



UNITED NATIONS
ALBANIA



COVID-19
RESPONSE

Issue No:4 / 14 May-18 June

A SPECIAL COVID-19 RESPONSE NEWSLETTER

This fourth issue of our COVID-19 special newsletter covers the period from 13 May to date. It provides new updates of the work of the UN Agencies in Albania in response to the pandemic, in particular to reaching those furthest behind, advocating for women and children at risk and adjusting programmes to better assist Albania's response and recovery against COVID-19. Previous issues of this special newsletter can be accessed here: [issue 1](#) [issue 2](#) [issue 3](#)

This period was characterized by a steady reduction of the number of cases and hospitalization. In mid-May this resulted in the announcement of the relaxation strategy of the government. However, during the last week, the number of cases is rising again.

The WHO continues to be the UN frontline responder and supporter of the fight against COVID19 in Albania.



One of 5 auto ambulances delivered by UNOPS as part of EU's assistance to Albania, Photo Credit: EU in Albania

Emergency Support

UNOPS delivered on 15 and 18 June 2020 the second and third part of EU's 4 Million Euro assistance to Albania for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19. These deliveries included 5 fully equipped ambulances, 100 ICU hospital beds, 30 portable mechanical ventilators, 30 ECG equipment and other necessary medical equipment to treat severe cases.

WHO, through USAID funds, supplied to the Institute of Public Health 2500 RNA extraction tests, and reagents for more than 40000 tests. 3450 more are arriving in the next few weeks.

On 16 July 2010 UNDP delivered to the MoHSP new ventilators as part of the Covid-19 joint assistance by

governments of Switzerland and Norway and UNDP Albania. The new 31 life-saving machines were procured as part of collective efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and to increase the capacities of Albania's healthcare system to cope with the emergency.

As preschools and creches reopened on June 1st, UNICEF Albania thanks to USAID funds, delivered 400 infra-red no touch thermometers for 400 creches and kindergartens in 10 municipalities (Tirana, Shkodra, Durres, Korca, Vlora, Maliq, Berat, Kukes, Lezhe, Elbasan). [Click here](#).



"Lifesaving ventilators delivered to Health Authorities thanks to Switzerland, Norway and UNDP. Photo Credit UNDP Albania"

To help vulnerable and poor families and children cope with the financial burden caused by COVID 19, UNICEF is piloting for the first time in Albania a Humanitarian Cash Transfer programme in Municipalities of Durres and Korca. The amount of cash varies between 4'000 – 4'800 ALL for a family depending the family size and transfers are processed through Albanian postal services. [Click Here.](#)

UN Women delivered 1100 protective equipment items to 12 Civil Society Organizations that support women in Tirana, Durres, Shkoder, Vlore and Elbasan. These items

enable CSO service providers to continue offering services to women in need, including accommodation in shelters in line with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection's **Protocol** on the management and functioning of shelters during the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNFPA **provided** hygiene kits to 663 vulnerable families in Cerrik and Pogradec as part of the UN joint programme 'Ending Violence Against Women in Albania – EVAWIA supported by Sweden.

UN's Immediate Socio-Economic Reponse to Covid-19 in Albania

The established UNCT taskforce working on the UN-ALB Socio Economic Recovery Plan had a coordinative meeting with GoA and Development partners on July 3rd. The focus of all participatory institutions is to work together in supporting the national response plan and in conducting light and quick assessments required to support it. The process for the formulation of the UN's Recovery and Response Plan (including its components) as well as the socio-economic impact assessments ongoing and a draft will be presented to the Government and partners in the coming days.

The ILO completed the Enterprise survey on Assessing the needs of enterprises resulting from COVID-19. The findings of the survey that was conducted in cooperation

with the EBRD and Business Albania will be published on ilo.org website shortly.

The rapid gender assessment conducted by UN Women confirmed that COVID-19 risks to deepen gender inequalities, disproportionately affecting women livelihoods. The assessment reveals, for example, that women **psychological and mental health** are affected at much higher rates compared to men (69% vs. 57%), with active working women (35-44 years) experiencing even higher levels of distress (72% vs 58%). The survey was conducted in partnership with IDRA Research & Consulting from April 17 to 26. To learn more about the findings check out the [UN Women Website](#) where results will be published shortly.

Enhancing Albania's National Capacities to Combat Covid-19

The ILO will provide technical support to the State Labour Inspectorate, social partners and the companies on the compliance and monitoring of the red protocols and the occupational health and safety standards and measures to be taken by the companies for a safe resume of operations after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

Strengthening of COVID-19 testing capacities

WHO carried out an online training of Municipality Hospitals and public health staff of District Public Health Units on "Clinical Management & Infection Prevention and Control". 2 hospitals with 25 Health professionals trained. As COVID-19 transmission is reported in health facility settings, WHO is holding a series of trainings of health personnel at University Hospital "Mother Teresa" on "Covid-19 prevention and control".

