

HIGHLIGHTS

- **COVID-19 Curfew Suspended on 20-22 November 2020**
- **Companies to Receive VAT Refund**
- **New Digital Platform for Seeking Medical Attention is operational**
- **Private and Municipal Preschools to be Closed in Largest Cities**
- **StopCov fund has accumulated GEL 138 330 373 as of 20 November 2020**

77,932
Total recovered

96,860
Confirmed cases

894
Total deaths

2226
People in quarantine

Source: www.stopcov.ge 20 November 2020

Georgia Situation Overview

- 20 Nov - The Government-imposed 22:00 – 05:00 curfew in Georgia's largest cities, Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Gori, Poti, and Zugdidi, will be temporarily suspended between November 20-22 due to parliamentary election runoffs scheduled to take place tomorrow.
- 19 Nov - During today's Government meeting, Georgia's Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia announced that about 150,000 companies will automatically receive a VAT refund, returning a total of approximately one billion GEL per year to businesses. The PM said the reform, carried out in collaboration with the Finance Ministry, aims to mitigate the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 16 Nov - According to Health Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze, a new information portal ambulatoria.moh.gov.ge was launched, allowing those infected with coronavirus to see which clinic they are registered in and which family doctor can provide them with medical attention by entering their personal number on the website.
- 7 Nov - Vice Prime Minister Maia Tskitishvili announced that both private and municipal preschool institutions in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Rustavi, Zugdidi, Gori, and Poti, Georgia's largest cities, will be closed starting November 9.

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 completed mission to Abkhazia on 12 November, with support of the epidemiologist/surveillance expert and hospital readiness expert. Report is under development
- Together with RO RCCE team and NCDC, WHO is in process of planning “a Qualitative formative research to inform policies for engaging health workers to ensure successful uptake of covid-19 vaccination”
- WHO provided support for the initiation of serological studies and facilitated the green light approvals for the serological tests requested for NCDC for this purpose.
- Under the EU DG NEAR supported project WHO has delivered awareness raising sessions on risks and prevention of COVID-19 to 66 long-haul truck drivers in the port city of Poti. Awareness raising sessions are continuing.
- Under the same project WHO supported online and on-site trainings on COVID-19 epidemiology and testing of 54 graduates epidemiologists and lab technicians, covering whole country.
- Street banners were placed by WHO in Samtskhe-Djavakheti region in frame of Regional COVID19 RCCE intervention, supported by USAID
- WHO continued coordination for the provision of diagnostic, case management and PPE related items to be provided to Georgian MoH, under various funding sources (WHO, EU, USAID)

UNICEF

- World Children’s Day, 20 November 2020, was celebrated this week, with a number of initiatives from UNICEF focusing on the prioritization of children in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The [UNICEF Representative made a video address](#) from Akhalkalaki, where he met with children and young people to discuss the challenges they are experiencing, as well as their vision for the future.
- For World Children’s Day, [UNICEF National Ambassador Nikoloz Rachveli](#), called on Government, private sector and civil society to unite for children in these challenging times.
- Children took over [UNICEF’s Instagram account](#) and shared their stories. Three young people also took over the [UNICEF all staff meeting](#) this week, participating in the discussions and sharing their opinions on priority areas when working for children amid the pandemic.
- UNICEF, with financial support from USAID, launched a new initiative to enhance COVID-19 related risk communication among young people. The project will train 60 young students across Georgia to act as health ambassadors and share information on COVID-19 protective measures

and healthcare tips among their peers. The young people will also be educated on how to use internet safely, especially with the news related to the pandemic. Trilingual social media toolkits and explainers on wide range of COVID-19 related topics, as well as videos from peer influencers will assist them in being the multipliers of COVID-19 related news among their friends and family members online and during face to face communication.

