

HIGHLIGHTS

- COVID-19 cases in Georgia rose to 211, recoveries stand at 50 and deaths at 3; cases are predicted to peak by late April - early May;
- EU will provide Georgia with 183 mln euro to fight COVID-19;
- In an open letter by the IFIs and banks they assured to support economic recovery in Georgia;
- Locally manufactured face masks are available at pharmacies countrywide;
- 3,500 hospital beds have been allocated for treating coronavirus-infected patients;
- Top health official entreated Georgian Orthodox Church parishioners to pray at home;
- Government launched “Aggressive Testing” of target groups on COVID-19;

50
Total Recovered

214
Confirmed cases

3
Total Deaths

4,722
People in quarantine

Source: www.stopcov.ge 9 April 2020

Georgia situation overview

On 26 February, 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in Georgia. Soon thereafter, direct flights from China, Iran and Italy were suspended. Land border crossing points were closed for passenger traffic, only cargo was allowed. The Prime Minister of Georgia established, and leads an Intergovernmental Coordination Council to combat the COVID-19. The Government mobilized hospitals for confirmed cases, as well as quarantine spaces for suspected cases in different regions of Georgia. Despite early actions of the Government, the number of confirmed and suspected cases continued to grow, triggering the Government to declare the State of Emergency for a period of one month on 21 March, imposing different restrictions and measures. Two regions, Bolnisi and Dmanisi, were declared as quarantine zones after detecting community spread on 22 March. A nationwide curfew was declared and further restrictive measures were introduced on 31 March: public transport was halted and population was requested to self-isolate and elderlies aged over 70 are urged to stay home. Mobility is restricted to 3 people per vehicle, and in public spaces. Only groceries, pharmacies, fuel/gas stations and banks are authorized to operate along with enterprises with critical functions as well as construction and infrastructural project sites having appropriate safety license. The Government reiterated several times that they stand ready to assist the breakaway regions with supplies and treatment of COVID-19 patients. With the purpose of serving patients in Zugdidi and adjacent areas in mind, Rukhi General Hospital was refurbished. The first case of COVID-19 was reported in Abkhazia on 7 April, where restrictions of movement are in place and the administrative boundary line remains closed. All schools have been closed and end of year exams have been canceled. The second patient was diagnosed with COVID-19 in Abkhazia on 9 April.

Coordination arrangements

- The Prime Minister of Georgia established and leads the Cross Government Coordination Council to combat the Novel Coronavirus.
- Under the decree signed by the Prime Minister of Georgia, 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 National Bank is taking measures to stop GEL depreciation. The interest rate is maintained at 9%.
- Three-month delays on loans and leases for SMEs were introduced.
- 1.2 billion USD in VAT revenue to be returned to the private sector. Stimulus packages for tourism-related businesses developed. Price freezes on staple groceries introduced.
- Two billion GEL (USD 605 million) stimulus package to respond to coronavirus and diminish damage was launched for direct assistance to the economy.
- 3 month subsidies for natural gas and electricity supply for individual householders were introduced.
- GEL 351 million (USD 106 million) was allocated to special healthcare measures to fight coronavirus.
- StopCov fund established to pool private sector donations for aid efforts [GEL 124, 543 899]
- Local authorities in partnership with Georgian Red Cross organize volunteers to assist in food and medication delivery to the elderly, vulnerable citizens.
- Organised transportation of Georgian citizens from other countries is carried out by Georgian Airlines per request of the Government;

