

## Libya - Crisis

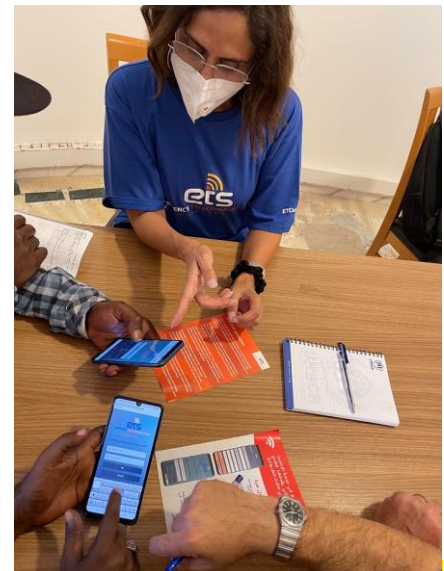
### ETS Situation Report #24

**Reporting period 01/07/2021 to 31/07/2021**

World Food Programme (WFP), in its capacity as global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), is leading the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) in Libya, responding with government, private sector and humanitarian partners on the ground to ensure a coordinated response.

### Highlights

- The Libya ETS coordinator conducted an evaluation mission to Tripoli from 1-8 July to assess the quality of all of the services provided in Libya, from security communications for humanitarians to services to affected communities. Among the outcomes of her mission was the submission of a formal request for a Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) mission to Libya to identify areas for improvement in security communications.
- An initial pilot of the ETC's first Chatbot, Mila, was conducted with Persons of Concern (POCs) at the UNHCR Community Day Centre (CDC) in Tripoli managed by CESVI. The Chatbot was developed to provide a complimentary information channel to the Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) hotline.
- The Danish Refugee Council has become the latest NGO to sign a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to participate in the CFM. The ETS is working to strengthen the CFM by expanding its partnerships with UN agencies and INGO/NGOs, and establishing cost-sharing agreements.



Persons of concern try out the new simplified registration process to access Wi-Fi during the ETS coordinator's visit to the UNHCR CDC in Tripoli.

Photo: WFP / ETS

### ETS Activities

#### *Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) project*

- The ETS-managed call centre in Tripoli continues to serve as a nationwide COVID-19 information channel as well as a means for affected communities to seek information about other humanitarian issues and to provide feedback on assistance received. Following the hiring of additional call centre operators in June, the service is now offered in six languages: Arabic, Amharic, English, French, Hausa, and Tigrinya.

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- From 3- 30 July, the call centre registered 2,053 cases. 99 percent of cases related to humanitarian issues, with the most common topics of concern being protection, food security and cash-based transfers. The remaining calls related to COVID-19.
  - Of the total calls related to COVID-19, there were no suspected cases. The majority of callers requested information on vaccine side-effects and guidance on what to do if a family member is infected. Operators raise awareness about the virus and help people to protect themselves from it by providing critical information and official health guidelines and referring callers with potential symptoms to the health authorities.
  - Persons of Concern provided positive feedback on the Chatbot, Mila, during a pilot conducted at the UNHCR CDC in Tripoli in July. The initial form of the Chatbot, which will be officially launched in August, will be capable of providing automated answers to frequently asked questions regarding humanitarian assistance and COVID-19. In a later phase, the Chatbot will integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning to respond to more complex queries.
  - The ETS is working to strengthen and sustain the CFM by setting up a cost sharing arrangement and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with humanitarian organizations that want to use the platform. The first agreement was signed with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the first quarter of 2021, and in July a second partner, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), also signed an SLA to use the CFM.

#### *Services for Communities*

- Following the relocation of the UNHCR Community Day Centre to a new site in Tripoli in June, the ETS has re-established free Wi-Fi services for persons of concern (POCs) and made changes to simplify the registration and log-in process. The new interface, which now also includes language options in Amharic and Tigrinya in addition to English and Arabic, was presented to POCs during the ETS coordinator's visit. They provided positive feedback on the changes and some suggestions for further improvements. 34 POCs, of which 31 were male and 3 female, have accessed the internet in 176 unique sessions since the re-establishment of the service on 5 July.
- The ETS is planning to support the Benghazi Port Authority by implementing a marine VHF system to improve radio communications in the port, as part of preparedness and capacity enhancing objectives. A preliminary assessment has been carried out by the ETS to evaluate the technical requirements. Additional funding may be required as well as further analysis of the technical specifications.

#### *Security Communications*

- During the ETS coordinator's mission to Tripoli, a meeting was held with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to discuss security communications challenges in Libya. As an outcome of this meeting, an official request was made for a Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) mission to evaluate security communications in the country. The request has been approved and planning is now underway for the mission.



- There have been challenges in shipping a communications equipment toolkit from WFP UAE to support efforts to troubleshoot the poor coverage of the VHF network in the Security Operations Centre (SOC) at the UN hub in Benghazi. After the latest delays, the equipment is expected to arrive in Libya in mid-August, allowing the team to continue to work with partners to resolve this issue.
- The ETS is supporting the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to obtain clearance from the national authorities to import satellite equipment. A letter has been sent to the Ministry of Telecommunications (MoT) requesting approval to import a BGAN satellite device and the ETS is following up on the status of the request.
- The ETS continues to provide radio programming services to humanitarian upon request.

## Funding

- USD 10,000 has been received from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as a part of the cost-sharing agreement signed to support the CFM.
- A grant of USD 118,000 was given to the ETS by European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) to fund the CFM project.
- USD 30,000 in funding has been received from *UN Reform – Critical Corporate Initiatives* to support the rollout and integration of the Chatbot into the CFM.
- With these funds, the ETS has secured 18 percent of the required budget of USD 882,000 for the planned ETS activities for Libya in 2021.
- Additionally, USD 280,450 in funds from the Government of Luxembourg have been carried over into 2021. The grant has been extended until 31 December 2021 to allow the completion of ETS activities planned for 2020.

## Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **15 September 2021**.

## Key information

- All information on the ETS response in Libya can be found [here](#).
- For further information or to contact the team on the ground please contact [Libya.ETS@wfp.org](mailto:Libya.ETS@wfp.org)

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