

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

On 30th January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. As of 7th January 2021, there were 86,365,989 cases and 1,833,342 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for confirmed 37,975,799 cases and 896,318 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 December 2020, there were 82 newly confirmed cases.

Among the new cases:

- Seventy-six percent were from New Providence;
- One new island, San Salvador, reported seven (7) cases;
- 32 males, 40 females and 10 unknown (data for 3rd January 2021 unknown).

54,244 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 31st December 2020, there were 63 newly confirmed cases.

Among the new cases:

- Fifty-one percent were from Grand Turk and forty-nine percent were from Providenciales.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 496 (52.7%) males, 444 (47.2%) females and 1 (0.1%) unknown gender (data to 6th January 2021);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 6th January 2021) is 0-5 (3.4%), 6-19 (11.2%), 20-29 (19.6%), 30-39 (26.0%), 40-49 (21.5%), 50-59 (12.1%), 60-79 (5.6%), 80 and over (0.5%), unknown (0.1%);
- 430 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 12,172 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	5779	136
Grand Bahama	1143	24
Abaco	202	3
Eleuthera	157	1
Exuma	121	1
Bimini/Cat Cay	83	2
Berry Islands	47	1
Inagua	19	0
Andros	24	0
Long Island	11	0
Cat Island	8	0
Acklins	7	0
San Salvador	7	0
Crooked Island	6	0
Mayaguana	3	0
Pending	351	7
TOTAL	7969	175

Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	843	5
North Caicos	20	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	79	1
South Caicos	3	0
TOTAL	956	6

