

YEMEN – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #16

Reporting period 01/02/17 to 30/04/17

The next ETC Situation Report will be issued on or around 18/05/17.

Highlights

- The ETC worked with the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) on the security telecommunications needs to be covered until the end of 2017 across Yemen.
- The procurement plan of the equipment required by the ETC to continue delivering life-saving communications services to humanitarians until the end of the year has been approved.

Situation Overview

The situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate. Ongoing fighting in the Mokha and Dhubab districts of Ta'izz governorate has displaced over 44,000 people, with most displaced civilians fleeing to other parts of Ta'izz governorate or to Al Hudaydah, Lahj, Ibb, Al Dhale'e or Aden governorates.

Following increased tension around Al Hudaydah port, access to the port has been restricted and commercial shipping lines have stopped calling at the port. As an immediate implication, a rise in transportation costs and an increase in delivery times are expected. The World Food Programme (WFP), global lead of the ETC, is working on a contingency plan to address these access constraints and one of the possibilities is using Aden port for humanitarian operations. The ETC is monitoring the situation closely in case this option materialises and a scale up of inter-agency communications services is required.



Ta'izz governorate is one of the most affected governorates by the conflict in Yemen. Due to the security situation, Ta'izz remains inaccessible to humanitarians.

Photo credits: ICRC/Khalid al-Saeed



Response

- The ETC met with UNDSS to identify the security telecommunications needs. The plan is to improve and expand services in the common operational areas but most of the organisations are having difficulties in getting security telecommunications equipment.
- The ETC procurement plan has been approved and been submitted to the WFP procurement unit. The total cost of IT and security telecommunications equipment and services across Yemen until the end of 2017 is US\$1 million approx.
- The ETC discussed with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the lead agency in Aden, a possible scale up of resources following the blockage of the port in Al Hudaydah and the shift of humanitarian operations to Aden. The need for inter-agency connectivity services are being identified for the establishment of one common UN hub and one NGO hub.
- The UNDSS Communications Centre (COMCEN) has been relocated in Sa'ada.

Planned Response

- There is a plan to move the COMCEN from the Diplomatic Transit Facility (DTF) to the new UN compound in Hadda (Sana'a). This new compound will be ready by the end of March and an assessment will be done accordingly. After that, a test of the Internet services will be carried out to ensure they meet the UN standards.

Challenges

- The ETC plans to deploy a satellite kit at the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) premises in Sa'ada to provide back-up connectivity services at the common UN hub. This equipment is currently in Sana'a and the ETC, with the support of WFP, continues to follow up on the approval from the Sa'ada authorities to transport it.
- The ETC requires US\$3.2 million to carry out its project in Yemen in 2017. So far, US\$373,831 from the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has been received. The ETC is actively engaging with local donors to seek further funding opportunities.
- Humanitarian workers face insecurity and movement restrictions. Access has been further restricted following the intensification of conflict. Ta'izz and Al Mukalla, cities where the ETC plans to deploy communications services, remain inaccessible to humanitarians.
- Importation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment, especially security telecommunications, in Yemen remains a major obstacle to the ETC operation in the country.

Meetings

ETC Yemen Working Group meeting:

The ETC is holding monthly local meetings in Sana'a. The next meeting is planned for 5 April at 9:00 UTC.



Global ETC teleconference:

The ETC is holding monthly Global ETC Joint teleconferences. The next meeting is planned for 10 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	Communications Centre
DTF	Diplomatic Transit Facility
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information Technology
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

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 18 million people, almost 80% of the population, currently require some form of humanitarian assistance. 2.4 million Yemenis 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
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/UNDSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VHF Radio Coverage• Radio user training• 24/7 COMCEN• Internet Hotspot at the common UN building (WHO premises)
Aden	WFP/UNDSS/UNHCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24/7 COMCEN
Ibb	WFP/UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COMCEN operating during office hours• Satellite base station• Internet Hotspot in UN hub (UNICEF premises)• Internet Hotspot in INGO (ACTED premises)
Sa'ada	UNICEF/UNDSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VHF base radio• VHF radio coverage• Satellite phone



ETC Yemen Focal Points

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