

Syria – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #64: January – February

Reporting period: 01/01/2024 to 29/02/2024

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

Highlights

- The ETC in Syria is geared up for 2024 following the submission of its inputs to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and updates to the 2024 procurement plan to ensure priority equipment and services are sourced to match the response needs. Further, the cluster received funding of US\$200,000 for ETC activities in 2024 from USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).
- On 08 January, the ETC in Damascus received the shipment of four VHF radio repeaters which had been in customs clearance for two months. The repeaters will be used as contingency stock for the UN hubs located across Syria in the case that rapid upgrades are needed in the operation.
- The ETC went on mission to Gaziantep, Mersin, and Reyhanlı in Türkiye from 11 to 28 February to enhance and set up UHF radio networks in key locations. The ETC in Syria supports activities in Gaziantep, Türkiye, as part of the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach and more recently, as part of the Kahramanmaraş earthquake response which hit both countries in early 2023.



The ETC enhanced UHF radio services in Gaziantep, Türkiye, in February 2024.
Photo: WFP/Muhammad Khaled

Activities

Coordination

The ETC submitted its inputs to UNOCHA as part of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2024 process for the humanitarian response in Syria.

The ETC updated its 2024 procurement plan to reflect equipment and services needs based on priority and resource availability.

Security communications

On 08 January, the ETC in Damascus received the shipment of four VHF radio repeaters which had been in customs clearance for two months. The repeaters will be used as

contingency stock for the UN hubs located across Syria in the case that increased coverage or a replacement is needed in the operation.

On 14 January, the ETC successfully dismantled the vehicle tracking system installed on three United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) armoured vehicles in Damascus to comply with the authorities' regulations.

The ETC gave equipment importation guidance and assistance to the World Health Organization (WHO) to import approximately 75 VHF/HF radio communication devices into Syria to support their response efforts.

The ETC also provided technical support to WHO and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Damascus related to Security Communications Systems (SCS) standards and radio programming.

Due to prevailing weather conditions, the VHF radio repeater in Aleppo was facing insufficient power from the solar power system. The issue was resolved on 22 February by the cluster, following the installation of an additional battery charger connected to the national grid.

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- **Gaziantep:** In Gaziantep, the ETC upgraded the antenna of the existing UHF radio repeater at the UN hub and installed a solar power solution to provide stable power to the repeater. The coverage of the repeater is improved to ensure UN personnel staff safety in Gaziantep. The ETC also carried out maintenance activities for the UHF base radio and HF radio stations in the UN hub. Further, the ETC conducted a training session for UNDSS Security Operations Centre (SOC) operators in Gaziantep on 16 February.
- **Reyhanlı:** A new UHF radio repeater was installed in Reyhanlı to cover the operational area of the cross-border team and installed a power solution for stable running of the repeater. A briefing was given to key stakeholders in Reyhanlı on the safety and security of the equipment installed there. UNDSS will maintain the service.
- **Mersin:** In Mersin, a new UHF radio repeater and antenna was installed to replace the previous degraded system. Solar power was also installed to support the continuous running of the service. The service has been tested and coverage was found to reach across the city. UNDSS will maintain the service.

Data connectivity

The ETC continues to provide internet connectivity services to 300+ humanitarians from 15 UN agencies across eight sites in Syria.

The ETC carried out connectivity network maintenance at the UN hub in Gaziantep, Türkiye, on 22 February while on mission there.

Dashboard

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

Funding

In 2024, the ETC requires funding of US\$455,183 to maintain and expand services in eight common operational areas across Syria and Türkiye.

In February, USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) confirmed funding of US\$200,000 for ETC activities in 2024. Additionally, the ETC is carrying over US\$50,000 in funding from 2023. Therefore, the ETC is 54% funded out of the required US\$463,000 for 2024.

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.

Contacts

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

www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-conflict

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