

Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region

COVID-19 Situation Report No. 5

United Nations Population Fund



Reporting Period: 1-30 June 2020

Regional Highlights

- All countries, except Turkmenistan, have officially reported COVID-19 cases. Armenia, Belarus and Moldova are the most affected relative to their population size. Turkey is the most affected country in absolute numbers (making up 45 percent of reported cases in the region, compared to 55 percent at the end of May) and ranks eighth among UNFPA programme countries.
- UNFPA continues to support the socio-economic impact assessments in the region. In particular, UNFPA is helping to identify the most vulnerable people, including older persons, based on social and demographic data. UNFPA is also supporting countries to assess economic shocks and their implications for people (using National Transfer Accounts).
- UNFPA is supporting countries to integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) into the national assessments of COVID-19 impact, and to ensure that national strategies and response plans include prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence, and that gender equality and violence against women and girls are a central feature of national socio-economic responses.
- UNFPA country offices continue to engage young people on peer to peer risk communication, including #youthagainstcovid #healthychallenge.
- UNFPA has started the implementation of COVID19 programmes using the Joint UN Multi Partner Trust Fund in at least 5 countries.
- UNFPA continues to strengthen health systems by applying new online technologies.
- In Tajikistan, UNFPA launched a project on building access to SRH services for People with Disabilities during the pandemic, allowing them to receive safe and quality SRH services at no cost and no barriers.

Situation in Numbers

 **467,283** Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

 **9,195** COVID-19 Deaths

Source: WHO 2 July, 2020

Key Population Groups

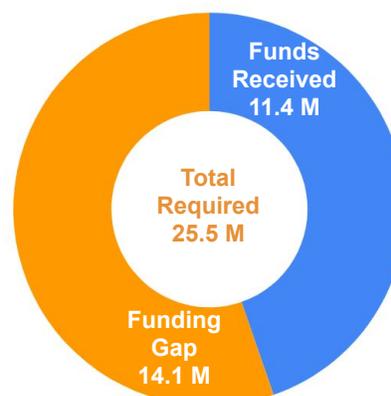
 **3 M** Pregnant Women

 **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

Coordination and partnerships

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

UNFPA continues to work with UN Country Teams to design joint programmes and partnerships and mobilise the funding required. In June, UNFPA started implementation of COVID19 programmes using the Joint UN Multi Partner Trust Fund in at least 5 countries. Partnerships continue to be critical to ensure that no one is left behind. UNFPA joined with various partners to reach marginalised and vulnerable groups like the older people, pregnant women or those at risk of domestic abuse and violence.

Country examples:

- **Armenia:** UNFPA is a partner of a new \$1 million-project on mitigating the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable people and communities. It is funded from the UN Secretary-General's "Recover Better Fund". It will provide support to survivors of domestic violence, as well as other vulnerable women and older persons.
- **Belarus:** UNFPA engaged the company [life:\)](#) to make the national hotline for domestic violence victims toll-free. This allows all survivors who have encountered any domestic physical, psychological, sexual or economic violence to call free of charge through the fixed lines and at the [life:\)](#) mobile network operator.
- **Georgia:** With participation of several UN agencies, UNFPA facilitated thematic consultation on health, rights and protection of elderly in the context of COVID-19. Priorities and gaps have been identified and will be integrated into the Socio-Economic Response Plan of the UN Country Team.
- **North Macedonia:** UNFPA facilitated a coordination meeting for identification of needs for maternal and newborn care with key national partners and UN agencies including UNICEF and WHO. The group will solicit inputs from all maternity facilities, documenting short and mid-term needs, to enable proactive support.
- **Tajikistan:** Overall coordination of development partners in Tajikistan on COVID-19 preparedness and response is undertaken by the UN Resident Coordinator with the technical guidance of WHO, in the frame of the COVID-19 Response Group. UNFPA continues to coordinate and lead the COVID-19 Hospital for UN personnel and their dependents ensuring medical doctors, medicines, treatment protocols and MEDEVAC are in place.
- **Ukraine:** Jointly with HelpAge International, UNFPA distributed hygiene and disinfectant kits specifically adapted to combat the spread of COVID-19 virus in 10 state-run nursing homes for elderly people and people with disabilities. Currently, there are 761 people living in these long-term living facilities who require additional protective equipment due to COVID-19.
- **Uzbekistan:** UNFPA is part of the \$1 million UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi Partner Trust Fund project to support early recovery and inclusive service delivery for vulnerable groups affected by COVID-19. It will be implemented together with UNDP, UNICEF, and IOM.

