

Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region

COVID-19 Situation Report No. 4

United Nations Population Fund



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Reporting Period: 14 May - 2 June 2020

Regional Highlights

- All countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, except Turkmenistan, have officially reported COVID-19 cases. Belarus, Armenia and Moldova are the most affected relative to their population size. Turkey is the most affected country in absolute numbers (making up 55 percent of reported cases in the region) and ranks fourth among UNFPA programme countries, globally, after Brazil, India and Peru.
- In the context of UNFPA's focus on ensuring responses to the most vulnerable people, the Regional Director published an [opinion piece](#) calling for the health and rights of older people to be protected during COVID-19; it was published by over 60 news outlets across the region.
- The region has seen strong support from the European Union. The private sector and academia also offered a wide range of support to UNFPA programmes, from in-kind to technical expertise, making their response truly multisectoral and creating new partnership possibilities.
- UNFPA scaled up existing partnerships and entered new ones in support of COVID-19 responses, including a new partnership with Body Shop in Georgia aimed at addressing GBV.
- UNFPA continued special efforts to reach the most vulnerable with information, supplies and services, including to survivors of GBV in shelters, pregnant and lactating women, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees and key populations at higher risk of HIV. Risk communication materials were produced to reach these vulnerable groups.
- UNFPA actively engages young people on risk communication and empowerment with online campaigns such as #YouthAgainstCOVID and #HealthyChallenge.

Situation in Numbers

 **304,961** Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

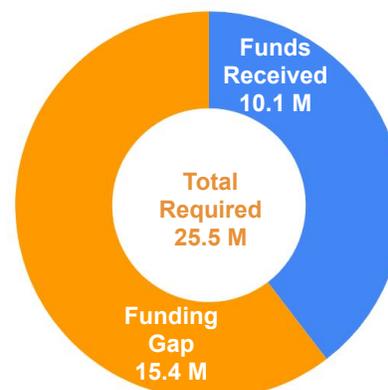
 **6,925** COVID-19 Deaths

Source: WHO 4 June, 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](#).

The region has seen strong support from the European Union (EU) to the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries, and projected EU funding shows no sign of decline. UNFPA offices in Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have been approved for joint UN funds through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). These funds and those from the EU or development banks are discussed within the UN Country Team level, where UNFPA advocates for funding to be specifically dedicated to programmes on women and girls and services and protection for older persons. The private sector and academia have offered a wide range of support to UNFPA programs, from in-kind to technical expertise, making their COVID-19 response truly multisectoral and creating new partnership possibilities.

- **Armenia:** The UN team, including UNFPA, created the programme “Living with Coronavirus - Mitigating the Socio-economic Impacts of Crisis on People and Communities for Agenda 2030 in Armenia” which will be funded by the UN MPTF.
- **Belarus:** UNFPA, in partnership with the social charitable organisation Mama PRO Help and the Ministry of Health (MoH), is ready to launch an Online School of Pregnancy and Partnership Delivery using the existing online platform. This will reduce the number of visits to healthcare facilities and substitute physical pregnancy schools in polyclinics.
- **Georgia:** The UN, including UNFPA, launched the Joint programme ‘Assisting the Georgian Government and Local Communities in Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19’, funded by the UN MPTF. In partnership with Georgia Red Cross Society, the project aims to improve the protection of vulnerable elderly populations.
- **Kyrgyzstan:** The UN Team, including UNFPA, secured USD 274,990 from the UN MPTF to support health care workers and strengthen health systems to address the immediate needs of vulnerable populations.
- **North Macedonia:** Through UNFPA advocacy, a dedicated working group on Sexual and Reproductive Health was appointed by the MoH to address SRH needs during COVID-19. UNFPA has been invited to contribute to the National Commission on Mental Health during COVID-19.
- **Tajikistan:** Alongside engaging in several coordination groups, Donor Coordination Council (DCC) Health, DCC Health Procurement and Supply Chains sub-groups and DCC Education, UNFPA was designated to lead the Medical Doctors’ Task Force managing the UN-designated hospital.
- **Turkey:** UNFPA is an active member of both the COVID-19 socio-economic impact working group and the Emergency Response and Preparedness (ERP) Group on COVID-19, which designs the country preparedness and response plan (CPRP).
- **Ukraine:** UNFPA, jointly with L’Oreal, delivered 1,950 hygienic items to support staff members and clients of shelters and health service delivery points. UNFPA Ukraine also launched an online flashmob for young fans of FC Shakhtar to promote healthy values among young people and engage girls in sports.

