



The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands

14 January 2022

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

The Bahamas

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 15 March 2020. During the period 8-14 January 2022, there were 3043 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 2 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- 1881 (81%) were from New Providence;
- 1099 (47.0%) were males and 1228 (53.0%) females;
- 341 cases (300 from New Providence, 23 Exuma, 6 Grand Bahama, 6 Abaco, 4 Eleuthera, 1 Bimini and 1 unknown) were travel-related.

The total number of real time PCR tests conducted to 14 January 2022 was 200,421 tests.

Turks and Caicos Islands

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 23 March 2020. During the period 8-14 January 2022, there were 1076 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 3 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among new cases, 933 (87%) cases were from Providenciales.

Among the total confirmed cases:

- 2221 (47.9%) were males, 2404 (51.9%) were females, and 11 (0.2%) unknown as of 12 January 2022;

The total number of Real time PCR tests and Rapid Antigen Tests conducted to 14 January 2022 was 50,653 and 357,080 tests respectively.

Total cases and deaths, as of 14 January 2022
The Bahamas Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	24157	520
Grand Bahama	3122	104
Abaco	743	19
Eleuthera	767	17
Exuma	471	9
Bimini/Cat Cay	267	12
Berry Islands	139	4
Inagua	79	3
Andros	333	9
Long Island	130	4
Cat Island	123	3
Acklins	30	0
San Salvador	18	0
Crooked Island	34	0
Mayaguana	21	2
Ragged Island*	0	0
Pending	221	13
TOTAL	30655	719

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	4158	21
North Caicos	118	0
Parrot Cay	20	0
Grand Turk	541	6
South Caicos	84	1
Middle Caicos	30	0
Ambergris Cay	2	0
Pine Cay	1	0
Salt Cay**	2	0
Unknown	0	2
TOTAL	4956	30

* This case was reclassified to New Providence.

**First confirmed reported cases.

GLOBAL

319,994,577 Cases
5,521,173 Deaths

REGION OF THE AMERICAS

118,072,047 Cases
2,442,862 Deaths

THE BAHAMAS

30,655 Confirmed
6,726 Active
23,020 Recovered
124 Hospitalized
719 Deaths

TURKS & CAICOS

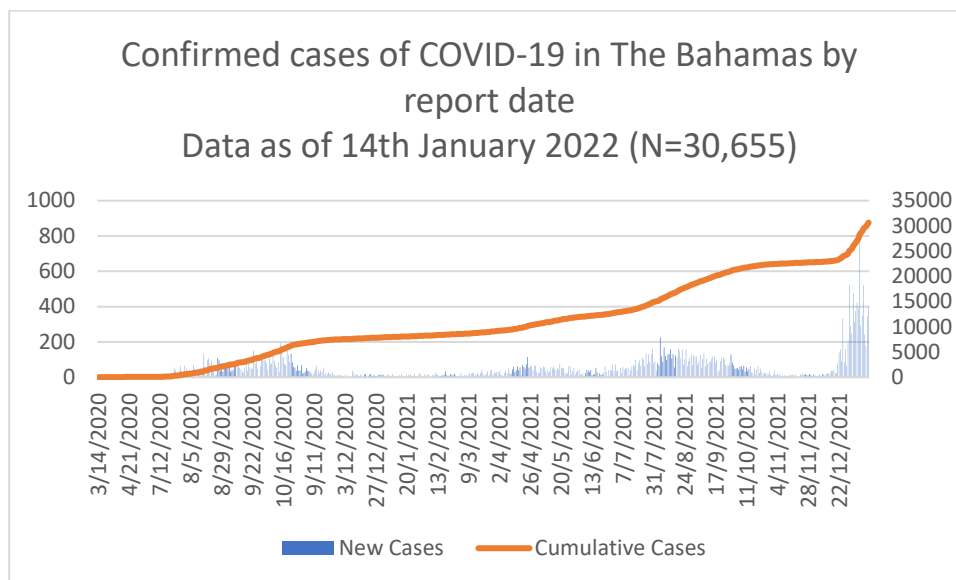
4,956 Confirmed
806 Active
4,110 Recovered
30 Deaths