WHO Solidarity Trial

22 Albanian patients are enrolled at Solidarity Trial, launched by the World Health Organization and partners to help find an effective treatment for COVID-19. More than 3500 patients have been recruited in 35 countries, with over 400 hospitals actively recruiting patients. Overall, over 100 countries have joined or expressed an interest in joining the trial, and WHO is actively supporting 60 of them.

Mental Health and Psychosocial support

WHO and UNICEF are providing guidance and training to 250 professionals (psychiatrists, psychologist, social workers, GP from both public and NGO sector) in 8 webinar sessions extended in a period of two months, on mental health in emergencies, cross cultural issues and human rights protection during humanitarian emergencies, setting of mental health and psychosocial programs in emergencies, community-based mental health and

psychosocial support for children and adolescents in humanitarian emergency settings, sexual and gender-based violence during humanitarian emergencies, stress related disorders during humanitarian emergencies (grief, loss, and depression), severe mental disorders, substance use related disorders and epilepsy, building back better.

Risk Communication

WHO supported the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) to producing 3 video spots for daily TV outreach on measures to be taken by individuals to protect themselves from Covid-19.

The ILO will provide technical support to the State Labour Inspectorate, social partners and the companies on the compliance and monitoring of the red protocols and the occupational health and safety standards and measures to be taken by the companies for a safe resume of operations after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Garment industry companies, the target companies for this intervention starting in June 2020, will also be provided with PPEs.



WHO and UNICEF providing training to mental health professionals. Photo Credit WHO Albania

Addressing Gender Concerns

On 28 May 2020 the UN Women Executive Director held a dedicated dialogue with representatives of National Gender Equality Mechanisms from the Western Balkans (including Albania), to discuss the gender equality impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nine priority issues for follow up during and post the pandemic were identified. To learn more, [Click Here](#).

Supporting vulnerable groups

During the last two weeks, 28 identified cases of victims from domestic violence have received services of CRMs in 5 municipalities (Kavaja, Patos, Maliq, Roskovec and Fushe-Arrez). *Under the UN Joint Programme "Ending Violence against women in Albania" (EVAWIA) funded*

Viktimat e dhunës seksuale mund të ndihen edhe më të pasigurta gjatë situatës emergjente të shkaktuar nga COVID-19.

Dhunë seksuale është çdo akt seksual, përpjekje për të kryer një akt seksual, komente të padëshiruara seksuale ose ndonjë akt tjetër drejtur kundër seksualitetit të një personi duke përdorur shtrëngimin, nga çdo person pavarësisht marrëdhënies së tyre me viktimitë, në çdo ambient.



Dhuna seksuale ka pasoja në shëndetin fizik, atë mendor dhe në marrëdhëniet shoqërore



Qendra e menaxhimit të krizës për rastet e dhunës seksuale-LILIUM operon nën kujdesin e Ministrisë së Shëndetësisë dhe Mbrojtjes Sociale. LILIUM ofron shërbime të integruara dhe të koordinuara për viktimat e dhunës seksuale 24 orë në 7 ditë të javës.



- Për të kërkuar mbështetje psiko-sociale telefononi në numrin e Qendrës LILUM: **0693079598**
- Për të raportuar rastin telefononi policinë në: **129**



by Sweden, UNDP has supported 15 municipalities¹ to establish and strengthen coordinated referral mechanisms (CRM) for domestic violence (DV) and gender-based violence (GBV) – which are proving to be even more important during the current Covid-19 emergency situation.

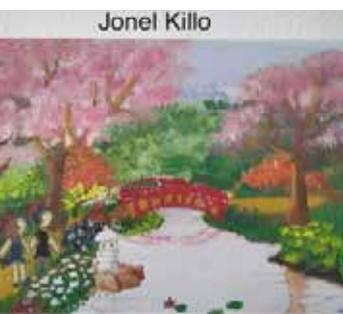
Specialized emergency services to **sexual violence victims** are available at LILUM Center- the only one-stop center for sexual violence victims.

Facilitating access to justice to vulnerable individuals has remained a priority during Covid-19 lockdown. 15 victims of domestic violence have been provided with free legal aid and 6 other clients were supported with administrative procedures to have special daily permission for leaving their home during lockdown as part of the UNDP's project 'Expanding Free Legal Aid Services (EFLAS) to Women and Men in Albania in cooperation with the Albanian Ministry of Justice.

A specific 'COVID-19 related' internal regulation on managing urgent sexual violence cases is now in place thanks to UNDP support under the joint UN programme EVAWIA.

Municipalities of Kavaja, Malesi e Madhe, Maliq, Patos, Ura Vajgurore, Kucova, Dropull launched online art competitions under the motto "Together for healthy and non-violent families, even in emergency situations". The aim was to engage men, boys, women and girls and increase their awareness on GBV and promoting healthy relationship through art.