- [Note on internet safety guidelines](#) for children reached nearly 31,000 parents using social media, across Georgia. The note included useful information for parents on how to guide children on the safe use of the internet while online. The webinar on how to protect children online outlined more practical tips and recommendations for parents of children of all ages.
- [Nine regional TV channels](#) actively promote COVID-19 protective measures, existing state regulations and other relevant information. “Learn more about COVID-19”, aired with financial support from USAID, has already broadcasted 185 editions in Georgian and 140 programs in minority languages.
- To help parents and children cope with school and kindergarten closures, UNICEF supported the development of videos “[How to talk to children under 6 about COVID-19](#)” and “[How to plan daily routines for children between 6 and 12 years](#)”.
- UNICEF Representative co-facilitated a workshop at the Local Action Group (LAG) education center in Akhalkalaki, bringing together over 20 representatives of community-based organizations to cover topics of occupational safety, child labor and child rights, including in the context of COVID-19.
- UNICEF partner, Initiatives for Social Change (ISC), provided training and supervision for 13 mediators from the National Agency for Crime Prevention and Probation enabling the provision of online mediation. UNICEF Representative and the Head of the National Agency for Crime Prevention and Probation visited the Mediation House to observe the progress in securing continuation of mediation services.
- UNICEF’s partner, Children of Georgia (CoG), provided online psychological support to 410 children and 329 caregivers in small group homes and foster care through group and individual sessions, covering all regions of Georgia.
- During the reporting period, youth volunteers contributed 2030 hours to peer education, distance learning, volunteering with homeless children, supporting homeless and elderly citizens, conducting an information campaign on volunteering issues, popularizing the idea of volunteering, organizing entertainment meetings with the involvement of the local community to reduce the stress caused by the pandemic, showing movies, information campaigns to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 infection, sewing and distributing reusable masks, sports activities for young people, online creative competitions; charitable activities, assistance to socially vulnerable families, cognitive activities for people with disabilities and etc.

- UNICEF's partner, Adjara Organization of Georgia Scout's Movement, visited 10 selected mountainous public schools of Adjara region to provide 415 students with face-to-face trainings on COVID-19 prevention measures with the guidance of a medical doctor with extensive knowledge and experience in public health.
- UNICEF's partner, Kant's Academy, initiated the training of adolescents on "Gambling, its risks and consequences on adolescent's development and fake news", reaching over 120 adolescents from Akhalkalaki district, and 100 peer educators participated in the interactive sessions conducted by the expert of the Gambling Research and Ludomania Prevention Center. It is anticipated that the peer educators will organize and lead the trainings for their peers in their respective communities on gambling, ludomania and its prevention.

UNDP

- UNDP completed a study on the impact of COVID-19 on the management of municipalities in Georgia as part of a local governance project implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure and funded by Austria and Switzerland. The study shows that the pandemic had a significant impact on the performance of local self-governments, particularly in municipal service delivery and the management of local administrations. The study also includes case studies in COVID-19 response by municipalities in EU member states and compares them to the Georgian experience. UNDP plans to publish two similar studies on the impact of COVID-19 at the local level, with a focus, respectively, on local budgets and local economic development.
- With the support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), UNDP provided tractors and other agricultural machinery to five vocational education colleges specializing in agriculture: Shota Rustaveli University in Batumi; Tetnaldi in Mestia; Phazisi in Poti; Lakada in Jvari; and Shota Meskhia University in Senaki. The VET colleges have been struggling with high enrollments resulting from the postponement of the spring semester during the COVID-19 lockdown. The equipment, with a total value of USD 74,000, will enable the colleges to provide hands-on vocational training to around 100 students who are enrolled this year in agriculture and forestry specializations.
- Through its EU-funded "Improving Rural Development in Georgia" project, UNDP launched a new grant competition to promote social enterprises in rural areas. The call for proposals is aimed at NGOs seeking to establish new social enterprises or expand existing ones to develop services and products made for and by vulnerable groups. The call is part of a broader effort to build the resilience of rural areas and mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. The maximum grant award is GEL 28,000. Applicants are required to commit co-funding worth at least ten percent of the value of the grant.

- Aiming to expand access to legal services for conflict-affected women and girls during the pandemic, UNDP provided ICT equipment to Legal Aid Service bureaus in three regions with the largest share of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and conflict-affected communities: Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Imereti and Shida Kartli. The Legal Aid Service is mandated to offer free counseling and legal services in conflict and crisis situations, including to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The new ICT equipment will enable legal counselors to provide remote legal services in pandemic conditions.
- Under the USAID-funded Horizons project, UNDP with the support of the CSO Association Peaceful and Business Caucasus (APBC) facilitated an online consultation session with 40 participants from local communities in Abkhazia to share science-based and up-to-date information on COVID-19. Topics covered included recent progress in developing vaccines for the COVID-19 virus and home-based treatment for COVID-19 patients with online supervision from a doctor or general practitioner.
- With support from USAID, UNDP continued its regular deliveries of urgently needed hygienic and sanitary supplies to Abkhazia, with a focus on minimizing the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks in medical and educational establishments. 500 liters of hand sanitizer were delivered to “Abkhaz State University” (ASU) to improve the safety of students and educators while classes are in session.

