

## Situation in The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. As of 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020, there were 13,516,842 cases and 583,599 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 7,154,840 confirmed cases and 297,855 deaths.

On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported in The Bahamas. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, the first confirmed case was reported in The Turks and Caicos Islands.

### HIGHLIGHTS The Bahamas

Since 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020, there were 17 newly confirmed cases and no deaths from COVID-19. There have been no new deaths since 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

Among the newly confirmed cases:

- 7 are male in age groups: 20-39 (1); 40-59 (5); 60-79 (1);
- 10 are female in age groups: ≤19 (1); 20-39 (5); 40-59 (3); ≥80 (1);
- Two cases are hospitalized, and the remaining new cases are in home isolation;
- One male is a healthcare worker in the age range 40-59 (1).

Among total confirmed cases:

- 51 are male in age groups: ≤19 (1); 20-39 (10); 40-59 (26); 60-79 (11); and ≥80 (3);
- 73 are female in age groups: ≤19 (5); 20-39 (27); 40-59 (25); 60-79 (13); and ≥80 (3);
- 2,567 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

### Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020, there were eight newly confirmed cases and no deaths from COVID-19.

Among the newly confirmed cases:

- 4 persons are hospitalized.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 41 (55.4%) are female and 33 (44.6%) are male;
- 3 are healthcare workers—two are female in age group 40-59 (2); one is male in age group 40-59 (1);
- 273 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 956 persons have been tested for COVID-19 to date.

### The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	89	8
Grand Bahama	21	2
Bimini	13	1
Cat Cay	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>11</b>

### Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Parrot Cay	2	0
Providenciales	70	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>2</b>

## SITUATION IN NUMBERS

### TOTAL CASES

124 Bahamas  
72 Turks & Caicos  
Confirmed

20 Bahamas  
58 Turks & Caicos  
Active Cases

91 Bahamas  
10 Turks & Caicos  
Recovered

3 Bahamas  
4 Turks & Caicos  
Hospitalized

2 Turks & Caicos  
Positive Cases that Left Country

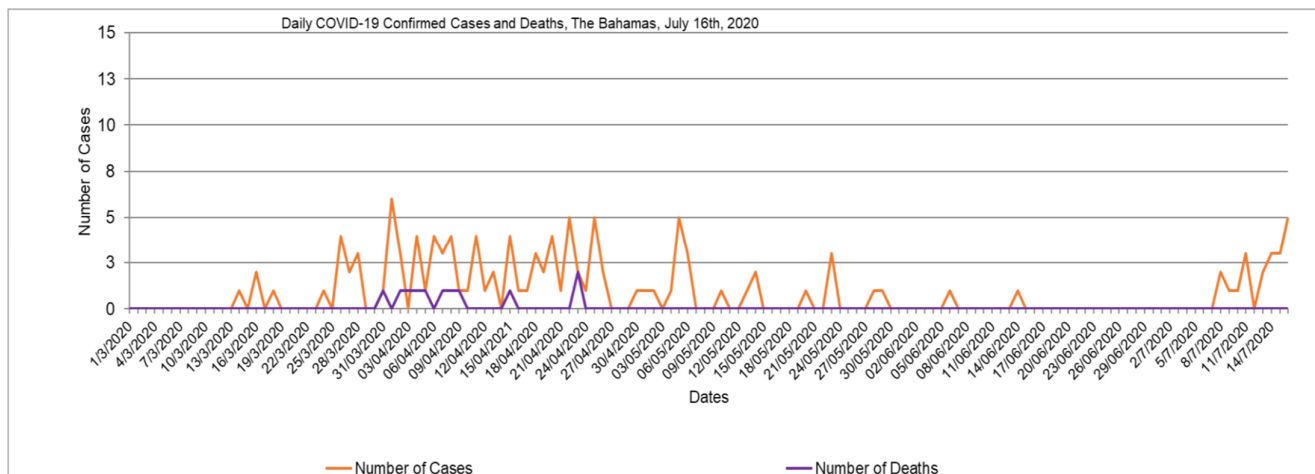
11 Bahamas  
2 Turks & Caicos  
Deaths

### PAHO RESPONSE

- ✓ Donation of laboratory supplies
- ✓ Risk assessment and situational analysis
- ✓ Technical guidance
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Support to local authorities on surveillance and health systems planning

## The Bahamas

- The Emergency Orders continue through 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. A 10pm to 5am curfew remain in effect, Mondays through Sundays. All businesses are to close by 8pm daily.
- Restaurants are permitted to operate until 9pm with mask and physical distancing protocols.
- The Lyford Cay Hospital and Doctors Hospitals are two private facilities that now offer RT-PCR COVID-19 testing.
- Bahamians and residents traveling for a period of 72 hours or less will be required to quarantine for 14 days on their return unless they provide a COVID-19 RT-PCR negative test result. Children under age 10 are not required to be tested.
- An electronic health visa system has been implemented and visas are required for all incoming travelers. A negative COVID-19 RT-PCR test taken within ten days of travel must also be submitted for consideration for the health visa.
- The Department of Environmental Health Services will carry out on-site inspections of businesses that have reopened to ensure compliance and enforcement of recommended COVID-19 prevention guidelines.
- A Grand Bahama COVID-19 Task Force met on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2020 considering the increasing number of newly confirmed cases on the island. Since 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020, 13 new cases were reported from Grand Bahama. There had been a gap in case detection in Grab Bahama between 05 May and 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020, and the surge in new cases occurred after resumption of international travel on 03 July 2020.

