

HIGHLIGHTS

- Wearing masks outdoors in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi is “strictly recommended”
- 5 more regional clinics will begin receiving fever patients
- Restaurants and entertainment facilities in Tbilisi, Municipality of Mtskheta and Imereti will close at 22:00
- 1200 additional inpatient beds available in Georgia’s capital
- StopCov fund has accumulated GEL 134,412,350 as of 23 October 2020

9,751
Total recovered

24,562
Confirmed cases

183
Total deaths

4,408
People in quarantine

Source: www.stopcov.ge 23 October 2020

Georgia Situation Overview

23 Oct - Head of the Government Administration Natia Mezvrishvili announced that wearing masks outdoors in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi is “strictly recommended”, underscoring that the police and labor inspection will monitor the enforcement of the recommendation.

23 Oct - According to Health Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze, starting today, 5 more regional clinics in Sagarejo, Tetrtskaro, Kutaisi, Akhaltsikhe, and Lanchkhuti will begin receiving fever patients.

20 Oct - restaurants and entertainment facilities in the Municipality of Mtskheta, located north to the capital city of Tbilisi, are banned from operating after 22:00.

15 Oct - Health Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze announced today that 4 additional clinics in Tbilisi will be used in the COVID-19 management process, making 1200 inpatient beds available in Georgia’s capital.

15 Oct - restaurants and entertainment facilities in Georgia’s capital Tbilisi, and in the western Imereti region are banned from operating past 22:00. The same measure is already in place in the western Adjara region.

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 placed new requests for supply/equipment requisitions on the COVID-19 supply portal for Georgia proper and Abkhazia, consisting of PPEs, lab diagnostics and case management items;
- A new WHO staff with expertise in surveillance and a WHO Consultant with technical expertise for emergency preparedness, readiness, and response to COVID-19 response have joined the WHO Country office in Georgia and initiated analysis of the current epidemiological situation and capacities.
- A WHO mission to Abkhazia is under preparation, with the involvement of the WHO Country Office staff and consultants.
- WHO supported/hosted 2 webinars for MoH Georgia attendees on Clinical management of COVID-19 cases for the designated hospital personnel and on Infection prevention and control for long-term care facilities in the context of COVID-19.
- WHO and UNRC Office developed the COVID-19 MEDEVAC SOPs for UN and affiliated INGO personnel and dependents.

UNICEF

- All 153 schools and 40 kindergartens in Abkhazia, Georgia, received disinfectants, hand sanitizers, antibacterial soaps, and non-contact thermometers. These products were financed by USAID and will support the safe reopening of schools and preschools.
- With support from USAID, UNICEF delivered PPE and hygiene supplies to the National Probation Agency, the Legal Aid Service, and the State Care Agency and to create a safer environment for children and operating staff. UNICEF has donated 192 infrared thermometers and 665 bottles/ liters of hand sanitizers to 192 kindergartens of Rustavi, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Gardabani, Tetri Tskaro, Marneuli, Tsalka, Adigeni, Aspindza, Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, Borjomi and Ninotsminda municipalities.
- On World Mental Health Day, messages on the importance of open communication about mental health, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, got amplified on UNICEF social media channels. The advocacy messages, a Facebook post, and articles – How Teenagers Can Protect Their Mental Health During Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Supporting Teenagers' Mental Health reached more than 15,000 users during the day.
- UNICEF, in partnership with MoIDPLHSA and NCDC, initiated an assessment of COVID-19 prevention and control measures in maternity houses across the country with assessments already conducted in 3 maternities in Kakheti, 4 in Shida and Kvemo Kartli, and 3 in Imereti-Racha-Lechkhumi regions.
- Launch of CK-12 special page - Following the joint initiative and effort, the Education for all Coalition, CK-12 Foundation, and UNICEF created a webpage to assist Georgian students in the distance learning process on the CK-12 Platform.

UNDP

- UNDP organized the delivery to Abkhazia of USD 250,000 worth of Turkish humanitarian assistance aimed at improving patient treatment and protecting medical personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The supplies were delivered to Gudauta Hospital, the designated COVID treatment facility, and to the laboratory at the epidemiological service in Sukhumi where COVID testing is performed. The shipment included 10 ventilators; 5,000 PCR diagnostic kits; 50,000 surgical masks; 5,000 N95 respirator masks; 5,000 pairs of gloves; 1,000 medical coveralls; 1,000 face shields; and 1,000 pairs of medical goggles. It also included large quantities of antiviral medicines, anticoagulants, antibiotics, corticosteroids and other drugs. The shipment was part of a larger donation from Turkey and was delivered through the Dialogue Coordination Mechanism administered jointly by the EU and UNDP.
- As part of the USAID-funded Horizons project, UNDP continued to organize regular consultations between Abkhaz and Georgian medical professionals to share evidence-based protocols and up-to-date information on COVID-19. Most recently, the CSO Association “Peaceful and Business Caucasus” organized an online consultation for medical staff from healthcare facilities in Abkhazia on topics including distinguishing COVID-19 from seasonal flu and colds.
- With funding from the UK Government, UNDP supported the Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) of the Ministry of Justice in launching the “e-Apostille,” an innovative online service that enables Georgian and foreign citizens to verify up to 100 types of documents issued by Georgia’s public authorities and health and educational institutions. This makes Georgia the 19th of 119 state parties to the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents to roll out an e-Apostille programme. The service provides certification of birth and marriage certificates, diplomas, health-related papers, court orders and other documents for use abroad, providing both convenience and safety under pandemic conditions. The e-Apostille application is accessible at the PSDA website at www.sda.gov.ge and the unified Government portal at www.my.gov.ge; verification is available at the PSDA-run website at <http://apostille.cra.ge>.
- Amidst an upsurge in COVID-19 infections, a multidisciplinary team of five medical personnel conducted a clinical audit of 30 cases in Adjara as part of a Swedish-funded UNDP initiative to improve the clinical management of COVID-19 and establish a standardized approach to clinical quality audits across the country. Implemented by the Curatio International Foundation, the initiative more broadly aims to strengthen public institutions in Georgia’s healthcare sector in providing quality services and responding to emerging threats during the pandemic and beyond.
- Under the EU-funded ENPARD III project, UNDP conducted a survey of 837 rural enterprises in eight municipalities to assess their needs and coping strategies during the COVID-19 crisis. The results of the survey will be shared with stakeholders and partners to help in adapting existing support services for rural SMEs and designing new ones.

