

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Preschool and Higher Education Reopening Dates Announced – 12 October**
- **Foreign Visitors Will Undergo Fast Antigen Testing, NCDC Heads Says**
- **COVID-19 Contacts Must Undergo Self-isolation without Testing, NCDC Head Says**
- **StopCov fund has accumulated GEL 134 411 403 as of 9 October 2020**

5866
Total recovered

10752
Confirmed cases

72
Total deaths

5971
People in quarantine

Source: www.stopcov.ge 9 October 2020

Georgia Situation Overview

Georgian Education Minister Mikheil Chkhenkeli announced that preschools will reopen nationwide starting from October 12, except for in Adjara. Higher education institutions are scheduled to reopen for classroom attendance starting from October 19, with the exception also being universities in the western Adjara region.

As announced by Head of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) Amiran Gamkrelidze on 7 October, foreign citizens visiting Georgia will undergo fast antigen testing following an 8-day mandatory quarantine period.

As announced by Head of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) Amiran Gamkrelidze on 5 October, a resolution has been submitted to the Health Ministry, according to which close contacts with COVID-19-positive citizens, including family and work contacts, must be directly transferred to self-isolation without any testing. If contacts show no symptoms, such as cough, fever, or shortness of breath, for 12 days after self-isolation, they may return to normal life without further testing.

Coordination Arrangements

The Prime Minister of Georgia has established and leads an Inter-Governmental Coordination Council to combat the COVID-19 crisis.

Mitigation and Response

Mitigation measures taken by the Government of Georgia

Detailed report on measures taken by the GoG is translated in English and can be accessed at: http://gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=41&info_id=76497

Response by the UN agencies, funds and programmes (AFPs)

WHO

- WHO has secured funding to support Georgia in conducting seroepidemiological investigations under the Unity studies. Coordination of details are progressing with NCDC to get a better estimate of the needs.
- WHO completed procurement, delivered and handed over to MoH Georgia 16,800 GOGGLES PROTECTIVE and 10,000 GOWN, ISOLATION, non-sterile, under the EU DG NEAR supported project;
- Also under the EU DG NEAR supported project WHO has completed the work on the National protocol for enhanced surveillance and the IPC standard operating procedures for ambulance services – work done in partnership with the NCDC and Emergency Coordination Centre.
- WHO organized a webinar on risk assessment and risk management of SARS-CoV-2 infection among healthcare workers and inpatients;
- In partnership with UNICEF, WHO finalized the 5th wave of the COVID-19 Behavioural Insights Study. The study results have been shared with the national health authorities.
- Under the USAID supported project, WHO completed the production regional intervention materials: 2 type of posters - one about COVID rules in public transport and another regarding how to act in case of symptoms (already placed in places of public gatherings), two similar banners and one video-clip. Each poster/banner was produced in Azeri-Georgian and Armenian-Georgian languages.

UNICEF

- UNICEF delivered 450 food and hygiene boxes, along with vitamins and micronutrients, to the Ministry of Health of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara for further distribution to 150 pregnant women and 300 children under self-isolation.
- UNICEF, together with the Public Charity Organization KIARAZ, the Holy Metropolis of Abkhazia, the Charity Fund Amshen and groups of volunteers, distributed food parcels and hygiene supplies to 350 vulnerable families in Abkhazia, Georgia, reaching 1,073 children and 858 adults. The parcels were purchased by UNICEF with financial support from the Swedish International Development Agency.
- UNICEF and the Rugby Union of Georgia signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to mark [the launch of a new phase of their partnership](#) to raise awareness on COVID-19 preventive measures, advocate for the protection of children from violence, and promote crime prevention and healthy lifestyles among children and young people. As part of the partnership, the Georgia Rugby team members will focus on raising awareness of COVID-19 prevention measures and as a symbolic gesture, will wear the UNICEF logo on their face masks during the Eight Nations tournament.

