

HIGHLIGHTS

- The UN allocates USD 1 million to protect front-line responders to the COVID-19 crisis as well as vulnerable groups from pandemic shocks in Georgia
- Gradual lifting of restrictions is underway
- StopCov fund has accumulated GEL 131 599 912 as of 14 May

383
Total recovered

667
Confirmed cases

12
Total deaths

4,233
People in quarantine

Source: www.stopcov.ge 14 May 2020

Georgia situation overview

The first patient with COVID-19 was diagnosed in Georgia on 26 February 2020. Despite early decisive actions of the Government, the number of confirmed and suspected cases continued to grow triggering the Government to declare a state of emergency on 21 March, closing borders and airports, restricting movement inside the country, banning mass gatherings and maintaining closure of all schools, kindergartens and universities. A nationwide curfew was declared, and further restrictive measures were introduced on 31 March and a lockdown was imposed on the country's four largest cities on 15 April. In order to avoid further community spread, and the state of emergency was extended until May 22, including the ban on inter-city travel. Movement of cars within the cities is now permitted and as of 11 May, entry and exit from Tbilisi was allowed. The Government launched a Crisis Response Plan implying social support and economic recovery components, as well as gradually lifts restrictions based on epidemiological data.

To date, there have been fifteen COVID-19 cases detected and one death was recorded in Abkhazia. A state of emergency was put in place on 28 March and was lifted as of 21 April. Despite this, restrictions on movement remain in place and the administrative boundary line (ABL) remains closed. As for the South Ossetia, 30 confirmed cases have been registered to date.

Coordination arrangements

- The Prime Minister of Georgia has established and leads an Inter-Governmental Coordination Council to combat the COVID-19 crisis.
- The Prime Minister of Georgia signed a decree that the UN Disaster Management Country Team will be tasked to coordinate international humanitarian support in case international humanitarian support should be requested by the government.

Mitigation and response

Mitigation measures taken by the Government of Georgia

- The Government announced GEL 300 mln (USD 94 mln) Relief Program for farmers to cope with the impact of pandemic.
- The quarantine regime in the village of Kvemo Bolnisi of the Bolnisi Municipality was lifted on 8 May
- Restrictions on entering and exiting Tbilisi were lifted on May 11 and Rustavi and Gardabani on 14 May;
- Gathering of more than three people, both indoors and outdoors will be allowed starting 18 May. The restriction on no more than three people in the car remains in force along with restricting on gatherings to 10 individuals.

- Restrictions on entering and exiting Marneuli will be lifted and beauty salons and esthetic centers will resume its operations on 18 May.
- Domestic tourism will resume on 15 June, while Georgia will be ready to host international tourists from 1 July.

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

- WHO runs regular surveys on the awareness and attitudes of the population towards COVID-19 and associated measures;
- With the USAID support, WHO initiated procurement of printing equipment to enable quick dissemination of clinical and laboratory guidance at the designated hospitals and laboratories.
- WHO updated the COVID-19 Partners Platform with the strategic actions for mitigation of socio-economic consequences of the pandemic in Georgia.
- In collaboration with the UN RCO and UNOPS, WHO works on consolidating procurement of identified essential supplies and commodities through the global COVID-19 supply mechanism.
- In partnership with UNICEF, WHO coordinates the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) working group in support to the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC). The COVID-19 RCCE Strategy and Action Plan, including for the regions inhabited by ethnic minorities are under development;
- UNICEF supported TV programme on early childhood development was launched and began airing on Saturdays and Sundays for six weeks on the Georgian Public Broadcaster's Education Channel. Each 15-minute video in the series features an expert who provides an overview and recommendations on the topic, and a preschool educator who demonstrates activities that can be applied by parents and their children at home.
- UNICEF, in partnership with the CSO Coalition Education for All and Ministry of Education and Science, is supporting the development of teaching and learning resources for effective distance/online learning.
- UNICEF developed a partnership with Kant's Academy, a leading non-formal education platform for adolescents, to build the resilience of adolescents to cope with challenges, especially with emerging needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- UNICEF shared guidelines for religious leaders on the prevention of violence against children with over 150 religious leaders across 3 major denominations in Georgia (Orthodox Patriarchy, Administration of all Muslims of Georgia and Lutheran Church).
- UNICEF delivered Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and disinfectants to Abkhazia for distribution to maternities, children's polyclinics and primary health clinics.
- UNHCR provided emergency cash assistance to 114 households/259 individuals, including asylum seekers, refugees, humanitarian status holders and stateless persons;
- UNHCR assisted 139 households in Abkhazia to cope with the consequences of the restrictive measures introduced in response to pandemics.
- UNDP provided protective face shields to the Emergency Situations Coordination and Urgent Assistance Center under the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs. The shields are made from recycled plastic bottles by the Georgian company CaucasPack, which retooled its production from with support from the EU and UNDP. Under the same project, UNDP assisted packaging-sector companies in applying COVID-19 safety rules.
- UNDP launched a series of hackathons to help rural communities devise innovative solutions to the socio-economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. Teams of innovators will compete for GEL 20,000 grants to implement digital solutions in eight municipalities. The hackathon is organized under the EU-funded ENPARD programme, in partnership with the Georgian Innovations and Technology Agency (GITA) and the Agriculture and Rural Development Agency (ARDA).
- UNDP has been supporting the Data Exchange Agency (DEA), which manages the unified www.my.gov.ge portal, to encourage people to make greater use of e-services. With UNDP support, the number of e-services available has been increased to 650 and the portal has been made accessible for persons with visual impairments. UNDP's efforts are supported by the UK and Sweden.
- With funding from Denmark, Switzerland and Austria, UNDP continues to help municipalities adjust their Municipal Development Documents (MDDs) and related action plans to pandemic realities.
- With schools closed in Abkhazia due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Joint EU-UNDP project in support of vocational education and training (VET) provided training in digital and online learning for remote eastern districts. To increase youth participation in spreading WHO recommendations for COVID-19 prevention, a slogan and logo contest was launched for VET students.

