

HIGHLIGHTS

- **COVID-19 cases in Georgia rose to 336, recoveries stand at 74 and deaths at 3**
- **Georgia to Receive \$3 bln International Aid**
- **Top health officials urge Georgian Orthodox Church parishioners to pray at home**
- **Easter service will be held with police supervision, but parish was asked to stay home**
- **A total ban on all vehicle movement is imposed throughout Georgia until April 21**

74	336	3	5,000
Total recovered	Confirmed cases	Total deaths	People in quarantine

Source: www.stopcov.ge 16 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. A nationwide curfew was declared and further restrictive measures were introduced on 31 March. 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. While the several 'hot-spots' remain under the strict quarantine throughout the country, the government had to shut-down the four largest cities for 10 days, effective from April 15. Expansion of the nationwide state of emergency until May 10 is also considered.

Coordination arrangements

- The Prime Minister of Georgia established and leads the Inter - 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

- A total ban on all vehicle movement is imposed throughout Georgia on April 17 until April 21 and wearing face masks at closed public spaces is a must.
- Strict quarantine measures were introduced in Khidiskuri village in Khashuri Municipality in Shida Kartli region; seven rural communities of Kobuleti Municipality in Adjara and Lentekhi Municipality of Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti region, along with Marneuli and Bolnisi Municipalities.
- The four largest cities including Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi and Rustavi were shut down for 10 days;

- StopCov fund established to pool private sector donations for aid efforts has accumulated GEL 128 662 763 as of 16 April;
- The StopCov.ge website, is available in English, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Abkhaz languages. Ossetian language version is expected to be added soon.
- Local authorities in partnership with the Georgian Red Cross continue to organize volunteers to assist in food and medication delivery to the elderly, vulnerable citizens.
- Georgia initiated local production of medical masks. 4 mln masks will be procured and distributed to the health facilities by Cartu Foundation.
- Transportation of Georgian citizens from other countries is carried out by Georgian Airlines per request of the Government; Georgian embassies in different countries are supporting its citizens.
- The Government and the Orthodox Church reached an agreement that allows people to attend Easter Sunday service. Parishioners to attend the service in large churches provided that they observe social distancing. Small churches will hold services without congregation. Restrictions are to be imposed on visiting cemeteries.

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)**. **WHO** has been providing technical lead to the joint strategic planning on supporting the Government with its preparedness and response efforts. Multisectoral efforts [under the Country Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (CSPR)] 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.

Resource mobilization efforts have been actively pursued, including those centralized at the regional level. Georgia was included in the **WHO** supported solidarity trial for identifying effective treatment regimens for COVID-19 as well as seroepidemiological trials. **WHO** has updated procurement lists per three main categories of essential goods for COVID-19 response (infection prevention and control measures, medical equipment for intensive care units, and laboratory supplies and test kits). The lists were shared with development partners upon respective clearance by the health authorities. **WHO** has been working on the development of communication materials related to non-communicable diseases and COVID-19. Report on selected hospitals' readiness assessment for COVID-19 was finalized and shared with the health authorities to guide its operational readiness efforts.

