

COVID-19

GNWP Mitigation and Adaptation Strategy and Appeal

April 2020

Country Update

Armenia

As of April 20, 2020, 1,339 COVID-19 cases were registered in Armenia, including 22 lethal cases.[1] On March 16, 2020, Armenia declared a state emergency, with mandatory self-isolation until May 14th. All but “vital movements” have been prohibited, most workplaces have halted or moved their operations online and “non-essential” establishments have been closed. As of March 20, all universities have switched to online learning.

The government has also prohibited the publishing or sharing any information about the COVID-19 outbreak that did not come from the Armenian government or other official sources, in an effort to prevent the spread of fake news.[2]

Impact on women and on peace and security:

- Domestic violence organizations have noted a 30% spike in domestic violence reports[3], and raised alarm about insufficient capacities to respond. Similarly, the Ombudsman’s office has also noted an increase in the number of domestic violence cases received.

Response by women peacebuilders:

- Women have been at the centre of citizenship organizing to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Women groups initiated “emergency teams” to provide food packages to elderly people. Food items for one month have been packaged and delivered to elderly and vulnerable families. Women drove the groceries to the households where they unloaded them, with help from men volunteers. According to Democracy Today, 35,000 food packages were delivered through this cooperation. Women have also organized to sew surgical masks and deliver them to hospitals.
- Democracy Today has used its cross-border network of women peacebuilders to share information about the progress of the COVID-19 situation in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Syria and Yemen. It is also working with partners in other countries to launch appeals for the international community for gender-sensitive response to COVID-19 crisis, especially in humanitarian and crisis contexts.
- Democracy Today is also closely monitoring the situation in Nagorno Karabakh, maintaining contact with young women in border communities to ensure that the peacebuilding activities do not stop despite the state of emergency. They have circulated an open letter from young women, in support of the UN Secretary-General’s call for ceasefire.
- Women’s organizations have been using their existing networks to provide consultations, counselling and emotional support to women – including victims of violence – online. They have also been disseminating information about cyber-security among vulnerable women.

[1] Worldometer, “COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC”, 16 April 2020, Available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>, accessed 16 April 2020.

[2] Ani Mejlumyan, “Armenia takes hard line against media reporting on COVID-19”, Eurasianet, 23 March 2020. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/armenia-takes-hard-line-against-media-reporting-on-covid-19>. Accessed on 1 April 2020.

[3] Mary Martirosyan, “Violence against women has increased, restrictions aggravate the situation”, Factor.am, 20 April 2020. Available at: https://factor.am/242677.html?fbclid=IwAR0jZqhCjj2aP2mnlgm5WfjePDJ20Wp7t6hw7g_fL961c8xkvU6iAnANL-o