

Ukraine

ETC Situation Report #10

Reporting period: 01/07/2022 to 15/07/2022

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster was activated in Ukraine on 3 March 2022 following the escalation of armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

Highlights

- From 06 to 21 July, the ETC team is conducting a joint assessment mission with the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) to Kyiv. The mission conducted an assessment for the setup of a UNDSS Security Information Operations Centre; checked the configuration of security communications systems (SCS) in the armoured vehicles of UN agencies; and conducted an assessment on the potential site for the installation of a Very High Frequency (VHF) repeater.
- The ETC team is closely following up with the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) and UNDSS to liaise with the Government of Ukraine on the UN's request for a VHF licence as the backup means of telecommunications in the country.
- Since the launch of the ETC Chatbot – [vBeztpesi](#) – on 20 June, a total of 8,561 users in Ukraine have accessed information relating to humanitarian assistance.



A WFP FITTEST Specialist facilitates a training session on security communications protocol for WFP security staff and drivers in Lviv.
Photo: WFP/Beryl Lo

Overview

Four months into the hostilities in Ukraine, concerns about the impact of the conflict on global food supplies are growing, with key ports for the export of grain blocked.

The estimated toll of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine surpassed 11,500 including 5,024 deaths as of 12 July, according to the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#). 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, Luhanska, and Kharkivska oblasts.

The [International Organisation for Migration \(IOM\)](#) reports that 6.27 million people are internally displaced in Ukraine due to 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 9.17 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 humanitarian workers have been reported.

In response, the ETC is deploying cybersecurity solutions to provide secure networks and backup connectivity to humanitarians, while working with UNDSS to obtain approvals for the establishment of radio security communications. The ETC is also collaborating with partners to increase accountability towards affected populations, including the launch of the ETC Chatbot that allows affected populations to access information about humanitarian assistance.

Activities

Coordination

The ETC team on the ground comprises the ETC Coordinator and the ETC Information Management Officer, as well as two IT & Telecommunications specialists, two Telecommunications specialists, and an Administration and Logistics specialist from WFP's Fast IT & Telecommunications Emergency & Support Team (FITTEST).

The ETC team is present in four locations in Ukraine – Dnipro, Kyiv, Lviv and Odesa. To improve coordination with key partners, the ETC Coordinator relocated to Kyiv on 06 July.

Data connectivity

Since 16 April, the ETC is providing secure internet connectivity and ICT helpdesk services to 239 staff from 12 humanitarian organisations, including UN agencies and INGOs, in two interagency workspaces in Dnipro and Lviv. The secure network will protect humanitarian data from cyber threats.

The ETC is planning to establish data connectivity and security communications services in an interagency location in Odesa. A WFP FITTEST Specialist has configured the IT infrastructure for the deployment of a cybersecurity solution designed by ETC partner Cisco Crisis Response, currently pending the confirmation of an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

The ETC stands ready to provide data connectivity services together with capacity building sessions to any new interagency office locations in Ukraine, as well as technical support and consultation with humanitarian organisations on communications solutions.

Security communications

From 06 to 21 July, the ETC team is conducting a joint assessment mission with UNDSS to Kyiv. The mission team conducted an assessment for the setup of a UNDSS Security Information Operations Centre (SIOC); checked the configuration of SCS in the armoured vehicles of UN agencies; and conducted an assessment on the potential site for the installation of a VHF repeater.

The ETC team is closely following up with the UNRCO and UNDSS to liaise with the Government of Ukraine on the UN's request for a VHF licence¹ as the backup means of telecommunications in the country.

The ETC is supporting the setup of five UNDSS-managed Security Operations Centres (SOCs) in Ukraine. The ETC has finalised a concept note on the overall set up of UNDSS SOCs in Ukraine and will seek final endorsement from UNDSS.

To improve the safety and security of UN personnel in the field, the ETC checked the configuration of security communications systems in 51 armoured and/or soft-skin vehicles from five UN agencies in three locations – Dnipro, Lviv, and Mukachevo. Separately, on 01 July, the ETC team facilitated a training session on security communications protocol in Lviv for nine security staff and drivers from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). This brings the total number of UN personnel who received ETC technical training to 24.

Services for communities

The ETC Chatbot, available on [Telegram](#) and [Viber](#), is a tool for communications between humanitarian responders and the affected population. In Ukraine, the Chatbot goes by the name vBezpetsi (вБезпечи in Ukrainian), which translates to “safe spaces”.

Since the launch of vBezpetsi on 20 June, a total of 8,561 users in Ukraine have accessed information relating to humanitarian assistance.

The ETC Services for Communities team continues to engage with partners on the ground, including the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Working Group, the Cash Working Group, the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, the Health Cluster, UNHCR, and WFP, to expand and populate the content disseminated through the Chatbot.

Further, the ETC team is waiting for feedback from the AAP Working Group on a concept note drafted for the establishment of a Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM).

Funding

The ETC is 97% funded out of the US\$3.72 million required to implement the ETC Chatbot and to provide security communications services, SOC setup, data connectivity, and helpdesk services in five locations until the end of August 2022.

¹ The ETC's recommendations on the use of VHF as a back-up means of security communications in case mobile networks are compromised have been drafted in consultation with WFP's [Telecommunications Security Standards {TESS+}](#) team and formally endorsed by the Ukraine Security Management Team (SMT).

So far, the ETC has received a total of \$3.62 million from the following donors:

- US\$1.1 million from two UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) envelopes;
- US\$1 million from ICANN;
- US\$1 million from the United States;
- US\$248,000 from Ukraine Humanitarian Fund;
- US\$150,000 from Cisco; and
- US\$125,000 from Tableau.

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 **25 August 2022 at 13:00 UTC**.

Contacts

CONTACTS	EMAIL
ETC Coordinator	Amirullah Syarif Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org
ETC IM Officer	Beryl Lo Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org

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

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

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

Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org