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Reporting Period: 1- 11 May 2020

Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region

COVID-19 Situation Report No. 3

United Nations Population Fund



Regional Highlights

- All countries in the region have officially reported COVID-19 cases, except for Turkmenistan (as of 15 May 2020). Turkey is the most affected country in the region (64% of all reported cases) and the second most reported cases of all UNFPA programme countries globally, after Brazil. Belarus, Moldova & Armenia are the other three most affected countries, relative to the size of their population. Azerbaijan is hit by a second wave of the pandemic since May 3, 2020.
- Restrictions, lockdowns and border closures continue to impact operations and supply chains, affecting the procurement of items such as personal protective equipment (PPE).¹
- UNFPA [advocated](#) strongly with government, UN and civil society partners to put the most vulnerable at the center of the response, with a focus on the needs of older people and people living with disabilities.
- UNFPA continued special efforts to reach the most vulnerable with information, supplies and services, including survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in shelters, pregnant and lactating women, older people, people with disabilities, migrants, refugees, and populations at higher risk of HIV. Risk communication materials were produced to reach these groups.
- UNFPA rolled out a COVID-19 youth assessment to inform better-targeted responses, while continuing to mobilize youth organisations to reach young people with messages, including through the global #YouthAgainstCOVID-19 campaign.
- UNFPA scaled up existing partnerships and entered new ones in support of the COVID-19 response, especially with strategic partners in the private sector.
- UNFPA actively participates in socioeconomic risk assessments focusing on implications of the pandemic on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and rights, GBV, gender equality, and demographic security.

¹ Countries with restrictions: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. Border closures: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo*, Moldova, North Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.)

* All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999.)

Situation in Numbers

224,424 Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

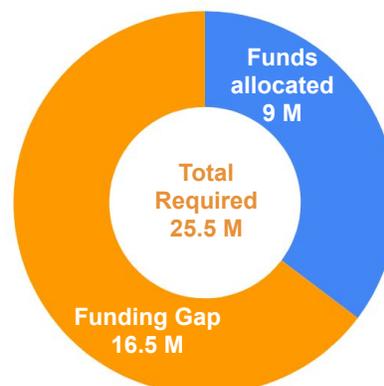
5,417 COVID-19 Deaths

Source: WHO 15 May, 2020

Key Population Groups

- 3 M** Pregnant Women
- 63 M** Women of Reproductive Age
- 53 M** Young People (age 10-24)
- 26 M** Older Persons (age 65+)

Funding Status for Region (US\$)



Regional Response Summary

The UNFPA response in the region aligns with the [2030 Agenda](#), [WHO global strategic preparedness and response plan](#), [UN-coordinated global humanitarian response plan](#), the [UN framework for socio-economic response to COVID-19](#), and [UNFPA COVID-19 global response plan](#).

Coordination and partnerships

A number of country offices have scaled up existing partnerships or are negotiating new ones to support the COVID-19 response, especially strategic partners including the private sector. New COVID-19 partnerships signed in Georgia include Liberty Bank, and Body Shop franchisee JSC GEPHA to reach older persons, promote gender equality and prevent GBV.

Continuity of SRH Services and interventions, including protection of health workforce

UNFPA, with national partners and other UN agencies, is **working to strengthen health system capacities in all countries to ensure access to preventive and curative SRH services** for women, especially pregnant women, young people and survivors of GBV, particularly for people with specific vulnerabilities, such as older people, people living with HIV or with disabilities. Country offices are focusing on PPE supply, development and translation of newest national guidelines and recommendations to align country approaches with UNFPA and WHO newest guidance, and training.

The mapping of country priorities developing telemedicine for family planning and maternal health has been completed. A regional proposal and roadmap development will be developed shortly.

Country examples:

- **Albania:** Procured and [distributed](#) PPE for maternity care providers at the hospital level, covering immediate short-term needs for protection.
- **Azerbaijan:** Translated and adapted the UNFPA COVID-19 Technical Brief for Maternity Services and shared with the scientific department of OBGYN for further adaptation and comments.
- **Belarus:** Updated social advertising on positive pregnancy experience for the Ministry of Health, including messages for pregnant women on social distancing and hygiene during the pandemic.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Translated the "[COVID-19 Technical Brief for Maternity Services](#)" aimed at building the capacity of healthcare professionals during COVID-19, as well as the [technical notes](#) on Impact of COVID-19 on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage.
- **Georgia:** Locally procured PPE was donated to the First University Clinic in Tbilisi, Kobuleti and Kutaisi fever centers (designated for all pregnant women with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infections) and to reproductive health service delivery units in Abkhazia to ensure continuity of SRH services.
- **Kazakhstan:** Comprehensive [guidelines](#) for maternal and neonatal services during COVID-19 were developed and shared with the Ministry of Health; a [GBV protocol](#) for health providers was developed and approved by the MoH, and a communications strategy for the development of Youth-Friendly Health Centres in Kazakhstan was prepared.
- **Moldova:** UNFPA, WHO, UNAIDS and UNICEF under the leadership of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection, conducted online capacity building sessions for health care personnel from perinatal centers on the continuity of maternity care and healthcare for HIV-positive pregnant women in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Country examples (continued):