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

UNFPA contributed to addressing SRH in the region by:

- Partnering with NGOs, Ministries of Health and other key actors and reaching out to new donors to continue expanding the response in the region, with a focus on the most vulnerable populations;
- Supporting countries to integrate SRHR in the national Assessments of COVID-19 impact;
- Organizing training sessions and webinars for health professionals;
- Strengthening health systems by applying new online technologies;
- Translating in national languages the newest technical resources; and
- Producing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for healthcare providers.

Country examples:

- **Albania:** In partnership with the Ministry of Health and Albania Community Assist NGO, 6 training sessions were organised, reaching out 28 Health Care Providers and local Coordinators.
- **Azerbaijan:** UNFPA reached an agreement with Public Health and Reforms Center under the Ministry of Health to implement a series of activities including: establishing an e-survey platform and monitoring system for public health needs; developing clinical protocol on reproductive health & family planning; preparing instructions on sanitary-epidemiological rules during the pandemic; developing a mobile app on reproductive health & family planning; creating videos to communicate messages with regard to pregnancy, family planning, responding to GBV in times of COVID-19. These activities are planned for the next two months.
- **Belarus:** In partnership with a local NGO and a healthcare facility, UNFPA facilitated the submission of an additional proposal to the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria which was approved. Online counselling and referral will be organised for the key populations and vulnerable groups in context of COVID-19 to improve HIV prevention and treatment.
- **Georgia:** UNFPA procured and distributed PPE to healthcare providers specifically designated by the Ministry of Health to treat COVID-19 suspected/infected pregnant women with supportive and management therapies. The newest technical resources on COVID-19 have been translated, adapted and approved by the ministry. These resources are practical guides for remote antenatal care (phone/messaging application/telehealth).
- **Kazakhstan:** UNFPA organized 4 webinars for over 300 health workers on topics related to [“Infection control in obstetric institutions during COVID-19”](#), [“Providing antenatal care to pregnant women in the context of COVID-19”](#), [“Reducing neonatal mortality in Kazakhstan”](#) and [“Prevention and control of infections associated with medical care provision of obstetric organizations”](#); 40,000 copies of a [booklet](#) for pregnant women were sent to health facilities all over the country.
- **North Macedonia:** UNFPA is continuously providing online training to Ob/Gyns in the country on the recommendations for prevention and management of COVID-19 cases. These trainings are much appreciated and the demand for them is ongoing.
- **Tajikistan:** As part of the country’s preparedness and response plan for COVID-19, UNFPA handed over PPE to the national and regional reproductive health institutions, including reproductive health centers and maternity hospitals (<https://twitter.com/UNFPATajikistan>; <https://www.facebook.com/tajikistan.unfpa.org/>).
- **Uzbekistan:** UNFPA procured 80,000 masks for 14 Tashkent city maternities. The PPE was delivered to 21 maternity hospitals of Andijan region, under the joint UNAIDS-UNFPA Agreement. This support reached 410 doctors (including obstetrician– gynecologists, neonatologists and resuscitation doctors), 2,550 midwives and nurses, and 1,510 other maternity staff. This will help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the health sector in Andijan region for the next three months.