- UNICEF delivered entertainment and educational materials for kindergartens and youth center and computers, projectors and network devices for schools in Pankisi Gorge to support continued access to education;
- UNICEF, in partnership with the National Center for Disease Control and the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, and with the financial support of USAID, organized the second meeting with media representatives on COVID-19 with the aim of raising awareness of journalists and producers about the evolving situation, prevention measures and Government's regulations to respond to the pandemic.
- UNICEF continued to provide parents with information and skills on how to communicate with their children and support them in coping with the stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Another [webinar](#) for the parents of children aged 6-12 was organized with over 15,000 Facebook views. [An additional seven short videos were developed](#) and shared through social media to support parents in improving their communication with the children of this age group.
- [Seven regional TV channels broadcasted 28 special news programs](#), totaling 102 editions on COVID-19 protective measures. Minority language TV channels aired an additional 20 programs (totaling 80 editions) in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages about the topic.
- Advocacy campaign for the safe reopening of schools continued with UNICEF [Representative's video address](#) which was shared via social media and traditional media outlets, focusing on the importance of equal access to education for every child in Georgia. The campaign also included a [series of photo stories](#) of children sharing their experiences about distance learning and school reopening, as well as [a video story of a kindergarten teacher](#) speaking about the importance of preschool education.
- UNICEF partner organization "Adjara Organization of Georgia Scout's Movement" initiated on-line sessions for 6 schools, reaching 240 students of Adjara mountainous villages on prevention measures against COVID-19. It is anticipated that the trained students will transfer the information received during the training to their peers and community members.
- In partnership with the Parliament and State Care Agency, the UNICEF-supported child hotline "111" continues to provide assistance to children and their families, supporting 961 cases to date, of which 826 already received assistance and were closed accordingly. There is an increase in the number of cases related to violence against children, reaching a total of 64.
- UNICEF partner Initiatives for Social Change (ISC) started training and supervision sessions for social workers and psychologists from the State Care Agency and the National Agency for Crime Prevention and Probation (Probation Agency). 85 professionals (social workers, psychologists and mediators) from the Probation Agency took part in trainings related to various issues concerning children in conflict with the law. 30 social workers from the State Care Agency completed the training on Social Work During an Emergency. ISC, in cooperation with the respective department of the Probation Agency, initiated the development of guidelines for online mediation in criminal cases.
- UNICEF's partner RHEA Union launched activities in Akhalkalaki and Aspindza to provide developmental activities for children and young people with disabilities. Around 17 children and young people benefitted from art therapy and felting classes during the reporting period.

- UNICEF supported the creation of a child-friendly space in Pankisi Legal Aid Bureau. The room is equipped with special furniture and materials considering children's specific needs, ensures privacy and prevents re-victimization of children in contact with the law. The space will serve all children and their parents seeking legal service from the Legal Aid Bureau in Pankisi Gorge.

UNDP

- Labor safety during the COVID-19 pandemic was the focus of a series of seminars and trainings organized by UNDP for some 70 companies in the packaging value chain, as part of a joint EU-UNDP initiative to promote private sector competitiveness. Participants learned about new state regulations on labor safety and a methodology to assess labor safety risks in enterprises through practical exercises and tools. Special attention was paid to the risks and rules for safe operations during pandemics. The initiative will continue with an enterprise-tailored labor safety advancement program, enabling enterprises to assess labor safety risks on site and supporting them by establishing cooperation mechanisms between firms to improve labor safety conditions.
- With funding from the UK Government, UNDP supported the Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) in launching a new USD 80,000 initiative to improve the quality and security of electronic public services. The initiative comes in response to the COVID-driven shift of public services online, which dramatically increased the amount of citizen data needing safe management and storage. With UNDP support, the PSDA (which functions under the Ministry of Justice) will improve its cybersecurity systems and data management processes and develop standards for data collection and management that will gradually be applied across the entire Georgian public sector. The initiative is part of a wider program of public administration reform that UNDP implements together with the UK.
- Under a local development program funded by Denmark, UNDP designed and delivered a training course for municipalities in the Imereti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Kvemo Kartli regions aimed at strengthening the role of local government in managing public health programs and improving coordination between central and local agencies. Local authorities are responsible for important aspects of healthcare and social services, putting them on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that a coordinated effort between central and local governments is critical to effectively develop and manage healthcare policies and programs at the local level. The training was led by representatives of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs and the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health.
- With funding from Norway, UNDP commissioned the Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center to prepare a study on self-employment and challenges to labor rights during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study presents a typology of self-employed workers in Georgia and analyses the forms of precarity they face. International best practices regarding social and labor protection of self-employed workers are also presented. The study will be made available online in coming weeks.
- As part of an EU-UN joint vocational education and training (VET) program in Abkhazia, UNDP partnered with the local NGO Sukhumi Youth House to organize an interactive competition among VET students to design the best logo and slogan aimed at preventing COVID-19. Knowledge of safety measures recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) was part of the competition. T-shirts with the winning logo and slogan were produced and distributed to VET students in Abkhazia.

- With USAID funding, UNDP continued its online training programs for Abkhaz medical specialists on COVID-related topics. The latest session on infectious diseases was organized by the NGO SFG and was attended by pediatricians, reanimation specialists, infectious disease specialists, cardiologists, therapists, and nurses from different hospitals in Abkhazia. UNDP also organized an online session on the use of ELISA (antibody) tests in COVID-19 diagnostics for laboratory workers from the Sanitary and Epidemiological Service and the Research Institute of Experimental Pathology and Therapy. Finally, UNDP conducted a needs assessment among educational establishments in Abkhazia to identify acute needs for hygienic supplies for the school year. A detailed inventory of needed supplies (mainly multiple-use masks and hand sanitizer) and quantities has been prepared.