SITUATION SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

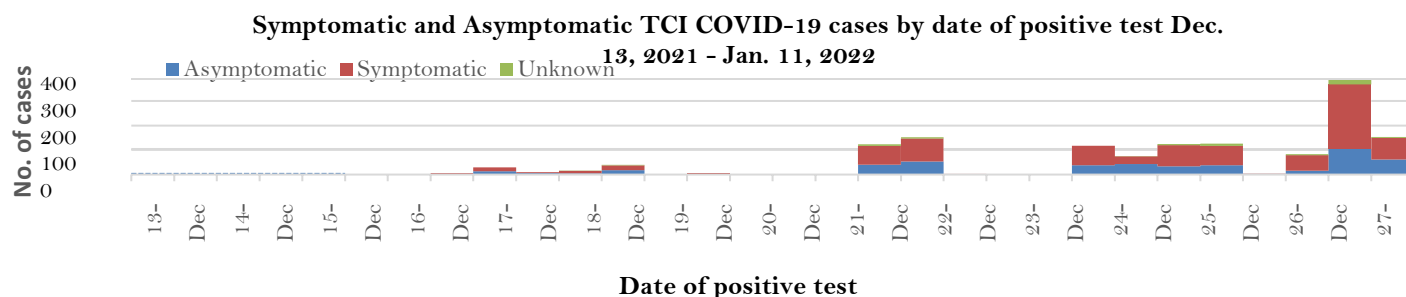
The Bahamas

- The country is currently undergoing the fourth wave with an increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19 and hospitalizations, though daily numbers of cases have been decreasing.
- The Health Services (COVID-19) (Prevention and Management of Community Spread) Rules, 2021 and the Health Services (COVID-19) (General) Rules, 2021 remain in effect.



Turks and Caicos Islands

- There is an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- The Public and Environmental Health (COVID-19 Pandemic) Regulations 2021 are in effect until 28 February 2022.
- New measures and protocols that were to be effective 14 January 2022 was changed to 21 January 2022. These include the following:
 - Only fully vaccinated persons or persons presenting a negative COVID-19 test done within 24 hours who are 12 years and older will be allowed entry into bars, discos, funerals, nightclubs, religious events and restaurants.
 - COVID-19 tests must be presented for incoming travellers and residents two years and older.
- On 13 January 2022, it was announced that all schools will operate in a virtual platform.



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 91

RESPONSE

PAHO/WHO continues to provide both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands with access to updated technical guidelines, technical assistance and situational updates related to the COVID-19 response.

The Bahamas

- COVID-19 vaccine distribution including extended and booster dose vaccinations continued throughout The Bahamas.
- As of 8 January 2022, 147,819 persons received their first dose of either the Astra Zeneca or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, and 156,777 persons were fully vaccinated including those who received the one dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine
- Free COVID-19 Rapid Antigen testing continued at both the Kendal G. L. Isaacs Gymnasium and the Melia Hotel for asymptomatic persons and at the South Beach Health Center for RT-PCR testing for symptomatic persons. As of 11 January 2022, 1,000 Rapid Antigen tests per day were being offered to the public.
- On 11 January 2022, a Virtual Town Hall Meeting was held with Senior Physicians from the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Office of the Prime Minister addressing questions from the public related to COVID-19.
- The COVID-19 Mobile Unit continues to operate and provide vaccinations to individuals who are homebound, hearing impaired, mentally challenged, physically challenged, and visually impaired as well as their caretakers.
- Restrictions continue on the amount of traffic into and out of the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) and the Rand Memorial Hospital (RMH) in Grand Bahama with only emergency cases being allowed for service.
- Moderate to severe COVID-19 cases continue to be treated at PMH, Doctors Hospital West and the RMH and less severe cases at the South Beach Health Center.
- COVID-19 laboratory PCR testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), PMH, RMH and private sector laboratories.
- A National Respiratory Surveillance Genomics Database is in use by the NRL for genetic analysis. Several genomic deletions and variant mutations have been identified by the NRL.
- The Alpha, Delta, and Gamma, variants of concern, and the Iota, variant of interest, were detected among samples previously sent to the Fiocruz Laboratory in Brazil for genomic sequencing.
- An on-line contact tracing course continues to be offered through the University of The Bahamas.
- Go.Data continues to be utilized for data collection of confirmed COVID-19 cases and contact tracing. On 10-11 January 2022, training on the Go.Data platform was provided to Ministry of Health and Wellness personnel in the Family Islands by a PAHO Country Office staff.
- Health visas are no longer needed for Bahamian citizens and permanent residences returning to The Bahamas. However, the testing requirements to enter the country for Bahamian citizens and permanent residents remain in place.
- Non-Bahamian citizens and non-residents must present a travel health visa for entry into the country.
- Vaccinated travellers aged 12 and over are required to present a negative RT-PCR or Rapid Antigen test obtained no longer than three days prior to check-in for travel. Unvaccinated travellers aged 12 and over are required to present a negative RT-PCR test obtained no longer than three days prior to check-in for travel.
- Incoming visitors remaining in the country after 48 hours will be required to take a COVID-19 test regardless of vaccination status.
- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute personal protective equipment across all public hospitals and clinics.
- A delegation from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, including the Minister of Health, returned from Cuba. On 14 January 2022, a total of 50 Cuban specialized Nurses arrived in-country to support clinical care in light of COVID-19 exposures and burn out of staff.
- Ministry of Health and Wellness continues to provide telemedicine, telepsychology, mental health, and psychosocial support services.

