

Situation in The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands 29th 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 28th May 2020, there were 5,653,197 cases and 356,173 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 2,613,092 of confirmed cases and 151,212 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 22nd May 2020, there were four newly confirmed cases and no deaths from COVID-19.

Among the newly confirmed cases:

- Three are male in age groups: ≤19 (1); 20 to 39 (1), and ≥80 (1);
- One is female in the age group: 20 to 39 (1);
- All new cases reside in New Providence and are in isolation at home.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 41 males in age groups: ≤19 (1); 20 to 39 (7); 40 to 59 (21); 60-79 (9); and ≥80 (3);
- 60 females in age groups: ≤19 (4); 20 to 39 (20); 40 to 59 (21); 60-79 (13); and ≥80 (2);
- 2,050 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted;
- 23.7% are health care workers (HCWs);
- The case fatality ratio is 10.9% (11 deaths / 101 cases).

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 22nd 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 are male in age groups: ≤19 (1); 20 to 39 (3); 40 to 59 (3); 60-79 (1);
- 4 are female in age groups: ≤ 20 to 39 (3); 40 to 59 (1);
- 1 case departed TCI prior to recovering;
- 19 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 129 persons have been tested for COVID-19 to date.

The Bahamas

| Island | Confirmed cases | Deaths |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| New Providence | 79 | 8 |
| Grand Bahama | 8 | 2 |
| Bimini | 13 | 1 |
| Cat Cay | 1 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 101 | 11 |

Turks and Caicos Islands

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

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

TOTAL CASES

101 Bahamas
12 Turks & Caicos
Confirmed

43 Bahamas
0 Turks & Caicos
Active Cases

47 Bahamas
10 Turks & Caicos
Recovered

4 Bahamas
0 Turks & Caicos
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos
Left country

11 Bahamas
1 Turks & Caicos
Deaths

PAHO RESPONSE

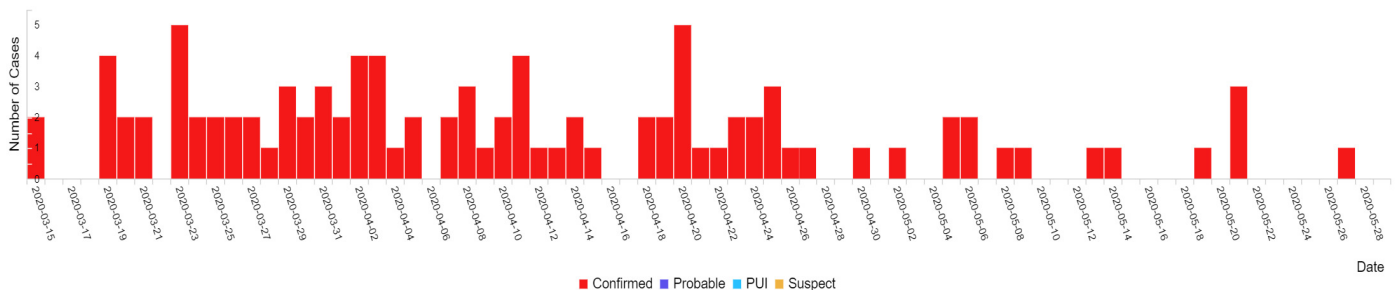
- ✓ Donation of laboratory supplies
- ✓ Risk assessment and situational analysis
- ✓ Investigation of HCW infection in The Bahamas
- ✓ Technical guidance
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Support to local authorities on surveillance and health systems planning

SITUATION SUMMARY

The Bahamas

- The Emergency Orders have been extended to 29th June 2020. Effective 2nd June 2020, curfew hours will be reduced from 24 hours to 9pm to 5am on weekdays. Persons will be permitted exercise between 5am and 9pm on weekdays. 24 hour weekend curfews will remain in effect.
- The current 24 hour curfew measures will also apply to the Whit Monday holiday weekend from 9pm on 29th May 2020 to 5am on 2nd June 2020, and on the Labor Day holiday weekend from 9pm on 4th June 2020 to 5am on 8th June 2020.
- The country will transition to the third phase of reopening the economy on 2nd June 2020. This will allow for non-essential businesses to operate with essential staff only and in accordance with public health safety measures. Restrictions have been relaxed on some social gatherings.
- Religious services will be permitted between 7am and 1pm on Saturday and Sunday on all islands beginning 6th June 2020, with limited congregation sizes and physical distancing measures advised.
- 135 Bahamian nationals and permanent residents and 3 infants were repatriated on 23rd May 2020 from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, U.S.A. 60 of those travelers disembarked in Grand Bahama and 75 in New Providence. Returnees were sent to government quarantine facilities on both islands for assessments. 14 persons in Grand Bahama and 42 persons in New Providence remained at the Government facility and the remainder were cleared to self-quarantine.
- Further repatriation of persons to New Providence from Fort Lauderdale has been postponed until week of 1st June, pending completion of quarantine of the persons who arrived on 21st May.
- Unemployment assistance for self-employed individuals through the National Insurance Board has been extended until 1st July.

