

YEMEN – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #11

Reporting period 21/05/16 to 03/07/16

These Situation Reports are distributed every four to six weeks. The next report will be issued on or around 14/08/16.

Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has deployed Internet services on the inter-agency boat travelling between Djibouti and Aden.
- The back-up connectivity hub that the ETC installed at the common United Nations building in Al Hudaydah is fully operational.
- The ETC assessed the premises of a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) which volunteered to host the NGO back-up hub in Sa'ada.
- An UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Communications Centre (COMCEN) in the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) building in Sa'ada was relocated by the ETC.



ETC telecommunications specialist relocating the COMCEN in the UNICEF building in Sa'ada.

Photo credits: WFP

Situation Overview

The ETC is currently supporting humanitarian operations in Sana'a, Aden, Al Hudaydah, Sa'ada and Ibb. Ta'izz and Al Mukalla, where the ETC plans to deploy vital communications services, remain inaccessible due to the volatile security situation.

The ETC is working closely with UNDSS, the agency responsible for managing the COMCENs across the country, to train new radio operators and to maintain security telecommunications services in Yemen.

The ETC continues to hold Local ETC Working Group meetings fortnightly in Sana'a and Global ETC teleconferences monthly to ensure a coordinated response.



Response

- Connectivity services for humanitarians are fully operational aboard the inter-agency boat, VOS Apollo, which travels between Djibouti and Aden.
- In Al Hudaydah, an ETC back-up hub is fully operational at the common United Nations (UN) building. Internet services are available for UN agencies located in the same building. The team is also installing a solar system that will power the devices in the ETC back-up hub. This will also serve as an emergency power solution for all humanitarians to use when necessary.
- The ETC relocated a COMCEN from the basement of the UNICEF building in Sa'ada to the second floor. It will be offering security telecommunications services 24/7 when UNDSS finalises the recruitment process of the required radio operators in the coming weeks.
- In Sa'ada, an ETC telecommunications specialist assessed Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) premises as a potential host of the NGO back-up hub.
- Maintenance works were conducted on the ETC Internet service at the Diplomatic Transit Facility (DTF) in Sana'a at the end of June.
- Information Technology (IT) and telecommunications equipment is being prepared for shipment to Aden from Dubai. The ETC in Yemen will be seeking pre-clearance from local customs before this shipment is sent.

Planned Response

- UNDSS is recruiting radio operators to maintain security telecommunications services 24/7 across the country. The ETC is working closely with UNDSS to deliver radio training for new radio operators.
- The ETC plans to install a Very High Frequency (VHF) repeater at the UNDSS COMCEN in Sa'ada once the COMCEN is operational. This repeater is currently in Sana'a Country Office.
- In Sa'ada, the ETC is planning to assess a second NGO which has offered their premises to host the NGO back-up hub.
- The ETC and UNDSS will prepare a Security Telecommunications Country Plan to identify the needs across the country and plan the resources accordingly.

Challenges

- Scarcity of telecommunications equipment in the local market and challenges in importing telecommunications equipment are hampering the ETC response in Yemen. Lengthy customs clearance processes in Djibouti and Yemen are affecting the deployment of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment in Aden, Al Hudaydah and Sana'a.
- Lack of access to some operational areas such as Al Mukalla and Ta'izz is a challenge. The ETC is mitigating this challenge by deploying vital communications services in alternative locations, e.g. Ibb.



Meetings

Local ETC meeting:

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

Global ETC teleconference:

The ETC is holding monthly joint global ETC meetings. The next meeting is planned for 13 July 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	Communications Centre
DTF	Diplomatic Transit Facility
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization



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"> • Coordination hub • Customer support • Radio user training • Radio programming • VHF radio coverage • HF radio coverage • 24/7 COMCEN • Internet Hotspot in DTF • Internet Hotspot in INGO
Al Hudaydah	WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VHF Radio Coverage • Internet Hotspot in temporary location • Radio user training • 24/7 COMCEN • Internet Hotspot at the common UN building
Aden	UNHCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 COMCEN
Ibb	UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMCEN operating during office hours • 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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