

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Government Shuts Down Upper Svaneti**
- **Quarantined village Karajalari south to Tbilisi reopened following 17-days-long closure.**
- **Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia announced additional anti-crisis measures to tackle economic and social challenges amid the coronavirus fallout.**
- **Schools to reopen as usual, on 15 September**
- **StopCov fund has accumulated GEL 134 325 768 as of 14 August 2020**

1085
Total recovered

1306
Confirmed cases

17
Total deaths

7597
People in quarantine

Source: www.stopcov.ge 1 2020

Georgia Situation Overview

- 10 Aug - Due to high epidemiological risks – namely, after revealing at least 16 cases of COVID-19 in the area in the last two days – Georgia shut down Mestia Municipality (historic upper Svaneti province), the country's sought after tourism destination. Leaving and entering Mestia municipality is banned, according to the coronavirus task force. The Government imposed stricter quarantine restrictions in the village Lenjeri and Ushguli community, locations of COVID outbreak in upper Svaneti. The government in addition halted movement between the town of Mestia and its surrounding villages.
- Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia announced additional anti-crisis measures to tackle economic and social challenges amid the coronavirus fallout. The third stage of the anti-crisis plan – worth of GEL 410 million (USD 132 Million), of which GEL 130 million was allocated from *StopCov* fund – entails a social assistance package for individuals, including helping children and students as well as covering utility fees for the households. The Government will offer one-off assistance of GEL 200 (USD 65) to children under 17. In the meantime, the state will cover a semester tuition-fee – GEL 1125 / USD 365 – for the students whose families have received less than 150,000 points in the system for socially vulnerable persons. The students belonging to the same category, who had their student status suspended due to financial difficulties, will receive a full-tuition waiver – GEL 2250 / USD 730 – for the academic year 2020-21. As stated by the Prime Minister, the Government will also cover utility fees for the households consuming less than 200 cubic meters of gas and 200 kilowatts of electricity per month in November, December, January, and February.

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

- With WHO support under the EU DG NEAR project the NCDC completed development/review of SOP on implementation of IPC measures for transporting patients in ambulances and development/review of protocols for case investigation and for assessing and managing risks of health care workers (HCWs) with risk of exposure to COVID-19;
- Under the same project training sessions in 3 different regions of Georgia have been launched with WHO's support. Three trainer groups are working in parallel to cover planned activities for primary health care doctors, ambulance personnel and public health sector epidemiologists; WHO representatives will attend training sessions in some of the regions;
- WHO has finalized IPC capabilities assessment in designated COVID and fever clinics. The evaluation report for recently visited 16 clinics is under development. Recommendations were given and on site trainings provided to personnel based on identified gaps;
- Collaboration on-going between WHO and NCDC to develop posters, billboards and videos, also webinars for communication interventions in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe Javakheti district populated by ethnic minorities, under the USAID supported project;
- WHO continues online training courses on labs and IPC in Abkhazia, under the USAID supported project.
- On 13 August a new cargo with 29 Oxygen Concentrator units has been received by WHO under the EU DG NEAR project. A distribution plan is under discussions with the MoH.

UNICEF

- A grant agreement was signed between UNICEF and the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat), to support the implementation of real-time monitoring of the situation of children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a one-year project, supported by USAID and SIDA, which will serve as a tool to inform programme planning going forward.
- The UNICEF Representative visited the Minister of Education of Adjara to discuss the ongoing collaboration and support in safe re-opening of schools and kindergartens, as well as mental health and psycho-social wellbeing of adolescents, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between UNICEF and Czech Development Agency. The goal of this cooperation is to support the strengthening of Primary Health Care, especially in emergencies, through a joint programme between UNICEF Georgia and Caritas Georgia.
- UNICEF distributed PPE to 39 rural health centers in three districts of Abkhazia. Central Maternity under the Republican Hospital of Abkhazia received PPE and sanitizers.
- In partnership with the Patriarchate of Georgia, UNICEF shared the findings of a study on "International Experience on Gambling Prevention Among Adolescents" which will serve for related programming to protect children and young people from addiction to gambling and drug abuse, which has increased during Covid-19.
- The Administration of All Muslims of Georgia disseminated UNICEF provided educational materials on COVID-19 to their community members. The materials included seven short videos, ten social media posters and three graphic animations. These materials give additional information to community members on COVID-19 safety measures in their local language.

- The UNICEF Representative held a coaching session for young people who were the members of Facebook group, created by UNICEF and the Georgian Institute for Debate and Education. This group serves as a meeting space and an entertainment/education resource during the pandemic.
- The newly launched support to adolescents on substance abuse and online gambling, which is part of the UNICEF-supported child hotline “111” has become operational, with 9 cases to date, of which 4 are already receiving needed assistance.
- UNICEF continues publishing series of videos, where children talk about how COVID-19 changed their lives and what is the new normal for them.

