

Situation in The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands 15th May 2020.

CONTEXT

On 30th January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. As of 14th May 2020, there were 4,303,468 cases and 297,001 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 1,864,468 of confirmed cases and 111,934 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 8th May 2020, there was four newly confirmed cases and no deaths from COVID-19.

Of the newly confirmed cases:

- One is male in age group: 40 to 59 (1);
- Three are female in age groups: 20 to 39 (2); and ≥ 60 (1);
- New cases were distributed among 2 different islands-New Providence (2), and Bimini (2);
- There have been no newly reported cases in Grand Bahama for 7 days;
- Most newly reported cases had contact with previously reported cases.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 36 male in age groups: 20 to 39 (6); 40 to 59 (20) and ≥ 60 (10);
- 60 female in age groups: ≤ 19 (4); 20 to 39 (19); 40 to 59 (21) and ≥ 60 (16);
- 22 are Health Care Workers (HCWs) representing 23.9% of total cases;
- As of 14th May 2020, 1,700 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted;
- The case fatality ratio is 11.5% (11 deaths / 96 cases)

Turks and Caicos Islands

Since 8th May 2020, there were no newly confirmed cases and no deaths from COVID-19. The last case was confirmed on 25th April 2020.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 8 (66.7%) are male;
- 4 (33.3%) are female;
- 54 persons are quarantined/home isolation.
- 109 persons have been tested for COVID-19 to date.

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	74	8
Grand Bahama	8	2
Bimini	13	1
Cat Cay	1	0
TOTAL	96	11

Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Parrot Cay	2	0
Providenciales	10	1
TOTAL	12	1

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

TOTAL CASES

16 Bahamas
2 Turks & Caicos
Confirmed

44 Bahamas
0 Turks & Caicos
Active Cases

11 Bahamas
10 Turks & Caicos
Recovered

11 Bahamas
3 Turks & Caicos
Hospitalized

1 Bahamas
Turks & Caicos
Deaths

PAHO RESPONSE

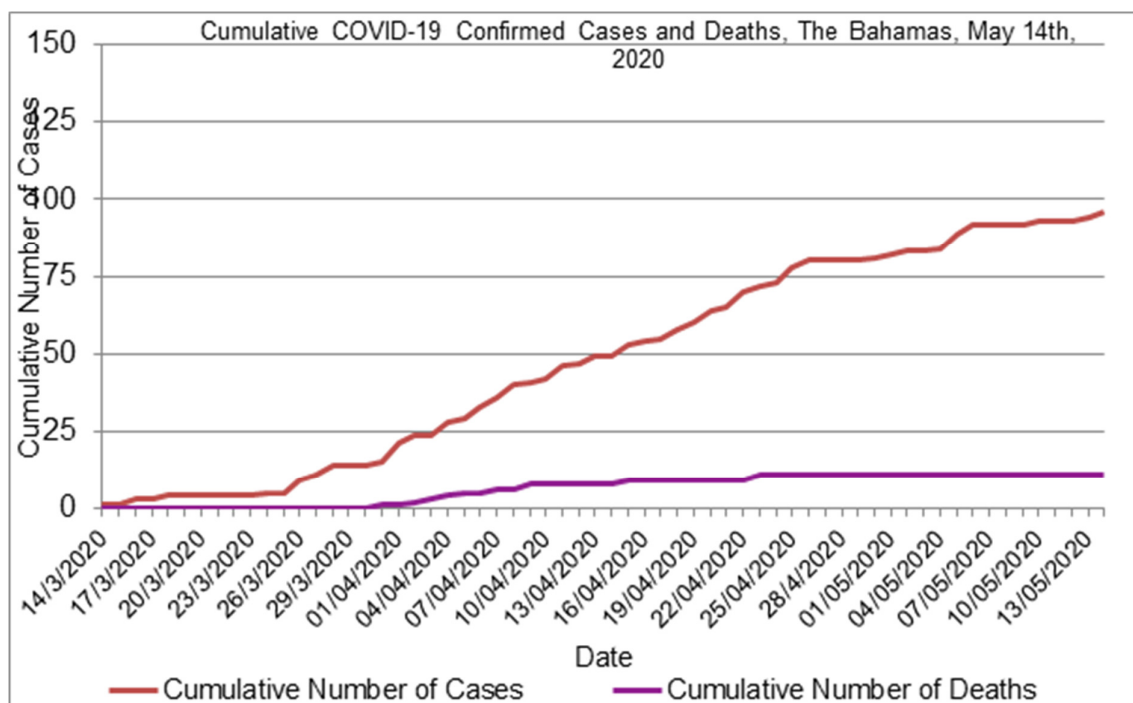
- ✓ Donation of laboratory supplies
- ✓ Risk assessment and situational analysis
- ✓ Investigation of HCW infection in The Bahamas
- ✓ Technical guidance
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Support to local authorities on surveillance and health systems planning