- **North Macedonia:** Supported the development of interim recommendations for the treatment of pregnant women who contracted COVID-19. After approval by the Ministry of Health, these will be distributed to midwives, gynecologists and obstetricians, as well as their patients, to ensure that they are properly informed and monitored during their pregnancy and in the postpartum period.
- **Tajikistan:** UNFPA and UNICEF joined efforts in the development of the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund proposal on strengthening national capacities to prepare and respond to COVID-19.
- **Ukraine:** Distributed SRH kits for complicated deliveries, post-exposure preventive kits, and contraceptives in health facilities located along the contact line. One of these kits contains PPE for health workers.
- **Uzbekistan:** Supported the development and dissemination of “National Interim Clinical Guidelines on Pregnancy and Childbirth Management in COVID-19”, approved by the Ministry of Health, which serve as basis for joint online trainings, with WHO, for medical staff providing maternal healthcare services.

Addressing GBV

UNFPA in the EECA region is addressing GBV by:

- **Supporting governments in the coordination, planning and implementation of GBV prevention and response** through supporting hotline services; setting up online psychological counseling and referrals; setting up temporary safe spaces for women and girls and providing PPE; adapting and adjusting Mental Health and PsychoSocial Services guidelines and multisectoral approach to GBV in the COVID-19 context.
- **Collecting and analyzing data for COVID-19 Impact Rapid Gender Assessment** with UN Women, UNDP and UNAIDS as part of the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment.
- **Responding to raise awareness of COVID-19 prevention measures** for families and their children, older persons and people living with disabilities through different platforms: TV, social media, podcasts etc., social videos on Men Engage in prevention of domestic violence and role of men in sharing household chores.
- **Mobilizing funds for short-term projects to ensure the continuity and accessibility of GBV prevention and response for women and girls.**

Country examples:

- **Armenia:** Launched COVID-19 Impact rapid gender analysis, conducted within the regional project funded by the EU, in collaboration with UN Women, UNDP and UNAIDS, as part of the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment.
- **Azerbaijan:** Data collection for COVID-19 Impact rapid gender analysis completed, in collaboration with UN Women.
- **Belarus:** Conducted a series of webinars for social care providers on access to GBV-related services and information in plain language for persons with disabilities.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** UNFPA delivered hygiene packages including PPE and food to women in safe houses nationwide, and continued GBV support within its humanitarian response to mixed migration crisis (85 empowerment services, 62 PSS services provided to women, 836 services provided to young boys and men).
- **Georgia:** Locally procured PPEs were donated to the Agency for State Care for further distribution to Tbilisi shelters for victims of domestic violence working under the quarantine regime. Posters with information on domestic violence services are being distributed through pharmacies and food stores.
- **Kazakhstan:** Prepared a video for people with disabilities explaining what steps to take if faced with violence, in partnership with the National Commission on Women, Family and Demographic Policy in both [Kazakh](#) and [Russian](#) languages, and has been broadcast on national TV channels and social media.
- **Kosovo:** UNFPA and UN Women distributed hygiene and bed sheets for quarantine shelter for GBV survivors.
- **Kyrgyzstan:** Supported Ministry of Labour and Social Development with developing coordination algorithm for multi-sectoral GBV response by national and sub-national service providers in humanitarian settings.
- **Moldova:** In partnership with UN Women, initiated the [“Men Engage campaign”](#) to raise awareness on the importance of the equal involvement of men in household responsibilities and childcare, especially in the context of COVID-19.

Regional Response Summary (continued)

Country examples (continued):

- **Tajikistan:** Initiated the creation of a GBV Sub-Cluster, co-led by UN Women, to consolidate, coordinate, improve support and develop activities on the prevention of and response to GBV. Translated and disseminated PSEA video, “No Excuse for Abuse: Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Action”.
- **Ukraine:** Enabled ‘silent solutions’ for GBV survivors and people at risk – counselling via social media, Skype and texts. 17% of all psychosocial support was provided online in addition to 73% phone consultations.
- **Uzbekistan:** Between 10 April and 7 May, 597 calls were received through the UNFPA supported helpline aimed at providing psychological and legal counseling to women. 180 women were assisted and 8 suicide cases prevented. Psychological counseling via Telegram by professional psychologists received 17 requests per day.

