

Situation in The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands 7th August 2020.

On 30th January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. As of 31st July 2020, there were 18,768,290 cases and 706,716 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 10,135,322 confirmed cases and 376,606 deaths.

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

HIGHLIGHTS

The Bahamas

Since 31st July 2020, there were 253 newly confirmed cases and no new deaths from COVID-19. Prior to the recent increase, there had been no deaths since 24th April 2020.

The gender and age distribution of new and total confirmed cases are not reflected in this report pending completion of on-going follow up investigations.

Laboratory testing

- 4,814 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 31st July 2020, there were 36 newly confirmed cases and no deaths from COVID-19. There have been no new deaths since 29th June 2020. The last 29 cases reported on 6th August 2020 are not reflected in this report although highlighted in the narrative.

Among the new cases:

- One new island reported cases: North Caicos (3);
- Two healthcare workers.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 72 (51.4%) are female and 68 (48.6 %) are male;
- The age distribution of all cases is 0-5 (3.6 %), 6-19 (12.1 %), 20-29 (14.3 %), 30-39 (28.6 %), 40-49 (21.4 %), 50-59 (12.9 %), 60-79 (6.4 %) and unknown (0.7%);
- 294 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 1270 persons have been tested for COVID-19 to date.

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	349	8
Grand Bahama	336	6
Abaco	2	0
Berry Islands	9	0
Bimini	34	0
Cat Cay	6	0
Cat Island	3	0
Exuma	3	
Great Guana Cay	9	0
Moore's Island	10	0
TOTAL	761	14

Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Parrot Cay	2	0
Providenciales	135	2
North Caicos	3	0
TOTAL	140	2

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

TOTAL CASES

761 Bahamas
140 Turks & Caicos
Confirmed

654 Bahamas
98 Turks & Caicos
Active Cases

91 Bahamas
39 Turks & Caicos
Recovered

19 Bahamas
1 Turks & Caicos
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos
Positive Cases that Left Country

14 Bahamas
2 Turks & Caicos
COVID-related Deaths

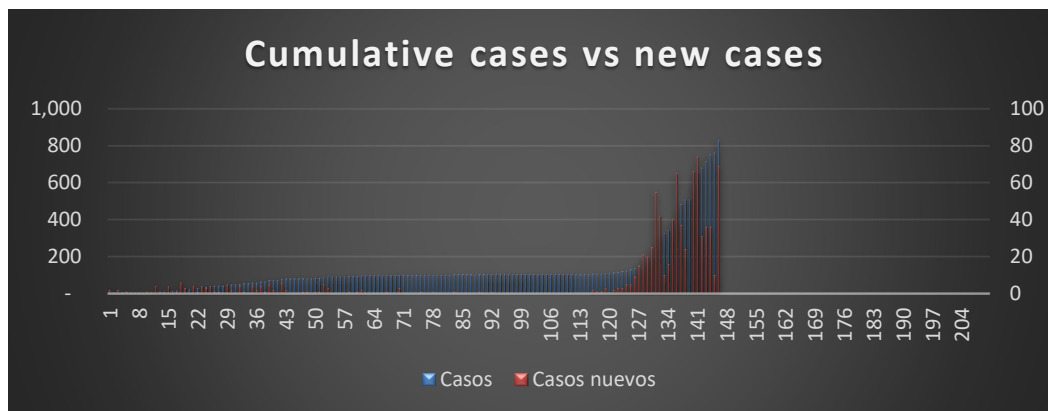
2 Bahamas
Non-COVID-related Deaths

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

- Emergency Orders have been extended through 30th September 2020.
- A two-week national lockdown commenced 4th August 2020 at 10pm for all islands of The Bahamas except Grand Bahama which was already under a two-week lockdown. The Grand Bahama lockdown has been extended to coincide with the end of the national lockdown, 19th August 2020 at 5am.
- Hardware stores, gas stations, grocery stores, pharmacies and water depots, are permitted to operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 7 am to 5 pm. Essential workers will be permitted to access the aforementioned services on Saturdays from 7 am to 1 pm.
- Commercial banks are permitted to operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 am to 1 pm for face to face interactions with clients.
- National Insurance Board cheque distribution will take place Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 am to 5 pm at the National Stadium.
- Congregant gatherings are to be limited to a maximum of five persons.
- All other businesses except those listed above and essential services are to remain closed for the duration of the two-week lockdown period.
- The Ministry of Education has issued recommendations to students wishing to travel overseas for tertiary education which includes utilizing online courses for the next semester or deferring until January 2021.
- The All Clear was given on 2nd August 2020 after the passing of Hurricane Isaias. There was no significant damage to The Bahamas.
- The National Food Task Force and NGOs continue the national distribution of food.
- A COVID-19 Enforcement Unit Command Centre is now operational at a police station in New Providence.



