

Ukraine – conflict

ETC Situation Report #16

Reporting period: 01/10/2022 to 31/10/2022

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 month.

Highlights

- The ETC is following up with the Ukrainian State Centre of Radio Frequencies (UCRF) on the final stages of the VHF radio license approval. Once granted, the license will be used to establish a security communications network for humanitarians in Ukraine.
- In October, the ETC supported the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (UNRCO) to develop their telecommunications preparedness plan and provided training on satellite connectivity and VHF radio communications to eight UNRCO and 35 WFP staff in Kyiv.
- A total of 14,552 users have accessed information relating to humanitarian assistance through the ETC Chatbot. The ETC is working with a new content provider for the ETC Chatbot service—the Coordination Centre for Legal Aid Provision (CCLAP).



ETC delivers security communications training to UNRCO staff in Kyiv. Photo: ETC/Amirullah Syarif

Overview

The estimated toll of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine surpassed 16,150 civilian casualties, including 6,374 deaths as of 24 October, according to the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#). The most intense hostilities continue to take place in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

The [International Organisation for Migration \(IOM\)](#) reports that 6.2 million people are internally displaced in Ukraine due to the conflict as of 27 October, and the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#) puts the total number of Ukrainian refugees recorded across Europe at 7.8 million as of 25 October.

Impact on telecommunications

Nearly a third of Ukraine’s power stations have been destroyed in the recent wave of conflict, located in Dnipro, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, and Zhytomyr. As a result, over 1.4 million households are experiencing daily power cuts of up to four hours.

More than 4,000 base stations belonging to Ukrainian telecommunications providers have been seized or destroyed since the onset of the conflict, across Ukraine.

In October, the ETC conducted a voice and data coverage assessment of three Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)—Vodafone, Lifecell, and Kyivstar—in the newly accessible areas of Kharkiv, Kupiansk, Izyum, and Lyman. Lifecell has comparatively better coverage in terms of calls, SMS, and 4G data connectivity in the newly accessible areas.

From 28 October, the ETC is also conducting a voice and data connectivity services assessment in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) site in Ternopil, as well as in the city centre. Ternopil, situated in western Ukraine, has been recently and heavily impacted by the ongoing conflict.

Cyber-attacks on Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Ukraine remains a high risk.

Activities

Coordination

The ETC is present in four locations in Ukraine – Dnipro, Kyiv, Lviv, and Odesa. The ETC Coordinator, Information Management Officer (IMO), Telecommunications Specialist and Services for Communities Project Manager are based in Kyiv. The ETC Ukraine team also comprises four IT and telecommunications specialists, two in Dnipro, one in Kyiv, and one in Odesa.

The ETC supported the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) to develop their telecommunications preparedness plan and provide training on satellite connectivity and VHF radio communications. The training was delivered on 25 October to eight UNRCO colleagues and 35 WFP staff in Kyiv, focusing on the best practice usage of telecommunications equipment in the field and when following evacuation procedures.

Security communications

The ETC is following up with the Ukrainian State Centre of Radio Frequencies (UCRF) on the status of the Very High Frequency (VHF) license approval. The license approval is in the final stages with the authorities. Once granted, the VHF license will enable the establishment of a security communications network for humanitarians in Ukraine.

The team began installation of the indoor components of the VHF repeater in the UNDSS premises in Dnipro in anticipation of the VHF license approval, as part of the {TESS+} recommendations to provide emergency security communications services to UN agencies in Ukraine.

The ETC met with UNDSS on 18 October to plan for improvements to the Security Information and Operations Centre (SIOC) located in Mukachevo and the implementation of the {TESS+} recommendations.

As part of the cluster improvement plan for the UNDSS-managed SIOC, the ETC installed a satellite phone docking station and supporting equipment in the SIOC, and provided training to two SIOC operators.

All remaining orders for additional security communications equipment to improve services in the SIOC and backup SIOC is being procured with WFP FITTEST. Three orders are ready to ship from the U.A.E.

The team completed the review and update of the radio call sign database for all humanitarian staff in Lviv and Dnipro while updates for Odesa and Kyiv are ongoing.

In October, two mobile radios in UNDSS vehicles were programmed in Dnipro. Further, VHF radios in five UNDSS vehicles and six handheld radios for WFP Security in Lviv were programmed. Three satellite phones were allocated to the WFP in Lviv, and training was provided on using the equipment. The team also activated 14 satellite phones in Kyiv.

Secure data connectivity

A total of 267 humanitarian staff from 12 humanitarian organizations have registered as users on the ETC data connectivity network provided in Dnipro and Lviv. The planned data connectivity services in the interagency workspace in Odesa are still pending Internet Service Provider (ISP) activation.

The ETC is planning to conduct an assessment mission to support the set-up of a common office in Kharkiv. The mission is pending UNDSS clearance.

On 12 October, the ETC installed a firewall and three access points in the new shared WHO/UNDSS office in Lviv to facilitate connectivity services.

Services for communities

The ETC Services for Communities Project Manager is engaging with the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine on the services for communities' projects. A technical session is planned with the Ministry to further discuss the use of the ETC Chatbot in the context of the humanitarian response in Ukraine.

A total of 14,552 users have accessed information relating to humanitarian assistance through the ETC Chatbot, vBezpetsi, since its launch in March 2022. Users of the ETC Chatbot most frequently use the service to access information on humanitarian aid, hotlines and referral methods, other useful information, and human rights.

The ETC is reviewing the ETC Chatbot content to improve the user experience. New updates from content providers have been received—including from a new content provider, the Coordination Centre for Legal Aid Provision (CCLAP)—and the ETC is seeking support from a vendor to simplify the content.

A concept note has been drafted for the planned Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) services, which aim to support local authorities with the management of humanitarian calls for assistance through their existing hotlines. The team is so far engaging with six local authorities in Ukraine to develop the CFM services, with further engagements ongoing or planned in Ternopil'ska, Chernivets'ka, Volyn'ska, Rivn'eska and Zakarpats'ka oblasts.

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, 37 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 constraint 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 **24 November 2022 at 13:00 UTC**.

Contacts

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www.etcluster.org/emergency/ukraine-conflict

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