UNFPA

- UNFPA cooperation with the Public Broadcaster of Georgia on integration of healthy lifestyle, gender equality and SRH issues into the distance education platform is in progress. Lesson scenarios for six classes have been prepared and tested. The team is working on developing the learning content, including the animations on selected topics. It has been agreed that the 25-minute episodes will be aired on Fridays on “TV School”.
- On September 28th 2020, MoH has approved standards for prevention and management of COVID-19 in residential institutions and community care homes that are mandatory for state funded institutions (order N 01-105/n). Adherence to the Standards, developed with the technical support of UNFPA will be monitored by the relevant staff members of the ministry and the state care agency.
- Within the frames of the UN COVID-19 Fund funded UN Joint programme, UNFPA has provided all 11 state-funded residential institutions and community care homes for older persons with protective gear and disinfectants for personnel as well as with informational materials to help in prevention of COVID-19 among personnel and beneficiaries.

IOM

- IOM provided voluntary return assistance on regular flights to 5 vulnerable migrants from Bangladesh and Uzbekistan, stranded in Georgia due to COVID-19, and has made preparations for the voluntary return of 8 other stranded migrants to return to Iraq, Moldova, South Africa and Uzbekistan, scheduled in the coming week. Six Iranians departed with IOM assistance on 5 October on a charter flight to Tehran. Their departure from Georgia was delayed due to the protracted COVID-19 pandemic.
- Among vulnerable migrants who applied for IOM’s COVID-19 Emergency Response Assistance IOM identified a possible trafficking victim - a woman from Uzbekistan – who was referred to the State Fund for the assignment of the status of victim of trafficking in human beings.
- IOM provided direct humanitarian assistance (accommodation, food, medical) to vulnerable migrants from Uzbekistan, Jordan, Russia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, India, Syria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, Eritrea, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Palestine, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine to support them during the time of COVID-19.

- In the period of 19 September – 7 October 264 Georgian nationals returned with IOM's assistance. On 29 September the first charter flight for specifically IOM's caseload (146 persons) was organized from Greece to Georgia in coordination with the governments of both countries. Similar charter flight from Germany was organized on 23 September for 54 Georgian nationals. On both flights there were vulnerable medical cases who will receive follow-up assistance upon return. Also both flights were accompanied by IOM escorts for assistance and smooth operation during the flights. Germany returned 41 more persons during the mentioned time span with regular flights. Other sending countries were Austria (6 persons), Switzerland (5 persons), Finland (4 persons), Poland (4 persons), Czech Republic (2 persons), Netherlands (1 person) and Belgium (1 person). These nationals arrived with connecting flights either from Paris (regular) or Amsterdam (charter). 10 pre-departure information requests were answered: 8 medical and 2 COVID-related, from Germany, Switzerland and Finland. Post-arrival reintegration assistance was provided to 10 returnees from Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands. IOM Georgia provides on-line counselling to all new arrivals.
- IOM Georgia started provision of pre-departure virtual counselling to potential returnees - vulnerable Georgian nationals, some of them with medical needs stranded in Germany due to COVID-19. Twelve Georgian nationals who are rejected asylum seekers or having a status for tolerated stay received virtual counselling via IOM's dedicated hotline.

FAO

- FAO under the EU-funded ENPARD awarded 14 matching grants, with a total budget of USD 123,144. Out of which one is COVID-19 emergency response grant, with the budget of USD 5,352.
- FAO under the EU-funded ENPARD supports Georgian farmers in Gori to produce with No-Till Planter Calibration method.
- FAO under the EU-funded ENPARD provided training for Kakheti farmers on Production of Healthy Vegetable Seedlings.
- FAO and the UN Office Security in Abkhazia delivered the hygiene products – masks and sanitizers to farmers participating in the Farmer Field Days.

Important Links to Follow

General:

- <https://hr.un.org/page/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>
- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>
- <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>
- <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/covid-19-outbreak-readiness-and-response>
- <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/strategic-preparedness-and-response-plan-for-the-new-coronavirus>
- Disaster management and contingency planning: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publications/view/2527>
- WHO Whatsapp Thread for Q&A: <http://bit.ly/who-covid19-whatsapp>
- UNIDO COVID-19 Industrial Recovery Programme, <https://www.unido.org/news/unido-launches-covid-19-industrial-recovery-programme>
- UNIDO's publication "COVID-19: Digital Transformation and Industrial Recovery" <https://hub.unido.org/sites/default/files/publications/UNIDO-COVID-Digital%20Transformation.pdf>.

To contribute to regular Situation Reports and to be included in the mailing lists, please contact:
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Georgia:

- Government of Georgia website on COVID-19 <https://stopcov.ge/en>
- National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health [COVID-19 related information, including epidemiology, education materials and regulations: <https://www.ncdc.ge/Pages/User/News.aspx?ID=66254a4e-6c23-49ef-9157-4fcc247db00c>
- Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia hotline: 1505 U
- UNICEF Georgia supported COVID-19 hotline to provide assistance to children and their families: **111**
- Government of Georgia hotline: **144**
- Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Emergency and Operative Response Centre: **112**
- COVID-19 Georgia live blog: <https://civil.ge/archives/342486>