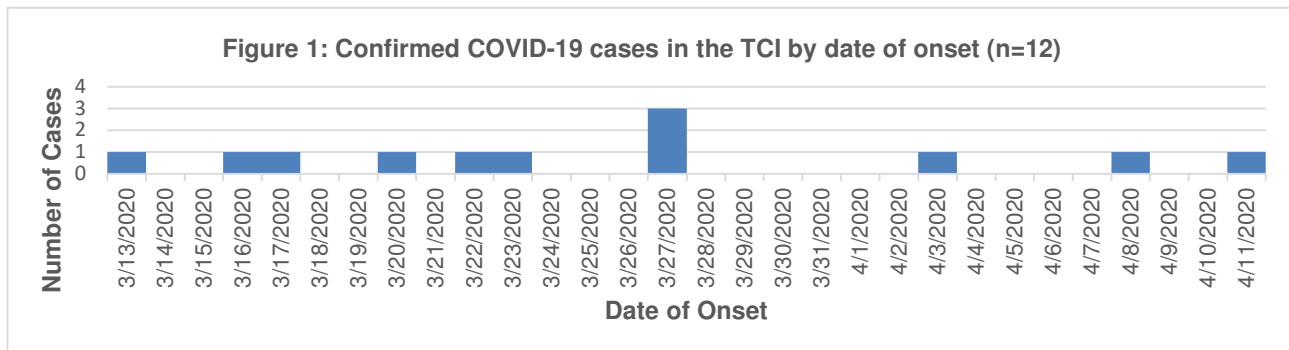
Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in The Bahamas by Date of Onset



Turks and Caicos Islands

- Emergency Powers will remain in effect until 1st June 2020. Nightly curfews have been extended to 1st June 2020 until 5:00 am.
- The country remains in Phase 1B of its plan for reopening.
- Incoming travel is now permitted and restricted to TCI nationals, permanent residents, British Overseas Territory Citizens, and residence permit holders. All incoming persons are subject to a 14-day quarantine, must sign a quarantine order, and complete forms provided by MOH.
- Preparations have commenced for domestic travel from Providenciales to the other islands. Residents must make application to the Ministry of Health (MOH) and further instructions will be provided for COVID-19 testing.

- The Department of Social Development has increased mental health awareness communication and delivers mental health and psychosocial support via its hotline.
- The Royal Air Force made a delivery of medical supplies and other equipment.



NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- The 124 hour curfew measures in Bimini continue, following its identification as a transmission hotspot. This is scheduled to end 30th May 2020. To date, 13 COVID-19 cases were confirmed on Bimini and laboratory test results are pending for 13 contacts of cases. MOH continues to provide mental health and psychosocial support services to persons in Bimini.
- Contact tracing nears completion for the most recent active cluster of cases in New Providence.
- The last reported case in Grand Bahama was 23 days ago (5th May 2020) and in Bimini was 14 days ago (4th May 2020).
- MOH received a donation of medical supplies including personal protective equipment from the People's Republic of China. Details of items donated were not shared with PAHO.
- MOH commenced a process aimed at issuance of COVID-19 Authorization Travel Cards for domestic inter-island travel of low-risk passengers who have been evaluated by an approved physician. A total of 46 physicians in New Providence and 9 in Grand Bahama in both the private and public sectors have been approved to conduct such evaluations.
- Monitoring of individuals in quarantine commenced using a geographical fencing and security software application. There is evidence of some resistance by quarantined persons to use of the app.
- Persons previously lost to follow-up have been located with the assistance of National Armed Forces.

Turks and Caicos Islands Ministry of Health

- In-country capacity building for COVID-19 PCR testing continues following receipt of two PCR testing machines. Validation of results has commenced through parallel testing of samples by the local laboratory and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), Trinidad.
- A United Kingdom Security Assistance team and Public Health England continue to provide technical assistance to the MOH including laboratory training.
- A Royal Marine Commando Troop completed its pre-service quarantine and is working closely with the Royal TCI Police Force and Maritime Police Branch to address security concerns.

- The MOH is drafting protocols for the use of PPEs by non-health first responders and for prioritization of COVID-19 testing. A proposal for widescale community 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.
- PAHO CO continues to provide technical assistance to the MOH for COVID-19 outbreak data management using the WHO GoData surveillance platform.
- PAHO donated RNA extraction kits.
- An offer of donation of 75,000 N95 masks procured by PAHO using contributions from the Caribbean Confederation of Credit Union was made to and accepted by MOH. Delivery is pending.

GAPS/CHALLENGES

The Bahamas

- HCWs account for 23.7% of total confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- Concern about non-compliance with public health measures in Family Islands that remain closed to commercial business.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- No in-country intensive care capacity.
- There have been challenges with timely shipping samples and receipt to both the Reference Laboratory in The Bahamas and CARPHA.