

## Tukastan– Earthquake

ETC Situation Report #03: 20 September 2023

Reporting period: 19/09/2023 to 20 September 2023

**An intense 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck 30km southwest of Ugrigk, Tukastan on 15 September 2022. The Global Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (ETC) and its partners deployed to Tukastan on 15 September to provide common telecommunication services support required for the humanitarian response. The ETC was formally activated on 19 September.**

### Highlights

- The ETC has established the security communication systems for humanitarian responders in Taldad and Qazurum on 19 September. The system uses VHF/HF handheld radios for secure voice calls to enhance emergency response and ensure staff security.
- The ETC and its global partners—have set up, installed and configured the long range and stable Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) data connectivity for humanitarian responders in Qazurum humanitarian basa camp hub. Functional VSAT data connectivity is scheduled to be complete on 20 September for Akbad and Taldad.
- The ETC is supporting the rehabilitation of the local broadcast radio—Tuka—to provide lifesaving information for the affected communities in Qazurum.



ETC and global partners set up VSAT data connectivity for communication services for responders in Taldad following the earthquake. Photo: Mufaro Masuka

### Situation Overview

On 15 September, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck Ugrigk, Kaitshow Province, in central Northern Tukastan. The earthquake and subsequent aftershock caused extensive destruction in a 50km radius from the epicentre, approximately 30km southwest of Ugrigk town. On 19 September a 6.6. magnitude aftershock caused further extensive damage and escalated the humanitarian needs of the affected population.

The death toll due to the recent earthquakes continues rising. According to the latest authorities figures—recorded on 17 September—at least 1,200 people have been killed and

more than 70,000 injured. Most of the deaths reportedly occurred in the districts of Ugrigk and Kathmandu Obodan. These figures are expected to increase, especially once communication is restored and government officials and aid workers fully access the outlying affected areas. Several remote areas are still cut off or they are difficult to approach.

## Telecommunications Impact

Further damage to the already destroyed telecommunications infrastructure and the national electrical grid occurred on 19 September due to a 6.6 magnitude aftershock. Communication platforms that include GSM, VHF and HF radios are still not working in the affected area. Power outages are extensive as the hydrological power plant was shut down.

Stable internet connectivity from across the remainder of the affected area remains intermittent. Internet data connectivity, mobile and landline calls with districts close to the epicentre is extremely difficult.

The government radio networks continue to be affected across the entire area with only intermittent and infrequent connectivity available. The ETC is supporting the rehabilitation of the local bradscat radio—Tuka—to provide life saving information for the affected communities in Qazurum.

## Activities

### Coordination

The ETC is planning to hold the first ICT working group meeting on 20 September. The group is being established to coordinate ICT activities across UN agencies, INGOs, local NGOs and national telecommunications service provider representatives.

The Global ETC is engaging with its partners for information-gathering and a coordinated response to the disaster. An [emergency page](#) has been set up on the Global ETC website to gather information on the response and an ICT country profile for [Tukastan](#) can also be found on the country pages of the website.

### ETC Activities

#### Data Connectivity

The ETC and its global partners— have set up, installed and configured the long range and stable Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) data connectivity for humanitarian responders in Qazurum humanitarian hub. Functional VSAT data connectivity is scheduled to be complete on 20 September for Akbad and Taldad.

To enhance the emergency response, the ETC is now providing stable internet connectivity and security communication systems to 98 users from 26 organisations across three locations.

The ETC plans to configure and install the WIDER data connectivity kits in Akbad on 20 September. Provided by ETC partner Ericsson Response, WIDER is a central globalised management solution that allows central management access control of the internet services using wireless connectivity.

Meanwhile the humanitarian responders continue to use the basic BGAN connectivity in Akdad and Talbad to deliver aid to the affected population.

### Services for Communities

Following a request for laptops and furniture assistance from a local NGO—Shine—the ETC services for communities unit is following up on a donation offer from MSB to fulfill the request. Shine NGO is scheduled to conduct examinations for pupils on 22 September and are in dire need of the commodities, following a loss of their property due to the earthquake.

### Security Communication Systems

The ETC has established the security communication systems for humanitarian responders in Taldad and Qazurum on 19 September. The system uses VHF/HF handheld radios for secure voice calls to enhance emergency response and ensure staff security.

## Dashboard

The latest ETC Tukastan dashboard showing services is available [here](#).

## Funding

The team is combining their funding requirements and tabulating a budget in anticipation of delivering common shared telecommunication services in the three locations—Akbad, Talbad and Qazurum.

## Challenges

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 Tukastan.

## Contacts

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

<https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/2023gearup-exercise-tukastan-earthquake>

For more information or to be added or deleted from the mailing list please contact:

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