



## COVID-19 and Needs of Migrants in South Caucasus

**Project type:** Emergency Response

**Implementing countries:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

**Duration:** September—December 2020

The project is funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM)

### Target Group:

- ⇒ Migrants in irregular situations
- ⇒ Low skilled / low income labour migrants
- ⇒ Foreign students
- ⇒ Rejected asylum seekers

**Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in severe travel restrictions bringing international mobility to a standstill, and severely depressing formal and informal job markets. As a result, thousands of foreign migrants have found themselves in situations of severe vulnerability in the South Caucasus – stranded, in deteriorating socio-economic conditions, and facing linguistic, legal, and other types of barriers in access to State support services.

Under the overall outcome of promoting migrant-inclusive response to COVID-19 and assisting migrants in vulnerable situations, this emergency response project will provide humanitarian assistance to stranded, vulnerable migrants (foreign nationals) in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, corresponding to the identified priorities in the region.

### Project Components:

**Research:** IOM will implement a regional assessment to map out stranded and vulnerable migrants in the region and assess the breadth and depth of COVID-19 impact on these groups, delivering monthly situation reports and generating a comprehensive evidence-basis on the relevant vulnerable groups' status and COVID-19 related needs in Georgia and the South Caucasus region.

**Public Information Dissemination:** IOM will scale up its risk communication campaigns targeting foreign migrants in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Fit-for-purpose information, education communication (IEC) materials will be developed and disseminated in appropriate languages and through migrant-preferred channels, containing critical information on health, immigration, and socio-economic concerns among the target group. The campaigns will seek to target especially those vulnerable migrant groups not reached by existing COVID-19 strategies implemented by stakeholders in the three countries. Campaigns will be implemented with the support of local NGOs and in coordination with relevant Governmental authorities.

**Direct Humanitarian Assistance to Vulnerable Third-country Migrants:** IOM will deliver ad-hoc humanitarian assistance services to individual vulnerable foreign migrants and families in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Assistance will be tailored to individual needs on the basis of a rigorous eligibility assessment in line with IOM's best practices. Foreseen assistance types include housing, personal documents, food / hygienic items, medical care, and legal support (visa extension assistance, counselling).