Addressing GBV

UNFPA contributed to addressing GBV in the region by:

- Convening a webinar as a co-leader of the regional Issue-Based Coalition on Gender for partners and UN Country Teams to discuss ways to address gender equality and violence against women and girls - as a central feature of national socio-economic responses and all efforts to build back better from the pandemic;
- Supporting national strategies and response plans to ensure prevention and response to GBV and domestic violence are in place and services are strengthened through a coordinated and technical support by UNFPA; and
- Continuing its extensive prevention and awareness raising by Men Engage Campaigns through social media in the respective countries as well as the regional MenEngage Platform

Country examples:

- **Albania:** With the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, UNFPA agreed on a dissemination plan of the MultiSectoral Response to GBV Essential Guidelines and SoPs for Health and Psycho-Social Services, including the SoPs on GBV in Emergencies, to all 61 Municipalities to reach the GBV Referral Mechanisms.
- **Azerbaijan:** UNFPA continued its cooperation with Azerbaijani Bar Association and State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs with regards to provision of pro-bono legal services to GBV survivors. Within these joint efforts, UNFPA developed a curriculum on GBV prevention and response for lawyers and provided online trainings for the newly-elected members of the Bar Association. An online exchange of experiences was held with colleagues from UNDP Kyrgyzstan office who had previously implemented a similar project in their country. Based on their recommendations, the resource book is expected to be improved. In addition, UNFPA has completed its work on the Rapid Gender Assessment report and is waiting for feedback from UN Women to finalise and publish the document. UNFPA continues advocacy efforts to set up a hotline to provide improved services to the victims of GBV and their family members. The country office also organized a live session bringing experts (psychologists) and GBV service providers (women and children shelters) to discuss the topic of psycho-social support to GBV survivors and referral mechanisms. The event's video hit 2000 views so far.
- **Belarus:** UNFPA conducted a series of online webinars for service providers of Belarus and Ukraine to exchange experience of the countries in responding to GBV and Domestic Violence during COVID-19. The three webinars have 5,000 viewers thus far.
- **Kazakhstan:** 17,000 copies of the GBV leaflet are being distributed [through the police](#) all over the country and UNFPA's "Men Engage" campaign continues to grow, including through the launch of a new [song](#) with the group 101 on Father's Day, which received extensive media [coverage](#).
- **Kosovo:** UNFPA trained online 66 health workers on GBV management.
- **Kyrgyzstan:** UNFPA supported urgent meeting of the National Council on Gender under the Vice-Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic. Main interventions and [recommendations](#) were discussed.
- **Tajikistan:** National protocol for provision of services to survivors of rape (including in emergency situations) and the UN Essential Service Package have been adopted jointly with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population for primary health care institutions.
- **Ukraine:** The L'Oréal Group donated 750 sanitizers and 750 hand balms to UNFPA-supported shelters in 10 cities. Almost 500 sanitizers were delivered to medical service delivery points in 9 cities. Working collaboratively with partners, UNFPA helps mitigate additional risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to GBV survivors and ensure uninterrupted GBV service provision.
- **Uzbekistan:** UNFPA has dispatched three computers to the 'Oydin Nur' shelter in Samarkand and four computers to the 'Civic Initiatives Support Center' NGO (which administers the helpline services) to ensure smooth and uninterrupted support by lawyers and psychologists helping women and families in difficult situations as well as GBV survivors. Between 10 April and 25 June, 1,193 calls were received through the UNFPA supported helpline aimed at providing psychological and legal counseling to women. 305 women were assisted and 10 suicide cases prevented.

Assessment on the health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19

UNFPA continues to actively support socio-economic impact assessments in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Based on social and demographic data, UNFPA helps in identifying the most vulnerable people, including older persons. Using National Transfer Accounts, UNFPA supports countries in assessing economic shocks and their implications for people.

