

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Schools and Universities Will Make Use of Distance Learning until October 1**
- **11 Sep - 87 New Cases, Highest Daily Record, 20 More Recoveries Reported**
- **Government Reintroduces Several Restrictions**
- **Mandatory Quarantine Period Reduced, PCR Tests Required for Foreigners**
- **2 Sep - Quarantine Dropped in Town of Mestia, Village Lenjeri**
- **StopCov fund has accumulated GEL 134 409 419 as of 11 September 2020**

1354
Total recovered

1917
Confirmed cases

19
Total deaths

5882
People in quarantine

Source: www.stopcov.ge 11 September 2020

Georgia Situation Overview

The Interagency Coordination Council announced today that physical attendance in schools and universities will be postponed in Tbilisi, Gori, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Zugdidi and Poti until October 1. Starting from September 15, educational institutions in the five cities will make use of distance learning for the first two weeks of the fall semester. The same measure was already in place for schools and universities in Batumi. PM Giorgi Gakharia stated that the two-week period is necessary to “correctly assess current risks.”

As announced in 9 Sep press conference, due to a recent spike in infection cases, the reopening of cinemas and theaters, previously scheduled to take place during September 15 and October 1, will be postponed until November 1. The Government reintroduced the ban on large-scale social events, including weddings, funerals, birthdays, and other rites, both indoors and outdoors. Cultural and sports events involving over 200 attendants will also be banned. The new restrictions will not apply to election campaign events.

Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia announced on 7 Sep that the mandatory quarantine period will be reduced from 12 to 8 days. In addition, from September 15 onwards, all foreign citizens entering Georgia must present a mandatory 72-hour PCR test results. The new PCR test measure will also affect foreign citizens entering Georgia based on the reciprocal principle, who were previously exempt from COVID-19 related cautionary measures.

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 delivered 800 PCR test kits to NCDC (equivalent of 40,000 PCR tests);
- Posters, billboards have been developed jointly by WHO and NCDC (under the USAID supported project) in Armenian and Azeri languages for the ethnic minorities in the geographical locations that have experienced outbreaks in recent months;
- WHO continued development of risk communication videos and webinars for communication interventions in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe Javakheti ethnic district, under the USAID supported project;
- Surveillance, case investigation and laboratory WHO consultants continued delivering training webinars on IPC issues and laboratories, under the USAID supported project, with particular focus on Abkhazia due to lower capacities and higher training needs;
- First two webinars on clinical management have been conducted by WHO (under the USAID supported project), for the healthcare workers in charge of the designated hospital in Gudauta and the Republican Hospital in Sukhumi;
- Logistical arrangements have been made by WHO for the receipt of the PPE dispatched by WHO (gloves – 316,000, goggles – 16,800 and gowns - 10,000), procured under the EU FG-NEAR supported project
- Deep freezer has been procured by WHO (under the USAID supported project) for the main laboratory in Abkhazia to allow for storing of laboratory samples;
- Regional trainings for healthcare workers on the case investigation protocols for PHC doctors, ambulance personal and public health centers' epidemiologists under EU DG-NEAR supported project have been conducted in 10 regions;
- Additionally trainings on IPC protocols for the front-line medical staff in the designated healthcare facilities in Adjara and Guria regions of GEO has been conducted by WHO in collaboration with the MoH responsible, under the EU DG-NEAR supported project;
- Preparations are made by WHO (under the USAID supported project), for the media training on ethical portrayal of COVID-19 issues planned for second half of September;
- WHO HQ together with EURO coordinated detailed with Georgian stakeholders from NCDC to carry out the assessment of risk factors for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in health workers using WHO protocol for a case-control study. The funding has been secured and procurement the serological kits for the study is about to begin.

UNICEF

- An agreement between the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports (MoESCS) of Georgia, the Government of Estonia, and UNICEF Georgia was signed, which focuses on training elementary school teachers, school administrators, and educators from 100 schools in distance teaching and learning concepts and practices.
- To support the safer reopening of schools, UNICEF, in coordination with the MoESCS, WHO, and NCDC, prepared information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on COVID-19 in Georgian and ethnic minority languages for students, teachers, and non-teaching staff, which include infection prevention and control (IPC) messages on handwashing, proper use of face masks, hand sanitation, physical distancing, etc.

