



## The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands

21 January 2022

### SITUATION IN NUMBERS

#### The Bahamas

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 15 March 2020. During the period 15-21 January 2022, there were 1344 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 10 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- 1101 (82%) were from New Providence;
- 622 (46.0%) were males and 722 (54.0%) females;
- 202 cases (176 New Providence, 11 Eleuthera, 8 Exuma, 5 Long Island, 1 Grand Bahama, and 1 unknown) were travel-related.

The total number of real time PCR tests conducted to 21 January 2022 was 205,177 tests.

#### Turks and Caicos Islands

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 23 March 2020. During the period 15-21 January 2022, there were 568 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 3 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among new cases, 375 (66%) cases were from Providenciales.

Among the total confirmed cases:

- 2513 (47.7%) were males, 2742 (52.0%) were females, and 16 (0.3%) unknown as of 19 January 2022;

The total number of Real time PCR tests and Rapid Antigen Tests conducted to 21 January 2022 was 52,100 and 364,691 tests respectively.

**Total cases and deaths, as of 21 January 2022**  
The Bahamas                      Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	25258	528
Grand Bahama	3233	105
Abaco	759	19
Eleuthera	792	17
Exuma	499	9
Bimini/Cat Cay	270	13
Berry Islands	139	4
Inagua	85	3
Andros	350	9
Long Island	136	4
Cat Island	128	3
Acklins	41	0
San Salvador	18	0
Crooked Island	34	0
Mayaguana	21	2
Ragged Island	0	0
Pending	236	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31999</b>	<b>729</b>

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	4533	24
North Caicos	119	0
Parrot Cay	20	0
Grand Turk	707	7
South Caicos	110	1
Middle Caicos	30	0
Ambergris Cay	2	0
Pine Cay	1	0
Salt Cay	2	0
Unknown	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5524</b>	<b>33</b>

#### GLOBAL

341,864,383 Cases  
5,574,356 Deaths

#### REGION OF THE AMERICAS

126,205,164 Cases  
2,465,090 Deaths

#### THE BAHAMAS

31,999 Confirmed  
7,453 Active  
23,624 Recovered  
161 Hospitalized  
729 Deaths

#### TURKS & CAICOS

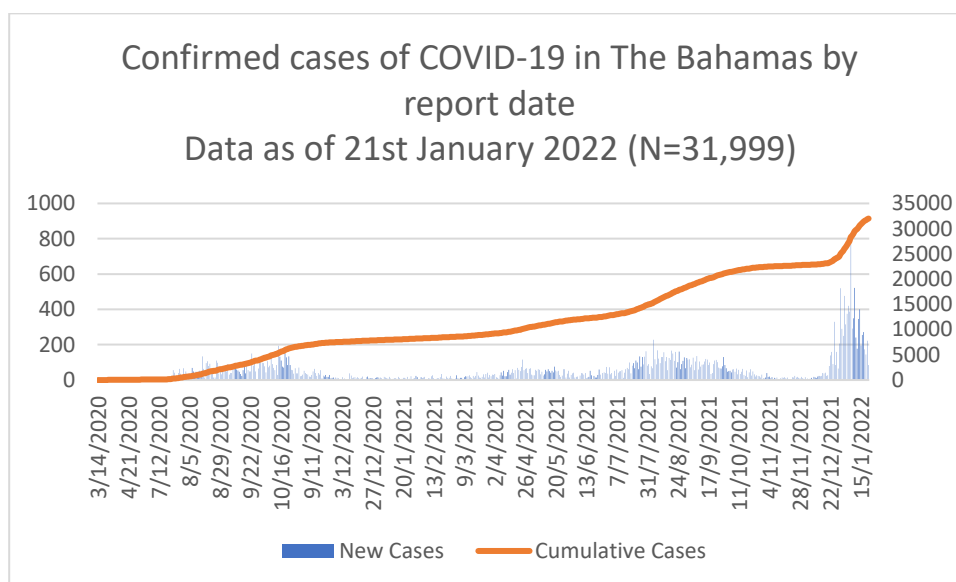
5,524 Confirmed  
616 Active  
4,864 Recovered  
33 Deaths

