

## Tukastan– Earthquake

ETC Situation Report #04: 21 September 2023

Reporting period: 20/09/2023 to 21 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 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 Akbad and Taldad.
- The ETC organized and hosted the first ETC Tukastan Working Group meeting on 20 September at Taldad base camp. Discussions included ETC activation, requests from humanitarian responders, plan for a coordinated operational response and key needs to be prioritized.
- The ETC attended the Inter-Cluster Coordination Meeting at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) in Claustan on 20 September and were allocated US\$500,000 funding from the USD20 million Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) envelope for the Tukastan earthquake response.



ETC holds an ICT Working Group meeting for responders in Taldad base camp 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. Following the aftershocks, search and rescue operations are reoriented from Ugrigk to the Lingenshowo and Chomiiersk.

In Stichbundi district, there are reports of people temporarily moving from settlements to central distribution points, such as Akbad. Communities started rebuilding homes with available wood, mud, stones and corrugated iron sheets.

According to the government, the number of affected people has past 1,6 million people with over 85,000 people injured.

Unconfirmed reports on 20 September state that some rebel forces are regrouping taking advantage of the government's focus on the earthquake. The forces are said to be advancing towards Sidharta city—an entry point for most of the aid relief from humanitarian responders.

## 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 broadcast radio—Tuka—to provide life saving information for the affected communities in Qazurum.

## Activities

### Coordination

The ETC held the first ETC working group meeting on 20 September at the Taldad base camp. A total of 9 organizations: Action Contre La Faim (ACF), MedAir, International Organization for Migration (IOM), World Health Organization (WHO), OXFAM, Solidarites International, Johanniter, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and NetHope, were in attendance. The group is being established to implement a coordinated approach for ICT activities across UN agencies, INGOs, local NGOs and national telecommunications service provider representatives.

The ETC attended the Inter-Cluster Coordination Meeting at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) in Claustan on 20 September and were allocated US\$500,000 funding from the USD20 million Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) envelope for the Tukastan earthquake response.

The 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 Akbad and Taldad on 20 September. All three priority sites are now connected with stable and reliable data network for effective lifesaving communication.

To enhance the emergency response, the ETC is now providing stable internet connectivity and security communication systems to 41 users from 16 organisations across the three priority locations.

#### Services for Communities

On 20 September the Services for Community Officer conducted an ICT needs assessment at Baknal village and at the Akbad town Mayor's house. Results of the needs assessment in Baknal show that, while the affected population have access to voice calls on their mobile phones, the data connectivity and power is unavailable. The ETC is exploring the possibility of supplying generator-powered or solar power solution mobile charging stations, which will be set in the community for affected populations to power communications devices and facilitate access to information.

On 20 September the ETC expanded VSAT data connectivity to a community centre in Mozra village near Qazurum. The village is habitat to 600 people. The ETC collaborated with local NGO—Shine—to install an internet access point at the community centre. The community centre serves 200 people for food collection. The same number of people will now get data connectivity access to communicate with their families through text messaging, starting on 21 September. The ETC plans to equip the centre with a backup solar solution to power the internet access point for uninterrupted service provision.

#### Security Communication Systems (SCS)

The ETC has established the security communication systems (SCS) for humanitarian responders in Qazurum on 20 September. Therefore all three sites are now connected to the SCS, which uses VHF/HF handheld radios for secure voice calls to enhance emergency response and ensure staff security.

The ETC conducted basic VHF/HF handheld radio use training for 31 staff from 12 organizations—19 in Taldad and 12 in Qazurum. The training enhances radio use skills and knowledge of the UN standard call signs.

## Dashboard

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

## Funding

The ETC is appealing for an initial US\$ 1.7 million fund the provision of common shared telecommunication services in the three priority locations—Akbad, Talbad and Qazurum—for the next three months.

The ETC was allocated US\$500,000 from the US\$20 million CERF envelope for the Tukastan earthquake response— at the Inter-Cluster Coordination meeting held at the OCHA office in Claustan on 20 September.

## Challenges

The need for communication services is increasing daily in Tukastan as families were separated during the disaster. The ETC has had to limit connectivity bandwidth so as to accommodate more users on the network. The ETC and its global partners are exploring ways to increase the the data connectivity bandwidth to meet the need of more users.

## 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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