

Syria & the Surrounding Countries

ETC Situation Report #48

Reporting period 01/04/2021 to 31/05/2021

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 31/07/2021.

Highlights

- A new ETC Coordinator took up the post on 16 April. A handover period from the Interim ETC Coordinator took place from 16 April-31 May.
- The ETC has re-submitted its inputs to the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2021 with a reduced and revised budget request of US\$429,405. The submission is currently under review by OCHA.
- The ETC successfully installed solar power solution equipment in the UNDSS-managed Security Operation Centres (SOCs) in Homs and Aleppo to support security communications services amid a country-wide power crisis.



The ETC installs a solar solution to power the Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Homs.

Photo: Hikmat Akad/ETC

ETC Activities

Coordination

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Internet connectivity

- An oversight mission took place to Homs and Aleppo to review the performance of Internet connectivity services in the common operational hubs to identify areas for improvement to the services. The team is also planning to visit the remaining two sites where ETC provides Internet connectivity services in Syria – Qamishli and Deir Ez-Zor.
- The ETC has obtained clearance from the US Treasury to import essential network equipment to install in all common operational hubs in Syria to improve Internet connectivity services.
- The ETC is exploring options to procure back-up power solution equipment to install in humanitarian field offices and warehouses in Syria to mitigate the impact of the country-wide power cuts on Internet connectivity services.

Security communications

- The ETC and UNDSS continue to follow up on the six satellite phones held at the border with Lebanon for several months, awaiting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to share its approval with customs authorities. The sat phones will equip the six UNDSS-managed Security Operation Centres (SOCs) in Syria.
- A shipment of Push-To-Talk (PTT) sat phones were dispatched to Syria via Lebanon and remain under customs clearance at the border. The ETC continues to follow up with the national authorities to release the equipment. When cleared and approved, the sat phones will be distributed to humanitarian agencies.

Solar power solution

- The ETC continues to implement the project to install solar power solution equipment in the six UNDSS SOCs to support security communications services amid a country-wide power crisis.
- From 17-22 May, the ETC deployed to Homs where the team successfully installed the solar power solution equipment in the UNDSS SOC. The system is now fully operational. The ETC also replaced the battery of security communications equipment in Homs with a long-lasting battery.
- The ETC deployed to Aleppo from 24-31 May to install the solar system at the UNDSS SOC.
- The solar solution has now been installed in a total of three sites – Tartous, Homs, and Aleppo. The ETC is waiting for MoFA approval to install the equipment at the remaining three SOCs in Damascus, Deir Ez-Zor and Qamishli.
- COVID-19 restrictions and a country-wide lack of fuel has caused delays to this project to improve services across the six SOCs in Syria.

Capacity building

- Given the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the ETC and partner NetHope are exploring options to deliver the planned Disaster Management and Emergency technical coordination training for national ICT staff in an alternative location instead of Dubai. A follow-up meeting is scheduled during the first week of June to make a final decision with NetHope.



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- Two sets of capacity building sessions – advanced VHF radio training and PTT sat phone training – are also on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Challenges

- Frequent power cuts across Syria are impacting on the delivery of ETC services.
- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact on the importation of equipment and movement of staff.
- 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.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **23 June 2021**.

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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