

Ukraine

ETC Situation Report #6

Reporting period: 27/04/2022 to 19/05/2022

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster was activated in Ukraine on 3 March 2022 following the escalation of armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The ETC is deploying cybersecurity solutions and VSATs to provide secure networks and backup connectivity to humanitarians, while working to obtain approvals for the establishment of radio security communications.

Highlights

- As of 18 May, the ETC is providing secure internet connectivity services to 129 staff from 10 humanitarian organisations, including UN agencies and INGOs, in two interagency workspaces in Dnipro and Lviv.
- On 13 May, the ETC extended secure internet connectivity services to cover a humanitarian workspace on an additional floor of the building in Lviv, to protect humanitarians' data from cyber threats.
- On 27 April, the ETC deployed a cybersecurity solution designed by its partner Cisco Crisis Response at the interagency humanitarian workspace in Dnipro. The ETC secure network in Dnipro is now connected to a dedicated fibre-optic network from the local ISP, offering a faster and more secure connection for humanitarian responders.



WFP FITTEST specialists configure the secure internet connection for an extended office location in the interagency workspace in Lviv. ©WFP/Beryl Lo

Overview

As of 17 May, according to [the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#), the toll of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine is estimated to have reached 7,814 civilian casualties, including 3,752 deaths. The OHCHR has stated that actual numbers may be significantly higher as many reports of casualties are still awaiting corroboration. The most intense hostilities continue to take place in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkivska and Khersonska oblasts.

The [International Organisation for Migration \(IOM\)](#) reports that 8.02 million people have been internally displaced in Ukraine since the start of the conflict, and the [Office of the United](#)

[Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#) puts the total number of refugees having crossed international borders at 6.36 million.

Impact on telecommunications

Telecommunications infrastructure remains operational throughout most of Ukraine, however, there are reports of hacking and jamming of telecommunications channels in the country and localised outages in areas of heavy fighting. Although reports of 3G and 4G mobile network coverage continue to be positive along the Ukrainian borders, there may be localised saturation of the network in some areas due to the influx of refugees.

A high volume of cyber attacks on Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have been observed to have caused a significant reduction in internet speeds. Additionally, phishing attacks targeting humanitarians have been reported.

Activities

Coordination

The ETC team is coordinating its response from Lviv, Ukraine, since late April, to support the deployment of connectivity and security communications services in Ukraine. These include the ETC coordinator and Information Management Officer who are dedicated to the rapidly expanding cluster response, as well as a team of three WFP FITTEST IT & Telecommunications specialists and a WFP FITTEST Administration and Logistics Specialist.

Data connectivity

All the ETC equipment that had been prepositioned in Rzeszow, Poland, has been brought into Ukraine.

In Dnipro, the ETC deployed a cybersecurity solution designed by ETC partner Cisco Crisis Response to protect the network being used by UN agencies and INGOs in the interagency office on 27 April. The solution, which includes both hardware and software components and a user registration system, was designed by Cisco to be deployed with ETC networks in Ukraine to protect humanitarians' data from cyber threats. The ETC secure network is now connected to a dedicated fibre-optic network from the local internet service provider (ISP).

A shipment that included a rapidly-deployable VSAT provided by ETC partner, the Government of Luxembourg, and cybersecurity hardware provided by Cisco Crisis Response, arrived in Dnipro on 29 April.

WFP FITTEST IT & Telecommunications specialists extended the ETC secure connectivity network to cover the humanitarian workspace on an additional floor of the interagency workspace on 13 May, and provided support to users with the one-time registration required to access the network. These activities will protect humanitarians' data from cyber threats.

As of 18 May, the ETC is providing secure internet connectivity services to 129 staff from 10 humanitarian organisations, including UN agencies and INGOs, in two interagency workspaces in Dnipro and Lviv.

Services for Communities

The ETC team continues to engage with partners on establishing an information centre comprising an interagency Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) and a hotline in Ukraine. The CFM would provide a coordinated channel for beneficiaries to request information and provide feedback on the services they receive, increasing the accountability of the humanitarian response to the affected population and providing valuable insights to inform decision-making. The ETC is working on a concept note to ascertain the scope of the CFM, as well as conducting background research on the process of setting up a toll-free hotline, and agreements with the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs).

The ETC Chatbot, under the name vBezpetsi_bot (вБезпечи in Ukrainian), which translates to “safe spaces”, is available on Telegram and Viber. The ETC team continues to engage with the Protection Cluster and other humanitarian partners including the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the Cash Working Group, to expand and populate the content disseminated by the clusters.

Security Communications

The ETC continues to coordinate with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) on obtaining approval from the Security Management Team (SMT) and the UN Designated Official (DO) in Ukraine for the set of recommendations on security communications systems issued by the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) team. The recommendations include the use of VHF radio as a back-up means of security communications in case mobile networks are compromised. Meanwhile, the ETC continues to follow up with UNDSS on an official request to the Government of Ukraine for a frequency license for the establishment of a VHF network for humanitarians.

The ETC is also preparing to support the setup of four UNDSS-managed Security Operations Centres (SOC), beginning with the priority location of Mukachevo. The number and locations are under discussion with the UNDSS, where the proposed locations include Lviv, Vinnytsia, and Dnipro.

Funding

The ETC has received a contribution of US\$1 million from the United States, and US\$400,000 and US\$700,000 from two Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) envelopes.

The ETC funding requirement for the Ukraine emergency operation was revised from the initial budget of US\$2.9 million, which covered three locations for a period of six months, to US\$3.72 million, which will cover security communications, Security Operations Centre (SOC) setup, data connectivity, and helpdesk services in five locations until the end of August 2022, as well as the implementation of the ETC Chatbot.

Based on the revised budget of US \$3.72 million, the ETC is 56% funded.

Challenges

Security and access to some locations are expected to be a continued major constraint in the ETC’s ability to implement telecommunications solutions within Ukraine.

The risk of cyber attacks is considered to be high in this response.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Partners Teleconference on the Ukraine response will take place on **26 May 2022 at 13:00 UTC**.

Contacts

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<https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/ukraine-conflict>

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