

Situation in The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands 4th December 2020

On 30th January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. As of 3rd December 2020, there were 64,258,412 cases and 1,493,173 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 27,438,341 confirmed cases and 737,382 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 26th November 2020, there were 69 newly confirmed cases and one non-COVID-19 related death.

Among the new cases:

- Forty-six percent were from New Providence and forty-five percent were Grand Bahama;
- 35 (51 %) are male and 34 (49%) are female.

Among total confirmed cases:

- Eighty percent of deaths (131) were from New Providence;
- 44,273 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 26th November 2020, there were five newly confirmed cases.

Among 751 total confirmed cases:

- 348 (46.3%) are female, 402 (53.5%) are male and 1(0.1%) (data to 2nd December 2020);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 2nd 2020) is 0-5 (3.6%), 6-19 (12.0%), 20-29 (19.2%), 30-39 (24.9%), 40-49 (22.4%), 50-59 (11.3%), 60-79 (5.9%), 80 and over (0.7%), unknown (0.1%);
- 96 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 9,081 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	5517	131
Grand Bahama	1043	24
Abaco	195	3
Eleuthera	148	1
Exuma	110	1
Bimini/Cat Cay	81	2
Berry Islands	46	1
Inagua	19	0
Andros	22	0
Long Island	11	0
Cat Island	8	0
Acklins	7	0
Crooked Island	6	0
Mayaguana	3	0
Pending	349	0
TOTAL	7565	163

Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	692	5
North Caicos	20	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	25	1
South Caicos	3	0
TOTAL	751	6