UNFPA

- UNFPA continued delivering food and hygiene parcels, and printed information materials (booklets, leaflets and posters) with COVID19 risks and prevention messages to vulnerable senior citizens living alone in Tianeti, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Kaspi, Gori and Shuakhevi Municipalities. In total 2256 vulnerable older persons have been covered by the end of September 2020 in partnership with the GRCS, including through the funding received from the UN COVID19 Fund.

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- In order to provide relevant information to private care homes that are not registered with and funded by the government, the MoH has disseminated the approved Standards for Prevention and Management of COVID-19 in Residential Institutions and Community Care Homes, developed with UNFPA's support, to the State Representatives in regions for them to distribute the Standards to the local municipalities and reach private care homes.
- An assessment on impact of COVID-19 on older persons and care provision in Georgia supported by the UNFPA in partnership with the Austrian Red Cross, the IFRC and Georgia Red Cross Society is being finalised. The findings and recommendations will feed into the UNFPA led larger research on socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on older persons, which will be publicized by the end of the year.

IOM

- IOM provided voluntary return assistance on regular flights to 8 vulnerable migrants going back to Iraq, South Africa and Uzbekistan, stranded in Georgia due to COVID-19. IOM has also made preparations for the voluntary return of 4 other stranded migrants to return to India and Ghana, scheduled in the coming days.
- One woman from Uzbekistan, a beneficiary of IOM's COVID-19 Emergency Response Assistance, was referred to by IOM and identified by the State Care Agency as victim of trafficking in human beings.
- IOM provided direct humanitarian assistance - accommodation, food, medical assistance - to vulnerable migrants from Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Guinea, India, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan to support them during the time of COVID-19.
- IOM supported return of 51 Georgian nationals from Germany (46 persons), Czech Republic (2 persons), Austria (1 person), Switzerland (1 person). Pre-departure consultations were provided to 8 Georgian nationals, IOM beneficiaries, stranded in Germany and Switzerland due to COVID-19. Post-arrival reintegration assistance was provided to 14 returnees from Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands. IOM Georgia provides on-line counselling to all new arrivals.
- IOM published [Regional South Caucasus COVID-19 Situation Report](#) for the month of September, which details IOM's response to the COVID-19 pandemic-related humanitarian needs in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

UNHCR

- To address the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for refugee children for whom the distance learning has proved complicated and to make it easier for them to manage studies more effectively, UNHCR supported a special program developed and implemented by the Georgian National Teacher Professional Development Centre (TPDC), an agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports. Program aims to improve children's communication skills in Georgian language and intercultural competences, as well as knowledge of school curricular subjects and specific terminologies.
- In response to COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR provided limited targeted emergency cash assistance to a total of 750 individuals, including asylum seekers, refugees, humanitarian status holders and stateless persons.

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- Due to dire circumstances of returnee population in Abkhazia, UNHCR and its social partner provided cash-based assistance to 93 individuals and distributed food and hygiene packages to a total of 420 vulnerable individuals to cope with the consequences of the measures put in place in response to COVID-19 crisis. UNHCR together with its partners continues assessment of the most vulnerable households in need of urgent and critical assistance.
- In response to COVID-19 situation, UNHCR completed a small-scale community support project in a village in Gali district aimed at improving conditions in the primary health point and renovation of the roof in a village school. The new facilities ensure access of children and other village population to primary medical services, create conditions and promote practices to maintain health and prevent the spread of viruses and disease.
- UNHCR installed a water tank in a kindergarten in Shashikvara village of Gali district to ensure the necessary sanitary conditions and access to safe water.
- UNHCR completed renovation of the Arts School in Gali town of Abkhazia. The Arts School is the only arts institution in eastern Abkhazia and brings together children and youth from Gali, Ochamchire and Tkvarcheli districts. The renovation of the school premises helps to add sculpture and other activities to the curricular.

Response by international development partners

- 13 October - According to the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ambassador of Georgia to Turkey Giorgi Janjgava and Deputy Minister of Health of Turkey Emine Alp Meşe signed an agreement on Donation in the Field of Healthcare. The MFA stated that Ankara has supplied Tbilisi with “significant medical equipment and medicines”, including respirators, PCR diagnostic kits and personal protective equipment to support the Georgian population during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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>