Working in partnership with the European Union, **UNDP** delivered a third shipment of urgently needed healthcare commodities to Abkhazia on 16 April. This time the cargo included 4,300 N95 respirator masks, 1,000 biosafety suits (coveralls, goggles and gloves), 11,000 pairs of nitrile gloves, 110 face shields, 1,300 liters of hospital-quality hand sanitizer and disinfectant, and 188 liters of liquid soap. The total value of the shipment was USD 44,000 and brings the cumulative value of UNDP deliveries to Abkhazia since 1 March to almost USD 100,000. A large portion of the shipment was delivered to Gudauta Hospital, the designated COVID19 treatment center in Abkhazia. **UNDP** provided 1,700 N95 respirator masks to Rukhi Hospital. **UNDP** provided the United Water Supply Company with USD 18,000 worth of protective gear, including facemasks, coveralls, gloves, hand sanitizer and disinfectant, to enable around 1,000 front-line workers to do their jobs safely. This responds to a request from the Ministry for Regional Development and Infrastructure and is funded by Switzerland and Austria through **UNDP's** local development programming. In an ongoing effort to ensure that persons with disabilities receive full and timely information on COVID19, UNDP translated informational videos in Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani and Abkhaz sign language for the hearing impaired. In addition, 10,000 brochures adapted to the needs of those with mental illness and intellectual disabilities were distributed to 20 residential and psychiatric institutions. **UNDP** worked with local psychiatric associations to develop specialized protocols and supervision programs to ensure that both staff and residents are prepared for the COVID-19 crisis. **UNDP** also prepared and disseminated more than 30,000 leaflets and posters on COVID-19 prevention as well as outdoor stickers for marking social distancing to seven municipalities – Mtskheta, Zugdidi, Tetrtskaro and high-mountainous Ambrolauri, Oni, Lentekhi and Tsageri – that were put under strict quarantine after the first cases of infection were discovered. As with previous efforts focused on Bolnisi and Marneuli, this work was funded by Switzerland, Austria and Denmark.

With support from UK aid from the British people, and in partnership with the Prime Minister's Office and the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, **UNICEF** continued to deliver essential hygiene and food items to 140 families in Tetrtskaro municipality. **UNICEF** Georgia partnered with the national broadcaster Rustavi-2 "Midday Show" to amplify and promote the 15-day challenge aimed to help parents in the care and early learning of their children. The show had a 12% share of viewership and, through Facebook, **UNICEF** reached an estimated 164,722 people and is actively engaging 14,261 people in the challenge. **UNICEF** reached out to young people on TikTok

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with a video on COVID-19 safety and taking care of your mental health. In partnership with three social media influencers, the first video generated 2,500 views in one day. **UNICEF** initiated a partnership with the State Medical University to establish a telemedicine center at the University Hospital to enable remote referrals for antenatal and pediatric care. 40 liters of hand sanitizer and 5 electric thermometers have been provided to TSMU Zhvania Pediatric Academic Clinic. **UNICEF partner, Children of Georgia**, started providing psychological support to children in alternative care (small group homes, foster care and state institution) and their caregivers. **UNICEF partner, Initiative for Social Change**, started development of COVID-19 related guidelines for social workers from child protection and justice systems. UNICEF and its partner, MAC Foundation, started a joint production with the national TV broadcaster for a specialized TV programme to support children with disabilities and their parents.

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. 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 to ensure continuity of sexual and reproductive health services and interventions. The latter includes protection of the health workforce through providing information and technical guides for planning and amending procedures and algorithms for respective service provision. Procurement of PPEs (including for distribution in Abkhazia) is underway. 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. In partnership with the health authorities **UNFPA** has developed and distributed brochures on pregnancy in the context of COVID-19 in various languages. Aiming at ensuring the continuity of lifesaving services for survivors of gender-based violence and the most at-risk women and girls, UNFPA is coordinating GBViE Inter-sectoral working group; preparing posters containing information on the existing hotlines and services for response to cases of violence against women; procuring PPEs and disinfectants for state run shelters; provides kits for vulnerable women of reproductive age living in Marneuli municipality, currently under the total lockdown. UNFPA addresses the needs of elderly - special kits are disseminated in target municipalities through 60+Clubs. In cooperation with the NCDC, UNFPA supports on-line peer education training on COVID-19 targeting young people in two target regions of Georgia to facilitate dissemination of reliable information among youth and their communities. UNFPA supports communication campaign through on-line and social media to encourage men to equality share house work and child care burden;

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** continues to provide 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.

