

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ban on Holding Indoor Conferences and Training Lifted**
- **Government will be entitled to take restrictive measures without declaring national emergency until the end of 2020**
- **Georgia to Open its Borders to Five EU Countries**
- **Restrictions on International Flights Prolonged till 31 July**
- **Georgia to Retain Mandatory Quarantine for all Arrivals**
- **StopCov fund has accumulated GEL 134 287 459 as of 17 July**

885
Total recovered

1,010
Confirmed cases

15
Total deaths

5,640
People in quarantine

Source: www.stopcov.ge July 17 2020

Georgia Situation Overview

- On 6 July, the ban on holding indoor conferences and training was lifted.
- As of 6 July, gyms and swimming pools that will meet the special regulations and successfully undergo the Labor Inspection Service examination, will be allowed to reopen.
- On 8 July, GoG announced an opening of Georgian borders to five EU countries, including France, Germany, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Citizens and residents of these countries will be able to enter Georgia by direct flights and before crossing the Georgian border, they will have to fill out a special electronic form to indicate their contact details, travel history over the previous 14 days and their place of stay in Georgia.
- On 14 July, the Parliament of Georgia approved the amendment in Law on Public Health according to which, the government becomes entitled to take restrictive measures without declaring a national emergency until the end of 2020. According to the amendment, the government will have the right to take quarantine measures such as restricting mobility, economic activity, limiting the right of proprietorship, gathering, labor, etc., until January 1, 2021.
- Military personnel (38 persons) of Georgian Defense Forces, participating in the NATO Resolute Support Mission on a rotational basis, have tested positive for COVID-19 and 28 of them have already been transported to Georgia with the help of the German Air Forces to be placed in the Gori Military Hospital for treatment.
- A two-week quarantine in government-designated facilities for all Georgian nationals arriving from different states remains mandatory. Wearing face masks in public spaces and observing social distancing remain compulsory as well.

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)

- RCCE Strategy and Action Plan, developed with WHO and UNICEF support are now under the process of approval with the Government of Georgia. Implementation plans are already in process, and will start immediately after approval.
- On July 15, WHO and UNICEF presented the results of Behavior Insights Study for “Monitoring knowledge, risk perceptions, preventive behaviors, and public trust in the current Coronavirus outbreak in Georgia” to media and organizations engaged in fight against COVID-19 pandemic.
- WHO completed procurement and delivered furniture and IT equipment under the USAID supported project to enhance capabilities of PHEOC located at NCDC. Also initiated procurement of an ultra-low freezer for NCDC to be used for storing samples collected as part of the COVID investigations.
- Under the same USAID project WHO provided to 4 main labs COVID-19 designated the Video-conferencing equipment. WHO CO consultant has developed the distance training program to be provided as needed and start a series of distance trainings for the lab personnel.
- WHO arranged a series of WebEx calls on NCDC requested topics with external experts who provided answers and clarifications regarding issues raised by Georgian colleagues on contact tracing, PoEs, serological testing, etc.
- WHO RO consultant developed the online training course on IPC issues and conducted first TC with representatives of MoH and health care facility epidemiologists.
- WHO continued risk assessment of IPC capabilities in regional health care facilities. Conducted joint site visits together with MoH representatives from Health Police division to 6 regional designated COVID-19/fever clinics in Rukhi, Senaki, Zugdidi, Poti, Batumi and Kutaisi.
- Together with the NCDC, the Ministry of Health of Autonomous Republic of Adjara and medical society, UNICEF launched a project under which pregnant women in Adjara will receive virtual antenatal consultations from country's top gynecologists.
- UNICEF Representative and Chairperson of Government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara held a meeting to discuss the joint response to lead pollution and future partnerships, as well as safe re-opening of schools during COVID-19. Challenges related to children in ‘dream city’ were also pointed out.
- UNICEF Representative held a meeting with the Deputy Minister and the team of the Ministry of Education and Science of Adjara to advocate for the safe re-opening of schools during COVID-19. The meeting also discussed the innovative "Bees Project". Project considers sending teachers from 15 schools, who were part of the project supported by Estonia, to coach their colleagues in other schools.
- A new partnership initiative “Preventing and Responding to COVID-2019 in Georgia” was inaugurated at a special moderated [video discussion](#) with participation of the USAID Mission Director and the UNICEF Representative. The video was shared via social media platforms of UNICEF and USAID to mark the launch of the new partnership.
- UNICEF organized seminars for religious leaders of Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Churches to emphasize the role of religious leaders in upholding child rights, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- UNICEF, in partnership with the local representation of the Public Defender’s Office, conducted a workshop for community-based organizations of Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe municipalities to improve the situation of children in difficult circumstances, including during the COVID-19-related crisis. Strategic actions were articulated to respond to emerging child rights issues and violations.

