As part of the preparations, the ETC completed an inventory update for all telecommunications equipment stored in Damascus.

### Data connectivity

The ETC continues to provide internet connectivity services to 336 humanitarians from 18 UN agencies across eight sites in Syria.

The ETC obtained approval to renew the VSAT satellite terminal licenses for the UN hubs in Aleppo and Homs. The ETC is now processing the payment for the licenses. The terminals provide critical connectivity for humanitarians working in the hubs.

### Security communications

On 08 November, the ETC received approval for the 2024 VHF/HF radio frequency licenses from the Syrian Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (SyTRA) and settled the fee payment by the end of 2023.

The ETC deployed to Qamishli from 13 to 22 December to establish an alternate Security Operations Centre (SOC) in the UN hub and install VHF radio systems and satellite phones for enhanced services. The ETC purchased and received a solar power inverter and battery storage as ETC contingency stock in Qamishli—the equipment was purchased locally.

WFP Türkiye has received UHF radio repeaters and installation equipment ordered during the ETS Türkiye response to the Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes in February. ETC Syria and WFP Türkiye are planning to deploy the repeaters in Reyhanlı and Mersin to support the Syria cross border operations.

The ETC conducted critical maintenance activities including rebooting a VHF radio repeater in the World Health Organization (WHO) office in Damascus, and replacing old VHF base radio devices with new devices at the SOC in Damascus.

On 28 December, the ETC received the shipment of four ICOM VHF repeaters which had been in customs clearance since 01 November. The repeaters will be used as contingency stock for the UN hubs in the case that increased coverage or a replacement is needed in the operation.

### Capacity building

On 16 November, the ETC delivered a security communications training session to four WFP VHF handheld radio holders to boost the safety and security of staff going into the field—a follow up session for all remaining staff is planned.

## Dashboard

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

## Funding

At the end of 2023, the ETC in Syria was 58% funded out of the total US\$500,000 requirement.

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) contributed US\$181,000 to the ETC operation in Syria in 2023 and this was combined with US\$108,000 funding carried over from BHA and the Government of Ireland from 2022 to make a total of US\$289,000.

The ETC funding requirement in 2024 is US\$455,183.

## Challenges

The ETC is closely monitoring the regional crisis in Gaza that may impact on humanitarian operations in Syria.

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.

## Contacts

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

[www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-conflict](http://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-conflict)

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