

YEMEN – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #9

Reporting period 07/03/16 to 04/04/16

These Situation Reports are distributed every four – six weeks. The next report will be issued on or around 09/05/16.

Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) installed a much needed Communications Centre (COMCEN) for humanitarian in the common United Nations (UN) compound in Ibb. The COMCEN is operational and allows humanitarians to utilize radios and satellite communications, increasing their safety and security.
- ETC is looking for Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) willing to host the back-up office for NGOs in Ibb and Sa'ada.
- ETC member Ericsson Response is preparing to deploy WIDER connectivity solution to Yemen. WIDER enables humanitarians to access the Internet, and the ETC to manage bandwidth distribution.



Access to humanitarian hub in Sa'ada/Photo: WFP.

Situation Overview

The ETC is currently operating in Sana'a, Al Hudaydah, Sa'ada and Ibb. Ta'izz and Al Mukalla, two locations initially included in the humanitarian plans, are currently inaccessible due to security concerns. In Aden a 24/7 radio room was installed but it is currently unutilized due to the high level of security.

The ETC thanks the Government of Luxembourg and its partners for the emergency.lu solution installed on the inter-agency mission boat which provided internet connectivity for the initial phase of the ETC Yemen operation. The equipment has been decommissioned and returned to Luxembourg to preposition for future emergencies.



Response

- In Sana'a, the ETC continues to maintain and enhance communication in the Diplomatic Transit Facility (DTF), with a High Frequency (HF), an additional Very High Frequency (VHF) base radio, a satellite base station and Internet.
- ETC deployed to Ibb and installed a COMCEN in the common UN compound, hosted in the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) building. Installations include VHF base radio, VHF repeater and a satellite phone base station.

Planned Response

- ETC will continue to support humanitarians in Sana'a, Al Hudaydah, Aden, Sa'ada, Ibb and on the inter-agency mission vessels. Radio networks will be enhanced across the country.
- Agreement has been reached with the World Health Organisation (WHO) to start installations in the common UN building in Al Hudaydah in 2nd week of April, depending on Government permissions. WHO is managing the common UN compound and the ETC will deploy internet connectivity infrastructure.
- The ETC is exploring various solutions to install a back-up connectivity solution in the Sa'ada humanitarian hub. One option is to dismantle the unused base satellite station (Very Small Aperture Terminal [VSAT]) from an office of the World Food Programme (WFP) and to move it to Sa'ada. Another option is to purchase equipment locally.

Challenges

- Scarcity of IT and telecommunications equipment and internet service providers in the local markets is one of the key challenges of the Yemen operation, compounded by delays in customs clearance processes. Mitigation measures include moving equipment across locations and reaching out to authorities to obtain clearances.
- Lack of access to some operational areas are a challenge. The ETC is mitigating this challenge by accelerating assessments and installations in critical operational areas to allow fast rotation of humanitarians.



Meetings

Local ETC teleconference:

The ETC is holding fortnight local meetings in Sana'a. The next meeting is planned for 13 April at 9:00 UTC.

Global ETC teleconference:

The ETC is holding fortnight global ETC meetings. The next meeting is planned for 14 April at 12:00 UTC.

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ETC website: www.ETCluster.org. For security reasons, most information is kept private, and logging in is required to access them.

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

Acronyms

COMCEN	Communication Center
DTF	Diplomatic Transit Facility
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
HF	High Frequency
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIDER	Wireless LAN in Disaster and Emergency Response.

Background on the emergency:

The ETC has been continuously present in Yemen since April 2015, supporting the humanitarian community with basic IT and telecommunications services. Operations are progressing amidst challenges of lack of equipment, lack of access to critical operational areas and restrictions of movement for staff. Internet hubs and security telecommunications are available in four locations, and plans are in place to deploy more services when conditions allow it.

The escalation of conflict in March 2015 is currently affecting all 22 governorates in Yemen. Restrictions on commercial imports are crippling the country. Civilians are bearing the brunt of the violence and humanitarian organizations estimate that 21.2 million people, 80% of the population, currently require some form of humanitarian assistance. Of these, 2.4 million are estimated to be displaced.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is leading ETC activities, which include:

1. Establish, upgrade and maintain security telecommunications services
2. Provide shared internet connectivity services and solar charging stations
3. Coordination and information-sharing.

Sources: Al Jazeera, OCHA



Shared ICT Services

CITY	LEAD AGENCY	ETC SERVICES
Sana'a	WFP/UNDSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio user training • Radio programming • VHF radio coverage • HF radio coverage • 24/7 radio room • Internet Hot-Spot in DTF • Internet Hot-Spot in INGO
Al Hudaydah	WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VHF Radio Coverage • Internet Hot-Spot in temporary location • Radio user training • Radio room operating during office hours
Aden	UNHCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 radio room (not operational due to security concerns)
Ibb	UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 radio room • Satellite base station
Sa'ada	UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VHF base radio • Satellite phone

ETC Yemen Focal Points

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