In partnership with civil society organizations, **IOM** has conducted a rapid needs assessment to identify immediate basic needs among vulnerable migrants in Georgia and estimate risks and vulnerabilities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic as a basis for future assistance programming. With **IOM's** assistance and in close cooperation with the Embassy of Georgia in the Netherlands 22 Georgian nationals, beneficiaries of IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme returned to Georgia from the Netherlands. After they are released from mandatory quarantine, they will be followed up by IOM Georgia for their post arrival assistance. **IOM** continues to support up to 20 stranded migrants in Georgia with counselling and cash grants before their voluntary return to their countries of origin can take place, including 7 citizens of Iran, who are being assisted to get on special charter flights to return home. Through its social media group used for provision of online counselling to stranded migrants in response to COVID-19-related challenges, IOM is promoting use of information collection mechanisms developed by the Government of Georgia to facilitate return of Georgian nationals stranded abroad

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As a result of **UN Women** advocacy, the Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence started regularly collect (from NCDC) and share sex and age disaggregated data of the confirmed COVID-19 cases. **UN Women** conducted a live-stream information sharing session on COVID-19 with NCDC representatives for grassroots women through its Facebook platform Women against COVID-19 on 16 April. The video recording of the session will be further shared in the Facebook group that has about 400 women members.

The **RCO** launched a public awareness campaign, Do Your Part - Stay Safe, designed to promote COVID-19-related health and safety practices among passengers of public transport/taxis and journalists, and to communicate proper use of facemask and gloves to the general public. A total of 7 videos were produced by the RCO in partnership with the Government's Administration, the NCDC and other partners

Response by international development partners

- The US Embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation and Defense Threat Reduction Agency are buying more than 100,000 GEL worth of personal protective equipment to donate to the Ministry of Health. The U.S. is also sending Georgia 2,000 high-quality test kits that can detect the COVID-19 virus within hours.
- The European Union, Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, German Development Fund, French Development Agency will support the Georgian economy with \$1.5 billion by the end of 2020;
- Georgia to receive an additional USD 447 million package over the course of one year from the International Monetary Fund

Important links to follow

Guidelines from the UN the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25788&LangID=E>

Letter to governments from the United Nations Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural

rights:https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Development/IEDebt/20200414_IEDebt_urgent_appeal_COVID19_EN.pdf

Statement by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25794&LangID=E>

The letter by of OHCHR key NGO Partners, Tolerance and Diversity Institute on the transfer of some state forests to Patriarchate of the Georgian Orthodox Church: <http://tdi.ge/en/news/775-during-state-emergency-parliament-reviewing-legislation-transferring-state-forests>

UN Women Georgia is running three social media (Facebook) campaigns, these campaigns are very popular having about 500,000 reach, please follow the campaigns [here](#). These are #womenonthefrontline, #stayhome but #sharework, #stayhome but #staysafe:

- a) **#womenonthefrontline** features women who are among the first responders and are working very actively during the COVID-19 crisis. UN Women has reached out to different Ministries, various hospitals, laboratories, supermarkets, pharmacies, post office, delivery service companies to feature their women employees.
- b) **#stayhome but #sharework**, features women from different walks of life journalists, artists, opinion leaders, housewives who share their stories of how their partners/husbands started to share care and domestic work during COVID-19 quarantine.
- c) **#stayhome but #staysafe** promotes the domestic violence module of 112 app that has been developed with UN Women technical support (using also data and findings from 2017 UN Women / EU and GEOSTAT National Study on Violence against Women).

UNIDO, Opinion piece on the Industrial Analytics Platform, Managing COVID-19: How industrial policy can mitigate the impact of the pandemic <https://iap.unido.org/articles/managing-covid-19-how-industrial-policy-can-mitigate-impact-pandemic>

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UNIDO COVID-19 response stories <https://www.unido.org/unidos-comprehensive-response-covid-19>

UNIDO, *Coronavirus: the economic impact* <https://www.unido.org/stories/coronavirus-economic-impact>

UNIDO webinar series on **Quality and Standards in the fight against COVID-19, Friday 17 April 2020, 14:30 - 16:00 (GMT+2)**. Webinar registration link https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wmy_IshKRxK4Role-o3JZg

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>

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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