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

- Since the breakout of the disease, the **United Nations AFPs in Georgia** have been taking robust steps to ensure preparedness and to enhance their response capabilities coordinated by the **Office of the UN Resident Coordinator (RCO)**. **RCO** supported establishment of the 'health procurement group' with participation of UN Agencies, WB and Georgia's health authorities to ensure harmonization of the respective assistance based on the commodity lists elaborated through WHO's technical expertise.
- **WHO** has been providing technical lead to the joint strategic planning on supporting the Government with its preparedness and response efforts. The health parts of the Country Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (CSPR) have been finalized, costed and are entered into the COVID-19 online Partners Platform (<https://covid-19-response.org/>). Multisectoral efforts to mitigate social and economic consequences of the outbreak, are currently in progress by the respective UN agencies and national counterparts being coordinated by the **RCO** in support of the government.
- **UNICEF**, in partnership with the PM Office and the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, delivered essential hygiene and non-perishable food items to over 380 Roma families in Gachiani, Vakhtangisi and Tetrtskaro, as well as Tbilisi, Dedoplistskaro, Kobuleti and Kutaisi. An estimated 34,000 people have been reached and 5,567 people actively engaged in **UNICEF's** 15-day challenge #Learningathome #havefunathome. **UNICEF**-trained social workers are supporting vulnerable families in Abkhazia, including through a hotline to provide psychosocial support. **UNICEF** supported the procurement of emergency supplies for the University Clinic in Tbilisi and 5 hospitals in Adjara Region. **UNICEF** developed communication materials for religious leaders focused on preventing violence against children.
- **UNDP** has secured USD 250,000 in internal rapid response funding and repurposed an additional USD 250,000 from ongoing programs to support COVID-19 readiness for conflict-affected populations in Georgia. The funding will be used to provide medical commodities and train front-line medical personnel in Abkhazia, and to help meet the needs of vulnerable members of Georgia's IDP communities. To address vulnerabilities in healthcare provision in Abkhazia, **UNDP** is organizing deliveries of medical commodities to hospitals. The deliveries are funded by USAID, the EU and UNDP and are transported via the UNDP-EU joint coordination mechanism. The value of the commodities delivered so far is USD 30,000. **UNDP** plans to organize humanitarian shipments to Abkhazia on a regular basis. Also in Abkhazia, **UNDP** worked with **UNHCR** and local and international NGOs to address information gaps about COVID-19. Public service spots containing WHO messages are currently being broadcast at regular daily intervals on local television stations. **UNDP** also printed 14,000 brochures containing information in various languages on COVID-19 that have been placed in pharmacies and other high-traffic locations and distributed door-to-door in all seven districts of Abkhazia. To address information deficits among communities placed under quarantine in Georgia, **UNDP** prepared 35,000 brochures with information in various languages on COVID-19 and regulations in force under the state of emergency. **UNDP** helped produce the Armenian-language version of the stopcov.ge website. Informational videos in sign language and minority languages are now in preparation. **UNDP** supported the State Inspector's Service in issuing personal data protection recommendations tailored to the coronavirus era. Funding was provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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- **OHCHR** remains in close contact with non-governmental organizations representing persons with disabilities and the Government to ensure that immediate concerns of these are addressed. **OHCHR** continues to inform the Public Defender's Office of various pieces of human rights focusing on issues of penitentiary, persons with disabilities, homeless persons and other vulnerable groups;
- **FAO's** immediate support targets continuation of primary agriculture production though increased resilience of farmers and rural households in medium and long-term. For this to happen, two sets of drip irrigation schemes were installed in Keda and Tskaltubo municipalities, sweetcorn planning was finalized on plots in Lagodekhi municipality, tomato seeds were prepared for planting in Tetriskaro and a seedlings nursery was set up in Tsalka municipality. **FAO** handed over PPE sets and disinfectants for the National Food Agency field personnel. **FAO** monitors the control of the pest and diseases in Abkhazia and stands ready to alert on potential outbreaks and reinforce the planting season in preparation to possible food shortages during upcoming months.
- **UNFPA** supports health authorities with information on continuity of sexual and reproductive health services and interventions as a part of planning procedures and algorithms for respective service provision which results in pregnant women with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, or in isolation, having access to woman-centred, skilled care. Development of the on-line training course on clinical management of pregnant women affected by COVID-19 to be integrated into the Medical University IT platform is underway. **UNFPA** has developed and distributed brochures on pregnancy in the context of COVID-19 in various languages. **UNFPA** is preparing posters containing information on the existing hotlines for response to cases of violence against women. **UNFPA** kits for elders are disseminated in target municipalities through 60+Clubs, along with the kits for Azerbaijani women of reproductive age living in Kvemo Kartli region. **UNFPA** in cooperation with the NCDC initiated on-line peer education training on COVID-19 targeting young people in two target regions of Georgia.
- **UNHCR** aims to ensure respect for and access to rights, non-discrimination and mainstreaming of asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless and IDPs in all appropriate government and development partner assistance programmes, including health services in the context of COVID-19 response. **UNHCR** has supported the Division of International Protection Issues (DIPI) under the MIA to improve the health safety in the reception area for asylum-seekers by installing protective glass, provision of PPEs and sanitizers. While registration and refugee status determination procedures were halted as of 1 April, the asylum authority is continuing to receive applications by email. **UNHCR** is advocating for the resumption of documentation for asylum-seekers, refugees, humanitarian status holders, stateless persons as soon as possible, to ensure they can access the rights provided by the national legislation and avoid exclusion. **UNHCR** has provided information in various languages on COVID-19 and the preventive measures to be taken and disseminated to asylum-seeker/ refugee communities; has extended its outreach and protection monitoring in refugee communities and expanded the scope of its cash assistance for the most vulnerable households to partially address the intensified needs resulting from COVID prevention measures. **UNHCR** is also providing hygienic items and food packages to support the asylum-seekers living in the Government-run Reception Centre in Martkopi (Tbilisi). Psychological support, social and legal counselling is continuing with remote modalities through NGO partners. **UNHCR** continues to support the Gali population in Abkhazia with protection and assistance and will also expand cash assistance for the most vulnerable households, as well as maintaining support for rural livelihood activities in collaboration with sister agencies and partners.
- **IOM** scaled up an online counselling service to provide Georgian migrants stranded abroad with up-to date, with information on available services and return possibilities through its social media channels. **IOM** continues to provide reintegration assistance to migrants who returned to Georgia recently, through **IOM's** assisted voluntary return programme, adapting the operational modalities to continue service provision and financial assistance.
- **UN Women** has contributed through its local partner Civil Society Organizations with 200 hygienic packages to the poor families in Pankisi Gorge. Together with its partner women's NGOs, **UN Women** established information sharing platform on Facebook for grassroots women "Women against COVID-19". **UN Women** together with Georgian Farmers' Association conducted a rapid needs assessment of women-led small businesses in Samegrelo and supported several of them to add their agricultural products to www.Soplidan.ge e-commerce platform. Women sewers supported by **UN Women** switched to producing home-made face masks, **UN Women** facilitated their communication with NCDC to ensure improved quality of the masks they produce. **UN Women** is showcasing women in the frontline of COVID-19 preparedness and response (such as doctors, pharmacists, sewers, etc.) using #womenonfrontline and supporting the #stayhome through its official Facebook platform.