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

TOTAL CASES

7969 Bahamas
956 Turks & Caicos
Confirmed

1429 Bahamas
150 Turks & Caicos
Active Cases

6313 Bahamas
799 Turks & Caicos
Recovered

16 Bahamas
4 Turks & Caicos
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos
Positive Cases that Left Country

175 Bahamas
6 Turks & Caicos
COVID-related Deaths

37 Bahamas
Non-COVID-related Deaths

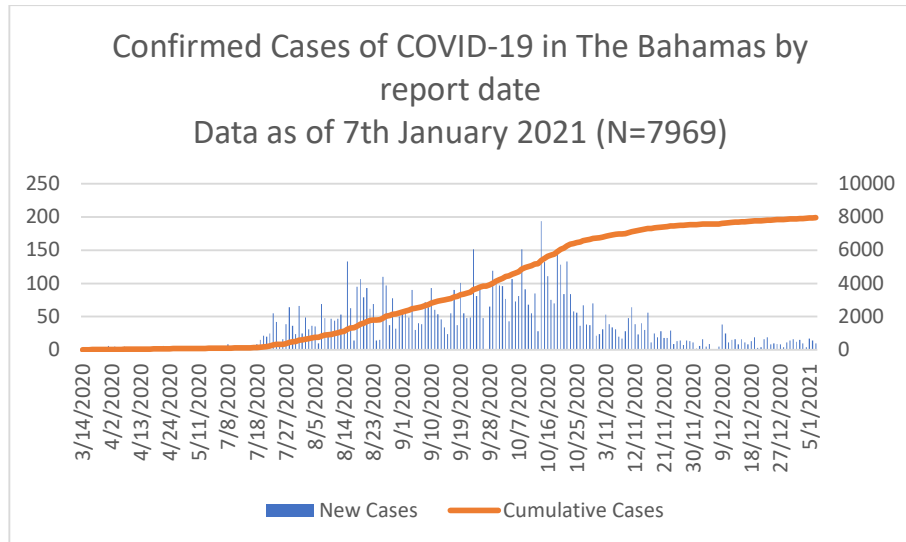
15 Bahamas
Deaths under investigation

PAHO RESPONSE

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

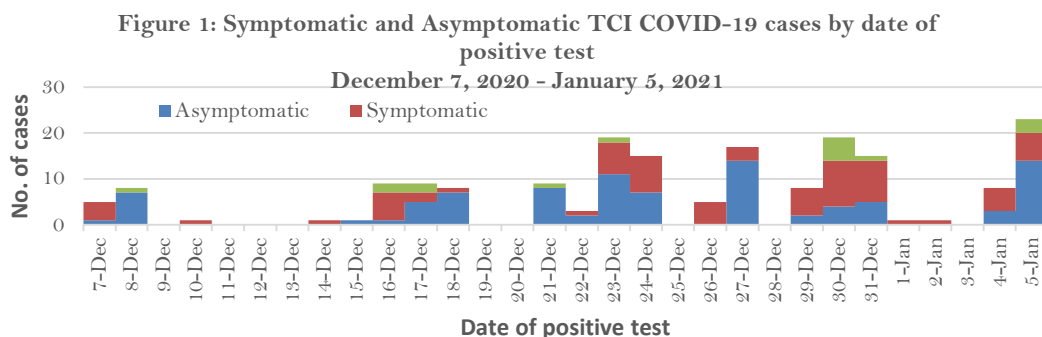
The Bahamas

- Emergency Orders have been extended to 31st January 2021.
- Nightly curfews continue for Abaco, Grand Bahama, Mainland Eleuthera, Mainland Exuma and New Providence from 10:00 pm to 5:00 am, Mondays to Sundays.
- Special provisions for the Christmas Season ended on 3rd January 2021.
- Public schools re-opened on 4th January 2021. However, students on Abaco, Eleuthera, Exuma, and New Providence will continue to access classes via virtual platforms.



Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Protocols related to social distancing, wearing of masks and other related measures including screening for travel have been extended to 31st March 2020.
- From 5th January 2021 to 20th January 2021, business closures will be from 10pm to 5 am.
- No curfew is in effect for any island.
- Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines were received in-country on 7th January 2021. Distribution is expected to commence on 11th January 2021 with front-line workers.



NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- There has been a slight increase in the daily number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19 The Bahamas.
- The national authorities continue to require negative real time PCR tests from arriving travelers and rapid antigen testing five and ten days post entry for all in-coming travelers, including citizens and residents.
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), PMH, Rand Memorial Hospital and private sector laboratories.
- The Contact Tracing Command Centre is still operational, although with a decrease in the number of volunteer contact tracers. 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. Work has started on planning a communication campaign for COVID-19 vaccine introduction.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) Ministry of Health

- There has been an increase in the daily number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19, with notable increase on Grand Turk. New confirmed cases are linked to social gatherings and workplace exposures.
- The Grand Turk Clinic was closed as well as community testing on Grand Turk cancelled on several days of this past week to allow for contact tracing efforts on the island.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing and 12,172 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. This work has been expedited in line with the receipt of Pfizer vaccine with both a national committee and a technical task force supporting vaccine introduction policy development and planning.
- Community drive-through services continue to access COVID-19 tests throughout the 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.
- A communication campaign has been launched and communication materials on the COVID-19

vaccine have been shared via social media.

PAHO/WHO RESPONSE

- PAHO continues to provide both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands with access to updated technical guidelines and technical assistance.
- PAHO has shared WHO/PAHO briefing documents on COVID-19 vaccination and the emergence of COVID-19 mutant strains in different countries.

The Bahamas

- PAHO Country Office personnel remain embedded within The Bahamas' MOH Emergency Operating Centre (EOC) to provide technical advice. There has been a decreased frequency of EOC meetings.
- 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 was completed by 20 personnel from MOH.

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.
- The 2020 hurricane season ended uneventfully.
- There is a new risk to both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands from the emergence of mutant COVID-19 strains in large numbers in the United Kingdom and South Africa with evidence of spread through travel to other countries.
- CARPHA has advised Caribbean countries that it is offering genomic sequencing for COVID-19 strains through collaboration with a researcher at the University of the West Indies. Neither The Bahamas nor Turks and Caicos Islands have in-country sequencing capacity. Furthermore, The Bahamas normally experiences significant challenges to refer biological samples to CARPHA and will be exploring alternative options through PAHO.

The Bahamas

- A tented patient facility donated by Samaritan's Purse remains available in New Providence for expanded clinical capacity.

- COVID-19 testing is now offered in both the public and private sectors, both real time PCR and SARS CoV-2 antigen testing are offered with a requirement to report positive results and workload through the national COVID-19 surveillance system.
- 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

- There appears to be a surge in confirmed COVID-19 cases in Grand Turk. Responsive contact tracing and epidemiological investigations are on-going.
- Stigma and discrimination by public towards COVID-19 confirmed and suspected cases.