

HIGHLIGHTS

- Schools to Reopen starting 1 October
- New Restrictions Announced in Adjara Region
- Wizz Air to Renew Flights starting 1 October
- StopCov fund has accumulated GEL 134 409 839 as of 25 September 2020

1759
Total recovered

4664
Confirmed cases

27
Total deaths

5584
People in quarantine

Source: www.stopcov.ge 25 September 2020

Georgia Situation Overview

24 Sep - Head of the Government Administration Natia Mezvrishvili announced that students in grades 1 to 6 will be able to physically attend classes in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Rustavi and Zugdidi. All students in Gori and Poti will be going back to school from October 1, regardless of their grade. Education institutions in the Adjara region will remain closed until further notice, according to the Interagency Coordination Council.

24 Sep - Starting from September 25, restaurants operating in the western Adjara region will no longer be able to serve customers past 22:00, according to Natia Mezvrishvili, head of the Government Administration. The Interagency Coordination Council also announced that all public transportation in the region will be temporarily suspended to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Georgian PM Giorgi Gakharia announced that budget airline Wizz Air will be renewing flights from Kutaisi to Riga, starting from October 1.

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 countries in conducting seroepidemiological investigations under the Unity studies. Coordinating details with NCDC to get a better estimate of the needs and how much funding would be required if a country conducts repeated cross-sectional surveys;
- WHO has completed procurement and delivered 316 000 PPEs (gloves) to the MoH warehouse, under the EU DG NEAR supported project. Coordinating delivery of additional supply of PPE for following weeks including gloves, gowns and goggles;
- Under the same EU DG NEAR supported project, WHO has completed review of the final report received from the Emergency Coordination and Urgent Assistance Center of the MoH on completed activities under the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) program at national and facility level. Activities included development of IPC standards operating procedure and designing & disseminating protocol for assessing and managing HCWs with risk of exposure to COVID-19;
- Training for selected journalists and media representatives on ethical portrayal of COVID-19 issues and current issues of public interest has been conducted by WHO, in collaboration with NCDC on 18 September, under the USAID supported project;
- Webinar on reuse of personal protective equipment and environmental cleaning in healthcare settings was provided by WHO to Georgian health care workers and use of corticosteroids/latest WHO guidance in the context of COVID-19 has been conducted for the healthcare workers in charge of the designated hospital in Abkhazia (Gudauta); both events under the USAID supported project;
- GeneExpert device, ultralow freezer and transportation boxes have been shipped to Abkhazia on 23 September under the USAID supported project.

UNICEF

- On 15 September, UNICEF celebrated the start of another academic year with videos of children talking about their experiences as they return to school, and social media posts of children sharing their views on school reopening.
- An agreement between the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports (MoESCS) of Georgia, the Government of Estonia, and UNICEF was signed, which focuses on training teachers, school administrators, and educators from 100 schools in distance teaching, learning concepts, and quality education practices.
- UNICEF's partner, MAC Georgia, provided information on health and safety requirements for returning to preschool/school, engaging 110,000 people.
- UNICEF, in partnership with NCDC and with the financial support of USAID, organized a training in Batumi for regional media representatives on COVID-19-related health risks and recommendations.

- UNICEF, in partnership with the Adjara Organization of Georgian Scout Movement, launched a project to involve young scouts in shaping initiatives supporting the COVID-19 response and recovery for adolescents residing in the mountainous villages of the Adjara region.
- As a part of the immediate response to the increased incidence of COVID-19 in Adjara, UNICEF representative held a working visit to Batumi and held meetings with Ministers of Health and Education of the A.R. UNICEF will provide support to families with pregnant women and young children affected by COVID-19 and will partner with the Ministry of Education of the A.R. to provide students of families facing economic challenges with internet packages to ensure access to online education.
- UNICEF held a workshop with Mufti and Administration of Muslims of all Georgia in Batumi to discuss progress on cooperation on protection and promotion of child rights including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- UNICEF held a meeting with the Public Defender's Office in Kutaisi, Imereti Region to discuss the challenges affecting vulnerable families amid COVID-19 pandemic, including problem of child labour.

UNDP

- With funding from Switzerland and Austria, UNDP launched a GEL 226,000 sub-granting program to help small businesses in three regions: Racha-Lechkhumi- Kvemo Svaneti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Guria. Small firms form the backbone of the local economy in remote areas and are particularly exposed to pandemic-related challenges due to their size, limited financial capacity and the difficulties they face in adapting to COVID-19 prevention measures. Grants will be extended to 46 micro and small businesses in the farming, agriculture, and hospitality sectors. Most of the beneficiary enterprises are headed by women or persons with disabilities.
- With funding from Switzerland, UNDP has been helping Georgia's vocational education and training (VET) system adapt teaching approaches to pandemic challenges. As part of this support, UNDP procured and transferred 21 computers, 21 monitors, a printer and a projector along with related software to Shota Rustaveli University, where the equipment will be used in two new agricultural VET programs, in forestry and gardening. Each specialization will graduate an average of 30 students per year.
- Under a joint UNDP-EU joint initiative to promote private sector competitiveness, the Georgian cluster management organization for packaging officially joined the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP). This EU-supported platform promotes collaboration of SMEs in different sectors and facilitates access to third markets and strategic partners in global value chains. ECCP unites more than 100 cluster organizations; with an average of 100 SMEs per cluster it reaches some 100,000 SMEs across Europe.
- Through an EU-funded rural development project, UNDP selected six projects proposed by LAGs and NGOs as part of a COVID-driven effort to introduce the "smart villages" concept in Georgia. The projects will be implemented in five municipalities: Keda, Akhalkalaki, Tetrtskaro, Kazbegi and Dedoplistskaro. They include the creation of a youth hub for education and development in Akhalkalaki; support to women entrepreneurs in adopting innovative business approaches in Kazbegi; improving connectivity and mobility for rural resilience in Keda, supporting enhanced digital competences in Tetrtskaro; and creating an agriculture system mapping of Dedoplistskaro.
- With USAID funding, UNDP continued to provide online trainings for Abkhaz medical specialists on PCR diagnostics and hospital management during the pandemic. In the past two weeks, two online sessions on

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occupational safety and infection prevention and control measures were conducted for 31 healthcare specialists (85 percent female) including the Chief Doctors from Gali, Ochamchire, Tkvarcheli and Gulripshi Hospitals. In addition, three online sessions on PCR diagnostics and laboratory biosafety and biosecurity for COVID-19 were conducted for 6 lab workers.