Country examples:

- **Albania:** UNFPA has been actively involved in the development of the joint Socio-Economic Recovery Plan under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. Quick needs assessment of young people in Albania related to Covid-19 were conducted.
- **Armenia:** "Rapid Assessment on Government Response to Domestic Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic" report is available in [English](#) and [Armenian](#). The Assessment was conducted by UNFPA within the EU funded "Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Armenia" Project, implemented by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.
- **Azerbaijan:** UNFPA organized an online focus group discussion event with the representatives of the leading NGOs working with disability issues. Discussions were the part of the preparation of the Socio-Economic Assessment of COVID-19 implemented by the UN Country Team.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** To better respond to the needs of youth, UNFPA implemented a survey of young people's opinions and experiences on the impact of COVID-19 on their lives, with a specific focus on SRH, community relations and migration.
- **Georgia:** As part of COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund project, UNFPA initiated a needs assessment of older people living alone under the poverty line in targeted municipalities. This is to better understand, mitigate and decrease barriers and inequalities caused and revealed by COVID-19.
- **Kyrgyzstan:** Within the UN Youth thematic group, UNFPA launched a youth and COVID-19 survey aimed at identifying the impact of COVID-19 on income, labor, including unpaid domestic work, and employment, social protection, education and health, and the psychological status of young people in urban and rural environments.
- **Moldova:** Work has commenced to update Moldova's National Transfer Account analysis, which includes the development of scenarios that reflect impact of COVID-19.
- **North Macedonia:** UNFPA held consultations with national stakeholders on GBV as preparation for the recently implemented GBV project, aimed at improving services to survivors of GBV with particular focus on two municipalities.
- **Serbia:** UNFPA participates in the UN Country Team task force to assist the government in a) compiling a fact-finding report to assess the effect of COVID-19 on society and economy, and b) conducting an in-depth analysis of socio-economic impact to inform the recovery strategy.
- **Tajikistan:** UNFPA continues to contribute to the Health First and Social Cohesion sections of the final draft of Socioeconomic Response Framework to COVID-19, focusing on the implications of the pandemic on women and girls, survivors of domestic violence, and vulnerable youth.
- **Uzbekistan:** UNFPA posted two rapid assessment questions on the 'No to violence' Telegram channel (launched by UNFPA and the Gender Commission of the Senate of Uzbekistan), related to men's involvement in childcare and domestic violence.

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

UNFPA continues to strengthen its response to the COVID-19 crisis with a focus on the most vulnerable people, including older persons, young people, people living with disabilities or with HIV/AIDS. UNFPA procured significant amount of PPE to professionals and facilities, including in nursing homes. UNFPA also supported the national authorities in adapting protocols in nursing homes.

A regional [hotline](#) provided information and services to people living with HIV/AIDS and key populations affected by COVID-19. As of 30 June 2020, the hotline helped a total of 80 people living with HIV/AIDS (52 men and 28 women) throughout 14 countries to receive counselling support and life-saving antiretroviral treatment medications while stuck in Abkhazia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, the United Arab Emirates and the United States. See a personal story in English [here](#).

UNFPA supported the Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS in conducting a community-led study on impact of the COVID19 pandemic and quarantine on access of women living with HIV and women from key populations to SRHR, HIV and GBV prevention services. The study is being conducted in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

UNFPA conducted a joint inter-regional meeting on HIV during Covid-19 to share lessons learnt and good examples from country offices in two regions (Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia) on HIV prevention and HIV/SRHR linkages, identify challenges, opportunities and joint actions to address the needs of key populations throughout Europe and Asia Pacific.

At the country level, during the reporting period, UNFPA: a) ensured access to HIV/STI prevention counselling for sex workers and MSM affected by the pandemic through established dedicated hotlines b) provided hygiene and food packages for key populations in rural areas; c) addressed the needs of young key populations detained in prisons; d) provided support to women living with HIV to access gender-friendly SRH services and information on how to stay safe during the pandemic.



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

Country offices are also engaged in supporting reprogramming of the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria grants to ensure key populations and other vulnerable groups receive adequate attention with regards to HIV prevention and treatment in the context of COVID-19.

