

Situation in The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands 12th November 2020

On 30th January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. As of 11th November 2020, there were 52,082,698 cases and 1,284,534 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 22,438,205 confirmed cases and 669,493 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 5th November 2020, there were 247 newly confirmed cases, 4 deaths from COVID-19, and 4 non-COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- Forty percent were from New Providence and thirty-four percent were from Grand Bahama;
- 154 (62.3%) are male, 37.2 (92%) are female and 1 (0.4%) is unknown.

Among total confirmed cases:

- Eight-four percent of deaths (130) were from New Providence;
- 39,379 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 5th November 2020, there were 11 newly confirmed cases.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 340 (47.5%) are female and 375 (52.4%) are male (data 11th November 2020);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 11th November 2020) is 0-5 (3.8%), 6-19 (12.3%), 20-29 (19.4%), 30-39 (24.9%), 40-49 (21.9%), 50-59 (10.8%), 60-79 (6.1%), 80 and over (0.7%), unknown (0.1%);
- 48 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 5525 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	5375	130
Grand Bahama	874	17
Abaco	180	3
Eleuthera	130	1
Bimini & Cat Cay	63	2
Berry Islands	43	1
Exuma	80	1
Inagua	19	0
Andros	18	0
Long Island	11	0
Cat Island	8	0
Acklins	7	0
Crooked Island	6	0
Mayaguana	3	0
Pending	346	0
TOTAL	7163	154

Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	660	5
North Caicos	20	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	25	1
South Caicos	1	0
TOTAL	716	6

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

TOTAL CASES

7163 Bahamas
716 Turks & Caicos
Confirmed

1666 Bahamas
14 Turks & Caicos
Active Cases

5282 Bahamas
695 Turks & Caicos
Recovered

23 Bahamas
0 Turks & Caicos
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos
Positive Cases that Left Country

155 Bahamas
6 Turks & Caicos
COVID-related Deaths

30 Bahamas
Non-COVID-related Deaths

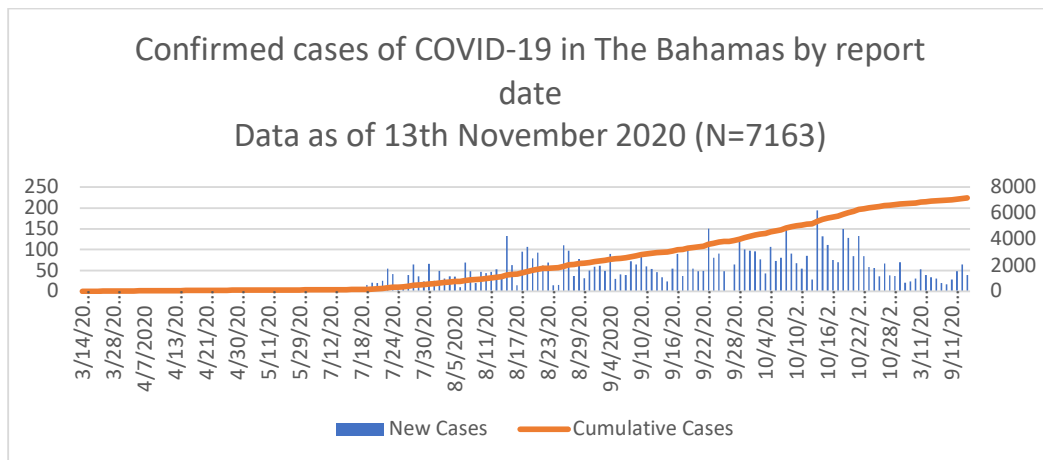
30 Bahamas
Deaths under investigation

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

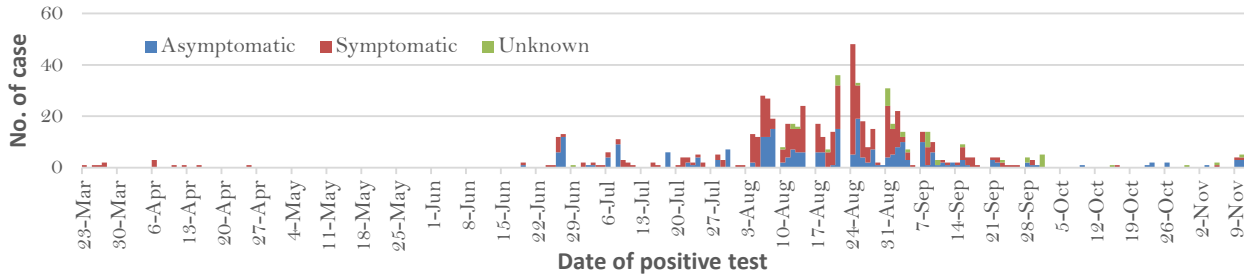
- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 30th November 2020.
- Weekend lockdowns discontinued this past weekend on Abaco and New Providence. A weekend nightly curfew will commence at 6 pm on Saturdays and Sundays and end at 5 am on Sundays and Mondays effective Saturday, 14th November 2020. Weekend lockdowns will commence for Mainland Eleuthera and Exuma on 13th November 2020 at 6:00 pm on Fridays to 5:00 am on Mondays, in response to an increase in the number of confirmed cases in these locations. Only essential services will be allowed to operate during lockdowns.
- Times for nightly curfews have changed from 8:00 pm to 5:00 am to 9:00 pm to 5:00 am on New Providence, Abaco, and Grand Bahama, from Mondays to Fridays. Mainland Eleuthera and Exuma were placed on weekday nightly curfews from 6:00 pm to 5:00 am on 9th November and 11th November 2020, respectively.
- Effective 9th November 2020 on Abaco and New Providence, in-store services at retail stores and outdoor dining at restaurants resumed, from Mondays to Saturdays. Indoor dining at hotels also commenced and only drive-thru and take-way restaurant service will be permitted on Sundays. Bars and restaurants with bars were closed effective 9th November and 11th November on both Mainland Eleuthera and Abaco, respectively.
- Effective 13th November 2020, beaches and parks will reopen on Saturdays and Sundays from 5:00 am to 6:00 pm, on all locations with the exception of Eleuthra and Exuma.
- Effective 13th November 2020, food stores may open to the general public on Saturdays and on Sundays for restocking purposes only.
- Restrictions have been placed on domestic travel into and out of Mainland Eleuthera and Exuma with only essential travel permitted.
- Residents and citizens travelling from New Providence to the Family Islands will be required to have a negative RT-PCR Test within five days of travel and will be required to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival. Incoming visitors who transited through New Providence within less than 24 hours of their arrival into The Bahamas will not be required to quarantine.



Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- COVID-19 Control Measures will be extended until 30th November 2020 .
- TCI will be removed from the Travel Corridor List for the United Kingdom effective 14th November 2020. Persons travelling to that region from TCI will not need to quarantine.
- The authorities made a plea to the population to limit attendees at private social gatherings and to wear masks at these gatherings and in workplaces.

Figure 1: Symptomatic and Asymptomatic TCI COVID-19 cases by date of positive test
March 23 - November 11, 2020



NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- While New Providence is the epi-center for COVID-19 in The Bahamas, there have been increases in newly confirmed cases on the islands of Mainland Eleuthera and Exuma. A team from MOH just returned from Eleuthera last week and another team will be sent to Exuma to assess the COVID-19 situation on 13th November 2020.
- On 13th November 2020, Samaritan's Purse has turned over the operation of the Field Hospital (20 bed facility) that it has donated to the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH). During its 3 weeks of operations at PMH, Samaritan's Purse conducted Infection Prevention and Control training for 1,000 workers at hospitals and at 36 clinics on 26 islands. Curriculum details for the training are unknown to PAHO.
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), PMH, Rand Memorial Hospital and private sector laboratories. On 12th November, the laboratory sub-committee team of the EOC met to discuss operational, surveillance and reporting concerns for COVID-19 antigen testing.
- The Contact Tracing Command Centre is still operating and an on-line contact tracing course continues to be offered through the University of The Bahamas (UB).
- Preparatory work continues for developing the preparation of a National COVID-19 Vaccine Plan, with support from PAHO.
- A SharePoint platform is utilized for multiple user entry of contact tracing data, case investigation and laboratory test results whilst Go.Data is used for epidemiology analysis of a subset of exported data variables.
- Moderate to severe, suspected and confirmed cases are treated at PMH, Doctors Hospital West and Rand Memorial Hospital.
- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute PPEs across all public hospitals and clinics.
- MOH continues to provide telemedicine, telepsychology, mental health, and psychosocial support services.
- MOH continues to implement a communication campaign to increase immunization coverage.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) Ministry of Health

- There has been a decline in the daily number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing and 5,525 tests were completed to date. Testing has been expanded to include "frontline" workers and community-

based testing.

- Preparatory work continues for developing the National COVID-19 Vaccine Plan.
- Community drive-thru testing for COVID-19 continued in Providenciales and at “walk-up” sites on other islands. Recent confirmed cases were identified through Community-based Testing.
- GoData is being utilized for field data collection and contact tracing investigations.
- A Cuban health contingent of 20 persons continues to operate in medical facilities through a bilateral agreement between the two countries.

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 personnel remain embedded within The Bahamas’ MOH Emergency Operating Centre (EOC) to provide technical advice.
- Three staff members provide data management support to MOH, assisting with coordination of data entry for cases, contacts and laboratory tests and with standardizing of analysis and reporting.
- A PAHO led Infection Prevention Control Training course was completed by 36 physicians and nurses from MOH, Public Hospitals Authority, and Department of Public Health.
- PAHO’s regional and country office HSS and EOC groups are advising the MOH on expanding acute care services in three hospitals and adjusting workflow and workplace layout to minimize risks of COVID-19 infection.
- PAHO Country Office personnel continue to participate in MOH’s planning committee for developing the country’s COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy and plan.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- PAHO continues to provide technical assistance and access to technical guidelines, information and communication products, has advised on contact tracing and data management and made donations of PPE. A weekly virtual meeting is convened between MOH and PAHO for discussion of the technical cooperation programme.
- A PAHO led Infection Prevention Control Training course continues with 20 personnel enrolled in the course.

GAPS/CHALLENGES

- Public compliance with and enforcement of public health protocols are challenges in both countries.
- Surges in travel-related cases and virus transmission among nationals and residents occurred in both countries after the re-opening of international borders, however, within-country transmission of COVID-19 currently accounts for most of the confirmed cases in both countries.
- Tropical storms and hurricanes pose a risk to COVID-19 response efforts.

The Bahamas

- A tented patient facility donated by Samaritan’s Purse increased health care capacity in New Providence. However, there are still concerns about insufficient capacity for handling severe cases.
- COVID-19 testing has been expanded in both the public and private sectors to cope with increased demands for testing. Many sites have started using antigen tests, before MOH disseminated guidance on the subject. Reporting of antigen test results compounds on-going challenges with coordination and timely receipt of results from all laboratories.

- There has been a decline in infections and requirements for isolation/quarantine of frontline health, security service and other sector workers.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- The decline in confirmation of new cases has decreased the workload for contact tracers. The Ministry of Health has initiated community-based COVID-19 testing.
- Stigma and discrimination by public towards COVID-19 confirmed and suspected cases.