

## Covid-19 deaths increase in Georgia; experts say the peak is yet to come

Over 7250 people have died of coronavirus since the beginning of the pandemic

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The number of deaths from Covid-19 has been increasing last two months. Experts are saying that the little stabilization is a result of the recent restrictions adopted in the country, which minimized movements in the largest cities.

Since the pandemic started, Georgia has reported over 7250 deaths. The number of people dying has been increasing significantly in August, with about 50 people dying of the virus every day on average.

According to the official data, 1355 people have died of coronavirus in the country over the past 28 days. The country has reported a total of over 543,000 cases out of which, 120,915 were reported over the past 28 days.

Some of the health professionals have started talking about the possibility of the number of deaths increasing in the near future. The Medical Director of the Iashvili Children's Hospital, Ivane Ckhaidze talked about this and said that in Georgia, in terms of deaths, the worst period will be the end of August and the first week of September.

He said that it should be considered that the peak of the fourth wave is August 17, following which the number of people infected with the virus started to decrease slowly.



The number of deaths has increased significantly in August



There are four vaccines available in Georgia, with 50,000 doses of J&J to arrive in September

"What is more important, the number of active cases has decreased from 61,000 to 53,000. However, the biggest pain for us is the number of deaths. If we look at the numbers that we have today, we have been talking about this when we assessed the August 17 week. In most cases, 3 weeks after the peak in cases, we have a peak in the number of deaths," said Ckhaidze.

Yesterday, August 29, the country reported 2,669 new cases and 76 deaths. There were about 25,000 tests taken on Saturday, out of which, 15,027 were antigen tests, and 10,190 were PCR tests.

As the virus further spreads in the country, many people start to talk about the importance of vaccination. Georgia has already administered over 1,122,000 doses of the vaccine. Out of this, 760,899 people have received at least one dose of vaccine, which is 26.6 percent of the population, and 361,310 people have already received both doses, which is 12.7 percent of the population.

There are currently several vaccines available in the country. People can get both first and second doses of Pfizer, AstraZeneca, and Sinovac. As for Sinopharm, there are only doses left for the second dose.

Amiran Gamkrelidze, the director of NCDC has announced that the country will receive more Sinopharm doses. Recently, it was also announced that Georgia will receive 50,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine as a gift from Germany. There is only one dose of this vaccine required for immunization. The country expects to receive the doses in September.

# Georgia takes part in evacuation efforts from Afghanistan

## Georgia sent humanitarian aid to the Kabul airport

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia announced on August 26 that Georgia would support an international effort aimed at the urgent evacuation of people employed by International Organizations and Institutions from Afghanistan.

The military cargo planes of the NATO Military Cargo Transportation Organization are using the Tbilisi International Airport to perform daily flights to and from Kabul. Various charter flights have been performed to evacuate people from Kabul to Tbilisi airport.

The Regional Transit Hub was established at the Tbilisi International Airport and at the military base station of Georgian Defense Forces near the airport with the engagement of Georgian, Norwegian, Swedish, and other NATO member states.

The Georgian side has also agreed to honor the application of several international organizations, such as the National Endowment for Democracy, NED, the Intentional Republican Institute, IRI, the Asian Development Bank, ADB, the International Monetary Fund, IMF, as well as the World Bank, WB. As a result, the country will also assist in the evacuation of the staff of these companies for temporary placement in Georgia.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia David Zalkaliani said that Georgia has to play an important role as a transit country in ensuring the withdrawal of the Member States' armed forces from Afghanistan.



Georgian Airport has been used as a Transit Hub for numerous European countries



Georgian side also partnered with numerous international organizations to help them evacuate

“It was a thoroughly organized process. Evacuated people were flown by military cargo planes to the Tbilisi International Airport where they were redirected to various countries of Europe. This process is still ongoing and involves all our respective agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense. The entire process is led by the Prime Minister’s office, in close coordination with our partners,” said Zalkaliani.

In addition, according to the decision made by the Georgian Prime Minister, Irakli Garibashvili, the Georgian side sent water, as humanitarian aid, to Kabul Airport.

According to Revaz Javelidze, Deputy Head of the Government Administration, Georgia stands by its international partners and is actively involved in managing both humanitarian and evacuation processes.

The Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, Carl Hartzell went to Twitter and wrote about the steps taken by the Georgian side. “Thank you, Georgia, for your strong support to the evacuation from Kabul which allowed EU member states to swiftly and safely transit and transfer via Tbilisi airport,” wrote EU Ambassador to Georgia.

Yesterday, on August 29, it was announced that the European countries are finishing up the evacuation from Kabul Airport. According to Western media reports, the pace of evacuation measures at Kabul airport has slowed and the Taliban is preparing to take control of the airport.

# Young people to advocate for voting in local elections

## UNDP and Sweden are launching a campaign to educate first-time voters in Georgia

**BORJOMI.** 27 August 2021 – The upcoming local elections in Georgia are a chance to promote diversity and equality in governance, vote more women into office and elect competent, efficient and accountable authorities who will address a range of social and economic issues. Young people in Georgia are responding to this opportunity by launching a national ‘**Shall We Go to Vote?**’ campaign, supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

and the Government of Sweden.

Motivated and active Georgian youth are leading this initiative, which includes a series of training on democracy, elections, self-governance, human rights, gender equality and citizen engagement. The peers-engaging-peers nature of the training will motivate first-time voters to cast their first ballots in October. The campaign will continue through September.

Twenty-five young trainers who were selected in the competition are now going through a specialized course that will prepare them to pass their knowledge on to other young voters across Georgia. The three-day ‘training of trainers’ kicked off in Borjomi on 26 August. “Young voices must be heard in

elections if we want to address intergenerational issues such as climate change and inequality,” said UNDP Acting Head **Anna Chernyshova**. “We help first-time voters in Georgia to understand their role in this critical democratic process and hold decision-making power over the issues that will shape their future.”

“Sweden is a long-standing supporter of democracy, gender equality and youth activism in Georgia,” said Ambassador of Sweden **Ulrik Tidestrom**. “Our initiative aims to ensure that young Georgians, especially those in the rural areas, will engage in the electoral process as responsible and informed citizens. We wish to encourage young women and men to be part of this

life-changing experience, also bearing in mind that a gender quota will be applied to local elections for the first time in the history of independent Georgia.”

The Central Electoral Commission reports that people aged 18 to 29 comprise 18 to 20 percent of Georgian voters. The research commissioned by the International Republican Institute last year revealed that their turnout rates are high; by then, more than 80 percent of young people stated they would cast a vote in the 2020 parliamentary elections. However, the same research showed that only 38 percent of young voters were familiar with the electoral environment and programmes.

With the 2021 local elections

several weeks away, the educational campaign for first-time voters will address these gaps by assisting young people to learn about the areas such as the foundations of democracy, the electoral system, the competencies of the central and local governments, forms of citizen participation and the roles of the media in elections. Special emphasis will be placed on respecting human rights, ensuring gender equality and protecting the rights of minorities and persons with disabilities.

UNDP and the Georgian organization ‘Democracy Laboratory’ (DemLab) are implementing the campaign, drawing on resources provided by the Sweden-funded UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality.

### Weather

Monday, August 30

Day Clear  
High: 35°C

Night Clear  
Low: 23°C

Tuesday, August 31

Day Clear  
High: 36°C

Night Clear  
Low: 22°C

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