



The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands

7 January 2022

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

The Bahamas

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 15 March 2020. During the period 1-7 January 2022, there were 3043 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 0 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- 2674 (88%) were from New Providence;
- 1374 (45.15%) were males, 1667 (54.78%) were females and 2(0.066%) unknown;
- 433 cases (391 from New Providence, 25 Grand Bahama, 7 Exuma, 4 Eleuthera, 4 Long Island, 1 Andros and 1 unknown) were travel-related.

The total number of real time PCR tests conducted to 7 January 2022 was 193,249 tests.

Turks and Caicos Islands

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 23 March 2020. During the period 1-7 January 2022, there were 475 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 0 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among new cases, 375 (79%) cases were from Providenciales.

Among the total confirmed cases:

- 1813 (48.2%) were males and 1938 (51.8%) were females as of 6 January 2022;

The total number of Real time PCR tests and Rapid Antigen Tests conducted to 7 January 2022 was 47,493 and 347,659 tests respectively.

Total cases and deaths, as of 7 January 2022
The Bahamas Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	22276	520
Grand Bahama	2883	102
Abaco	700	19
Eleuthera	732	17
Exuma	414	9
Bimini/Cat Cay	259	12
Berry Islands	130	4
Inagua	77	3
Andros	318	9
Long Island	125	4
Cat Island	107	3
Acklins	30	0
San Salvador	18	0
Crooked Island	34	0
Mayaguana	21	2
Ragged Island*	1	0
Pending	202	13
TOTAL	28328	717

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	3225	21
North Caicos	104	0
Parrot Cay	20	0
Grand Turk	434	6
South Caicos	67	0
Middle Caicos	28	0
Ambergris Cay	1	0
Pine Cay*	1	0
TOTAL	3880	27

* Both islands reported their first confirmed case.

GLOBAL

298,558,734 Cases
5,467,662 Deaths

REGION OF THE AMERICAS

109,905,339 Cases
2,424,726 Deaths

THE BAHAMAS

28,328 Confirmed
5,299 Active
22,122 Recovered
98 Hospitalized
717 Deaths

TURKS & CAICOS

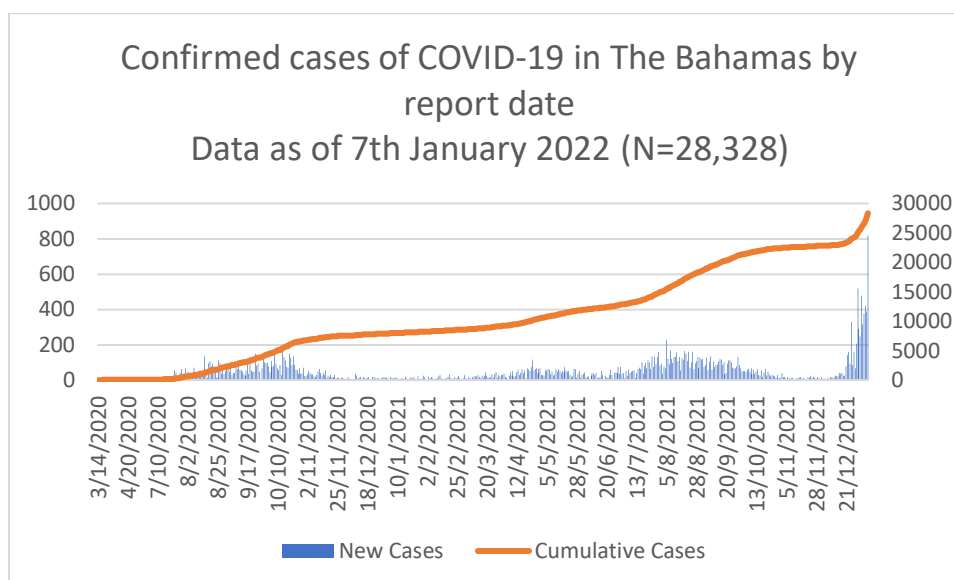
3,880 Confirmed
448 Active
3396 Recovered
27 Deaths

SITUATION SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

The Bahamas

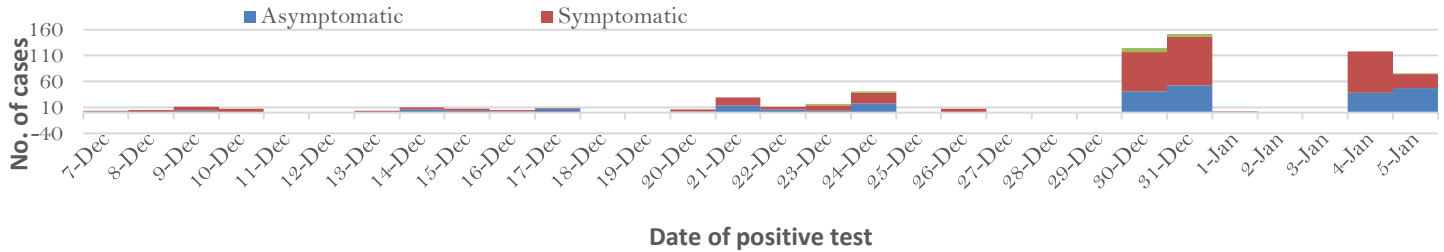
- The country is currently undergoing the fourth wave with an increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19 and hospitalizations.
- The Health Services (COVID-19) (Prevention and Management of Community Spread) Rules, 2021 and the Health Services (COVID-19) (General) Rules, 2021 remain in effect.
- Effective 4 January 2022, any incoming visitors remaining in the country after 48 hours will be required to take a COVID-19 test regardless of vaccination status. Details are available at <https://www.bahamas.com/pressroom/bahamas-ministry-of-tourism-investments--aviation-statement-on-updated-testing-protocols-jan-4-2022>.
- The mandatory RT-PCR testing for vaccinated travellers slated to begin 7 January 2022 was postponed and instead 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. Details are available on The Bahamas Travel Health Site at: <https://travel.gov.bs>