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

UNFPA provided technical and financial support to develop national guidelines and recommendations for continuity of SRH services in line with UNFPA technical briefs and newest guidelines, developed by leading technical partners; and provided PPE supplies to facilities providing SRH services. The newly released UNFPA Technical Brief Package for Maternity Services was translated into Russian for immediate application to national SRHR guidelines. Two regional online conferences were conducted for EECA countries to: a) discuss and agree on how to incorporate SRHR issues in the UN partners’ assessments focused on the impact of COVID-19; b) address the SRHR needs of key populations affected by COVID-19 and c) advocate for Universal Health Coverage for SRH services in the post-COVID-19 era.

Country examples:

- **Azerbaijan:** UNFPA, with the OBGYN and Public Health and Reforms Centre, translated and uploaded 7 different guidelines on COVID-19 for health service providers on SRH and maternal care to the MoH’s “E-Talim” online training portal. Video trainings on COVID-19 are being developed for the MoH training portal.

Country examples (continued):

- **Belarus:** In a series of webinars, UNFPA engaged international SRH expertise from some of the most affected countries of COVID-19 (Italy, Spain, USA) to share lessons learned, practice and knowledge on provision of obstetric care and SRH services during COVID-19 and the management of COVID-19 during pregnancy.
- **Georgia:** Through UNFPA support, the antenatal care (ANC) national clinical protocol amendment on providing phone-based antenatal care in the immediate clinical situation during COVID-19 was developed and submitted to the MoH for approval.
- **Kyrgyzstan:** The Ministry of Health established a working group on coordination of SRH and maternal and child health (MCH) to facilitate joint interventions and decrease any duplication among relevant partners. A [video](#) was produced to increase attention to the COVID-19 impact on female health workers.
- **North Macedonia:** In cooperation with the MoH and the non-governmental organisation HERA, UNFPA supported the preparation and publication of the [Interim recommendations for treatment of pregnant women during COVID-19 pandemic](#), which were referred to healthcare professionals. Four sessions of video trainings for all levels of healthcare gynecologists were undertaken to prepare them for treatment of pregnant women during COVID-19, held with the MoH.
- **Tajikistan:** Completed the local procurement of PPE supplies that will be used to support SRH facilities in the country to sustain the continuity of SRH services. In parallel, UNFPA provided up-to-date technical briefs and guidance notes on SRH and maternal care and corresponding leaflets in the context of COVID-19.
- **Turkey:** Support to the Ministry of Health in COVID-19 prevention and response as well as continuation of essential SRH services continued via Mobile Health Teams and PPE provision.
- **Ukraine:** With UNFPA support, 17 Service Delivery Points for survivors of GBV provided medical services to 53 GBV survivors.
- **Uzbekistan:** UNFPA allocated USD 350,000 from its supplies programme to bridge the national supply gap of family planning commodities and ensure uninterrupted reproductive health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNFPA received a contribution from UNAIDS to procure PPE for 21 maternity hospitals in the Andijan region to ensure the safest possible environment for all patients and frontline healthcare workers.



Addressing GBV

UNFPA is addressing GBV in the region by:

- Supporting services for survivors of GBV, including hotlines with psychosocial support and legal services, providing safe spaces, improving work of shelters in crisis, and strengthening capacity of health workers to manage GBV cases. Service providers and survivors of GBV received PPE, and vulnerable women also received hygiene kits with support from UNFPA in more than four countries.
- Across the EECA region, UNFPA initiated communication campaigns and webinars to inform partners and communities about GBV during COVID-19 and its prevention.
- In four countries, UNFPA is finalizing the results of a rapid gender assessment.

Country examples:

