Ukraine

ETC Situation Report #14
Reporting period: 01/09/2022 to 15/09/2022

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was activated in Ukraine on 3 March 2022 following the escalation of armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. ETC SitReps are distributed every two weeks.

Highlights

- The Ukrainian State Centre of Radio Frequencies (UCRF) contacted the ETC regarding the request for a VHF license to establish a radio security communications network for humanitarians in Ukraine – the UCRF supplied and requested further information and feedback from the ETC.

- The ETC is providing secure internet connectivity and ICT helpdesk services to 265 staff from 12 humanitarian organizations in Dnipro and Lviv.

- Since the launch of the ETC Chatbot, a total of 12,004 unique users in Ukraine have accessed information relating to humanitarian assistance.

WFP staff in Kyiv are trained in basic radio use and protocol. Photo: WFP/Ahmad Al-Mehdi

Overview

The estimated toll of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine surpassed 14,248 civilian casualties, including 5,827 deaths as of 11 September, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Between 1 – 11 September, about 362 civilian causalities were reported. The OHCHR has stated that actual numbers may be significantly higher. The most intense hostilities continue to take place in Donetska, Luhanska, and Kharkiv oblasts.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reports that 6.98 million people are internally displaced in Ukraine due to the conflict as of 23 August, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) puts the total number of refugees having crossed international borders at 7.1 million as of 7 September.

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 localized 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 localized 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.

Activities

Coordination

The ETC is present in four locations in Ukraine – Dnipro, Kyiv, Lviv, and Odesa. The ETC Coordinator, Information Management Officer (IMO), and a telecommunications specialist are based in Kyiv while two IT and telecommunications specialists are present in Lviv. Similarly, two IT and Telecommunications specialists are based in Dnipro and Odesa.

The ETC in Ukraine participated in the weekly Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and Information Management Working Group (IMWG) on 13 September, and the Logistics Cluster Coordination meeting on 14 September in Kyiv to ensure alignment of service cluster coordination in Ukraine.

Security communications

On 12 September, the ETC received a reply from the Ukrainian State Centre of Radio Frequencies (UCRF) regarding the request for a VHF license to establish a radio security communications network for humanitarians in Ukraine. The UCRF supplied and requested further information and feedback from the ETC for further discussion.

The ETC is working with UNDSS on the {TESS+} recommendations which identify the recommended number of Security Operations Centres (SOCs) in Ukraine. The ETC and UNDSS presented a revised proposal—one main SOC in Mukachevo, one backup SOC in Lviv, and three remote SOCs in Kyiv, Dnipro, and Odesa—to the Security Management Team (SMT) for endorsement on 15 September.

The ETC is prepositioning telecommunications equipment to set up SOCs as needed.

The ETC prepared the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish UNDSS-managed SOC staffing support and shared it with UNDSS for review and comments. The WFP management and United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO) are expected to append signatures accordingly.

The ETC team in Odesa carried out maintenance of eight handheld radios from WFP.

In September, the ETC delivered security communications training to 22 WFP staff members in Kyiv, bringing the total number of inter-agency staff trained by the ETC in Ukraine to 117.

Data connectivity

As of 15 September, the ETC is providing secure internet connectivity services to 265 registered staff from 12 humanitarian organizations in the interagency humanitarian workspaces in Dnipro and Lviv.

The ETC is propositioning VSAT satellite terminal equipment in Odesa with possible deployment to newly new accessible areas in south-eastern Ukraine to provide data connectivity services.

Services for Communities

The national ETC Services for Communities Project Officer joined the Ukraine operation on 9 September. The new project officer will support the ETC Chatbot, planning for the Inter-Agency Information Centre (IAIC), and engage with the humanitarian community on further communications needs of the affected population.

Since the launch of the ETC Chatbot, vBeztpesi (вБезпеці in Ukrainian, which translates to "safe spaces"), a total of 12,004 unique users in Ukraine have accessed information relating to humanitarian assistance as of 15 September.

As of 15 September, users of the ETC Chatbot most frequently used the service to access information on humanitarian aid (72%), hotlines and referral methods (11%), other useful information (10%), and human rights (7%). When seeking information on humanitarian aid, users most frequently consulted categories related to WFP assistance and general cash assistance, including how to register for cash, the eligibility criteria, and the cash amount to be received.

The Global ETC is working with CLEAR Global on Chatbot content translation (Ukrainian – English / English – Ukrainian), reviewing existing content to maximize readability, and reviewing overall content to ensure logical flow.

Dashboard

 See the ETC Dashboard for an overview of service locations.

Funding

The ETC in Ukraine is 97 percent funded out of the required US$3.72 million. So far, 34 percent of this funding has been committed or spent.

Challenges

The risk of cyber attacks in Ukraine is considered high.

Security issues and access to some locations in eastern Ukraine is a major constraints in the ETC's ability to implement telecommunications solutions within Ukraine.

The process to acquire a VHF license in the country is lengthy.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Partners Teleconference on the Ukraine response will take place on **29 September 2022 at 13:00 UTC**.

Contacts

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www.etcluster.org/emergency/ukraine-conflict

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