To contribute to regular Situation Reports and to be included in the mailing lists, please contact:
David Mushkudiani, UN RC Office, david.mushkudiani@un.org

- UNICEF, in coordination with the MoESCS, WHO, and NCDC, prepared information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on COVID-19 in Georgian and ethnic minority languages for students, teachers, and non-teaching staff. The materials include IPC messages on handwashing, proper use of face masks, hand sanitation, physical distancing recommendations, etc.
- UNICEF published an article to guide parents on how to introduce the new regulations for the safer reopening of schools and the necessity of wearing masks to children.
- With UNICEF support and in partnership with CK-12 Foundation, Education for All Coalition is translating and adapting interactive and online teaching and learning resources for students and teachers of Georgia.
- In partnership with Parents for Education, best practices of parent-child communication in stressful environments, including COVID-19, reached 24,000 people through Facebook.
- UNICEF and the Initiative for Social Change started a new project to provide support to the National Agency for Crime Prevention and Probation for online mediation in criminal cases and enhance the capacity of social workers from the State Care Agency on social work in emergencies.
- In partnership with the Administration of All Muslims of Georgia, Regional Media Association, and NCDC, UNICEF continued to share videos featuring Muslim religious leaders, animations, and social media posters on COVID-19 in the Azeri language, reaching up to 30,000 ethnic minority community members.
- Seven regional TV channels broadcasted 28 news programmes on COVID-19-related topics as part of the RCCE strategy, which aims to support NCDC in reaching ethnic minority population with COVID-19 prevention messages through regional TV channels across Georgia. The project is implemented by the Journalism Resource Center, with USAID support.
- In partnership with NCDC, UNICEF organized a meeting with media representatives/western Georgia based journalists on COVID-19 including prevention measures, clinical management of COVID cases, vaccination as well as the Cod of the Rights of the Child;
- UNICEF's partner, Global Initiative in Psychiatry (GIP), continues a series of online mental health webinars for adolescents and their parents, with 765 views.
- 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 728 cases to date, of which 639 already received assistance and were closed accordingly.
- Through group and individual sessions, UNICEF partner, Children of Georgia, provided online psychological support to 262 children and 174 caregivers in small group homes and foster care, in all regions of Georgia. During the reporting period, the following topics were covered: distresses caused during and by COVID-19-related restrictions/isolation; emotional state of children; altered daily routine contributing anxiety; conflict management; violence; and challenging behavior.

UNDP

- With funding from the UK Government, UNDP worked in partnership with the Georgia Red Cross Society to deliver professional home care services—including cleaning, hot meal delivery, assistance in paying utilities and support in personal hygiene—to 5,715 elderly and vulnerable persons. The services were provided by 615 caregivers and volunteers and 150 self-support groups, who received specialized training through a dedicated online platform. Some 100,000 elderly and vulnerable people received information and counseling support through a hotline and home visits. 12,000 leaflets with risk communication messages on COVID-19 and 4,000 brochures on “Psychological Coping During Disease Outbreak: Elderly and People with Chronic Conditions” were also developed and distributed as part of the initiative.

To contribute to regular Situation Reports and to be included in the mailing lists, please contact:
David Mushkudiani, UN RC Office, david.mushkudiani@un.org

- With UNDP support and leadership, the UN Association of Georgia (UNAG), working with the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC), has finalized the development of the National Risk Communication Strategy for Public Health Emergencies in Georgia. The strategy is currently under review by the Administration of the Government (AoG) and will be submitted for Government approval. Working jointly with the NCDC and the AoG, the UNAG will soon launch the training of selected public servants and public health center representatives on the key guidelines provided in the strategy. This will be followed by an active communications campaign. The initiative is funded by the UK Government.
- With funding from Switzerland and Austria, UNDP helped the Georgian National Tourism Administration and the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development to prepare video guides for businesses engaged in the tourism industry. The initiative is aimed at ensuring that restaurants and cafes, accommodation facilities and apartments, tourism companies, tour operators, guides and drivers are informed about relevant state regulations for operating tourism businesses during the pandemic. One video was produced to document the partnership between the state and the private sector in arranging quarantine zones in hotels to contain the spread of COVID-19 and reduce pandemic-driven losses.
- As part of the joint UN programme on disability, UNDP conducted a four-day training for staff of shelters for victims of domestic violence that operate under the LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance to the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking in Georgia. The initiative is a response to challenges that shelter staff have encountered in identifying and addressing mental health issues that shelter residents have faced during the pandemic. The aim is to increase the capacity of the State Care Agency to intervene in a timely fashion and provide necessary referrals and follow-up. Trainers from the “Global Initiative in Psychiatry-Tbilisi” provided basic training on psychosocial care; depression; self-harm and suicide; generalized anxiety disorders; adjustment disorder; post-traumatic stress disorder; and psychoses.
- UNDP has received a total of 333 applications for funding under the first call of a EUR 2.9 million small grants scheme for rural small and medium-sized enterprises implemented in partnership with the Agriculture and Rural Development Agency (ARDA) and funded under the EU’s ENPARD programme. The applications are currently being evaluated. Another call for applications will be issued in November 2020.
- UNDP organized a training session for vocational education instructors and managers of VET colleges in Sukhumi on how to apply WHO-recommended safety measures during the new academic year. Instructions were provided on sanitary and hygienic precautions for in-class teaching, including social distancing. In addition, UNDP provided plastic protection shields, facemasks and information packages.
- With UNDP funding, the Charity Humanitarian Centre “Abkhazeti” (CHCA) continued its work to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and support vulnerable households in selected IDP collective centers in Shida Kartli, Imereti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regions. Over the past two weeks, 100 women and girls received psychosocial counseling, bringing the total to more than 300 women. Regular disinfection works were performed at 89 IDP collective centers in the past two weeks, with each of 100 centers set to be disinfected ten times during the project duration. Home care services were provided to 21 elderly residents of the collective centers, bringing the total to 130 elderly IDPs receiving home care so far.
- With USAID funding, UNDP continued to organize peer-to-peer consultations between Abkhaz and Georgian medical professionals to share information, knowledge and best practices on COVID-19. Over the past two weeks, the CSO Society for Future Generation organized two online consultations that focused on COVID-19 diagnostics in which 13 medical professionals from Abkhazia participated.
- With USAID funding, UNDP continued to provide online training for Abkhaz medical specialists on hospital management during the pandemic. Sessions on epidemiological and clinical features of COVID-19 and home care of patients with suspected and confirmed COVID infections were held for staff of the COVID-19 treatment center at Gudauta Hospital. Online training sessions were also provided on PCR diagnostics.