- **Albania:** Within a project on ending violence against women supported by Sweden, UNFPA [provided](#) hygiene kits to 663 vulnerable families in Cerrik and Pogradec.
- **Armenia:** Within an EU-funded project, UNFPA conducted a rapid assessment on accessibility of services for victims of domestic violence during the COVID-19 lockdown, with a special focus on services for women and children with disabilities.
- **Azerbaijan:** UNFPA CO continued online live sessions on GBV response in cooperation with its governmental partners (State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Bar Association) and civil society institutions (women's shelter, independent lawyers, etc). The successive webinars focused respectively on the provision of legal assistance to survivors of GBV, the multi-sectoral coordinated efforts in combating domestic violence and the role of the religion in preventing gender-biased sex selection.
- **Belarus:** GBV shelters, civil society organisations and state-run 'crisis' rooms providing support to survivors of domestic violence were supplied with essential PPE and basic hygienic items for safe and continuous services. UNFPA supplied the national GBV hotline with essential modern technical equipment for continuous counselling.
- **Georgia:** In partnership with Body Shop Georgia, the campaign [#IsolatedNotAlone](#) was launched to address violence against women during COVID-19. Billboards with hotline numbers were placed in streets, shops and pharmacies in Tbilisi. The campaign includes media activities with celebrities and government agencies.
- **Kazakhstan:** The first-ever clinical protocol on GBV was approved by the Joint Commission on quality of medical services under the MoH, with technical and financial support from UNFPA. The UNFPA-UN Women rapid gender assessment on COVID-19 was finalized and will be shared in Russian and English.
- **Kyrgyzstan:** Due to the lockdown, temporary safe spaces were organized for women and children where they received shelter and support since the state of emergency was introduced. Adults and children were provided shelter, food, hygiene kits and [information](#) on legal issues.
- **Moldova:** UNFPA in partnership with UN-Women continued the awareness campaign Men Engagement on equal involvement of men in household and childcare responsibilities, portraying examples and human stories of families with shared responsibilities, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- **Turkey:** GBV case management services continue to be provided to women, men and key groups through women and girls' safe spaces, key refugee group units and social service centres.
- **Ukraine:** UNFPA-supported services for survivors of GBV have adjusted service provision modalities to provide online psychosocial counselling and the opening of two crisis rooms in Kyiv for addressing the surge of GBV cases during COVID-19. Of all the modalities for safe space solutions for survivors of GBV, crisis rooms offer the most flexibility in terms of admission and highest protection from COVID-19.
- **Uzbekistan:** An increase in GBV cases was evident in the number of survivors assisted by the government and UNFPA-supported sites. 'Protection orders' issued to survivors of GBV increased from 90 (17-30 April) to 241 (11-18 May), and 928 appeals for legal and psychosocial support to a UNFPA-supported rehabilitation centre were recorded between 27 April and 22 May.

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. In addition to the variables that are currently included in the online [dashboard](#), UNFPA identified variables that reflect socio-economic vulnerability. These include (i) census data on ownership of assets which can indicate vulnerability to poverty, as well as (ii) IMF estimates of the magnitude of economic recession in countries around the world;
- Use of National Transfer Accounts (NTAs) and General Equilibrium Model (GEMs) for modelling socio-economic implications;
- Impact of COVID-19 on maternal mortality, family planning supplies and GBV. Based on recently published UNFPA estimates, work is ongoing to develop estimates of investment needs over the coming years; and
- Impact on international and within-country migration. UNFPA has formulated sample questions that could be added to socio-economic impact assessments in countries to gauge the implications of COVID-19 for both international and national migration.

A rapid assessment, led by the regional joint team on HIV/AIDS, of COVID-19 impact on delivering HIV-related services to people living with HIV and key populations in the EECA region is underway. The first [report for Kyrgyzstan](#) has been prepared. Preliminary data for other countries already indicate disruptions in the work of condom distribution systems and self-testing services in Armenia, stock-outs of condoms and disruption of harm reduction services in Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

Country examples:

- **Albania:** Within UN coordination mechanisms at the country level, UNFPA Albania is contributing to the Health First and Social Cohesion and Social Protection sections of Socioeconomic Recovery Plan/Response to COVID-19. The focus will be access to services especially for women and girls, survivors of domestic violence, and vulnerable youth and elderly.
- **Armenia:** UNFPA prepared a report on the pilot assessment conducted in Vagharshapat and Berd communities, as part of the nationwide Rapid Gender Assessment. The Rapid Gender Assessment will inform the COVID-19 Socio-economic Impact Assessment.
- **Kazakhstan:** A national [Population Situation Analysis](#) is now available.
- **Kyrgyzstan:** A youth survey was initiated to support the overall recommendations on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. Additionally, a [policy brief](#) about gender imbalances in income, the root causes of gender inequality and socio-economic status were developed.
- **Moldova:** UNFPA is supporting the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in re-calculating population numbers for 2020, reflecting international migration, to provide authorities with data to estimate the impact of COVID-19 on the health and well-being of the population and the economy, and to identify post-crisis measures and solutions.
- **North Macedonia:** Initial data from the rapid youth assessment questionnaire, disseminated in cooperation with UNICEF, was analyzed and the final results from 700 young people are expected by June 10. The results will be used for planning the immediate and mid-term youth activities as well as for advocacy and resource mobilization.
- **Serbia:** UNFPA participates in the UNCT Task Force, which supports the government in assessing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on 15 sectors, including health, social services and gender.
- **Tajikistan:** UNFPA contributed to the health first and social cohesion sections of the Socio-economic Impact Analysis of COVID-19 focusing on implications of the pandemic on women and girls, survivors of domestic violence, and vulnerable youth. UNFPA leads UN Medical Doctor's Task Force Team and coordinate UN staff safety and security issues under the leadership of UNRC and facilitate UNCT. UNFPA is appointed as a UN Covid19 Coordinator. UNFPA promotes joint efforts on GBV protection through GTG in cooperation with UN Women.
- **Turkey:** UNFPA contributed to the health, protection and refugee sections of the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment and Response Plans.