SITUATION SUMMARY

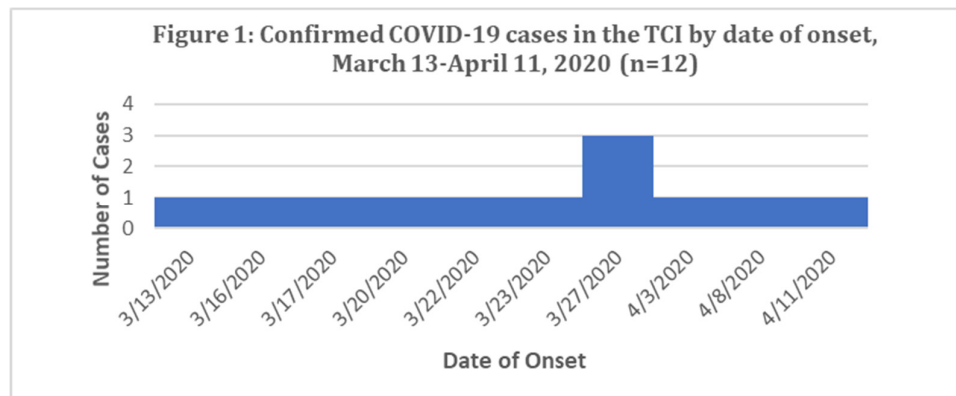
The Bahamas

- Emergency Orders (that include curfews, lockdowns, physical distancing measures and travel restrictions) will continue until 30th May 2020.
- An increasing number of commercial businesses are being exempted from curfew restrictions.
- In accordance with the plan for phased re-opening of the economy, the country remains in the second step of the first phase with expansion of commercial activity in islands that have had no confirmed COVID19 cases and commercial and construction activities for preparedness for the upcoming hurricane season.
- The National Food Committee provides oversight for equitable food distribution, including addressing needs of vulnerable persons.
- A phased return of Bahamian nationals and permanent residents commenced 8th May 2020 with 183 persons repatriated through airline travel from Fort Lauderdale to Grand Bahama and New Providence. Prior to travel, RT-PCR tests were performed on each traveler and results reviewed along with application to travel by The Bahamas mission in Florida with a view to having only those with negative results permitted to travel. Travelers were required to wear facial masks during transit to The Bahamas up to the time of their instalment in their quarantine location. Upon arrival in the country, a medical team evaluated and coordinated quarantine arrangements - 124 travelers are self-quarantined at home and 59 at a government quarantine facility, all for a 14-day period after arrival.
- There was at least 1 breach of the repatriation protocol. It was discovered that one repatriated person had a documented COVID-19 positive result prior to travel but got on the flight. That person was tested after arrival and had two sequential negative COVID 19 real-time PCR results, 24 hours apart.
- An Economic Recovery Committee convenes periodically – there are subcommittees on Structural Reform; Family Island Development; Healthcare and Social Capital; Commerce, Entrepreneurship, and Youth Engagement; Agriculture, Fisheries and Manufacturing; Environmental Stewardship; Labor and Education; Digitization and the Conceptual Economy; Tourism and the Creative Economy; and Financial Services. The Committee will provide an update on progress and intended plans.