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- Increased vulnerability of children to child labor due to COVID-19 was discussed in a workshop in Akhalkalaki with NGOs. UNICEF agreed with the Public Defender's office to conduct an assessment on child labor.
- UNICEF carried out a social media campaign to promote online consultations for pregnant women on COVID-19, involving a [media release](#), an [animated video](#), and a [video](#) address by the UNICEF Representative encouraging pregnant women to join the consultations. A webpage was created by NCDC dedicated to providing further support to the project.
- In partnership with the Parliament and State Care Agency, the UNICEF-supported child hotline "111" [continues to provide assistance to children and their families](#), supporting around 619 cases to date, of which 457 already received assistance and were closed accordingly.
- A series of webinars on COVID-19 for Muslim religious leaders have been organized by UNICEF in partnership with the NCDC and Administration of All Muslims of Georgia. The webinars aim at educating Muslim religious leaders about prevention measures on COVID-19 as part of UNICEF's risk communication and community engagement efforts. The first webinar was attended by more than 50 religious leaders of Kvemo Kartli region of Georgia. The speaker from the NCDC talked about COVID-19 symptoms, transmission and protective measures to be used for minimizing the risks.
- An additional 15 TV programs on COVID-19 were broadcasted by Tok, Marneuli and Parvana TV stations in local languages. In total, 60 special editions on COVID-19 were aired to raise awareness of protective measures in ethnic minority regions of Georgia. The TV programmes are part of UNICEF's efforts to support NCDC in risk communication activities in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions of Georgia.
- The [Behavior Insights Study](#), conducted to determine public attitudes and behaviors in Georgia, found that over 90 per cent of Georgians are aware of COVID-19 symptoms and how it is transmitted, and over 90 per cent use self-protection measures. The results of the study were [presented at an online meeting](#) attended by the Government, NGOs, research organizations, international agencies and media. The study was conducted by WHO and UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Health and NCDC with the support of the European Union and the UK Government.
- UNICEF's [communication for social change campaign](#) to address stigma around disability was also used to raise awareness of COVID-19 prevention measures during a regional event in Mestia, Svaneti.
- UNICEF donated hygiene, recreation and rehabilitation items to the Special Penitentiary Service. Items were distributed among the Juvenile Rehabilitation Establishment #11, establishment #8 (Tbilisi) and #2 (Kutaisi) to protect juvenile inmates for the coming 6 months and support their rehabilitation. Donated items included books, puzzles and art therapy materials and recreational tools which will be utilized under the close supervision of psychologists and social workers within individual rehabilitation/treatment plans.
- UNICEF-created demo version of the chatbot for young people was created. The chatbot will be further populated with questions and answers on COVID-19, violence and mental health issues and will be launched in September 2020. The questions for the chatbot are generated by focus groups and online surveys of adolescents and young people.
- UNICEF completed simulations of cash transfer programmes to alleviate the COVID-19 impact and shared its findings together with the social protection system readiness assessment report with the Office of the National Security Council, Administration of the Government of Georgia, Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister, Advisor on Human Rights and Gender Equality, and Deputy Ministers for Health for further review and actions. Another meeting regarding the mentioned studies was called by the Ministry of Health to discuss the findings. It will be followed with an enlarged meeting attended by the MOF and AOG on the translating study findings into policy solutions.
- Clinical protocol amendments on provision of distant antenatal and postnatal care in the immediate clinical situation during COVID-19, developed with UNFPA support, have been approved by the Ministerial order and posted on the MoH website: <https://www.moh.gov.ge/ka/guidelines/>