Risk communication and community engagement (including with young people)

UNFPA actively engages young people on risk communication and empowerment with the online campaigns #YouthAgainstCOVID and #HealthyChallenge and organizes multiple online trainings, webinars and other multi-day online marathons, engaging young people on various topics that matter for them in the COVID-19 context, such as health, gender equality and stereotypes, personal development, migration and online activism and journalism.

In several countries, UNFPA works with national authorities to ensure continuation of educational services, including on healthy lifestyles. Across the region, UNFPA country offices document challenges for vulnerable populations, including those at risk of HIV and those living with disabilities, to advocate for inclusive responses by governments and partners.

UNFPA partners with youth organisations in the context of the [Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action](#) to include young people in responses and ensure young people's participation in defining response priorities. In collaboration with other UN agencies, guidance on the inclusion of young people will be rolled out in the upcoming period.

Country examples:

- **Azerbaijan:** UNFPA transferred its partnership with local youth houses to online engagement. A series of online trainings on gender and SRHR were organized for adolescents and youth.
- **Belarus:** UNFPA organized three (3) four-day online marathons for adolescents and young people, focusing on youth from small towns and remote areas, to explore and discuss techniques and approaches to cope with emotional stress related to COVID-19 and existing gender stereotypes, which negatively affect young people.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** UNFPA launched a survey on the effects of COVID-19 on the health of young people, their desire to emigrate and community relations, and is continuing the production of talk shows of the Youth Barometer initiative.
- **Moldova:** UNFPA, together with the Ministry of Education, conducted an online Youth Talks programme—an innovative project focused on personal development and motivation for young people, social media and branding, civic journalism and online youth participation, as an alternative platform of non-formal education.
- **North Macedonia:** [Leaflets](#) for pregnant women with useful information about prevention of COVID-19 have been prepared and distributed in cooperation with the MoH and and HERA.
- **Serbia:** UNFPA partnered with the International Federation of Medical Students Association, UNICEF and students to develop new episodes of the global #YouthAgainstCOVID campaign. A total of 6 episodes in the Serbian language have been produced so far.
- **Tajikistan:** Produced and disseminated SRH-related leaflets, technical briefs and guidance notes in the context of COVID-19.
- **Ukraine:** Launched the online #HealthyChallenge for young people to promote healthy lifestyles and raise awareness on COVID-19. A series of online skills development trainings, conducted by regional youth centres and/or civil society organisations that have been trained with UNFPA Ukraine support, for youth to increase their employability.
- **Uzbekistan:** UNFPA, in collaboration of the Ministry of Public Education, announced the “10 rules for effective summer holidays” video contest on the telegram channel, targeted at adolescent girls to strengthen their skills, including the use of ICT, to ensure that they have quality summer time while in quarantine.

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

UNFPA prioritizes its response towards older people, from procuring PPE for care homes to organising online emotional support, and creating or strengthening inter-generational dialogue and support.

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. As of 2 June, the hotline helped a total of 61 people living with HIV/AIDS (37 men and 24 women) to receive necessary counselling support and life-saving antiretroviral treatment medications while stuck (due to border closures) in the Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, the United Arab Emirates and the United States. See a personal story [here](#).

At the country level, UNFPA continues to support civil society organisations and the healthcare system to address the needs of key populations and people living with HIV during COVID-19, by strengthening capacities and partnering with AIDS centres and other healthcare providers to ensure the provision of information and services for key populations, women living with HIV and those at risk of HIV.

Country examples:

- **Armenia:** By urgent request of the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, UNFPA decided to purchase 20,000 surgical masks for elderly houses and child care institutions due to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases.
- **Azerbaijan:** UNFPA organised a series of online meetings with the aging project target group, each time hosting guests representing different specialties. Additionally, a number of videos with the participation of older persons were produced, including a motivational [video](#).
- **Kyrgyzstan:** Produced an advocacy [video](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities.
- **Moldova:** UNFPA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection, implemented a social campaign “Pandemic unites generations” to strengthen the intergenerational dialogue during COVID-19. 200 isolated older persons were phoned by young UNFPA volunteers in order to provide emotional support.
- **Serbia:** Together with the Red Cross of Serbia, on 25 May, UNFPA started distribution of hygiene items and information materials for 4,430 of the most vulnerable older people from 31 municipalities. Information lines for older people in Serbian and English (for international residents) are still functional, providing legal advice and psychological [support](#).
- **Turkey:** Protection services continue to be provided to people at risk of/living with HIV and people living with disabilities. Health services were provided to seasonal migrant workers and rural refugees via mobile health teams.



