

Situation in The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands 4th September 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 September 2020, there were 26,012,929 cases and 862,925 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 13,725,652 confirmed cases and 477,232 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 28th August 2020, there were 366 newly confirmed cases and 11 deaths from COVID-19. The gender and age distribution of new and total confirmed cases are not reflected in this report pending completion of on-going follow up investigations.

Among the new cases:

- Seventy-eight percent were from New Providence, and cases were reported from two new islands: Long Island (3), Mayaguana (2).

Laboratory testing

- 12,117 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 28th August 2020, there were 95 newly confirmed cases and two deaths from COVID-19.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 259 (46.7%) are female and 296 (53.3%) are male (data to 1st September 2020);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 1st September 2020) is 0-5 (3.6%), 6-19 (11.7%), 20-29 (18.4%), 30-39 (24.3%), 40-49 (23.1%), 50-59 (11.9%), 60-79 (6.3%), 80 and over (0.7%);
- 842 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 2601 persons have been tested for COVID-19 to date.

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	1504	29
Grand Bahama	570	16
Abaco	79	1
Berry Islands	15	1
Bimini	54	2
Cat Island	8	0
Eleuthera	7	1
Exuma	20	0
Inagua	11	0
Acklins	7	0
Long Island	3	0
Crooked Island	2	0
Andros	2	0
Mayaguana	2	0
Pending locations	102	0
TOTAL	2386	50

Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	538	5
North Caicos	19	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	9	0
TOTAL	577	5

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

TOTAL CASES

2386 Bahamas
577 Turks & Caicos
Confirmed

1423 Bahamas
351 Turks & Caicos
Active Cases

893 Bahamas
220 Turks & Caicos
Recovered

77 Bahamas
2 Turks & Caicos
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos
Positive Cases that Left Country

50 Bahamas
5 Turks & Caicos
COVID-related Deaths

7 Bahamas
Non-COVID-related Deaths

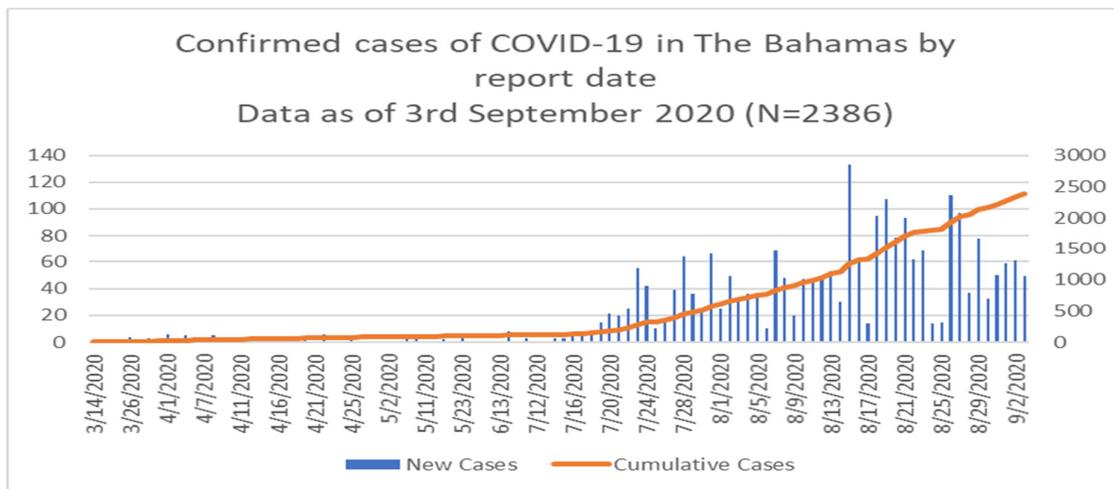
13 Bahamas
Deaths under investigation

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

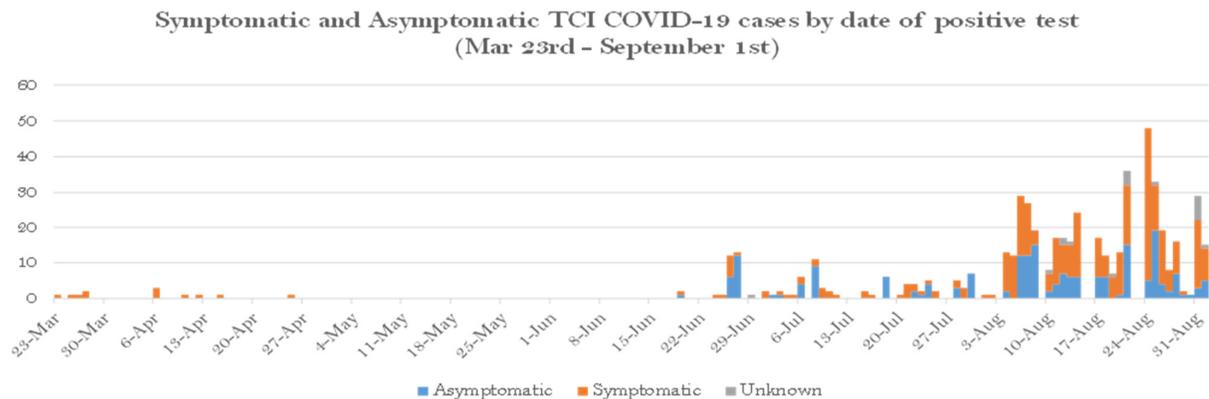
- Emergency Orders have been extended through 30th September 2020.
- Effective 31st August 2020, a curfew from 10 pm to 5 am will apply to Abaco, Acklins, Andros, Berry Islands, Bimini, Cat Island, Crooked Island, Eleuthera, Exuma, Grand Bahama, Inagua, Mayaguana, and New Providence.
- Effective 31st August 2020, private and public bus transportation resumed with only half of their usual occupancy.
- Effective 1st September 2020 shopping hours were updated for gas stations, grocery stores, hardware stores, pharmacies and water depots to 6 am to 9 pm daily, retail bakeries to 7 am to 5 pm daily, curbside and delivery retail businesses, indoor retail clothing, jewelry, fabric and shoe stores to 7 am to 6 pm daily except Sundays.
- Effective 1st September 2020 private medical care including dental care can operate daily from 5 am to 10 pm and emergency care daily from 10 pm to 5 am.
- Effective 1st September 2020 religious services may resume in person.
- National exams will re-commence on 14th September 2020 to 2nd October 2020. Public schools opening has been delayed to 5th October 2020. Private schools may open prior to the 5th but only in a virtual setting for grades higher than preschool level. Daycares and preschools are currently allowed to operate.



Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Local economic activity resumed on 22nd July 2020.
- Effective 28th August 2020, a national curfew commenced from 8 pm to 5 am daily.
- Effective 28th August 2020, a fine of \$250 will be levied for violations of COVID-19 protocols.
- Effective 28th August 2020, all businesses close by 7pm, restaurants and bars and social gatherings are restricted to 10 persons maximum, and all summer camps will be closed.
- Suspension of inter-island travel continues except for travel for essential services and travel of tourists between Providenciales to South Caicos and Grand Turk.
- The Cruise Port will remain closed until January 2021.
- The Ministry of Education has consulted on and developed three documents to assist with the phased reopening of schools. These documents are the e-Learning guidelines, Physical School Environment

guidelines and Curriculum guidelines. Phase 1A commenced 31st August 2020 in which schools will liaise with parents to ascertain whether they have required materials for online learning and to ensure information on students is up to date.



NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- While the surge in newly confirmed cases has decreased in both Grand Bahama and New Providence, there is concern about increased hospitalizations and limited bed capacity in New Providence.
- COVID-19 transmission investigations are on-going in two hospitals (Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) and Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre (SRC).
- Uniformed Officers of the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF) and Defense Force (RBDF) account for 205 confirmed COVID-19 cases. The RBDF New Entry Training Group has been quarantined on a RBDF vessel and training ceased after more than 85% of the recruits tested positive for COVID-19.
- Planning continues to ensure there are enough resources and equipment for the Alternative Medical Care Site for mild to moderate cases of COVID-19.
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory, Princess Margaret Hospital and private facilities.
- The Contact Tracing Command Centre operates at one of the local hotels on New Providence, providing national coordination, identification and follow up of contacts of confirmed cases.
- A SharePoint platform is utilized for multiple user data entry for contact tracing, case investigations 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 or Doctors Hospital West.
- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute personal protective equipment across all public hospitals and clinics.
- MOH continues to provide telepsychology, mental health, and psychosocial support services.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) Ministry of Health

- Contact tracing for newly detected cases is ongoing. Public health clinics on Grand Turk, North Caicos, and Providenciales continue to close daily at 1pm to allow staff to assist with contact tracing efforts.
- Effective 31st August 2020 for a one-week period, the Primary Healthcare Clinic on Grand Turk was closed to carry out investigations following confirmation of confirmed cases on the island.

- The Ministry of Health Office located on the island of Grand Turk was closed on 1st September 2020 for cleaning and sanitization based on contact tracing evidence of links to the office.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing and 2601 tests were completed to date. Daily laboratory testing workload has increased in parallel with increased case detections and contact tracing.
- Public health education campaigns continued with #MaskUpTCI launched this past week.

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 commenced on 6th August 2020 with 36 physicians and nurses participating from the Ministry of Health, Public Hospitals Authority, and Department of Public Health.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- A meeting was held on 31st August 2020 among senior policy makers of TCI, PWR, PAHO's Director of Public Health Emergencies Department and Public Health England (PHE-UK) to discuss the COVID-19 outbreak, response and risk mitigation. The Governor, Deputy premier and Minister of Health of TCI participated. Surveillance data shows predominance of cases among nationals and residents, virus spread to 4 of 8 islands, increases in persons with confirmed infection influenced by a policy of laboratory testing of contacts. Some health care workers are infected. There is no evidence of excess mortalities. PHE-UK has facilitated development of laboratory and clinical capacities and provides surveillance and strategic support for implementing public health measures to interrupt virus transmission. There is interest in expanding laboratory testing of frontline workers and key personnel. Availability of rapid antigen tests with validated accuracy of performance may assist in expanding testing at the first level of care. There are national challenges due to limited availability of human resources. PHE-UK intends to continue its support and is strengthening the health care system through the emergency response. PAHO and MOH have re-prioritized their technical collaboration and biennium budget and workplan towards the COVID-19 response. 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 Personal Protective 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 have occurred in both countries.
- Tropical storms and hurricanes pose a risk to COVID-19 response efforts,

The Bahamas

- Limited capacity of the health care facilities to accommodate severe cases.
- Centralized COVID-19 testing has become a logistical challenge now that cases are being confirmed on multiple islands.
- Exposure of healthcare workers and COVID-19 infection in frontline health and security service workers and large numbers of these sector workers in quarantine.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- Contact tracing has been challenging due to lack cooperation by some identified cases and limited human resources to track the growing number of contacts.

- Increase in the number of infected healthcare workers.