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

TOTAL CASES

7565 Bahamas
751 Turks & Caicos
Confirmed

1368 Bahamas
11 Turks & Caicos
Active Cases

5976 Bahamas
733 Turks & Caicos
Recovered

16 Bahamas
0 Turks & Caicos
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos
Positive Cases that Left Country

163 Bahamas
6 Turks & Caicos
COVID-related Deaths

35 Bahamas
Non-COVID-related Deaths

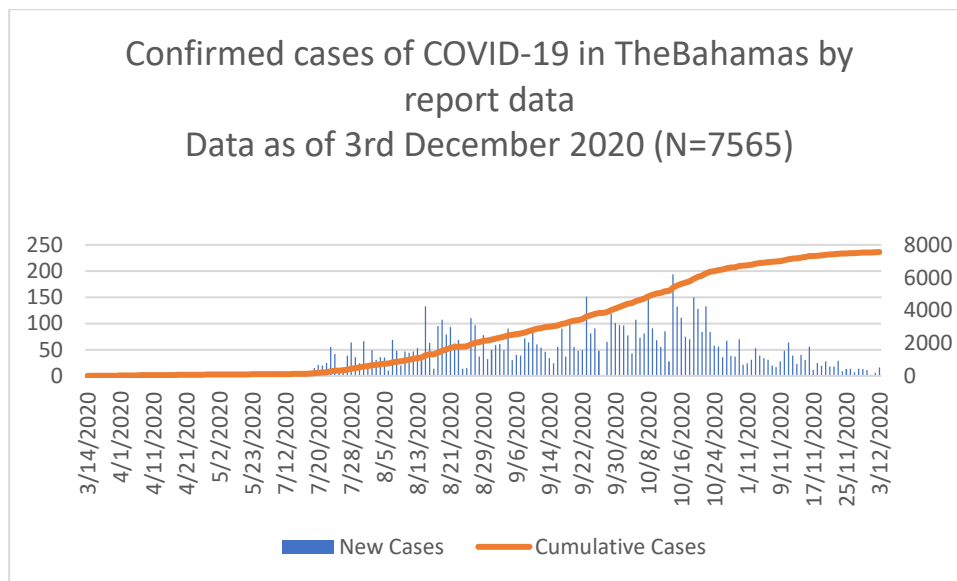
23 Bahamas
Deaths under investigation

PAHO RESPONSE

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

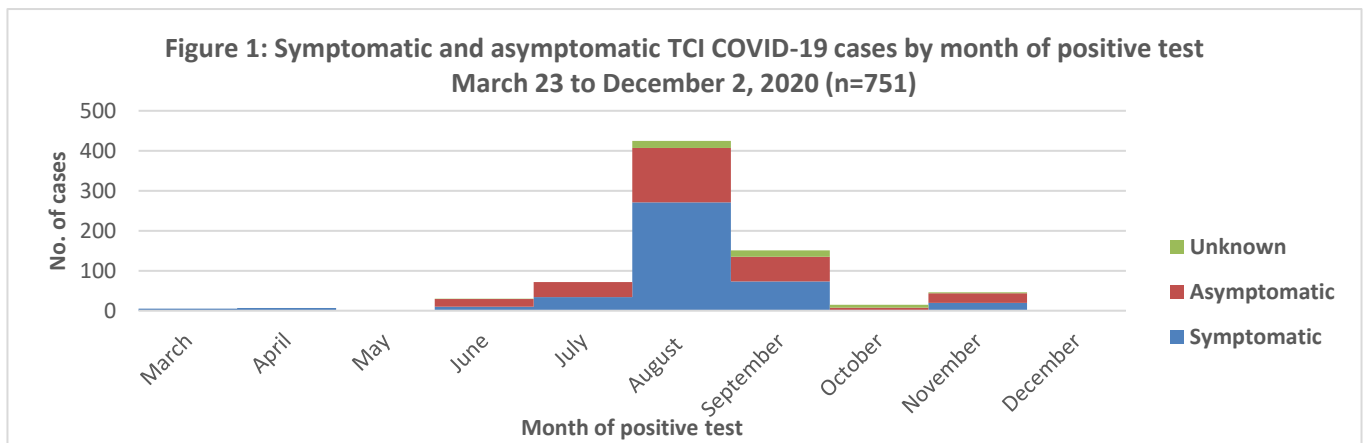
The Bahamas

- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 31st January 2021.
- Weekend lockdowns have been discontinued for Mainland Eleuthera and Exuma.
- Nightly curfews continue for Abaco, Grand Bahama, Mainland Eleuthera, Mainland Exuma and New Providence. However, as of 2nd December 2020, nightly curfew has changed to 10:00 pm to 5:00 am, Mondays to Sundays.
- Grocery stores on New Providence may operate on Sundays from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm.
- A tentative return to face-to-face instruction for public schools is scheduled for 1st February 2020.



Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Nightly curfew was discontinued as of 30th November 2020.
- Protocols related to social distancing, wearing of masks and other related measures including screening for travel have been extended to 31st March 2020.
- All businesses must close daily by 12 midnight with an exception for 31st December 2020 in which they will be permitted to close at 2:00 am.
- Restaurants and bars, religious places of worship, and funeral services are not to exceed the 30% occupancy on square footage indoors.
- Weddings are limited to 40 persons outdoors and social gatherings are limited to 25 persons outdoors only.
- Beach gatherings are limited to 10 persons from inside the same household.
- Log books must be kept for all events and gatherings.



NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- There has been a decline in the daily number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19 throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. MOH personnel completed a follow-up assessment on the island of Eleuthera from 27th November to 30th November 2020.
- The national authorities continue to require negative real time PCR tests from arriving travelers. However, they have discontinued quarantine of foreign travelers after arrival, but have replaced this with requirements for rapid antigen testing 5 and 10 days post entry.
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), PMH, Rand Memorial Hospital and private sector laboratories.
- MOH received a donation of two ventilators from private donors on 27th November 2020.
- MOH hosted a virtual discussion with Faith-Based Organizations on 1st December 2020 to discuss “Safety in Worship.”
- The Contact Tracing Command Centre is still operational and an on-line contact tracing course continues to be offered through the University of The Bahamas (UB).
- Preparatory work continues towards developing the 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 for influenza and other vaccines.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) Ministry of Health

- There has been a decline in the daily number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19. As of 26th November 2020, 56% of cases were attributed to workplace, social gatherings, and events, 41% were of unknown origin, and 2% were travel related.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing and 9,081 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, with support from PAHO.
- Community drive-thru testing for COVID-19 continued in Providenciales and at “walk-up” sites on other islands.
- Go.Data 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 have advised 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.
- On 3rd December 2020, the PAHO Sub-Regional Advisor for Immunization met with two United Kingdom Overseas Territories to discuss Ultra Cold Chain logistics and equipment.

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 and test sites.
- 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.