Response by International development partners

- United Nations Secretary-General launches plan to address the potentially devastating socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and announced the creation of a Multi-Purpose Trust Fund to address the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to covering lower and middle income countries.
- World Bank approved €45 mln to support economic reforms and mitigate impact of COVID-19 in Georgia.

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- United States will contribute \$1.1 million in emergency health assistance to support Georgia's efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and support at-risk individuals and communities. USAID will deliver this assistance in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).
- The European Commission will allocate over EUR 183 million of funds for Georgia as part of its global response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Useful Links

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>
- IOM's Covid-19 Mobility Restrictions website <https://migration.iom.int/>
- OHCHR Urgent action needed to prevent COVID-19 "rampaging through places of detention": <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25745&LangID=E>
- OHCHR COVID-19 and its human rights dimensions: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>
- Joint statement by UNHCR, IOM, OHCHR and WHO The rights and health of refugees, migrants and stateless must be protected in COVID-19 response: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25762&LangID=E>
- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, video conference with Member States in the framework of the UN Human Rights Council as of 9 April: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25785&LangID=E>
- On April 6 Georgia has communicated to the United Nations Secretary General its 30-day state of emergency from 21 March to 21 April 2020. Georgia has informed the Secretary General of derogations from obligations under Articles 9, 12, 17, and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), namely the right to liberty and security of person; freedom of movement, right to privacy and right of peaceful assembly: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CN/2020/CN.125.2020-Eng.pdf>
- UNIDO response to COVID-19: <https://www.unido.org/news/director-generals-message-member-states-unido-response-covid-19>.

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**
- 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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