Country examples:

- **Albania:** UNFPA and Albania Community Assist continued to support older people, especially those living alone, with information, health services and medicines in two regions.
- **Armenia:** Three clinical guidelines on elderly care developed with support of UNFPA were approved by the Ministry of Health and are [available online](#). UNFPA also provided the next set of PPE to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and the Office of Human Rights Defender. This included about 90,000 masks, 76,500 gloves, 230 face shields and 200 protective uniforms for those left behind in elderly houses, orphanages, people with disabilities and their caretakers.
- **Azerbaijan:** Within its Active Ageing project implemented with the government, UNFPA held online classes for the elderly on topics such as art and painting, and held live discussions with doctors (therapists). UNFPA published a motivational video on social media about daily lives and chores of the older persons in times of COVID-19. Under the People with Disabilities project, implemented jointly with UNDP and the government, UNFPA also held a series of awareness-raising webinars covering disability issues and published a motivational [video story](#) of a person with disability involved in the project.
- **Belarus:** UNFPA procured 4,000 personal protective equipment kits (each includes respirator, shield, coverall, gown) to support 8 nursing homes for older persons and those with disabilities. Information and check-up leaflets, requested by Ministry of Social Protection, were developed for staff and residents of nursing homes.
- **Georgia:** UNFPA supported the authorities in adapting standards for care homes for older people funded by the government and monitoring their implementation.
- **Kazakhstan:** UNFPA partnered with the NGO Revanch to support over [250 women living with HIV to access gender-friendly services during the pandemic](#), to receive SRH information and services, learn new skills and help stay safe during the pandemic. In partnership with the Association of Women with Disabilities "Shyrak", UNFPA provided 1,500 transparent [protective face shields](#) to Kazakhstan's professional sign language interpreters.
- **Kosovo:** In partnership with the Red Cross, UNFPA continued distributing assistance, food and health packages to 100 vulnerable families and GBV survivors.
- **Serbia:** UNFPA and the Red Cross completed distribution of hygiene items to some of the most vulnerable older people in the country, reaching out to over 4,430 older people in 31 municipalities.
- **Tajikistan:** UNFPA launched a Project on Building access to SRH services for the People with Disabilities, allowing them to receive safe and quality SRH services at no cost and no barriers, through the newly established medical rooms within the premises of the National and Regional Public Unions of People with Disabilities.
- **Ukraine:** UNFPA and the NGO HelpAge International distributed hygienic and disinfectant kits specifically adapted to combat the spread of COVID-19 in 10 state nursing homes for elderly people and people with disabilities.
- **Uzbekistan:** Within the framework of the approved UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (focusing on support to early recovery and inclusive service delivery for vulnerable groups heavily affected by the COVID-19), UNFPA is providing inclusive legal, psychosocial, and direct support to disabled women and girls as well as GBV survivors through shelters, hotlines and social media.

Risk communication and community engagement (including with young people)

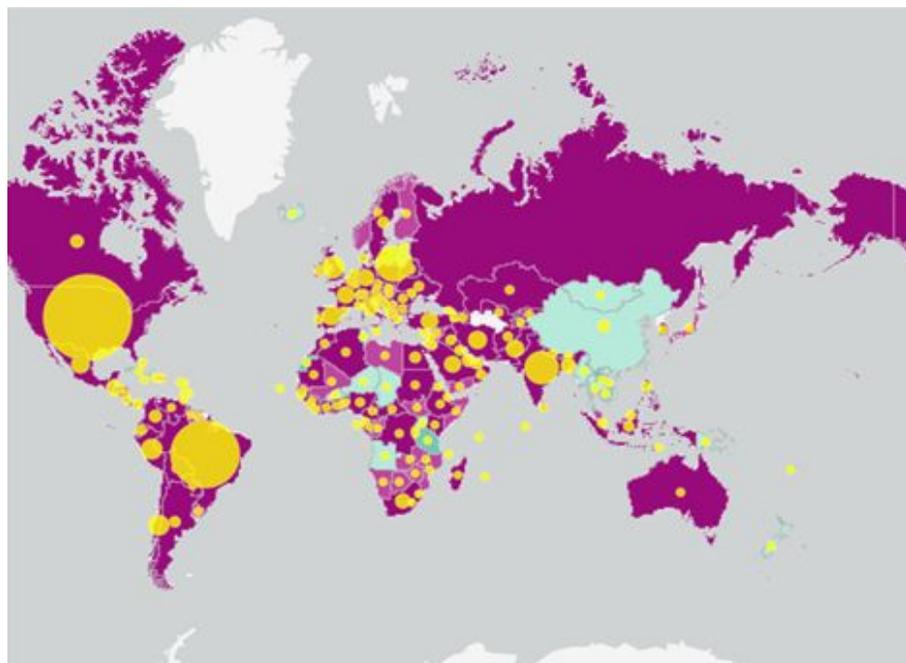
UNFPA Country Offices continued to engage young people on peer to peer risk communication, including #youthagainstcovid and #HealthyChallenge. In addition, existing structures such as educational facilities and youth centers are used to disseminate safe behavior messages.