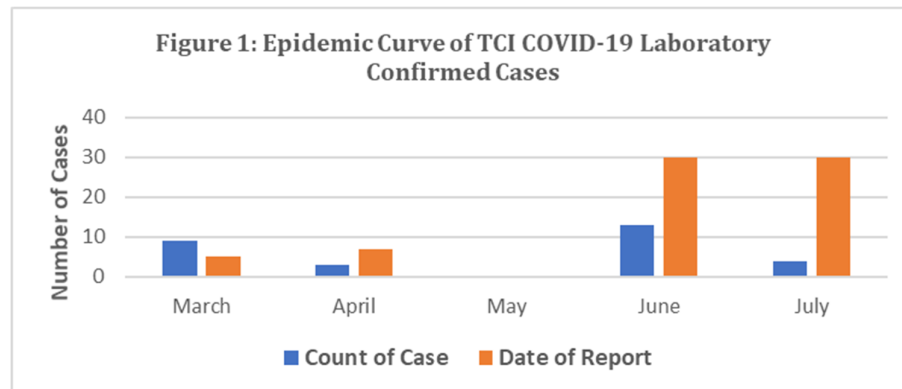


## Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Emergency Powers remain in effect. Closure of businesses on Sunday remain in effect until 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020. Borders are expected to reopen for international travel on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020.
- Providenciales remains under extended restrictions of Phase 2B with nightly 8pm to 5am curfew, delayed reopening of businesses, gatherings of only 10 persons and no outbound or inbound travel. Economic activity will resume on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020.
- Incoming travelers must make application to the TCI Assured Authorization Portal and submit a negative COVID-19 PCR test result taken within 5 days of travel, proof of medical insurance including Medical evacuation provisions, a completed health screening questionnaire, and certification of having read the conditions of privacy.
- The Ministry of Tourism has established a quality assurance portal for international travelers to indicate their pre-test certification, insurance information, and other travel requirements to the TCI

authority. Certification stickers will be provided to visitors who provide proof of medical insurance, completed health screening questionnaire, and a negative COVID-19 PCR test result at least 72 hours prior to arrival.

- The TCI Hotel and Tourism Association partnered with local non-governmental organizations and the Social Welfare Department to distribute packages of food, cleaning supplies and personal care items. 10,000 persons were reached in the first round of distribution and efforts will continue for 3 months.
- The Environmental Health Department developed protocols for public transport operators including guidance on hand hygiene, maximum capacity and social distancing requirements, cleaning requirements, and guidance for drivers above age 65.



## NATIONAL RESPONSE

### The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- Contact tracing for newly detected cases is ongoing.
- MOH continues to work with armed forces, the Office of the Attorney General, and Data Protection to monitor individuals in self-quarantine, using a geographical fencing and security mobile app.
- MOH has published Workplace Guidelines to help business owners determine whether their business is qualified to reopen. The guidelines include an on-line assessment tool that prompts mitigation recommendations and generates a certificate that qualifies the resumption of business operations.
- The MOH reporting dashboard has been amended to include non-COVID-19 related deaths. There have been two such deaths in the country.

### Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) Ministry of Health

- In-country COVID-19 PCR testing is ongoing by the National Public Health Laboratory, where 956 tests have been performed.
- Testing is ongoing for frontline workers, suspected COVID-19 cases, contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases, persons desirous of inter-island travel, and travel outside of the country for medical purposes and other reasons.
- The Royal Navy 203 Flight aircrew and engineering team arrived in TCI on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to support the Royal TCI Police Force in maritime security patrols.
- This past week a 20-person Cuban Medical team began delivering clinical care support in TCI hospitals.

## **PAHO/WHO RESPONSE**

- PAHO continues to provide both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands with access to updated technical guidelines and technical assistance.
- PAHO Country Office (CO) continues to provide technical assistance to The Bahamas' Ministry of Health to assist with the transition to the WHO Go Data surveillance platform, and to support the MOH TCI to troubleshoot challenges with the platform.

### **The Bahamas**

- PAHO CO personnel remain embedded within The Bahamas' MOH Emergency Operating Centre (EOC) to provide technical advice.

## **GAPS/CHALLENGES**

- Compliance and enforcement of public health protocols are challenges in both countries
- There has been an increase in travel-associated cases in both countries.

### **The Bahamas**

- Some persons ordered to quarantine or isolate at home are non-compliant or refuse to be monitored via the geographical fencing and security mobile app.
- Reports alleging forgery or alteration of COVID-19 laboratory results has been a concern for a few travelers who entered the country.

### **Turks and Caicos Islands**

- There is concern that members of some vulnerable groups may not access COVID-19 hotlines due to fear of discrimination or detection of illegal immigration status.