- Under its EU-funded ENPARD program in Abkhazia, UNDP conducted a fourth stocktaking on the pandemic's impact on 60+ project partners and beneficiaries. The exercise showed some signs of improvement in the local economy, mainly led by the agriculture and service sectors, with commercial entities engaged in trade and production however still trailing behind. Respondents highlighted improved revenues and increased local demand. That said, 63 percent of respondents still report lower revenues than in the previous year, and most ENPARD-supported enterprises are struggling to access markets for productive inputs and to cover operational costs. The results confirm the need for continued support to rural agriculture-based livelihoods – especially through the provision of inputs – while spotlighting the ongoing difficulties facing rural manufacturing.

UNFPA

- In order to support distance education on healthy lifestyle and SRH, UNFPA launched a new project in cooperation with the Public Broadcaster of Georgia. The initiative envisages preparing and airing 10-12 lessons dedicated to various aspects of healthy lifestyle, SRH and gender equality pursuant to general education biology standard for grades VII-VIII. Within the frameworks of initiative, issues-based cartoons will be prepared that will also serve as an education resource to be utilized during the in-class interaction.
- UNFPA supports the AoG to study the impact of COVID-19 on Human rights protection and government response thereof. For this purpose, the assessment is being conducted with the support of three agencies – UNDP, UNDP and UN Women to explore effects of the pandemic on a wide range of gender equality issues and provide recommendations.
- In response to the AoG request, UNFPA launched an assessment to determine the impact of COVID-19 social restriction measures on access to essential SRH services. The research findings shall be used for elaboration of the set of recommendations to address the disproportionate impact of the crisis on women and girls in the country.
- To support Government of Georgia in assessing impact of COVID-19 on different vulnerable groups in the country, the UNFPA has commissioned a studies that will assess socio-economic impact of COVID-19 two groups of population – youth and older persons and will analyze pandemic response measures undertaken so far, assess their effectiveness, and provide recommendation for subsequent response.

IOM

- The Government of Germany with the support of the Government of Georgia and IOM have organized voluntary return of 54 Georgian nationals via a charter flight departing from Frankfurt, Germany on September 23 to Tbilisi. Returnees will be provided with tailored support by IOM before and during the flight, as well as on arrival. IOM Germany escorts will support the arrival procedures in Tbilisi (facilitate the disembarkation of all passengers, assist returnees with pre-existing health conditions, collect luggage and answer questions). The contact details of the returnees will be collected to facilitate the delivery of further support. In the week of 14 – 18 September, 73 Georgian nationals stranded in Europe due to COVID-19 returned with the support of IOM (64 - from Germany, 5 – from Estonia, 2 – from Switzerland and 2 – from Latvia).

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- Since September 11, 2020, IOM provided direct humanitarian assistance to up to 40 vulnerable nationals of Japan, Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, South Africa, Guinea, Bangladesh, Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Guinea, Pakistan, Somalia stranded in Georgia due to COVID-19.
- IOM provided voluntary return assistance on regular flights to 3 vulnerable migrants from Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq, stranded in Georgia due to COVID-19, and has made preparations for the voluntary return of 9 other stranded migrants to return to Bangladesh, India, Iraq and Uzbekistan, scheduled in the coming week. Their departure from Georgia was delayed due to the protracted COVID-19 pandemic.
- In reaction to IOM's referral, a woman from Kyrgyzstan trafficked in labour exploitation in Georgia was assigned the status of victim of trafficking in human beings, making her eligible to state-sponsored protection and assistance services.

FAO

- FAO, under the EU funded ENPARD conducted two field days. First one on Minimum-tillage in Tamariani village where 10 farmers offered 21ha of maize to be shifted to Minimum-tillage in spring. FAO will assist them to control pests like locusts that affected them this year. The second Field Day was conducted on production of healthy seedlings in Chiauri village. These measures are taken to support the farmers to recover from the pandemic crisis and increase their productivity.
- Due to COVID-19 pandemic, FAO, under the SDC and ADC funded National Animal Identification and Traceability System (NAITS), moved epidemiology trainings online. The project develops 40-50 video trainings which will be subtitled in GE and provided to National Food Agency (NFA), and to the university for future perusal.

Response by international development partners

- The United States (U.S) European Command (EUCOM) has donated a USD 35,000 (GEL 113,750) multifunctional ultrasound machine to the Rukhi Republican Hospital. The Philip Affinity 50 ultrasound machine is recommended by the United States Food and Drug Administration due to its high-quality images, sensitivity programs, modern design, and high accuracy.
- The U.S Embassy has donated over \$73,000 worth of latex gloves, face shield masks, and disinfectants to the Georgian Central Election Committee (CEC) through the U.S. European Command's Humanitarian Assistance project. The aim of the donation is to assist the Georgian CEC in conducting the October elections in the safest conditions possible.

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>.
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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>