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:

- [Older people's rights and dignity must be protected amid Covid-19 pandemic](#) ([opinion piece](#) by Regional Director Alanna Armitage published in over 60 news outlets across Eastern Europe and Central Asia)
- International Families Day [video statement](#) by Regional Director Alanna Armitage
- [Baby's first cry under lockdown: Delivering safely amid a pandemic in North Macedonia](#)
- [Silent solutions available to quarantined survivors of domestic violence in Ukraine](#)
- [In Kyrgyz Republic, lockdowns force crisis centres to close their doors](#)
- [Prominent basketballers in Turkey encourage men to engage at home](#)

Other country examples:

- **Armenia:** Minister of Health [acknowledges](#) UNFPA as partner that “extended a helping hand” in the fight against COVID-19 in Armenia
- **Belarus:** [TV broadcast](#) on UNFPA's assistance in preventing Covid-19 among older populations with innovative IT tool developed by Oyper, allowing people to donate while watching a video. TNT and BelMuzTV channels supported the initiative and have broadcasted the videos several times per day.
- **Georgia:** New UNFPA partnership with Body Shop to address violence against women in the context of COVID-19 was highlighted by national [Formula TV](#), popular [online magazines](#), [GINSC](#) and other [portals](#).
- **Kazakhstan:** Series of podcasts released on engaged fatherhood during COVID-19: [qualities of an engaged father](#); how engaged fatherhood helps [build healthier relations in children's future families](#), and why [love and respect to one's partner](#) is essential to being an engaged spouse and father.
- **Kyrgyzstan:** Several [stories](#) on GBV and COVID-19 were posted on and disseminated.
- **Moldova:** Feature story on how the [pandemic unites generations](#) was covered widely, including by the [Ministry of Health](#), [UN Moldova](#), and national media ([here](#) and [here](#)). Portrait of a [student who combats profession gender stereotypes](#) covered in the [media](#). [Story](#) on the occasion of International Family Day disseminated. New [video](#) advocating for continuous access to family planning information & services during emergencies produced and disseminated on social media (over 87K views).
- **North Macedonia:** [Press release](#) on pregnant women and COVID-19 prevention published in 30 media outlets.
- **Serbia:** Dad in Quarantine campaign had a cumulative reach of over 335K users on social media. For International Families Day, 10 best submissions were selected and published on [social media](#). Joint statement with Minister of demography and population policy was published in 30 [media outlets](#)
- **Turkey:** To mark youth week, an online [Youth Festival](#) was organized including 4 live chats with a famous [chef](#), [basketball player](#), [actress](#) and [singer](#), followed by 1000s of people. A [Friends of UNFPA Turkey video](#) with famous basketball players to highlight men engagement at home was covered by leading news channels including [NTV](#), [CNN-Turk](#) and [HaberTürk](#).
- **Ukraine:** Reached over 100K people with COVID-related posts on social media (incl. 83K with GBV and COVID information). Launched online flashmob with FC Shakhtar and already reached 14K people online. Placed GBV in quarantine press-release in 10 [media](#). Generated 170 [media releases](#) of other [GBV related news](#) and 11 [media](#) articles on other news on health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19.
- **Uzbekistan:** Communications campaign with Senate Gender Equality Commission comprising call for videos on spending quality time with family, prevention of GBV and male engagement in bringing up children etc. completed with 117 videos received; selection process is ongoing. <http://senat.uz/uz/lists/view/1466>.

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Deaths (UNFPA programme countries) WHO, 4 June 2020

Country	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Albania	1,197	33
Armenia	11,221	176
Azerbaijan	6,260	76
Belarus	45,116	248
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,550	156
Georgia	801	13
Kazakhstan	12,067	48
Kosovo*	1,142	30
Kyrgyzstan	1,899	20
Republic of Moldova	8,795	314
North Macedonia	2,492	145
Serbia	11,523	245
Tajikistan	4,191	48
Turkey	166,422	4,609
Turkmenistan	0	0
Ukraine	25,411	748
Uzbekistan	3,874	16
TOTAL	304,961	6,925

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