Over 125 young girls and boys participated in these competitions and presented online their artistic works sharing their messages on fighting gender-based violence. The winners of the best artistic works were announced in the social media webpages of the municipalities.



Following the approval of the **dedicated protocol** on uninterrupted provision of services by emergency shelters, an online training session was organized by UN Women and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, to provide information on the requirements of the Protocol. The training was attended by 37 public and non-public services providers for survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking from across the country, including 19 residential centers that offer housing service, representatives of Ministry of Health and Social Protection, as well as State Social Services and Municipality Local Coordinators where these services are located.

As part of Sweden supported programme "Ending Violence Against Women in Albania – EVAWIA" UNFPA is

addressing gender-based violence (GBV) with supporting services for survivors of GBV in 60 municipalities to disseminate Standard Operational Procedures and to strengthen capacity of 180 shelter coordinators (*number is for current year). As an immediate response to the request by the shelter in Pogradec, 15 service providers and 93 survivors of GBV received PPE, and 152 vulnerable women heads of families received hygiene kits in Pogradec and Cerrik.

A regional **report** that includes Albania highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women civil society organizations and their beneficiaries. It provides evidence and recommendations to better support CSOs and governments during and after the pandemic. Surveyed CSOs in Albania promptly adapted to this unprecedented crisis and its impact on women safety and wellbeing. 83% of these organizations were able to reorganize services to respond to the urgent needs of women and girls facing domestic violence during isolation and lockdown.

Child Protection and Education

UNICEF in collaboration with partners has focused its efforts in strengthening capacities around child protection in emergencies. 5 webinars were organized from 10 April until 15 May with statutory child protection workers on case management during COVID-19.

The purpose of these workshops was to provide guidance on the adaptation of case management methodology while ensuring protection of the workers.

UNICEF is supporting Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports with standards for safe school reopening and has equipped 46.000 students and their respective teachers with 100.000 disinfectant kits. By helping the Government to use the Akademi.al platform, UNICEF has helped to prepare 31.000 students for their end of the year exams. 2.500 additional lessons in total are expecting to be delivered by the end of the project. The first 1,000 additional video lessons have been prepared. The same lessons are also aired through the main public TV for a bigger reach with the most vulnerable children.

Through the LearnIN initiative, 50 schoolteachers from Albania attended the training events along with participants from other countries in the region forming as such a community practice for teachers to respond to the challenges of distant learning and COVID- 19. We helped

our education partners to prepare a guidance on starting the academic process for kindergartens and creches safely by also ensuring compliance of child development principles. The document has been shared with all local education offices in the country. To reduce the digital divide among children, UNICEF is purchasing 430 tablets and internet for the most vulnerable children (e.g. Roma children with disability, children victims of the earthquake, children living in remote areas) thanks also to a generous contribution from World Bank staff association (matched by the institution) .

UNFPA in partnership with the Observatory for the Rights of Children and Youth (Observatory), as part of strengthening and expanding the activities of “Youth Voice” network of organizations, have initiated a survey among young people living in the municipalities of Shkodër, Roskovec, Belsh, Korçë, Pogradec, Tirana, Durrës, Fier, Maliq, Krujë, Dibër, Lezhë, Përmet, Urë Vajgurore, Shijak:

The survey aims to assess the needs of young people during the period of global pandemic Covid-19, related to health, education, participation and social services. The findings of the survey will feed into future interventions to respond to such needs in 15 municipalities where “Youth Voice” network is operational. **See: Youth Voice Survey.**

Migrants and Refugees

IOM and UNHCR have teamed up under the new joint regional initiative to “Addressing COVID-19 challenges within the Migrant and Refugee Response in the Western Balkans”, funded by European Union (EU) Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP).

Through this project, IOM and UNCHR in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo will assist the Border authorities, migration management and asylum authorities, institutions and actors providing accommodation and protection services

to refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, health care institutions, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

The project aims to protect migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and other vulnerable persons by ensuring that systems and services in place are supported, reinforced and can be quickly adapted to the measures that must be implemented in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.



UN Resident Coordinator Brian J Williams with journalist Ilva Tare at Ilva Now show Euronews Albania. Photo Credit: Euronews Albania

Communications

UN Resident Coordinator in Albania Brian J. Williams in an interview with Euronews Albania talked about the socio-economic impact of the pandemic and the work that UN family of agencies in Albania is doing to support the vulnerable and also support country's strategic planning for socio-economic recovery following the pandemic.

▶ [Watch the full interview here.](#)

IOM's Programme "Engage the Albanian Diaspora to the Social and Economic Development of Albania" have been following the remarkable contributions being made by Albanians in their host country – Italy, during the hardship of Covid-19. Watch the interviews of programme representatives to Lombardy and Emilia Romagna.

▶ [Click Here](#) / [Click Here.](#)



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