

Syria & the Surrounding Countries

ETC Situation Report #43

Reporting period 01/08/2020 to 30/09/2020

The ETC operates under the 'Whole of Syria (WoS)' approach which comprises activities in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan for an effective humanitarian response inside Syria. The next report will be issued on or around 30/11/2020.

Highlights

- A new ETC Coordinator took over the role in Syria on 25 August.
- The ETC deployed with Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) to Homs from 15-19 August and to Aleppo from 20-26 August to carry out the next stage of the country-wide telecommunications infrastructure upgrade and migration plan to improve access to security telecommunications services for humanitarians responding to the crisis in Syria.
- To mitigate the impact of the increasingly frequent power cuts on its services in Syria, the ETC is planning to carry out a review of its network setup across all ETC sites to implement a Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP).



The ETC and Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) deploy to Homs to migrate and upgrade security telecommunications infrastructure.

Photo: WFP/ETC

ETC Activities

- A new ETC Coordinator took over the role in Syria on 25 August.
- The ETC continued to implement the country-wide telecommunications infrastructure upgrade and migration plan to improve access to security telecommunications services for humanitarians responding to the crisis in Syria. The ETC deployed with Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) to Homs from 15-19 August and to Aleppo from 20-26 August to carry out the next stage of the migration process. The team significantly extended radio network coverage across both cities by 80 kilometres as well as carrying

out improvements to Security Operations Centres (SOCs) and Very High Frequency (VHF) services in UN vehicles. To date, upgrades have been carried out by the ETC in Damascus, Homs and Aleppo. As part of the next phase of the project, the ETC is preparing to deploy to Qamishli and Tartous. See more on the deployment to Homs [here](#).

- As part of the security communications infrastructure migration to a government-approved brand, all 15 WFP vehicles in Damascus have now been migrated by the ETC throughout August and September.
- The ETC is supporting the relocation of the WFP office in Tartous by sending an approval request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to redeploy satellite equipment from the WFP office in Tartous to the warehouse being used as a temporary office space by WFP staff. Moving the satellite equipment to the warehouse will accommodate the connectivity needs of 50 WFP users.
- The ETC programmed 20 VHF radio devices for UN agencies in Damascus in late September.
- The ETC is working to obtain new VHF licences from the authorities on behalf of the humanitarian community in Syria.
- To mitigate the impact of the increasingly frequent power cuts on its services in Syria, the ETC is planning to carry out a review of its network setup across all ETC sites to implement a Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP). The plan will include an upgrade of the current infrastructure with backup solar power solutions to reinforce the reliability of data connectivity services in the context of the increasing power blackouts in country.

Challenges

- Increasingly frequent power cuts across Syria are impacting on the delivery of ETC services.
- The ETC's plan for 2020 is experiencing delays caused by the response to COVID-19 due to movement restrictions and staff availability.
- Lack of access to operational areas and lengthy deployment authorisations from relevant authorities is a major issue which frequently affects the timely implementation of ETC activities across Syria.
- Importing IT and telecommunications equipment into Syria remains a challenge.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **14 October 2020**.



Information

- Humanitarian ICT responders supporting the Syria operation across the region are encouraged to share their contact details with Syria.ETC@wfp.org to facilitate coordination efforts.
- A dedicated information-sharing space on Syria – including an ETC dashboard, infographic and factsheet – can be found on the [ETC website](#).

Contacts

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