Assessment on the health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19

With respect to the socio-economic assessments of COVID-19, UNFPA is currently engaged in 4 work streams:

- **Demographic risk/vulnerability to COVID-19:** UNFPA has identified variables for the analysis of demographic risk/ vulnerability to COVID-19.
- **Use of National Transfer Accounts (NTAs) and General Equilibrium Model (GEMs) for modelling socio-economic implications:** In the region, Moldova is now embarking on this exercise; it could potentially be replicated in Turkey.
- **Impact of COVID-19 on maternal mortality, family planning supplies and gender-based violence:** Using existing costing tools on maternal mortality, family planning and gender-based violence, several countries in the region have signed up for costs assessment, reflecting impact of COVID-19.
- **Impact on international and within-country migration.**

As part of the regional joint team on HIV/AIDS, UNFPA participates in the design of the rapid assessment of COVID-19 impact on delivering HIV-related prevention services to people living with HIV and key populations in the EECA region. The assessment will examine to what extent social distancing and quarantine in the countries of the region negatively affect the most critical components of the National AIDS programs.

Country examples:

- **Armenia:** To inform the COVID-19 Socio Economic Impact Assessment, UNFPA launched a COVID-19 Impact rapid gender assessment, part of a regional project funded by the EU in collaboration with UN Women, UNDP and UNAIDS.
- **Azerbaijan:** Completed data collection for rapid gender assessment on impact of COVID-19, with UN Women.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Adapted regional youth survey and prepared rapid youth assessment questionnaire. Prepared a draft Action Plan on Older Persons and COVID-19. UNFPA is preparing COVID-19 assessments for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and the impact on provision of services. UNFPA is part of the joint UN country team working groups within different streams for socio-economic impact assessments.
- **Kazakhstan:** A [Rapid Needs Assessment](#) of people with disabilities during COVID-19 was conducted in the Turkestan region and Shymkent city as a follow-up to the 2019 in-depth interviews conducted with the same group with UK Government programme funding. The data collection of the UNFPA/UN Women rapid gender assessment is complete and the analysis and report will be finalized by May 15th.
- **Tajikistan:** UNFPA Tajikistan joined COVID-19 socio-economic risk assessments focusing on the implications of the pandemic on vulnerable groups within UN coordination mechanisms at country level. As part of the socio-economic taskforce, UNFPA is advocating for the integration of rights and needs of the most vulnerable: women and girls, survivors of domestic violence, and vulnerable youth.
- **Ukraine:** Conducted workshops for local NGOs in 3 eastern regions on the Men Engage initiative on responsible fatherhood so that they can use this information for developing programs for fathers and families during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Uzbekistan:** Based on the results of the Rapid Needs Assessment, conducted among female healthcare workers and as a response to healthcare workers feeling increasing anxiety, burnout syndrome and depression due to COVID-19, UNFPA and the Gender commission of the Senate and NGO Center for Support and Development of Initiatives “NIHOL” launched a [telephone helpline](#) to provide psychological counseling for medical workers.

Risk communication and community engagement (including with young people)

As part of a global partnership with UNFPA, the Belarus-based period tracker and reproductive health app Flo published a course on fertility and pregnancy for its over 30 million active users.

UNFPA partnered with the regional youth-led movement, Teenergizer, to address the impact of COVID-19 on youth health and wellbeing. The partnership, within the #StaySafe campaign, envisages empowering youth in the region to feel safe and protected during the pandemic and beyond and to become agents of change within their own families.

Across the region, UNFPA country offices rolled out questionnaires to understand the situation young people face to provide better targeted responses from both UNFPA and partners. UNFPA partnered with young people and youth organisations to reach young people with messages including in the context of the global #YouthAgainstCovid19 campaign.