UNFPA

- To ensure the continuation of SRH services, with the funding from the German Government, UNFPA locally procured & distributed the most needed PPEs (surgical masks, gowns, coveralls, hygiene material) for Maternity care providers in three healthcare facilities – University Hospital #1, Kutaisi & Kobuleti fever centers - those that have been designated by the MoH to serve pregnant women with suspected and/or confirmed COVID-19 cases and have special maternity wards.
- In partnership with the Georgia Red Cross Society, the psycho-social training was conducted by the Georgia Red Cross trainers to support strengthening the community-based care services for older persons and PwDs by providing personnel training on psychological first aid and burn out as it was requested by the MoH. Total 34 participants participated in the 3 day online training. This work has become possible with the support of the UN COVID 19 MPTF.
- UNFPA/Georgia continues cooperation with the Public Broadcaster of Georgia in support of distance education. So far, 5 episodes have been prepared and aired on TV School platform on STIs and early pregnancy, addiction, gender-based violence, harmful practices of Early/Child Marriage, TB.
- To mitigate the risks the pandemic poses to older persons, UNFPA, within the frames of the UN COVID-19 funded UN Joint Programme (with participation of UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF) prepared short animated videos and audios for the protection of vulnerable older persons in the context of the COVID-19 emergency. In partnership with the Alliance of Regional Broadcasters,

airing of the Georgian, Armenian and Azeri versions of the videos and audios has been started on all the TV and Radio channels operating in the regions of Georgia on the local level.

IOM

- IOM provided direct humanitarian assistance - accommodation, food, medical assistance - to vulnerable migrants from Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Guinea, India, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Somalia, South Africa, Syria, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan to support them during the time of COVID-19. Further, IOM supported migrants from Kyrgyzstan, Somalia and Uzbekistan with emergency travel documents.
- IOM provided voluntary return assistance on regular flights to 14 vulnerable migrants going back to Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, stranded in Georgia due to COVID-19. IOM has also made preparations for the voluntary return of 3 other stranded migrants to return to Pakistan (1) and Bangladesh (2), scheduled in the coming days.
- IOM supported return of 53 Georgian nationals from Germany (41 persons, 2 unaccompanied minors), Belgium (4 persons), Austria (3 persons), Netherlands (2 persons), Switzerland (2 persons), Czech Republic (1 person). Post-arrival reintegration assistance was provided to 58 returnees from Greece, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Finland, Netherlands, Ireland and Poland. IOM Georgia continues to provide on-line counselling, development and implementation of reintegration plans and relevant referrals to all new arrivals.

FAO

- As a response to Covid-19 pandemic, FAO, under the Austria-funded project, initiated a new programme of funding small-scale investments to strengthen the quality of life of rural women with a special focus on investments in labour-saving agricultural equipment and/or machinery in the project pilot communities of Ateni, Phlevi, Tvishi and Sori.
- Since 4th of November 2020, FAO has signed 3 grant agreements for the total budget of \$ 185,182.36. In the same time period FAO paid 14 grants for the total value of \$ 67,925.82. Co-funded capital agricultural investments for the COVID-affected farmers in Georgia are delivered under the FAO-EU project under ENPARD.
- FAO, under the EU-supported ENPARD programme, continues to train farmers in business, finances and marketing basics. 70 Farmers in Akhmeta, Dedoplistskharo, Lagodekhi and Tbilisi learned how to link with relevant markets and how to manage record keeping and budget. Knowledge of marketing and business basics will allow them not only to enhance their profit potential but also to acquire valuable skills needed to write business plans while applying for agricultural grant programmes or for a bank loan.

- FAO, under the EU-supported ENPARD programme, established 30 demonstration plots showing no-tillage practices for wheat and barley in Gori, Kareli, Sagarejo, Gardabani and Akhmeta. Total area of sowed is 188 hectares.

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>