## SITUATION SUMMARY

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### The Bahamas

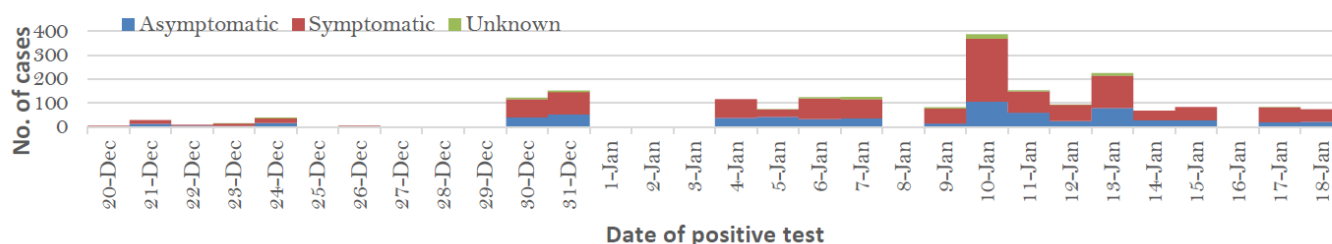
- The country is currently undergoing a fourth wave with an increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19 and hospitalizations, though daily numbers of cases have been decreasing and it appears that this wave has peaked.
- The Health Services (COVID-19) (Prevention and Management of Community Spread) Rules, 2021 and the Health Services (COVID-19) (General) Rules, 2021 remain in effect.



#### Turks and Caicos Islands

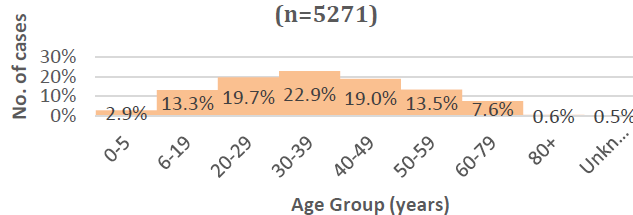
- The country is currently undergoing the fourth wave with an increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19 hospitalizations, and deaths, though daily numbers of cases have been decreasing and it appears that this wave has peaked.
- The Public and Environmental Health (COVID-19 Pandemic) Regulations 2021 are in effect until 28 February 2022.
- At the Cabinet Meeting held on 20 January 2022, the following measures were approved with effect 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022:
  - Entry to Churches, religious services, weddings and funerals will be limited to 50% of their approved capacity;
  - Only persons 16 and over who are fully vaccinated or present a negative COVID-19 test taken within 24 hours will be allowed entry into bars, discos, nightclubs, restaurants and social gatherings. Persons under 16 years of age who accompany those over 16 years of age are exempted from these requirements;
  - Incoming travellers and unvaccinated persons two years of age and older must present a negative PCR or Rapid Antigen test taken within three days prior to arrival;
  - Fully vaccinated residents must take a COVID-19 test within two days of arrival via the TCIG program at no cost;
  - Unvaccinated minors travellers must take a COVID-19 test within two days of arrival.
- The following measures went into effect 21 January 2022:
  - Only fully vaccinated persons or persons presenting a negative COVID-19 test done within 24 hours who are 12 years and older will be allowed entry into bars, discos, funerals, nightclubs, religious events and restaurants.
  - COVID-19 tests must be presented for incoming travellers and residents two years and older.

### Symptomatic and Asymptomatic TCI COVID-19 cases by date of positive test Dec. 20, 2021 - Jan. 18, 2022



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 92

### Age distribution of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the TCI, March 23, 2020 - January 19, 2022 (n=5271)



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 92

## RESPONSE

PAHO/WHO continues to provide both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands with access to updated technical guidelines, technical assistance and situational updates related to the COVID-19 response.

### The Bahamas

- COVID-19 vaccine distribution including extended and booster dose vaccinations continued throughout The Bahamas.
- As of 15 January 2022, 148,615 persons received their first dose of either the Astra Zeneca or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, and 157,582 persons were fully vaccinated including those who received the one dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.
- On 18 January 2022, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed the travel advisory threat of The Bahamas to a Level 4: Very high level of COVID-19 infections.
- Free COVID-19 Rapid Antigen testing continued at both the Kendal G. L. Isaacs Gymnasium and the Melia Hotel for asymptomatic persons and at the South Beach Health Center for RT-PCR testing for symptomatic persons. As of 19 January 2022, 7,565 free COVID-19 Rapid Antigen tests were administered since the testing commenced, of which 565 tests were positive.
- On 19 January 2022, the Office of the Prime Minister in collaboration with the National Emergency Management Agency spearheaded distribution of free KN95 masks to certain feeding programmes.
- The COVID-19 Mobile Unit continues to operate and provide vaccinations to individuals who are homebound, hearing impaired, mentally challenged, physically challenged, and visually impaired as well as their caretakers.
- Restrictions continue on the amount of traffic into and out of the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) and the Rand Memorial Hospital (RMH) in Grand Bahama with only emergency cases being allowed for service.
- Moderate to severe COVID-19 cases continue to be treated at PMH, Doctors Hospital West and the RMH and less severe cases at the South Beach Health Center.
- COVID-19 laboratory PCR testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), PMH, RMH and private sector laboratories.
- A National Respiratory Surveillance Genomics Database is in use by the NRL for genetic analysis. Several genomic deletions and variant mutations have been identified by the NRL.

