

Ukraine – conflict

ETC Situation Report #17

Reporting period: 01/11/2022 to 30/11/2022

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

- Following the operationalization of ETC connectivity services in the inter-agency hub in Odesa on 4 November, the ETC supported new users to register and sign-up to the secure network. The ETC is now providing secure data connectivity services in three locations in Ukraine.
- To mitigate the impact of ongoing power cuts across the country, the ETC sent power back-up equipment, including high-capacity batteries, to the UNDSS Security and Information Operations Centre (SIOC) in Mukachevo.
- The ETC used a fibre-optic extension to improve the strength of the internet connection for UN agencies using the office in the Logistics Cluster warehouse in Dnipro.



The ETC supports installation of a fibre optic cable to provide connectivity to UN responders in the Logistics Cluster warehouse in Dnipro. Photo: WFP/Hafeez Esaqzai

Overview

The estimated toll of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine surpassed 17,023 civilian casualties, including 6,655 deaths as of 27 November, 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 6.54 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 7.9 million as of 29 November.

Impact on telecommunications

The recent wave of conflict in Ukraine has not only led to the further displacement of people, but also significant collateral damage to critical infrastructure including electricity, telecommunications, and water distribution assets, most especially in the newly accessible

areas in Kharkiv, Kherson, and its environs. In Kherson, the remote gap assessment conducted by the WFP TEC on 16 November, revealed that the telecommunications assets of the three Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) – Vodaphone, Kyivstar, and Lifecell - operating in Kherson were badly damaged. Vodaphone lost 60% of its assets to these attacks.

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

Activities

Coordination

The ETC in Ukraine presented its 2023 projects to OCHA on 15 November as part of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) process for next year.

ETC participated in a UN ICT Working group meeting on 16 November and presented the ETC's activities in Ukraine and the services available to UN agencies.

The ETC's annual user satisfaction survey for the Ukraine operation was conducted from 1-22 November. The results of the survey will be compiled in a report that will be shared with users and ETC stakeholders.

Amirullah Syarif completed his mission as ETC Coordinator in Ukraine on 31 October. The new coordinator, Mohamedou Ndiath, is expected in the country by 1 December.

The ETC is planning an ICT assessment of newly accessible areas Mykolaiv and Kherson in early December subject to security approval.

Security communications

Training on security communications was provided to national WFP staff in Odesa on 1 November. An operational guide for security communications service equipment was developed and made available for staff reference.

The ETC supported the delivery of the Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments (SSAFE) training provided to UN staff in Kyiv by programming 12 VHF radios.

On 10 November, the ETC delivered a presentation to the Logistics Cluster on emergency telecommunications preparedness measures and recommendations for humanitarian organizations responding in Ukraine. The team is planning to conduct an assessment of 10 Logistics Cluster fleet trucks to ensure security communications systems in the trucks are optimized to support staff safety and security.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between WFP and UNDSS to outline the support that the ETC will provide to the Security Information and Operations Centre (SIOC), including staffing and equipment, was signed on 8 November.

To mitigate the impact of ongoing power cuts across the country, the ETC sent power back-up equipment, including high-capacity batteries, to the UNDSS Security and Information Operations Centre (SIOC) in Mukachevo. The ETC in Ukraine is planning to install an

additional power backup system in the Security Information and Operations Centre (SIOC) to support security communications services during power cuts.

In preparation for the establishment of a VHF radio network for humanitarian security communications, once the radio license is approved by the authorities, the ETC carried out roof assessments for VHF radio antennae installations in Dnipro.

Secure data connectivity

ETC connectivity services were extended to the inter-agency hub in Odesa on 4 November. Following the operationalization of the services, the ETC supported new users to register and sign-up to the secure network. The team is planning to extend the network further from the hub to the bunker and the fifth floor of the building to accommodate more users.

The ETC is now providing secure data connectivity services in three locations: the inter-agency hubs in Dnipro and Odesa, and the UNDSS back-up SIOC in Lviv. There are 278 registered users from 13 agencies on the network.

The ETC used a fibre-optic extension to improve the strength of the internet connection for UN agencies using the office in the Logistics Cluster warehouse in Dnipro.

Services for Communities

A potential ETC Chatbot partner — Coordination Centre for Legal Aid Provision (CCLAP)— agreed to add their content to the Chatbot and provide visibility to ETC Chatbot on their website. CCLAP provides free legal aid to the affected population across 500 offices in Ukraine.

The ETC attended the Affected Populations Working Group (AAP WG) on 2 November to engage with the clusters and NGOs on ETC Chatbot activities. The team continues to follow up with the Shelter Cluster on the inclusion of the cluster content in the ETC ChatBot.

A WFP Data Analyst is working on improvements to the ETC Chatbot monitoring platform to provide better data and performance indicators to partners.

As part of the ongoing engagement with the local authorities to promote the ETC Chatbot, the team presented the services to local authorities in Odesa and Lviv Oblasts on 10 November and attended a field coordination meeting with local authorities from five Oblasts to discuss the service.

A total of 16,334 users have accessed information relating to humanitarian assistance through the ETC Chatbot, vBezpetsi, since its launch.

After completing all scheduled meetings with the local authorities from seven Oblasts in Ukraine on the planned feedback mechanism project, the team is working with the Oblasts to identify how best to address the needs of the affected population through the project.

The ETC received a request from the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine for equipment to support their data connectivity services.

Dashboard

See the [ETC Dashboard](#) for an overview of service locations.

Funding

The ETC in Ukraine is 100 percent funded out of the required US\$3.72 million.

Challenges

Security issues in the newly accessible locations in eastern Ukraine are a major constraint in the ETC's ability to implement telecommunications solutions in the eastern Ukraine.

The risk of cyber-attacks in Ukraine is considered high.

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 **08 December 2022 at 13:00 UTC**.

Contacts

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www.etcluster.org/emergency/ukraine-conflict

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