



The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands

31 December 2021

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

The Bahamas

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 15 March 2020. During the period 25-31 December 2021, there were 1655 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 4 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- 1490 (90%) were from New Providence;
- 737 (44%) were males, 917 (55%) were females and 1(1%) unknown;
- 226 cases (211 from New Providence, 12 Grand Bahama, 2 Exuma, and 1 Abaco) were travel-related.

The total number of real time PCR tests conducted to 31 December 2021 was 185,443 tests.

Turks and Caicos Islands

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 23 March 2020. During the period 25-31 December 2021, there were 173 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 0 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among new cases, 164 (95%) cases were from Providenciales.

Among the total confirmed cases:

- 1547 (48.2%) were males and 1660 (51.8%) were females as of 29 December 2021;

The total number of Real time PCR tests and Rapid Antigen Tests conducted to 29 December 2021 was 46,371 and 337,191 tests respectively.

Total cases and deaths, as of 31 December 2021

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	19602	520
Grand Bahama	2734	102
Abaco	668	19
Eleuthera	714	17
Exuma	376	9
Bimini/Cat Cay	256	12
Berry Islands	115	4
Inagua	61	3
Andros	294	9
Long Island	114	4
Cat Island	99	3
Acklins	28	0
San Salvador	16	0
Crooked Island	34	0
Mayaguana	21	2
Ragged Island	0	0
Pending	153	13
TOTAL	25285	717

Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	2850	21
North Caicos	103	0
Parrot Cay	19	0
Grand Turk	348	5
South Caicos	60	0
Middle Caicos	27	0
Ambergris Cay	1	0
TOTAL	3408	26

GLOBAL (29 Dec.)
282,334,451 Cases
5,414,289 Deaths

REGION OF THE AMERICAS (29 Dec.)
102,814,342 Cases
2,406,884 Deaths

THE BAHAMAS
25,285 Confirmed
2,538 Active
21,840 Recovered
36 Hospitalized
717 Deaths

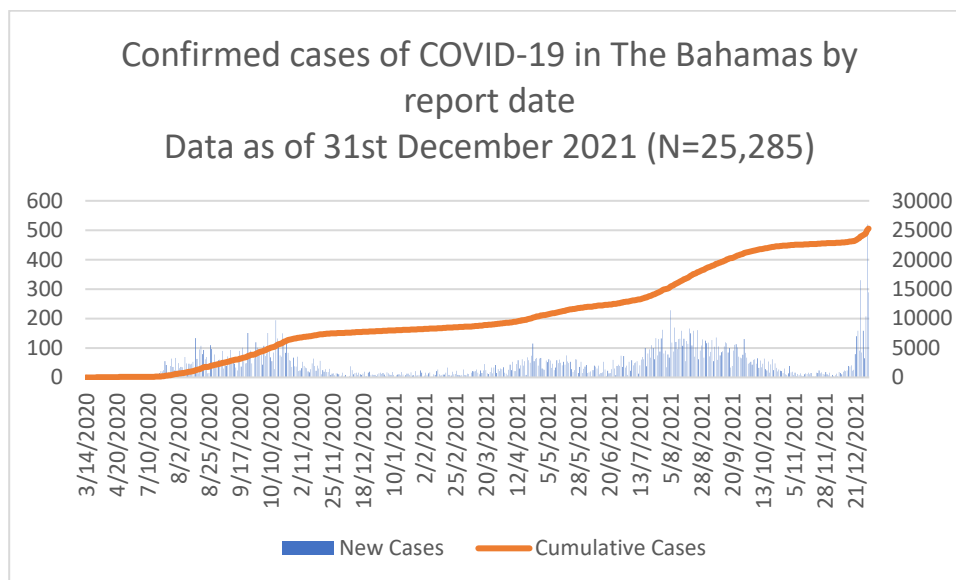
TURKS & CAICOS
3,408 Confirmed
186 Active
3186 Recovered
26 Deaths