- The Alpha, Delta, and Gamma, variants of concern, and the Iota, variant of interest, were detected among samples previously sent to the Fiocruz Laboratory in Brazil for genomic sequencing.
- An on-line contact tracing course continues to be offered through the University of The Bahamas.
- Go.Data continues to be utilized for data collection of confirmed COVID-19 cases and contact tracing.
- Health visas are no longer needed for Bahamian citizens and permanent residences returning to The Bahamas. However, the testing requirements to enter the country for Bahamian citizens and permanent residents remain in place.
- Non-Bahamian citizens and non-residents must present a travel health visa for entry into the country.
- Vaccinated travellers aged 12 and over are required to present a negative RT-PCR or Rapid Antigen test obtained no longer than three days prior to check-in for travel. Unvaccinated travellers aged 12 and over are required to present a negative RT-PCR test obtained no longer than three days prior to check-in for travel.
- Incoming visitors remaining in the country after 48 hours will be required to take a COVID-19 test regardless of vaccination status.
- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute personal protective equipment across all public hospitals and clinics.
- A Cuban health contingent of 50 Cuban specialized Nurses continues to support clinical care through a bilateral agreement between the two countries.
- Ministry of Health and Wellness continues to provide telemedicine, telepsychology, mental health, and psychosocial support services.
- Ministry of Health and Wellness, in collaboration with PAHO/WHO and other partners, continues to implement a communication campaign to increase immunization coverage for influenza and other vaccines.
- Work continues in adapting and implementing the National COVID-19 Vaccine Plan to the changing situation with respect to access to vaccines, with support from PAHO/WHO.
- PAHO/WHO continues to assist The Bahamas in obtaining swabs for COVID-19 testing.

## Turks and Caicos Islands

- COVID-19 vaccine distribution continued throughout the islands, including for children ages 12-15 years of age.
- More than 80% of the population is fully vaccinated with more than 3,000 booster COVID-19 shots given since inception.
- Persons aged over 50 years and the most vulnerable population continue to receive booster vaccines.
- All persons over the age of 18 years and high-risk persons over 16 years of age may receive a third dose or booster shot of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The Alpha, Gamma and Delta B.1.617.2 Variants of Concern was confirmed to be in-country.
- On 21 January 2022, the Omicron Variant of Concern was confirmed to be in-country based on results from samples (obtained 29 October 2021 to 15 December 2021) submitted to the Caribbean Public Health Agency for genomic sequencing..
- Persons continue to register for the COVID-19 vaccine via the online portal which is available in three languages: English, French-Creole, and Spanish.
- Go.Data continues to be utilized for field data collection and contact tracing investigations.
- Community drive-through services continue to provide access to COVID-19 tests throughout the islands.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing.
- The communication education campaign continues with communication materials on the COVID-19 vaccine shared via traditional means and social media.
- A Cuban health contingent of 20 persons was given an extension of an additional six months to support operations in the TCI Hospitals through a bilateral agreement between the two countries.
- PAHO/WHO continues to assist with coordination for genomic sequencing of samples to the FioCruz Laboratory in Brazil.

## GAPS/CHALLENGES

- Public compliance with public health protocols and vaccination hesitancy and resistance continue to present challenges in both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands. Vaccine hesitancy/resistance

is of particular concern among health care workers and other emergency and frontline workers.

- While The Bahamas has capacity to identify the presence of COVID-19 variants, neither The Bahamas nor Turks and Caicos Islands have in-country sequencing capacity. This presents a challenge for the timely identification of new variants.
- Both countries are challenged by the limited global supply of Cepheid Test Kits and other supplies required for COVID-19 testing. Turks and Caicos Islands is particularly challenged as it is only possible for them to source Cepheid Test Kits through the United Kingdom Government.
- A nursing shortage has been identified in The Bahamas and 50 Cuban nurses were recently hired to address this issue as well as staff burnout.
- In The Bahamas, 5-10% of health care workers in the public sector are in quarantine.
- Both countries risk importation of new variants as they immerge. While confirmation of the variant was made in the Turks and Caicos Islands, the epidemiological situation in The Bahamas is suggestive of the circulation of the Omicron variant.