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- Within the framework of the Joint EU-UNDP ENPARD rural development programme in Abkhazia, a call for grant applications was organized by the Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) in support of agricultural businesses. The grants will support rural livelihoods affected by the COVID pandemic.
- With USAID funding, UNDP contracted an international lab expert to provide on-demand advice and coaching to improve medical laboratory services in Abkhazia. The assignment foresees consultancy and on-job-training for the medical personnel engaged in laboratories designated for the COVID-19 response.
- In response to COVID-19 crisis, Caucasian Mosaic, a grantee of the Joint UNDP-EU COBERM confidence-building programme translated a video with COVID-19 recommendations for persons with disabilities into Ossetian language and disseminated it among South Ossetian colleagues and partners.
- UNFPA signed an agreement with the Body Shop Georgia, represented by the JSC GEPHA on the joint support to the Body Shop's global awareness raising campaign - 'Isolated, Not Alone' in Georgia. The latter will address risks of increased violence against women during pandemics.
- UNFPA signed a memorandum of understanding with JSC Liberty Bank to inform older people about COVID-19 and disseminate relevant materials. UNFPA and Liberty Bank will hold a joint awareness rising campaign on COVID-19 among older people, their families and caregivers;
- OHCHR delivered capacity-building session for the Georgian Bar Association lawyers dealing with various aspects of State of Emergency. OHCHR also carried out a training for the investigators of the State Inspector's Office related to the Office's mandate on independent investigation of allegations of human rights abuses by law enforcement officials.
- IOM distributed face masks to IDPs residing at the settlements in Zugdidi Municipality. IOM issued the migrants' rapid needs assessment survey report, confirming the high vulnerability and disproportional exposure of migrant communities in Georgia to the COVID-19 risks.
- FAO announced COVID-19 Emergency Response Grants Program for farmers. FAO and EU will be providing USD 1 mln co-funding for arranging drip irrigation systems in 22 municipalities of Georgia.
- FAO contributed to the regional COVID-19 Rapid Survey on Supply Chains.
- FAO agronomists assist farmers to arrange demonstration plots amid COVID-19.
- UN Women delivered Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and disinfectants to the NGOs running domestic violence crisis centers in Sukhumi and Gali.
- UN Women facilitated a session by the representatives of Enterprise Georgia through the FB Platform 'Women against COVID-19'. The session aimed at informing grassroots women on the new programmes launched by the Government in the framework of its Crisis Response Plan.

Response by international development partners

- Georgia is one of the first among 46 countries to receive USD 1 mln from the UN Covid-19 Fund to protect front-line workers in all municipalities as well as vulnerable groups from COVID-19 shocks.
- According to the US Ambassador, her country allocated additional USD 3 mln to support Georgia's response to COVID-19. The US will also donate 27,000 tons of wheat to Georgia.
- Gilead Sciences, a US based biotech company, signed licensing agreements with five generic pharmaceutical companies, allowing to manufacture antiviral drug Remdesivir for distribution in 127 countries, including Georgia.

Important links to follow

UN guidance note on addressing COVID-19 related hate speech sets out recommendations to various actors for addressing and countering COVID-19 related hate speech. It builds on and is complementary to the [Secretary-General's statement on hate speech \(8 May\) in the context of COVID-19 and the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech](#).

UNICEF Georgia supported education materials on distance learning [MoESCS platform](#) for the online educational resources for students and teachers.

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>

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- <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>

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>

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