Syria & the Surrounding Countries

ETC Situation Report #29

Reporting period 05/06/2017 to 31/10/2017

The ETC operates under the 'Whole of Syria (WoS)' approach which comprises activities in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan for an effective humanitarian response inside Syria. The next report will be issued on or around 31/01/18.

Highlights

- An Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio repeater was installed in Reynhanli, Turkey, to provide services to humanitarian organisations recently established there.

- Solar panels were deployed in the Communications Centres (COMCENs) in Aleppo and Damascus.

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) Syria has received a contribution of US$400,000 from the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) to continue delivering vital communications services in Syria and surrounding countries until the end of 2017.

Muhammad Khaled deploying a radio antenna in Aleppo.

Photo credits: ETC Syria

Situation Overview

The humanitarian situation in North-East Syria continues to deteriorate. Since the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) initiated their offensive in Ar-Raqqa city, Ar-Raqqa governorate, against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) on 6 June 2017.

The overall humanitarian situation for civilians remains alarming in Ar-Raqqa city, particularly with Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) contamination. ERW mapping and clearance is required to ensure adequate access for humanitarian partners and create a safe environment that is conducive for voluntary returns

Displacements from and within Deir-ez-Zor Governorate continued due to heavy fighting and airstrikes. Large influxes of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) from Deir-ez-Zor Governorate are straining existing capacities and services in IDP sites across northeastern Syria resulting in increased humanitarian needs

Response

Syria

- The ETC was allocated additional frequencies for High Frequency (HF) radios from the Government of Syria to minimise interference with existing frequencies.

- Local authorities granted permission to replace the old radio repeaters in Damascus, Homs, Qamishli and Aleppo.. This will enhance the security telecommunications services provided to humanitarians by the ETC. The ETC is awaiting approval from the Government of Syria to import the new repeaters.

- The ETC installed solar panels at the COMCEN in Damascus and Aleppo to ensure the provision of uninterrupted security telecommunications services. Solar panels will also be installed at the COMCENs in Homs, Tartous and Qamishly as soon as the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) issues the required permissions.

Turkey

- The ETC completed the installation of the Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio repeater in Reyhanli. These security telecommunications services are being used by nine UN agencies and several Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

- The contract with the local Internet Service Provider (ISP) in Qamishly was renewed to continue providing Internet connectivity to humanitarian responders and support cross-border operations.

Jordan

- The ETC continues to provide Internet connectivity and security telecommunications services in Za'atari and Azraq camps.

- During an inter-agency mission, it was agreed that the ETC would provide Internet connectivity services for the north-eastern border of Jordan to support humanitarian operations. The ETC is awaiting permission from Jordan's military to deploy a satellite kit.

Lebanon

- The UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the ETC are discussing a potential upgrade of the radio network, from analogue to digital.

Planned Response

- The ETC is organising a [Let's Comm Digital training](#) in Dubai for ICT personnel from Syria and surrounding countries supporting ETC operations in mid-November.

Turkey

- The ETC is exploring the possibility of conducting an Inter-Agency UHF radio training in Turkey, either in Ankara or Reyhanli, in early 2018.

Lebanon

- The ETC is evaluating the possibility of extending connectivity services to the affected population.

Jordan
- The ETC is planning to upgrade the repeaters in both Za'atari and Azraq camps from analogue to digital. The upgrade would provide improved features, which would allow humanitarian to carry out their jobs in a safer manner.

Challenges

- The volatile security situation is hindering the ETC response on the ground.

- Lack of access to operational areas affects the timely deployment of ETC services across Syria.

- Importing into Syria telecommunications equipment for in operational locations remains a challenge.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on 29 November.

Information

- Humanitarian ICT responders supporting the Syria operation across the region are encouraged to share their contact details with Syria.ETC@wfp.org to facilitate coordination efforts.

- A dedicated information-sharing space has been created on the ETC website https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-civil-unrest. Organisations involved in the ICT response are encouraged to share updates with the ETC community to support the overall humanitarian response.

Shared ICT Services

COUNTRY	SITE, CITY	PROVIDED BY	SERVICES	CUSTOMER
SYRIA	WFP Country Office, Damascus	WFP ETC UNDSS	• Internet connectivity • Security telecommunications (radio) • Coordination Hub • Radio programming	Humanitarian community
	Homs	ETC UNDSS	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio programming	Humanitarian community
	Tartous	ETC UNDSS	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio programming	Humanitarian community
	Aleppo	ETC UNDSS	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio programming	Humanitarian community
	Qamishli	ETC UNDSS	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio programming	Humanitarian community
JORDAN	Azraq camp	ETC UNHCR	• Internet connectivity • Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio programming	Humanitarian community
	Al Za'atari camp	ETC UNHCR	• Internet connectivity • Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio programming • Radio training	Humanitarian community
	WFP Country Office, Amman	WFP ETC	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio programming	Humanitarian community
LEBANON	WFP Country Office, Beirut	WFP ETC	• Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio programming • Logistics Hub	Humanitarian community

TURKEY	Antakya	ETC	• Security telecommunications (radio)	Humanitarian community
	Gazientep	WFP ETC	• ICT helpdesk • Security telecommunications (radio)	Humanitarian community
	Kilis	ETC	• Security telecommunications (radio)	Humanitarian community
	Reyhanli	ETC	• Security telecommunications (radio)	Humanitarian community
	Sanliurfa	ETC	• Security telecommunications (radio)	Humanitarian community

ETC Services Map: www.etcluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/SYR_ETC_Services_A3L_20171103_0.pdf

Contacts

Syria.ETC@wfp.org

Shahan Ara Quadir, ETC Coordinator for Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon / ETC Coordinator for Syria and WoS approach a.i.
shahan.araquadir@wfp.org
Phone: +20 101 549 0389

Salma Farouque, Global ETC cell, Syria focal point
salma.farouque@wfp.org
Phone: +39 349 779 2879

Erika Iglesias, ETC Information Management Officer
erika.iglesias@wfp.org
Phone: +971 52 927 2014

Acronyms

COMCEN	Communications Centre
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDP	Internally Displace People
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IT	Information Technology
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
S4C	Services for Communities
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ICT Emergency website: www.ETCluster.org

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: Syria.ETC@wfp.org