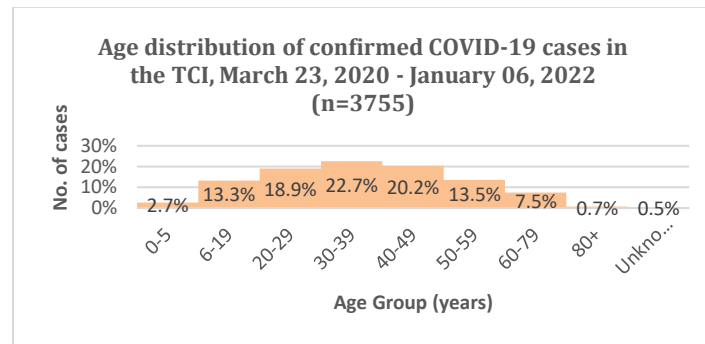
Turks and Caicos Islands

- There is an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- The Public and Environmental Health (COVID-19 Pandemic) Regulations 2021 are in effect until 28 February 2022.
- On 5 January 2022 approval was made in Cabinet for:
 - A policy to vaccinate children ages 5 years to 11 years for COVID-19;
 - New measures and protocols that will be effective 14 January 2022 to 28 February 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.

Symptomatic and Asymptomatic TCI COVID-19 cases by date of positive test November 27 - January 05, 2022



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 90



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 90

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

- On 1 January 2022 changes were announced to the Contact Tracing protocols in which a text message with details of quarantine and reporting of contacts will be sent to persons with COVID-19 positive results reported to Ministry of Health and Wellness by laboratories.
- On 4 January 2022, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed the travel advisory threat of The Bahamas back to a Level 3 due to a high level of COVID-19 infections.
- On 6 January 2022, it was announced that free COVID-19 testing would be offered at two sites, the Kendal G. L. Isaacs Gymnasium and the Melia Hotel, commencing on 8 January 2022.
- On 6 January 2022, changes were announced to isolation, quarantine, and testing protocols for confirmed COVID-19 positive cases and their contacts respectively.
 - Persons who test positive for COVID-19 who are asymptomatic or experiencing mild to moderate symptoms but are vaccinated and not immunocompromised will either isolate for seven days, undergo Rapid Antigen or RT-PCR testing on either the fifth to seventh day, and if negative, released from isolation and wear a N-95 mask for three days thereafter or isolate for ten days, undergo Rapid Antigen or RT-PCR testing on either the fifth to seventh day and if positive, or if no testing, will be released from isolation once 24 hours passed with no fever or use of medications.
 - Persons who test positive for COVID-19 who are experiencing severe symptoms but are vaccinated and immunocompromised will either isolate for twenty days and monitor symptoms or upon consultation with their physician be cleared from isolation after ten days or isolation extended.
 - Persons who were exposed to confirmed COVID-19 cases but are fully vaccinated and not immunocompromised are not required to quarantine but undergo Rapid Antigen or RT-PCR testing on the fifth day after exposure.

- Persons who were exposed to confirmed COVID-19 cases but are not vaccinated and not immunocompromised must quarantine for ten days, undergo Rapid Antigen or RT-PCR testing on the tenth day, and if negative will be released from quarantine on the eleventh day.
- COVID-19 vaccine distribution including extended and booster dose vaccinations continued throughout The Bahamas.
- 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 with only emergency cases being allowed for service.
- As of 6 January 2022, only emergency cases are also being allowed for service at the Rand Memorial Hospital (RMH) in Grand Bahama.
- 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.
- Results are pending for ten COVID-19 samples sent in March 2021 to the Caribbean Public Health Agency.
- 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 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. Persons not fully vaccinated must show proof vaccination or a negative real time PCR test taken no more than three days prior to travel.
- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute personal protective equipment across all public hospitals and clinics.
- A delegation from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, including the Minister of Health, travelled to Cuba to assist with recruitment of specialized Nurses to support clinical care in the country in light of COVID-19 exposures and burn out of staff.
- 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 is assisting The Bahamas in obtaining swabs for COVID-19 testing.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- On 7 January 2022, the Ministry of Health and Human Services announced the denial of entry of the cruise ship, Carnival Freedom into the 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.
- 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 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.
- 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 steps are being taken to recruit Cuban nurses.
- 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.