

Central African Republic - Conflict

ETC Situation Report #25

Reporting period 01/04/2019 to 31/05/2019

These Situation Reports will be distributed approximately every two months. The next report will be issued on or around 31/07/19.

Highlights

- OCHA has approved 2x project proposals submitted by the ETC team and allocated a total of USD 600,000 from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) – USD 300,000 for each project – to be distributed to the ETC for a Services for Communities (S4C) project and a Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) project.
- The ETC deployed a UN and NGO radio channel in Bangassou, hosted by the MINUSCA tower at the IOM office to provide security telecommunications services to humanitarians.
- The ETC completed missions to Bossangoa and Bouar to fix the NGO radio channels. The team also installed an additional UN radio channel to solve coverage issues experienced in Bouar. This will assist UN staff in CAR to operate more efficiently.



Situation Overview

The security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) remains volatile despite the peace agreement signed in February 2019. Civilians remain the main victims of tensions and violence in the country. CAR is also one of the most dangerous contexts for humanitarian workers; 70 incidents directly affecting humanitarian staff or goods were recorded during the first quarter of 2019 compared with 65 during the same period in 2018. The subprefectures of Bambari, Batangafo, Bria and Kaga-Bandoro remain the most affected areas, although ETC activities have not been impacted by conflict in this period.

Response

- OCHA has approved 2x project proposals submitted by the ETC team and allocated a total of USD 600,000 – USD 300,000 for each project – from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) to be distributed to the ETC for the following:
 - Services for Communities (S4C) project in 3 locations. The 6-month project will set up 1) a call centre in Bria 2) an internet café and support for the local community radio in Bangassou and 3) an ETC CONNECT app in Kaga-Bandoro. These are pilot projects but are expected to be extended beyond the initial 6 months. 1x project manager is required and budgeted for to support the project. The project is a direct result of an S4C assessment mission carried out earlier this year and is in support of the rest of the humanitarian community. Read the full S4C assessment report for CAR [here](#).
 - Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) recommendations implementation, part two. This is the second wave of a project which began with initial upgrades to security telecommunication systems in CAR from 11 – 24 March. The second part of the recommended upgrades will include the recruitment of 1x dedicated Telecommunications Specialist as well as standardization and maintenance of equipment at 15 locations and the replenishment of ETC equipment stock, as per the recommendations of the TESS assessment carried out in January 2019.
- To complement the TESS-recommended upgrades to security telecommunications systems in CAR, the ETC and TESS teams also collaborated to deliver capacity building sessions in Bangui for UN agencies including UNDSS, UNHCR and WFP. UN staff learned to deploy, configure and maintain the security telecommunications equipment in-country. The upgrades will significantly improve the standardization of VHF and HF networks in CAR, which are vital to all humanitarian operations as they support the safety and security of staff in the field.
- The ETC completed missions to Bossangoa and Bouar to fix the NGO radio channels by replacing repeaters at the respective sites. The team also installed an additional UN radio channel to solve coverage issues experienced in Bouar. This will assist UN staff in CAR to operate more efficiently.
- In Bangassou, security telecommunications services are now available to humanitarians. The ETC deployed a UN and NGO radio channel in Bangassou, hosted by the MINUSCA tower at the IOM office. The UN and NGO base station was installed in the UNDSS radio room and hosted by MINUSCA.
- The mobile phone network in Zemio (a location where the ETC operated until 2018) was out of service for two weeks. At OCHA's request, the ETC has facilitated access to Mobile Network Operators (MNO) to restore the network in Zemio, to provide voice and Internet services to humanitarians operating there.



Planned Response

- After completing the set-up of NGO radio channels in Bossangoa and Bouar, the ETC plans to carry out the same activity in Bria and other locations such as Alindao and Berberati. Equipment has been ordered for this purpose. This will assist NGO staff in CAR to operate more efficiently.
- Following a hepatitis epidemic in Bocaranga, the ETC was requested by the local cluster lead agencies to explore ETC communication solutions such as radio broadcast messaging to communities. The ETC is exploring licensing options and setting up a community radio station in collaboration with the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) advisor. The ETC is planning an assessment mission to Bocaranga for this purpose.
- The ETC is planning an assessment mission to Amada Gaza and Gamboula in June to set up ETC services to meet the communication needs of the humanitarian community in these locations. INGO Plan International has been identified to host ETC equipment and services.
- The ETC is aiming to set up a VHF network for UN agencies to ensure security communications services for all humanitarians in Batangafo. Once this is finished, all planned provision of ETC services in Batangafo will be complete.

Challenges

- The volatile security situation in the country remains a challenge for all humanitarians.
- There is a lack of resources to support all field locations.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **26 June 2019**.

Information

- ICT responders operating on the ground in CAR are encouraged to share their contact details with CAR.ETC@wfp.org to facilitate local coordination.
- A dedicated information-sharing space has been created on the ETC website <https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/central-african-republic-conflict>. Organisations involved in the ICT response are encouraged to share updates with the ETC community to support the overall humanitarian response.
- **ETC CAR Dashboard** : <https://www.etcluster.org/node/10098>



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Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
CAR	Central African Republic
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
HF	High Frequency
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MNO	Mobile Network Operators
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
S4C	Services for Communities
TESS	Telecommunications Security Standards
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
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: CAR.ETC@wfp.org



Background on the emergency:

A protection crisis erupted in the [Central African Republic](#) (CAR) at the end of 2013 resulting in severe violence and widespread displacement. The collapse of state, law and order and public services further exacerbated the situation. Since then, the country has remained extremely volatile. Over five years after the beginning of the conflict, the humanitarian situation remains critical leaving 2.5 million people, over half the population, in urgent need of assistance. Since December 2013, over 590,000 people are still displaced across the country and the number of refugees outside CAR is over 480,000.

The [Emergency Telecommunications Cluster](#) (ETC) was activated in December 2013 in response to the escalating crisis. Led by the World Food Programme (WFP), the ETC in CAR is focusing on enhancing security telecommunications in Bangui and supporting the establishment of common ICT services in eleven common operational areas, namely: Alindao, Bambari, Bangui, Batangafo, Bossangoa, Bria, Bouar, Kaga-Bandoro, N'Dele and Paoua.

Sources: IOM, OCHA, and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)