- Ministry of Health and Wellness, in collaboration with PAHO/WHO and other partners, continues to implement a communication campaign to increase immunization coverage for influenza and other vaccines.
- Work continues in adapting and implementing the National COVID-19 Vaccine Plan to the changing situation with respect to access to vaccines, with support from PAHO/WHO.
- PAHO/WHO continues to assist The Bahamas in obtaining swabs for COVID-19 testing.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- On 11 January 2022, changes were announced for early release from isolation as follows:
 - Isolation period of five days:
 - Fully vaccinated persons having received a WHO approved vaccine;
 - Persons without symptoms after day five of isolation;
 - Persons who test negative with a Lateral Flow Device or Rapid Antigen Test on day five;
 - Household contacts who test negative with a Lateral Flow Device or Rapid Antigen Test on the last day of quarantine (quarantine may be five or seven days based on booster status);
 - Isolation period of seven days-COVID-19 fully vaccinated persons:
 - Persons having received a WHO approved vaccine;
 - Persons without symptoms after day five of isolation;
 - Persons who test negative with a Lateral Flow Device or Rapid Antigen Test on day seven;
 - All household contacts must have no symptoms to day seven of quarantine;
 - All household contacts must test negative with a Lateral Flow Device or Rapid Antigen Test on day seven;
 - Isolation period of ten days-COVID-19 unvaccinated persons:
 - Persons without symptoms after day ten of isolation;
 - Persons who test negative with a Lateral Flow Device or Rapid Antigen Test on day ten;
 - All household contacts must have no symptoms to day ten of quarantine;
 - All household contacts must test negative with a Lateral Flow Device or Rapid Antigen Test on day ten;
- COVID-19 vaccine distribution continued throughout the islands, including for children ages 12-15 years of age.
- More than 80% of the population is fully vaccinated with more than 3,000 booster COVID-19 shots given since inception.
- Persons aged over 50 years and the most vulnerable population continue to receive booster vaccines.
- All persons over the age of 18 years and high-risk persons over 16 years of age may receive a third dose or booster shot of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The Alpha, Gamma and Delta B.1.617.2 Variants of Concern was confirmed to be in-country.
- Persons continue to register for the COVID-19 vaccine via the online portal which is available in three languages: English, French-Creole, and Spanish.
- Go.Data continues to be utilized for field data collection and contact tracing investigations.
- Community drive-through services continue to provide access to COVID-19 tests throughout the islands.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing.
- The communication education campaign continues with communication materials on the COVID-19 vaccine shared via traditional means and social media.
- A Cuban health contingent of 20 persons continues to operate in medical facilities through a bilateral agreement between the two countries.
- PAHO/WHO continues to assist with coordination for genomic sequencing of samples to the FioCruz Laboratory in Brazil.

GAPS/CHALLENGES

- Public compliance with public health protocols and vaccination hesitancy continue to present challenges in both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands. Vaccine hesitancy is of particular concern among health care workers and other emergency and frontline workers.
- While The Bahamas has capacity to identify the presence of COVID-19 variants, neither The Bahamas nor Turks and Caicos Islands have in-country sequencing capacity. This presents a challenge for the timely identification of new variants.
- Both countries are challenged by the limited global supply of Cepheid Test Kits and other supplies required for COVID-19 testing. Turks and Caicos Islands is particularly challenged as it is only possible for them to source Cepheid Test Kits through the United Kingdom Government.
- A nursing shortage has been identified in The Bahamas and 50 Cuban nurses were recently hired to address this issue as well as staff burnout.
- In The Bahamas, 5-10% of health care workers in the public sector are in quarantine.
- Both countries risk importation of new variants including the Omicron variant, though the epidemiological situation in both countries is suggestive of the circulation of the Omicron variant.