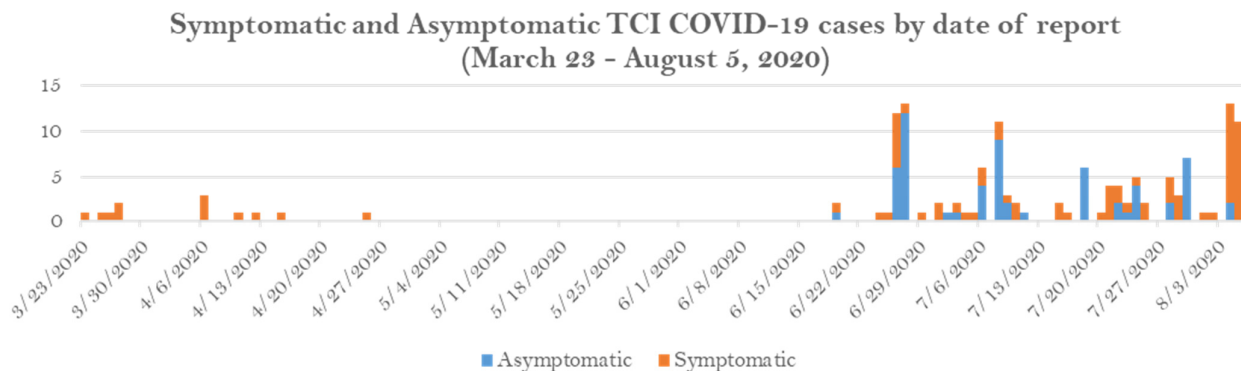
Bahamas EPI Curve of cumulative cases vs. new cases of COVID-19 by days

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Local economic activity has resumed, and borders were re-opened to international flights on 22nd July 2020.
- A three-week curfew will commence on 10th August 2020 from 10 pm to 5 am on Providenciales and

8 pm to 5 am on North Caicos and Parrot Cay, the locations of recently confirmed cases.

- Incoming travelers must apply to the TCI Assured Authorization Portal and submit a negative COVID-19 PCR test result taken within 5 days of travel, provide proof of medical insurance including Medical evacuation provision, a completed health screening questionnaire, and certification of having read the conditions of privacy.
- The All Clear was given on 31st July 2020 after the passing of Hurricane Isaias. There was no significant damage to the TCI or injury to persons.



*The last 29 cases reported on 6th August 2020 are not reflected in this EPI Curve.

NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- The increase in confirmed cases continues.
- Contact tracing has expanded and on 5th August 2020 a Contact Tracing Strike Force team was formed. This team is made up of more than 30 individuals.
- One ward at the Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre (SRC) was closed after a staff member tested positive for COVID-19. Patients were subsequently tested and isolated as necessary to prevent further transmission.
- A digital on-line platform is being implemented to assist with digitization and real time entry and analysis of contact tracing data. Similar technology solutions are being developed to improve efficiencies of data flow of case investigation data and laboratory test results.
- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute personal protective equipment across all hospitals.
- Approximately 30 healthcare workers have been infected with COVID-19 since the surge in cases.
- Approximately 30 officers from the Department of Immigration have been identified and are in quarantine following workplace exposures to positive COVID-19 cases. One officer of the Department of Corrections has tested positive for COVID-19.
- MOH continues to provide telepsychology and mental health and psychosocial support services.
- The Minister of Health accepted a donation of swabs, medical masks, goggles, shoe covers, and gloves from the Government of China.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) Ministry of Health

- The number of newly confirmed cases continue to increase. Among reported cases, 129 are considered to represent local transmission while 11 are either imported or the location of transmission was unclear.
- One new island, North Caicos, has reported three newly confirmed cases. The Nivelyn Butterfield Community Clinic in Kew, North Caicos has been closed as result of confirmation of new cases on that island.
- The highest daily number of cases to date occurred on 6th August 2020 when 29 newly confirmed cases were reported, 12 of which were linked to one worksite.
- Testing and contact tracing for newly detected cases is ongoing.
- The National Public Health Laboratory performed 1,270 COVID-19 PCR tests to date.
- Automated RNA extraction systems are being sought to decrease processing times of samples in the laboratory.
- MOH has developed guidance on deep cleaning to be distributed to all businesses.

PAHO/WHO RESPONSE

- PAHO continues to provide both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands with access to updated technical guidelines and technical assistance.

The Bahamas

- The PAHO Country Office (CO) donated two GeneXpert systems, 1800 test cartridges, mobile phones, and Wi-Fi hotspots to the MOH on 6th August 2020.
- PAHO CO personnel remain embedded within The Bahamas' MOH Emergency Operating Centre (EOC) to provide technical advice. Two persons have been stationed at MOH to provide data management support.
- PAHO is running an Infection Prevention Control Training course that commenced on 6th August 2020 with participant physicians and nurses from the Ministry of Health, Public Hospitals Authority, and Department of Public Health.

GAPS/CHALLENGES

- Compliance and enforcement of public health protocols are challenges in both countries.

The Bahamas

- Limited capacity of the health care facilities to accommodate severe cases.
- Centralized COVID-19 testing is becoming a logistical challenge, now that cases are being confirmed on multiple islands and in larger numbers.
- Exposure of healthcare workers and frontline workers to COVID-19 who are in quarantine.
- The large increases in workload for testing at the National Reference Laboratory is causing delays in providing results. Increase in workforce and decentralization of testing are mitigation strategies being implemented.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- Contact tracing has been challenging due to lack cooperation by cases to provide information about their contacts.