Country examples:

- **Armenia:** With UNFPA support, youth-specific questions on education continuity and civic engagement were incorporated into a rapid gender assessment tool regarding the impact of COVID-19 on young people, women and men. UNFPA supported the development of an anti-COVID19 communication campaign, and ran an information campaign on the effects of COVID-19 on gender issues, together with [WomenNet NGO](#).
- **Azerbaijan:** Hosted a webinar with participation of experts and FBO representatives discussing the topic of promoting the value of girls through religion.
- **Belarus:** Conducted 2 online weekly marathons for young people from the regions on gender stereotypes and coping with stress during COVID-19.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Prepared a draft Action Plan on Older Persons and COVID-19 and is developing COVID-19 assessments for survivors (conflict related sexual violence) and the impact on provision of services. UNFPA contributed to UN Country Team Working Groups within different streams for socio-economic impact assessments.
- **Georgia:** Facilitated youth participation in #YouthAgainstCOVID19 global campaign launched by UNFPA in partnership with Prezi.
- **Kyrgyzstan:** [Leaflets/guides](#) were developed for hotline operators, crisis centers, psychologists and GBV survivors.
- **Moldova:** Together with the Ministry of Education, UNFPA launched an online programme for young people ([#Youth Talks](#)), an alternative platform for non-formal education and personal and professional development. With the Ministry of Health, the [Youth-Older](#) solidarity initiative has continued.
- **North Macedonia:** Contributed to Y-PEER video [Youth talk to UN](#) with RC and WHO on what young people can do during the Covid-19 lockdown.
- **Serbia:** Supported the continuation of helplines in providing psychological first aid, psychosocial support and other types of support to older people. The #YouthAgainstCOVID19 campaign has been implemented with International Federation of Medical Students' Associations, Serbia.
- **Tajikistan:** Translated and adopted leaflets with information on COVID-19 for dissemination through reproductive health facilities.
- **Ukraine:** Conducted online SkillsLabs trainings focused on the development of essential life skills to increase employability and self-employability among young vulnerable populations.
- **Uzbekistan:** Young people joined the global joint UNFPA-Prezi initiative to help teach each other about COVID-19 and share their ideas on what they can do to keep their friends, families and communities safe through creating their own episodes.

Leaving no one behind (with a focus on older people, people living with disabilities or with HIV/AIDS)

The COVID-19 pandemic is intensifying inequalities and producing new threats for vulnerable people, including older persons and persons with disabilities. UNFPA, WHO and the UN Development Coordination Office, in coordination with the UN Regional Issue Based Coalition on Health, convened a [webinar](#) to ensure that the UN regional system is equipped to help governments guarantee the equal rights of older people and people with disabilities to access healthcare and lifesaving procedures during the pandemic.

A regional [hotline](#), launched in partnership with the Eurasian Network of Women Living with HIV, continues to provide information and services to people living with HIV/AIDS and key populations affected by COVID-19. It ensures that services are uninterrupted, especially antiretroviral treatment, SRH and GBV services, and counselling and referrals. From 27 April until 11 May the hotline helped 30 people living with HIV/AIDS to receive life-saving antiretroviral treatment medications while stuck (due to border closures) in Georgia, Greece, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and the USA.

At country level, UNFPA addressed the needs of key populations and people living with HIV during COVID-19 by providing prevention information through a dedicated hotline, procurement of PPE for local AIDS centers, provision of life-saving gender-sensitive services for women living with HIV and at risk of HIV, and capacity building of health providers to ensure healthcare continuity for HIV positive pregnant women.

Country examples:

- **Albania:** UNFPA and the Fund for Mandatory Health Care Insurance established a [partnership](#) to protect older persons from COVID-19 infection and respond to their immediate needs for care, through information materials, an online campaign, and home delivery of regular medicine for patients with chronic diseases.
- **Armenia:** With UNFPA support, the Association of Healthcare and Assistance to Older People launched an online course on the basics of care for older people and persons with disabilities for nurses, social workers and family members.
- **Azerbaijan:** Under its disability project, UNFPA disseminated a series of disability awareness-raising videos (in the format of webinars) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Delivered hygiene packages, including PPEs, to persons with disabilities in Tuzla, women in safe houses in Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Modriča and to older persons/members of Healthy Ageing Centres in Sarajevo. Food and hygiene supplies were also delivered to safe houses for women.
- **Georgia:** Donated PPE to two state elderly care homes (Tbilisi and Kutaisi) and three institutions for persons with disabilities (Dusheti, Gardabani and Terjola). In partnership with UNFPA, Liberty Bank printed 15,000 “COVID-19: Guidance and Advice for Older People” brochures for dissemination among older people.
- **Kazakhstan:** Supported the Public Foundation “Revansh” to provide life-support and gender-sensitive services for women living with HIV and at risk of HIV.
- **Moldova:** In coordination with the Ministry of Health, fostered social cohesion and inter-generational dialogue: about 200 vulnerable older persons from 16 communities received psychological and emotional support from young volunteers. Three new videos with professional advice from psychologists were produced and disseminated to young people: [How to cope with stress](#), [How to improve online schooling](#), [What are my values and beliefs?](#)
- **Uzbekistan:** Led the “Protection and Key Population” Taskforce and completed an LNOB (Leave no one behind) analysis of the Covid-19 situation, which is incorporated in the UN/International Financial Institutions’ social and economic response plan to be shared with the Government on 12 May.
- **Tajikistan:** Reprogrammed funds to establish a hotline for key populations to access information on HIV in the context of COVID-19 and to procure personal protective equipment to be used at AIDS centers.

