



Conscription in the Caucasus during Coronavirus

OE Watch Commentary: The governments of the Caucasus have been dealing with a number of issues related to the coronavirus pandemic, including safely carrying out conscription for their respective armed forces. The accompanying excerpted articles offer a look at how this is taking place.

The article from *Trend*, a news agency in Azerbaijan, reports that “the draft for military service and the return home of service members in Azerbaijan will be carried out by a special method.” The official interviewed does not offer any more details about this, but claims that “if the rules of the coronavirus were not followed during military service, it would be extremely difficult to protect the military,” suggesting that the armed forces have been following some set of measures to curb the spread of the virus to continue operating.

The first article from *Kavkazskiy Uzel*, a news website focusing on the Caucasus region, reports on the upcoming draft in Armenia and how “members of the armed forces and recruits will be provided medical masks, gloves and disinfectants, and the parents of the conscripts will be able to follow the process through a video feed.” As of the article’s publication date, Armenia is reportedly the “leader in the number of infected.” The article also mentions other measures that will be taken during the draft and that it “will be held [from] July 1 to August 30.”



Georgian Soldiers during an exercise.

Source: Eric Bloom, US Army via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Georgian_Soldiers_during_an_exercise.jpg, Public Domain

The second article from *Kavkazskiy Uzel* reports on how the Georgian government has been dealing with the pandemic and its draft. As of early March, the Georgian government “postponed the spring draft for a month” until “April 13.” While there has been no update on the status of the draft since the article came out, the government extended its state of emergency until late May.

Overall, the governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia are moving forward with their annual drafts, though they are taking precautions during the ongoing pandemic. While there is no updated information on when and how the Georgian government will carry out its draft, it is worth considering how conscription in Georgia has changed over the past few years. The Georgian government abolished the draft for the armed forces in 2016, as it tried to bring in more contract soldiers, only to reinstate it a year later. If this is any indication, the draft in Georgia is likely to happen to at some point and in some form. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

“During the summer draft, members of the armed forces and recruits will be provided medical masks, gloves and disinfectants, and the parents of the conscripts will be able to follow the process through a video feed, the Ministry of Defense of Armenia reported.”



Continued: Conscription in the Caucasus during Coronavirus

Source: Ilham Isabalayev, “Призыв на военную службу в Азербайджане будет осуществляться в особом порядке (The draft for military service in Azerbaijan will be carried out by a special method),” *Trend*, 1 May 2020. <https://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/society/3232972.html>

The draft for military service and the return home of service members in Azerbaijan will be carried out by a special method...Ramin Bayramli, head of the association for the management of medical territorial units, said this at a briefing today.

According to him, if the rules of the coronavirus were not followed during military service, it would be extremely difficult to protect the military...

Source: “Минобороны Армении определило меры безопасности на время призывной компании (The Ministry of Defense of Armenia has determined the security measures for the draft),” *Kavkazskiy Uzel*, 29 April 2020. <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/348969/>

During the summer draft, members of the armed forces and recruits will be provided medical masks, gloves and disinfectants, and the parents of the conscripts will be able to follow the process through a video feed, the Ministry of Defense of Armenia reported...Armenia, which has a smaller population than Georgia and Azerbaijan, remains the (regional) leader in the number of infected...

Conscripts at the processing point will be transported in small groups, for which the number of vehicles will be increased, said Shushan Stepanyan, a spokesman for the defense ministry...Recruits with a fever will be isolated in military units for 14 days and they will be under the care of medical staff and tested for COVID-19...The draft will be held July 1 to August 30 and preparatory work will start on May 1...

Over the years, FMSO has studied and written about foreign perspectives on pandemics. One example is below. For more information on previous FMSO work on pandemics including Ebola, search OE Watch issues:

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/>

Death Unguarded: Unsecured Virulent Pathogens in African Medical Facilities

By Robert Feldman

While affluent countries can afford secure, state-of-the-art bio labs to house deadly pathogens for research, many countries do not have the financial and/or technical resources to provide such facilities. Antiquated equipment, minimal security, and other problems have plagued these labs in less developed countries, increasing the risk for theft of lethal microbes by terrorists as well as dangerous accidents. This article discusses these issues and the concerns regarding the ability of some countries to provide ongoing and adequate security of these facilities.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/195089>