SITUATION SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

The Bahamas

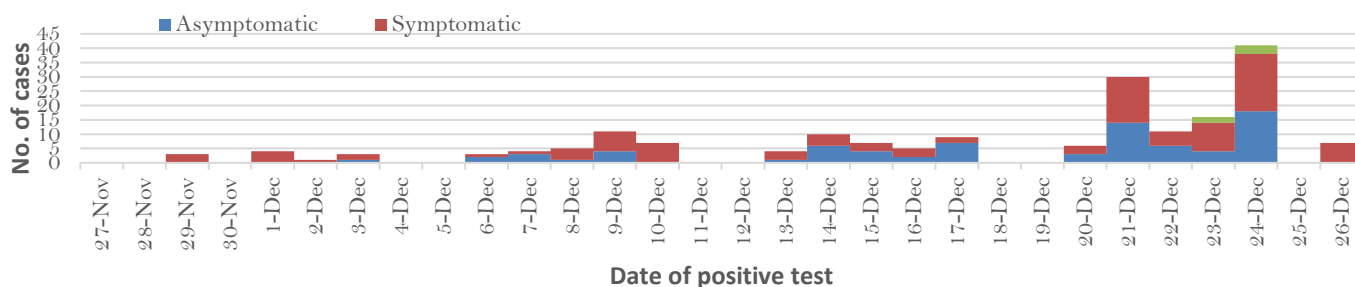
- The country is currently undergoing the fourth wave with an increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19 and hospitalizations.
- The Health Services (COVID-19) (Prevention and Management of Community Spread) Rules, 2021 and the Health Services (COVID-19) (General) Rules, 2021 remain in effect.
- Effective 7 January 2022, all incoming travellers will be required to present a negative RT PCR test obtained no longer than three days prior to arrival in country



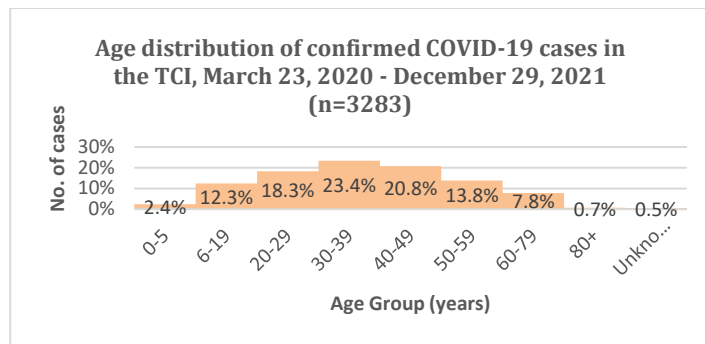
Turks and Caicos Islands

- There is a slight increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- The Public and Environmental Health (COVID-19 Pandemic) Regulations 2021 are in effect until 28 February 2022.

Symptomatic and Asymptomatic TCI COVID-19 cases by date of positive test November 27 - December 26, 2021



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 89



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 89

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.
- A donation of a PCR machine was made to the Rand Memorial Hospital by PAHO/WHO.
- The Bahamas Christian Council announced reduced occupancy at church services from 33% to 25% capacity.
- 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 PMH 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 Rand Memorial Hospital 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.
- Results are pending for ten COVID-19 samples sent in March 2021 to the Caribbean Public Health Agency.
- On 28-29 December 2021, training on the Tableau platform was offered for selected personnel of the Emergency Operations Centre and the PAHO Country Office.
- Go.Data continues to be utilized for data collection of confirmed COVID-19 cases and contact tracing.
- On 29 December 2021, training on the Go.Data platform was provided to Ministry of Health and Wellness personnel by PAHO Country staff.
- 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 and a negative real time PCR or rapid antigen test taken no more than three days prior to travel and proof of vaccination for fully vaccinated travellers and a must show proof vaccination or a negative real time PCR test taken no more than three days prior to travel for not fully vaccinated persons.
- An on-line contact tracing course continues to be offered through the University of The Bahamas.
- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute personal protective equipment across all public hospitals and clinics.
- Ministry of Health continues to provide telemedicine, telepsychology, mental health, and psychosocial support services.

- Ministry of Health, 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.

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.
- As of 31 December 2021, all persons over the age of 18 years of age 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.
- 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 continues to operate in medical facilities 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 continue to present challenges in both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands. Vaccine hesitancy is of particular concern among health care 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.
- The Bahamas risks using current stocks of syringes for their National Immunization Programme for COVID-19 vaccine distribution due to limited global supply.
- A nursing shortage has been identified in The Bahamas and there are concerns about the delivery of healthcare services.
- In The Bahamas, 5-10% of health care workers in the public sector are in quarantine.
- Both countries risk importation of new variants including the Omicron variant due to incoming travellers from countries already known to have other variants.
- Shortages of swabs for COVID-19 testing may affect in-country testing capacity in The Bahamas.