- With UNFPA support, the work is progressing for adaptation of the standards for Care Homes for Older People with regards to infection prevention control for long-term care facilities in the context of COVID-19 - on July 14th the first meeting of the working group was held at the Ministry of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs to discuss the draft document.
- To assess the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on local businesses in Abkhazia, UNDP conducted a third stocktaking exercise among key partners and beneficiaries participating in the Joint EU-UNDP Programme for Rural Development (ENPARD Abkhazia). The data are currently being analysed and compared with the results of a similar exercise conducted by the local Chamber of Commerce involving 54 Abkhaz entrepreneurs. Summary results will be available in late July.
- With UNDP funding, the Charity Humanitarian Centre “Abkhazeti” (CHCA), which has been working for over two months in IDP collective centers to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and support vulnerable households, finalized quantitative research on COVID-19 related needs of the IDPs at highest risk. It also convened the first meeting of the Multi-sectoral Coordination Platform (MUSECO) on COVID-19 challenges within IDP communities on 14 July 2020, with the participation of the Agency for IDPs, Eco-migrants and Livelihood Provision, relevant NGOs and experts.
- With UNDP support, consultations continued between Abkhaz and Georgian doctors on COVID-19 challenges. The CSO Society for Future Generation (SFG) facilitated an online discussion between specialists from the COVID Center at the Tbilisi Infectious Diseases Hospital and medical staff at two Sukhumi hospitals. The discussion was dedicated to the analysis of lethal COVID-19 cases. Under UNDP’s USAID-funded Horizons project, the NGO Association Peaceful and Business Caucasus (APBC) organized three online consultations, involving more than 100 beneficiaries, representatives of Ochamchire District Hospital and Ochamchire Culture House, and former patients from breakaway regions who have received healthcare services in the rest of Georgia through APBC. Consultations were dedicated to COVID-19 preventive measures during the vacation season, the epidemiology of the disease, and the body’s immune response to the virus.
- With USAID funding, UNDP delivered ICT equipment to an additional five medical facilities in Abkhazia, bringing the total number of medical facilities linked to online learning and training opportunities to 11. The new recipient facilities are three district hospitals in Gali, Tkvarcheli and Gulrisphi and the Infectious Disease Hospital and HIV/AIDS Center in Sukhumi.
- A preparatory online course on COVID-19 diagnostics and testing for lab workers was prepared, agreed and finalized under UNDP’s USAID-funded Horizons project. The course is designed to train 13 lab workers in Abkhazia in the required theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for qualified and independent work on COVID-19 diagnostics and testing.
- The draft of Georgia’s new National Risk Communication Strategy for Public Health Emergencies being prepared with UNDP support was presented for public consultation on 16 July 2020. The work is being conducted as part of a UK-supported public administration reform program. The draft was prepared by the UN Association of Georgia (UNAG) in consultation with the National Center for Disease Control & Public Health (NCDC). The consultative event was attended by more than 80 different stakeholders and was aimed at soliciting inputs from civil society and vulnerable groups to ensure that the strategy is fully inclusive and addresses the needs of marginalized communities. The strategy is expected to be finalized in August 2020 and is designed to serve as a guide for emergency risk communication policy and practice during and beyond COVID-19 crisis.
- With funding from the Government of Sweden, UNDP issued a USD 15,000 grant to the NGO “Equality Movement” to respond to the immediate needs of members of the LGBTQI+ community. The intervention stems from consultations with LGBTQI+ community organizations conducted by UNDP and the Government Administration in an effort to meet urgent and existential needs of community members. The resulting Rapid Response Mechanism, delivered by the “Equality Movement” in partnership with other community organizations, will provide supplies of food and hygiene items, reimbursement of healthcare service costs, as well as rental

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support for LGBTQI+ community members most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis. The intervention covers Tbilisi, Zugdidi, Kutaisi and Batumi.

- UN Women signed an agreement with the UK CSSF to implement a three-month project “Maintaining support for the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Georgia, ensuring adaptation and responsiveness to COVID-19 to inform longer-term responses.” The project is aimed at addressing and responding to the immediate needs of conflict-affected women caused by COVID-19 outbreak in Georgia (including Abkhazia) and will be implemented in the period of July-September 2020.
- UN Women partner Business Women’s Association Women for Tomorrow continues series of webinars for women entrepreneurs to support them in the post COVID-19 adaptation process. About 60 women attended the following seminars on 3 and 4 July respectively: ‘Branding’ - Giorgi Taktakishvili, Kant’s Academy, and ‘Self-Development, self- motivation’ - Nina Kekelidze, Discover Georgia Director.
- UN Women partner NGO Taso Foundation awarded 52 women with small grants. The total grant budget was 38 870 USD, and aimed at economic activity support of grassroots women. The emphasis was made on food production, as it was defined as a priority by the Government of Georgia in the post-COVID-19 recovery context.
- On 14 July 2020, UN Women co-organized a meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on Geneva International Discussions (GID), which aimed at supporting the dialogue and sharing the information between the GID participants and civil society organizations, especially with women’s CSOs. The discussion covered the women, peace and security agenda, humanitarian and security issues related to the official negotiations in COVID-19 context, as well as specific challenges and hardships experienced by the conflict affected population in Georgia and its regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia during the pandemic. The meeting took place on-line, via Zoom platform with over 50 participants.
- IOM provided cash assistance to respond to the basic needs of vulnerable migrants from Bangladesh, India, Moldova and Pakistan, who are stranded in Georgia due to COVID-19.
- In preparation for lifting the post-COVID-19 travel restrictions, IOM donated equipment to the Patrol Police Department of the MIA, aiming to boost their capacities to conduct first-line inspection of travel documents at key border crossing points in Georgia.

Response by international development partners

- Georgia Acquires up to 400,000 COVID-19 Tests and 50 Ventilators with World Bank Support. The just-in-time support package provided through the Fast Track COVID-19 Facility is helping the country procure vital medical equipment, as well as protect poor and vulnerable families and workers from the economic impacts 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>

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- 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>

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