

Syria & the Surrounding Countries

ETC Situation Report #46

Reporting period 01/02/2021 to 31/03/2021

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 31/05/2021.

Highlights

- The ETC submitted its 2021 plan and budget of US\$900,000 for the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) on 25 March.
- The ETC deployed to Tartous on 29 March to install an urgently needed solar power back-up system in the UNDSS-managed Security Operations Centre (SOC). The solar power equipment will mitigate the impact of increasingly severe fuel shortages on generator-powered services for humanitarians.
- The ETC continues to advance its large procurement exercise to obtain communications equipment and power solutions to improve services for humanitarians in Syria.



The ETC installs a solar solution to power the Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Tartous.

Photo: Hikmat Akad/ETC

ETC Activities

Coordination

- The ETC submitted its 2021 plan and budget of US\$900,000 for the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) on 25 March. In 2021, the ETC will continue to provide security telecommunications services in 13 common operational areas in Syria and the surrounding countries, provide Internet connectivity services in six common operational areas and deliver IT and telecommunications training to a target of 30 national

participants from UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs. The ETC will also install solar power back-up systems in all six UNDSS-managed Security Operation Centres (SOCs) in Syria and install power back-up systems in the inter-agency hubs in Homs and Aleppo to support data connectivity services for humanitarians.

Internet connectivity

- The ETC is identifying a supplier to provide equipment as part of the plan to install power back-up systems in the inter-agency hubs in Homs and Aleppo.
- The planned oversight mission to identify improvements to be made to ETC data connectivity services has been postponed indefinitely, pending new COVID-19 movement restrictions.

Security telecommunications

- The ETC and UNDSS are following up on the shipment of six satellite phones to be installed in the six SOCs in Syria. The devices are being held on the border with Lebanon. The ETC is waiting for the national authorities to share approval with customs authorities before the devices can be released and shipped to Damascus.
- The ETC deployed to Tartous on 29 March to install the urgently needed solar power back-up system in the SOC. The solar power equipment will mitigate the impact of increasingly severe fuel shortages on generator-powered services for humanitarians. While in Tartous, the ETC replaced faulty security telecommunications equipment identified during a mission in January 2021 – these services were restored on 30 March.
- Most of the solar power equipment to be installed by the ETC in the five remaining SOCs across Syria has been delivered.

Procurement

- The ETC continues to advance its large procurement exercise to obtain communications equipment and power solutions to improve services for humanitarians in Syria. Approval from national authorities to import all the equipment into Syria has been received in advance.

Capacity building

- The ETC continues to develop its national capacity building plan for 2021. As part of the plan, the ETC is currently reviewing training modules provided by ETC partner, NetHope. The training aims to build the emergency management capabilities of national staff in Syria to strengthen preparedness and ready-to-deploy skills. Planning for training sessions has been subject to frequent delays due to COVID-19 related challenges.



Challenges

- Frequent power cuts across Syria are impacting on the delivery of ETC services.
- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact on the importation of equipment and movement of staff.
- Lack of access to operational areas and lengthy deployment authorisations from relevant authorities is a major issue which frequently affects the timely implementation of ETC activities across Syria.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **28 April 2021**.

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 on Syria – including an ETC dashboard, infographic and factsheet – can be found on the [ETC website](#).

Contacts

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