

Ukraine – conflict

ETC Situation Report #18

Reporting period: 01/12/2022 to 31/12/2022

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

- On 2 December, the Ukrainian authorities approved the request for a VHF radio license, which had been pending since August.
- In collaboration with other UN agencies, the ETC is deploying the planned VHF network for humanitarians in an initial five locations. A VHF radio network is now operational in Odesa, Dnipro, and Kyiv, and is further planned for Lviv and Mukachevo.
- The ETC has prepositioned data connectivity equipment to support the proposed establishment of Crisis Coordination Hubs (CCH) in five locations in eastern Ukraine.



The VHF radio network was operationalized in Kyiv on 22 December with support from UNDP and OCHA. Photo: WFP/Kehinde Adewara

Overview

The estimated toll of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine surpassed 17,595 civilian casualties, including 6,826 deaths as of 19 December, according to the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#). The most intense hostilities continue to take place in Donetska, Luhanska, and Kharkivska oblasts.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reports that 6.98 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 over 7.8 million.

Impact on telecommunications

The continued attacks on national infrastructure across Ukraine had led to significant damage to national telecommunications infrastructure, resulting in severe communications blackouts across the country, especially in the newly accessible areas in Kharkiv, Kherson, and the surrounding areas. In many cases, disruption to electrical power supplies supporting telecommunications equipment has resulted in service failure, including ETC services.

Activities

Security communications

Following the authorities' approval of the Very High Frequency (VHF) radio license in Ukraine, the ETC continues to deploy the VHF network in an initial five locations—Dnipro, Kyiv, Lviv, Mukachevo, and Odesa. An additional five potential locations have been identified to expand the VHF network. The ETC will request for an additional VHF license approval for these sites and procure additional VHF equipment.

So far, the VHF radio network was operationalized in Odesa on 8 December, Dnipro on 12 December, and Kyiv on 22 December. The ETC is assessing the VHF coverage in Kyiv to determine the strength and coverage of the recently installed network and is also mobilizing additional equipment to support the new VHF network in Dnipro.

The ETC is working with UNDSS to identify a location to install the VHF repeater in Lviv. A potential location belonging to a university in Lviv has been identified after an assessment on 28 December.

Following the operationalization of the VHF network, the cluster is finalizing the radio call-sign structure with UNDSS and a World Health Organization (WHO) ICT specialist as well as briefing with the UNDSS Security and Information Operations Centre (SIOC) in Mukachevo on assigning call signs to UN agencies.

So far, the ETC has reprogrammed 32 handheld radios, seven mobile radios, and two base station radios for UNDSS, WHO and WFP to the VHF frequencies allocated by the government across Dnipro, Odesa, and Kyiv.

Together with UNDP, the ETC installed a power back-up system to support the UNDSS Security Information and Operations Centre (SIOC) in Mukachevo.

Secure data connectivity

The ETC is supporting data connectivity services in the inter-agency hubs in Dnipro and Odesa and in the UNDSS backup SIOC in Lviv. There are 285 registered users from 13 agencies on the network.

The ETC has prepositioned data connectivity equipment to support the proposed establishment of Crisis Coordination Hubs (CCH) in five locations in eastern Ukraine.

The ETC is developing the concept for a Connectivity on Wheels (CoW) solution for mobile ETC services deployment in newly accessible areas. The ETC met with a potential supplier for the CoW solution.

ETC connectivity services are being extended in the UN common office in Lviv, and to the fifth floor of the UN common office in Odesa.

Services for Communities

A total of 16,992 users have accessed information relating to humanitarian assistance through the ETC Chatbot, vBezpetsi, since its launch.

As of 29 December, users of the ETC Chatbot most frequently used the service to access information on humanitarian aid (75%), hotlines and referral methods (17.5%), other useful information (3.9%), and human rights (3.4%). When seeking information on humanitarian aid, users most frequently consulted categories related to general cash assistance and to WFP assistance, accessing the information on how to register for assistance and the eligibility criteria.

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 eastern Ukraine.

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

Meetings

The next Global ETC Partners Teleconference on the Ukraine response will take place on **12 January 2023 at 13:00 UTC**.

Contacts

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www.etcluster.org/emergency/ukraine-conflict

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