Turks and Caicos Islands

- Emergency Powers will continue in effect until 1st June 2020. Nightly curfews will continue until 25th May 2020. Business closures will continue only on Sundays.
- On 11th May 2020, the country moved into Phase 1B of a plan for reopening. Essential public service, other public sector bodies, take-away restaurants, and the construction sector resumed business operations. A Health and Safety Protocol was developed for the construction sector.
- All other businesses must comply to previous lockdown orders. Specifically, gyms, casinos, spas, discos, bars and dining in restaurants are to remain closed.
- Until 1st June 2020 no more than 10 persons may attend a religious service and must comply with physical distancing measures.
- Until 31st December 2020, persons 65 and older and/or persons with underlying chronic conditions are advised to shelter at home and practice physical distancing measures.
- Scotland Marines scheduled to assist in the COVID-19 response, are in pre-service quarantine and participate in virtual meetings with the TCI Government and United Kingdom Security Assistance Team.
- Royal Marine Troops are collaborating with the Royal Police Force Marine Branch to plan and prepare to address issues of the safety of prison staff, inmates, and tourists upon the reopening of the economy.



NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Bahamas Ministry of Health

- Prime Minister Hon. Hubert Minnis has temporarily assumed the position of Minister of Health, following resignation of the previous Minister.
- The Ministry of Health (MOH) continues efforts to procure personal protective equipment (PPE) in sufficient volume to meet needs. Several private companies and individuals have donated PPE, disinfectants, sanitizers, and other medical supplies.
- The MOH is investigating and implementing mitigation measures in response to a high prevalence of COVID-19 infected HCWs and HCWs who were in quarantine. Follow up measures included in-depth cleaning of facilities, re-training HCWs in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), and COVID-19 molecular testing based on presence of symptoms or end of 14-day quarantine post-exposure. The latter measure identified only 1 new positive HCW among 254 that were tested.
- PAHO has been invited to collaborate with the Ministry of Health to investigate risk factors for HCW

infections. Review of risk assessment data and conduct of a case-control study are being considered.

- Bimini island was identified as a transmission hotspot. To date 13 COVID-19 cases were confirmed, including two new cases this past week. A complete 2-week lockdown has been mandated to halt community transmission.
- Newly approved and draft protocols of the MOH include:
 - The Terms of Reference for the National Medical Ethics Committee COVID-19;
 - ACLS Cardiac Arrest Algorithm for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 patients;
 - Guidelines for National Emergency Medical Services (NEMS) during COVID-19 Pandemic;
 - Policy on EMS Management of COVID-19 Patients with Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) Ministry of Health

- In-country capacity building for COVID-19 PCR testing continues following receipt of PCR testing equipment. In the interim, COVID-19 testing is accessed at the Reference Laboratory in The Bahamas and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), Trinidad.
- A donation of medical supplies from the United Kingdom was received including another PCR machine, six ventilators, and PPE.
- The MOH is drafting protocols for the use of PPEs for non-health first responders and for prioritization for the COVID-19 testing. Mass-testing is under discussion.
- Public health communication continues to provide prevention advice for COVID-19 and tips for maintaining good mental health.

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

- PAHO Country Office (CO) personnel remain embedded within the Bahamas' MOH Emergency Operating Centre (EOC).
- PAHO CO and MOH have initiated a collaborative project to: investigate risk factors for HCW infections; describe clinical course and disease outcomes; plan and implement fact driven mitigation measures.
- The CO is providing technical assistance to the MOH for setting up the Go Data surveillance platform to manage cases and contacts of the outbreak.

NEEDS

Nasopharyngeal swabs to be donated by PAHO have been procured and shipped – delivery pending.

GAPS/CHALLENGES

The Bahamas

- HCWs account for 23.9% of total confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- There is public concern about 13/1063 named contacts of cases who could not be reached. Of the total quarantined persons since the start of the outbreak, 23 became cases and 761 have completed 14 days of quarantine.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- No in-country intensive care capacity remains a challenge. A feasible solution is yet to be identified.