UNDP

- With funding from the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and in partnership with the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure and the Kingdom of Denmark, UNDP provided supplies and equipment to three municipal shelters in Tbilisi, Rustavi and Samtredia that together house up to 200 homeless and elderly people. The supplies were delivered by UNDP Resident Representative Louisa Vinton on 6 and 11 August. In Tbilisi, a municipal shelter in the Didi Lilo district that currently cares for 103 homeless people received a new washer and dryer and furniture. In Rustavi, a municipal shelter for elderly persons received oxygen equipment, refrigerators, a kitchen stove and other kitchen equipment, and a cultivator for use in the one-hectare garden and vineyard that is tended by residents. In Samtredia, a municipal shelter for 25 elderly persons received new mattresses, blankets, kitchen appliances, air conditioners and water heaters. The deliveries are part of a broader effort by UNDP to expand municipal services for vulnerable and high-risk groups during the COVID-19 crisis.
- UNDP Resident Representative Louisa Vinton also visited the National Center of Mental Health in Khoni on 11 August. The Center is the country’s largest mental institution, with 650 residents and 500 staff. UNDP delivered posters and brochures presenting COVID-19 guidance in easily understandable formats. During pandemic lockdowns, UNDP has also been helping to provide guidelines and peer-to-peer support for personnel at the Center and other residential institutions under the State Care Agency. So far the Center in Khoni has not registered a single COVID-19 case among staff or residents.
- In July, through a joint initiative funded by Switzerland, Austria and Denmark, UNDP’s two local development programs launched a competitive call for local economic initiatives to support the COVID response in six target regions: Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Kvemo-Kartli, Imereti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti. Grants worth a total of USD 280,000 are available, and the winners will be announced in September 2020. UNDP also signed a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the municipality of Oni, covering USD 20,000 in funding from Switzerland, Austria and Georgia to support small enterprises to help address the negative economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Under a joint EU-UN program to promote private sector competitiveness, UNDP worked with companies in the packaging supply chain in Kakheti region to identify support needs to respond to COVID-19 challenges. More than 25 companies participated in the discussions. Preliminary diagnostic studies were completed for six companies and UNDP will provide support in improving waste management, making production more “circular” and implementing new packaging technologies.
- With funding from USAID under the Horizons program, on 10 August UNDP launched an online training course in Abkhazia on “hospital management in the COVID-19 context.” The course, directed by an international expert, is aimed at healthcare providers (chief doctors, doctors and nurses) at district hospitals and the tuberculosis hospital as well as the COVID-19 designated facility for Abkhazia in Gudauta. Three online sessions have been conducted so far for four hospitals with 26 healthcare specialists attending in total. The online training is provided through the use of ICT equipment that UNDP has installed in 11 different medical establishments in Abkhazia, again with USAID funding. At the same time, UNDP expanded its expert-led training in laboratory testing and diagnostics in Abkhazia by adding practical sessions to ensure that laboratory workers retain the skills to test for COVID-19.

UNFPA

- In order to ensure the continuation of SRH services in the context of COVID-19, UNFPA locally procured & distributed the most needed PPEs (surgical masks & gloves, gowns, coveralls, hygiene material) for Maternity care providers in Tbilisi University Hospital #1, Kutaisi & Kobuleti fever centers. These clinics have been designated by the MoH to serve pregnant women with suspected and/or confirmed COVID-19 cases and have special maternity wards.
- Georgian Red Cross Society and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Georgia Office have partnered to provide social and economic response to COVID-19 related challenges, in particular, to support older people living alone in targeted municipalities in accessing information, preventative measures, protection and health related services. On August 2 the distribution of food and dignity/hygiene parcels has been launched in Kaspi, one of the target municipalities, within the frames of the of UN Joint Programme „Assisting Local Communities in Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19” funded by the UN COVID-19 Multi- Partner Trust Fund (MPTF).
- An online introductory training was conducted for the relevant staff members of MoH and representatives of monitoring unit of the State Care Agency (in total 10 persons) on monitoring tool of standard of service during COVID-19 for older persons in residential institutions and community care homes funded by the government.

UN Women

- How to turn a crisis into an opportunity? this was the key question of a workshop conducted on 8-11 August by UN Women for the 34 women entrepreneurs on development of anti-crisis plans and generation of new business ideas. Women also benefitted from info sessions on access to finance and self-coaching. At the end of the meeting, women entrepreneurs have elaborated draft anti-crises and business development plans. Workshop participants also had an opportunity to meet with Mikheil Khidureli, Director of Enterprise Georgia and his deputy, Tornike Zirakishvili to discuss the opportunities provided by Enterprise Georgia to women entrepreneurs. The challenges which women entrepreneurs face in terms of access to finance were also discussed.
- On 5 August 2020, UN Women in partnership with the DCAF (the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance) organized a virtual workshop “Gender and the COVID-19 Pandemic - Security Sector Experience in Georgia”, where Georgian security sector representatives, including them Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Government Administration and Parliament of Georgia participated. State security professionals, as well as gender experts, explored gender dimension of security sector response to COVID-19 crisis, lessons learned and best practices in this process, further discussing specific measures undertaken to overcome different gender-related challenges. New Gender and Security Toolkit was further introduced to the participants of the meeting, which consists of series of practical tools and policy guides to promote gender equality and integrate a gender perspective in the security and justice sector.

IOM

- Upon the request of IOM Germany, IOM Georgia supported return of 33 Georgian migrants (incl. families) stranded in Germany due to COVID-19, through extraordinary chartered flight organized by the Government of Georgia and Georgian Airways on August 11, 2020. IOM continues to work closely with multiple partners to deliver support and organize more returns in forthcoming months.

Response by international development partners

- Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia spoke with Adam Boehler, CEO of the United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) via video conferencing. The parties focused on current and future DFC projects in Georgia. Special emphasis was placed on the role of the US International Development

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Finance Corporation in promoting the development of the private sector in Georgia, including under the conditions of the 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>