Country examples:

- **Albania:** HIV Programming includes COVID-19 response elements for young key population with special focus on prisoners. UNFPA was an active member of the [quick needs assessment of young people in Albania related to Covid-19](#).
- **Azerbaijan:** UNFPA continued a series of its trainings on gender and SRHR with the youth and adolescents. Due to the pandemic, these trainings have been converted to online. There have been two 3-day trainings in the capital Baku and Mingechevir region. UNFPA ensured participation of a young speaker, from the country, at the launch of the State of World's Population regional event - UNFPA's project titled "Missing Girls" was presented as Azerbaijan's best practice in combating biased sex selection and undervaluing of the girl-child. The event streamed live on Facebook, was viewed over 12 000.
- **Belarus:** UNFPA and the Ministry of Health finalized 6 educational animations on COVID-19 preventive measures, addressing specifically older people. Permission to place animations on TV channels as a social advertising (free of charge) was granted.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The end of the COVID-19 lockdown does not mean that the threat of the pandemic is over; UNFPA supported the association XY to adapt YouthAgainstCOVID19 videos to the country's context, covering different topics, and provided online and telephone information and counselling on SRH issues.
- **Georgia:** UNFPA designed and printed older-people-friendly brochures regarding prevention of COVID-19, based on WHO recommendations, in three local languages – Georgian, Armenian and Azeri. The publications will be delivered to more than 2,300 vulnerable older persons.
- **North Macedonia:** The rapid assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on young people was finalized. Immediate activities have been initiated in cooperation with UNFPA Implementing Partner Y-PEER
- **Serbia:** 10,000 leaflets "Recommendations for improving physical and mental health" were printed and distributed by volunteers alongside the distribution of hygiene parcels to older people and to other vulnerable populations in isolation and in need of essential information.
- **Tajikistan:** UNFPA ensured access to HIV/STI prevention counselling for people at particular risk of HIV during the pandemic through established hotlines. Over 160 calls were received. Support was provided through distribution of hygiene and food packages to 150 people at particular risk of HIV in rural areas.
- **Ukraine:** The #HealthyChallenge for young people has been joined by 4,500 young people all over Ukraine. Flashmob helped youth be more involved in healthy lifestyles, including sports, nutrition and COVID-19 prevention.
- **Uzbekistan:** Video contest '10 rules for effective summer holidays' by the Ministry of Public Education and UNFPA with the goal of building adolescent girls' skills, including the use of ICT, has received a total of 514 submissions. The communication campaign by UNFPA and the Senate Gender Equality Commission, calling for videos on spending quality time with family, has been completed.

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Deaths (UNFPA programme countries) WHO, 2 July 2020

Country	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Albania	2,662	69
Armenia	26,658	459
Azerbaijan	18,112	220
Belarus	62,424	398
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4,606	187
Georgia	939	15
Kazakhstan	42,574	188
Kosovo*	2,948	44
Kyrgyzstan	6,261	66
Republic of Moldova	16,898	549
North Macedonia	6,470	306
Serbia	14,836	281
Tajikistan	6,005	52
Turkey	201,098	5,150
Turkmenistan	0	0
Ukraine	45,888	1,185
Uzbekistan	8,904	26
TOTAL	467,283	9,195



See UNFPA's [COVID-19 Population Vulnerability Dashboard](#) for real-time updates