Media & Communications

Across the region, UNFPA has reached out to the public, through traditional and social media, to raise awareness of COVID-19 related information and guidance and showcase achievements in assisting people during the pandemic.

Story highlights:

- BBC **Ukraine**: [Pandemic "could lead to 7 million unplanned pregnancies"](#) (story also widely covered in [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Moldova](#), [North Macedonia](#) and [Turkey](#)).
- Euronews **Albania**: [UNFPA provides COVID-19 protection equipment for maternity hospitals in Tirana](#)
- [In Kyrgyzstan, lockdowns force crisis centres to close their doors](#)
- [Protecting the health and rights of older people amid COVID-19](#)
- [Protecting seasonal workers in Turkey's tent settlements from COVID-19](#)
- [In Kazakhstan, need for disability-sensitive response to violence amplified by COVID-19](#)
- [Pandemic leaves older populations struggling with isolation in Serbia](#)
- [Mothers, midwives risking their lives to bring new life into the world \(Albania\)](#)

Other country examples:

Azerbaijan:

- Publication of [wrap-up video](#) completed social media campaign featuring celebrity men engaging with childcare and household work during COVID-19 lockdown as role models for achieving gender equality

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- UNFPA [Youth Barometer](#) online talk show was launched, receiving [coverage](#) by the country's most popular news portal, as well as on [National TV](#) and the [N1](#) channel.

Georgia:

- Launch of partnership with JSC Liberty Bank with focus on reaching older people during COVID-19 pandemic received coverage by [Georgia Today](#) and some 40 other broadcast and print media outlets.

Kazakhstan:

- Kazakhstanskaya Pravda: [Kazakhstanis more likely to report domestic violence during quarantine - UNFPA](#)
- [People in Kazakhstan report more cases of domestic violence during quarantine](#)
- [UN calls for peace at home during COVID-19 outbreak in Kazakhstan](#)

Kosovo:

- Kosovo has launched a kickoff social media campaign for the project "Expanding Choices: Gender-Responsive Family Policies for the Private Sector"

Moldova:

- Social media campaign on young [volunteers](#) communicating with older persons during COVID-19.
- [MenEngage: social media challenge encourages equal participation of men in domestic and childcare activities](#)

Serbia:

- UNFPA Country Director [interviewed](#) on engaging men during COVID-19 on national TV N1.

Ukraine:

- [\(Un\)safe home: how the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine counteracts domestic violence under quarantine](#)

Tajikistan:

- [Standard operating procedures adopted in Tajikistan are being used to better address GBV during the Covid-19 pandemic](#)

Turkey:

- UNFPA-produced [video](#) featuring Turkish celebrities speaking about GBV during COVID-19 was covered by leading news channels including [NTV](#) and [HABER TURK](#)
- Video marking International Day of the Midwife disseminated on social media ([Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)).
- UNFPA engaged celebrity partners [Songül Öden](#) to speak about GBV during the pandemic, and [Hazal Kaya](#) on the occasion of Mother's Day (with coverage from [Hürriyet](#), [Milliyet](#), [Habertürk](#) and other media outlets)

Confirmed Cases and Deaths (UNFPA programme countries) WHO, 15 May 2020

Country	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Albania	880	31
Armenia	3,836	49
Azerbaijan	2,758	35
Belarus	25,840	149
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,181	119
Georgia	652	11
Kazakhstan	5,571	33
Kosovo*	919	29
Kyrgyzstan	1,082	12
Republic of Moldova	5,406	190
North Macedonia	1,694	95
Serbia	10,295	222
Tajikistan	729	23
Turkey	143,114	3,952
Turkmenistan	0	0
Ukraine	16,847	456
Uzbekistan	2,620	11
Total Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region	224,424	5,417

Confirmed Cases by Country and Region

Region ● Arab States ● Asia and the Pacific ● East and Southern Africa ● Eastern Europe and Central Asia ● Latin America and the Caribbean ● West and Central Africa