UNFPA

UNFPA has continued working to address health and protection of older persons in the context of COVID19:

To contribute to regular Situation Reports and to be included in the mailing lists, please contact:
David Mushkudiani, UN RC Office, david.mushkudiani@un.org

- As of August 2020, UNFPA has expanded its partnership project with the Georgia Red Cross Society (GRCS) with core funding thanks to generous contribution from the German Government: three (3) additional municipalities of Georgia (Qeda and Shuakhevi of Ajara A.R and Gori Municipality of Shida Kartli region) get covered under the project of Assisting Local Communities in Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19, aiming at strengthening protection of vulnerable older persons living alone.
- On September 6, 2020 UNFPA Georgia Head of Office, Ms. Lela Bakradze together with the Vice-president of GRCS, MR. Otar Davitadze participated in launching of Food and Hygiene parcels distribution in Qeda municipality of Ajara A.R. Some 84 beneficiaries will receive the abovementioned parcels and protective gear in Qeda municipality. Parallel to Qeda, the distribution took place in Shuakhevi municipality and will cover 87 beneficiaries within the next 2 weeks.
- On August 27, 2020, within the framework of the COVID19 MPTF funded UN Joint Programme, UNFPA visited Bolnisi and Dmanisi municipalities for monitoring of the distribution of Food and Hygiene parcels by GRCS in these Municipalities. Within the mentioned monitoring visit, UNFPA Project Coordinator met with Local Government representatives in Bolnisi and Dmanisi and discussed the ongoing activities as well as possible ways of cooperation in future. In total, more than 900 beneficiaries will be covered in these two municipalities.
- On September 4th 2020, social and care service providers attended an online training on standards of care in the context of COVID-19 in residential institutions and community care homes, organized by UNFPA within the frames of the COVID19 MPTF funded UN Joint Programme Assisting Local Communities in Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19.

IOM

- IOM provided voluntary return assistance via charter flights to vulnerable migrants from Poland and Iran, stranded in Georgia due to COVID-19 and has made preparations for the voluntary return of 10 stranded migrants to return to Bangladesh, Cameroon and India, scheduled for the coming days. Their departure from Georgia was delayed due to the protracted COVID-19 pandemic.
- IOM provided direct humanitarian assistance to vulnerable nationals of Egypt, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Guinea, Jordan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Cameroon stranded in Georgia due to COVID-19.
- Sixty-nine Georgian citizens returned with IOM's assistance from Germany, Finland, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Latvia and Ireland.
- IOM Georgia provided feedback on numerous pre-departure questions, mainly related to available medical assistance upon arrival and COVID-19 measures in Georgia.

FAO

- FAO, under the EU-funded ENPARD programme, arranged Farmers Field Days and vegetable production training series for farmers in Keda, Akhalkalaki, Tsalka, Akhmeta, Tskaltubo and Koda.
- FAO, under the Austria-funded project, in close collaboration with the Agrarian Movement in Georgia, conducted vegetable, wine grape production and beekeeping training series for the farmers in Shida Kartli and Racha-Lechkhumi effected by the pandemic.
- FAO and the European Union (EU) have awarded 34 more matching grants covering 40 to 60 percent of farmers' initial investments in agricultural initiatives: 18 small investments with a grant of a maximum of \$10,000, 12 medium investments with a grant of a maximum of \$50,000 and 4 large investments with a maximum of \$150,000.

To contribute to regular Situation Reports and to be included in the mailing lists, please contact:
David Mushkudiani, UN RC Office, david.mushkudiani@un.org

Response by international development partners

- World Bank will allocate 40 million USD to finance Login Georgia, a project seeking to enhance high-speed internet access throughout the country. More info available at: http://gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=288&info_id=77170

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>.
-

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>