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# TRIP 2022

**SEAMLESS AND CONTACTLESS**

Sharing data to accelerate the recovery

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**THE  
BAHAMAS**

**IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON  
TRAVEL & TOURISM**



## COUNTRY PROFILE

The Bahamas is an archipelago of nearly 700 coral islands.

Approximately 30 of the islands are inhabited.

The Bahamas sits in the West Atlantic Ocean, 100 kilometres south-east of Florida in the United States and 80 kilometres north-east of Cuba.

The islands are generally flat and low-lying.



# COVID-19: THE PANDEMIC

**January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel corona virus (Covid-19) a public health emergency of international concern.

**March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

WHO declared the novel corona virus (Covid-19) outbreak a global pandemic.

**March 11<sup>th</sup> 2020**

Prime Minister appoints National Coordination Committee on Covid-19 to engage the Covid-19 Task Force, a multi-governmental agency task force. The task force implements the government's decisions and private sector recommendations.



# COVID-19: THE PANDEMIC

## March 20th 2020

National Emergency Orders implemented activating national curfew and mandatory safe health measures.

## March 15<sup>th</sup> 2020

First case of Covid-19 reported in The Bahamas.

## March 24<sup>th</sup> 2020

Bahamas government closed borders to all incoming air and sea travel. Major hotels and resorts suspended operations.



COVID-19: PERSPECTIVES

MEDICAL CHALLENGES

NATIONAL RESPONSE

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION





**Ministry of Health:** heightened effort to procure personal protective equipment in sufficient volume to meet anticipated needs.

**Minimization of Overcrowding:** prescription refill programme launched at hospitals for chronic illness medications through WhatsApp.

**National Covid-19 Vaccine Consultative Committee:** appointed to provide advice on the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination.

## MEDICAL CHALLENGES

**Effective Contingency Planning:** implementation of measures to ensure increased availability of hospital beds and health care personnel to respond to Covid-19 critical care needs (e.g. cancellation of elective surgeries, specific hospitals & clinics designated routine health care services providers for antenatal & chronic illnesses, among other health issues).

**Surge Capacity Planning:** service utilization data, including emergency room use & emergency medical services use, were monitored for more accurate planning information.





## NATIONAL RESPONSE

**Risk Assessment:** done by a multi-sectoral group to ensure that border control and quarantine options effectively reduce the risk of travel associated cases entering the country and local spread of the virus. Resulting measures Implemented since 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

**Covid-19 Command Centre:** operated by the RBPF to monitor persons in quarantine & to onboard persons arriving at airports in New Providence & Grand Bahama.

**Contact Tracing Command Centre:** identifies individuals contacted by confirmed Covid-19 cases.

**A National Respiratory Surveillance Genomics Database:** implemented by the National Reference Laboratory for genetic analysis of test samples.

The Ministry of Health released a **Geographic Information System (GIS)** that produces mapping of COVID-19 confirmed cases and contacts.

Distribution of donated doses of **Astra Zeneca Covid-19 vaccines commenced 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021**. Full rollout of the vaccines began 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

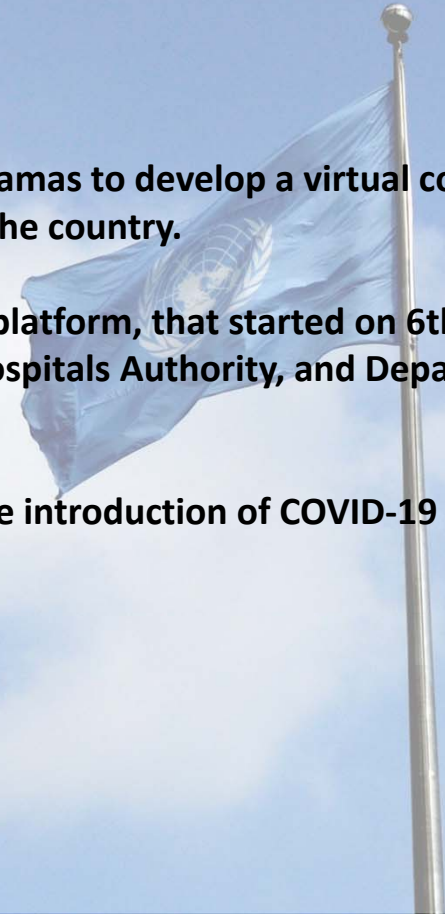
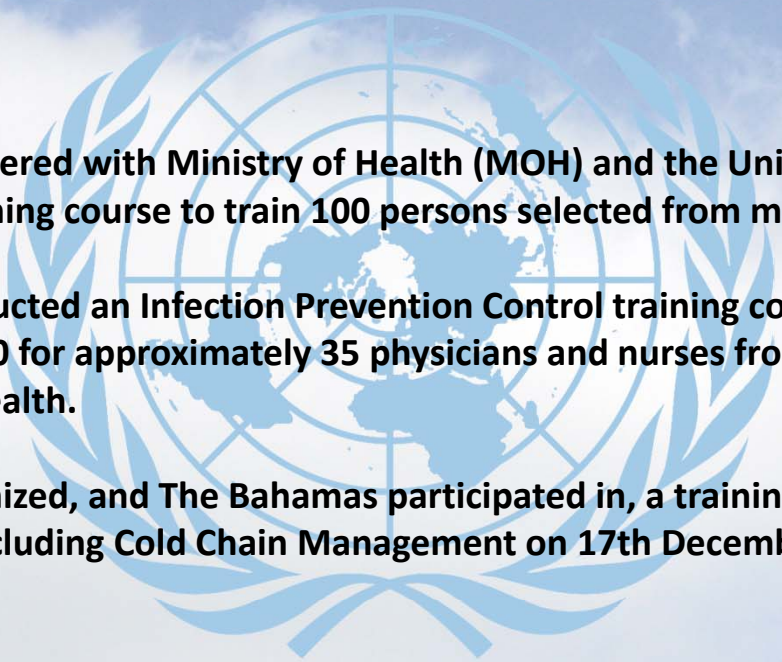


## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION (PAHO)

**PAHO partnered with Ministry of Health (MOH) and the University of the Bahamas to develop a virtual contact tracing training course to train 100 persons selected from multiple islands of the country.**

**PAHO conducted an Infection Prevention Control training course via a virtual platform, that started on 6th August 2020 for approximately 35 physicians and nurses from MOH, Public Hospitals Authority, and Department of Public Health.**

**PAHO organized, and The Bahamas participated in, a training workshop for the introduction of COVID-19 Vaccines including Cold Chain Management on 17th December 2020.**



## COVID-19: NATIONAL INDEX

The figures below indicate the impact of Covid-19 on the individuals in the Bahamas as of July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

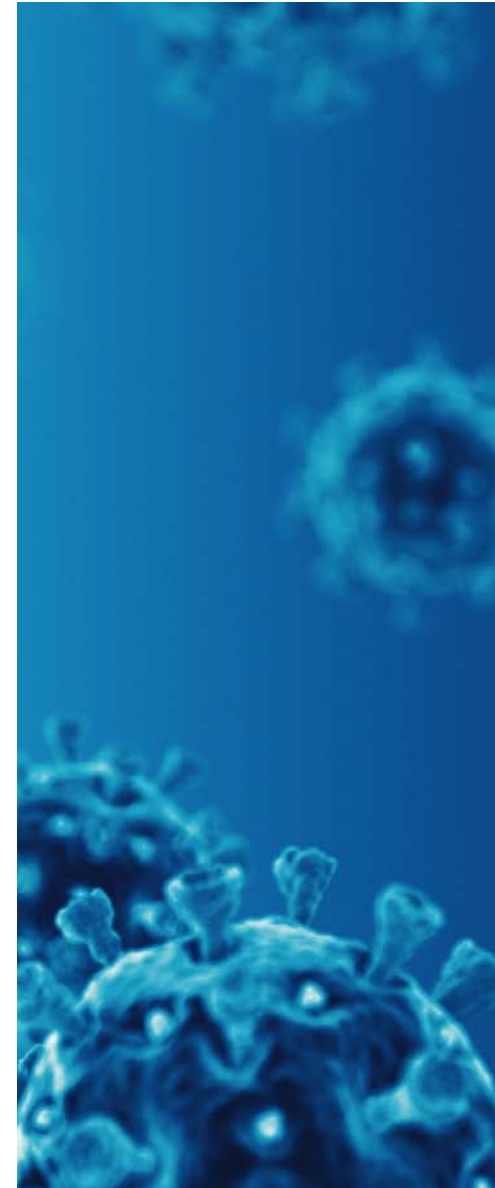
**Confirmed cases: 36,426**

**Active cases: 489**

**Recovered cases: 34,899**

**Currently hospitalized: 64**

**Deaths: 822**



## REOPENING & RESTARTING AVIATION

**BAHAMAS TRAVEL HEALTH VISA:** Along with the borders re-opening on July 1, 2020, discussion and planning were made for the implementation of an online platform for the collection and information management of the identification of passengers travelling to and from the Bahamas, along with their Covid-19 test results.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Bahamas Travel Health Visa (BTHV) fully implemented on November 1, 2020. Website is [travel.gov.bs](https://travel.gov.bs).

**PRE-DEPARTURE & ARRIVAL:** Everyone travelling to the Bahamas must have tested negative via a Covid-19 RT-PCR test taken no more than five (5) days prior to arrival. Test results must be uploaded to [travel.gov.bs](https://travel.gov.bs) to apply for the BTHV. On November 14<sup>th</sup> travelers required to opt in to Covid-19 health insurance. Cost built into price of BHTV and determined by length of stay. BHTV processing time takes up to 72hrs. Passengers have to present proof of above information at airline check-in prior to departure.





## EASING ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

### **BAHAMAS TRAVEL HEALTH VISA (BTHV): Phased Elimination**

**13<sup>th</sup> December 2021:** BTHV no longer required for Bahamians and residents to enter the Bahamas. All previous testing requirements remain in place.

**19<sup>th</sup> June 2022:** BTHV eliminated as an entry requirement.

**Vaccinated Travelers:** Effective 19 June 2022 fully vaccinated travelers will no longer be required to submit to pre-travel COVID-19 testing to enter the country. Instead, valid proof of vaccination must be presented before boarding a flight to The Bahamas.

**Unvaccinated Travelers:** Effective 19 June 2022, all unvaccinated travelers ages 2 and older will be required to obtain a negative COVID-19 test — either a negative RT-PCR test or a Rapid Antigen test — taken no more than three days (72 hours) prior to travel and present the negative test results at check-in before travel to The Bahamas. Children under the age of 2 are exempt from any testing requirements. Vaccine and testing info required to be presented to Immigration officials upon arriving.

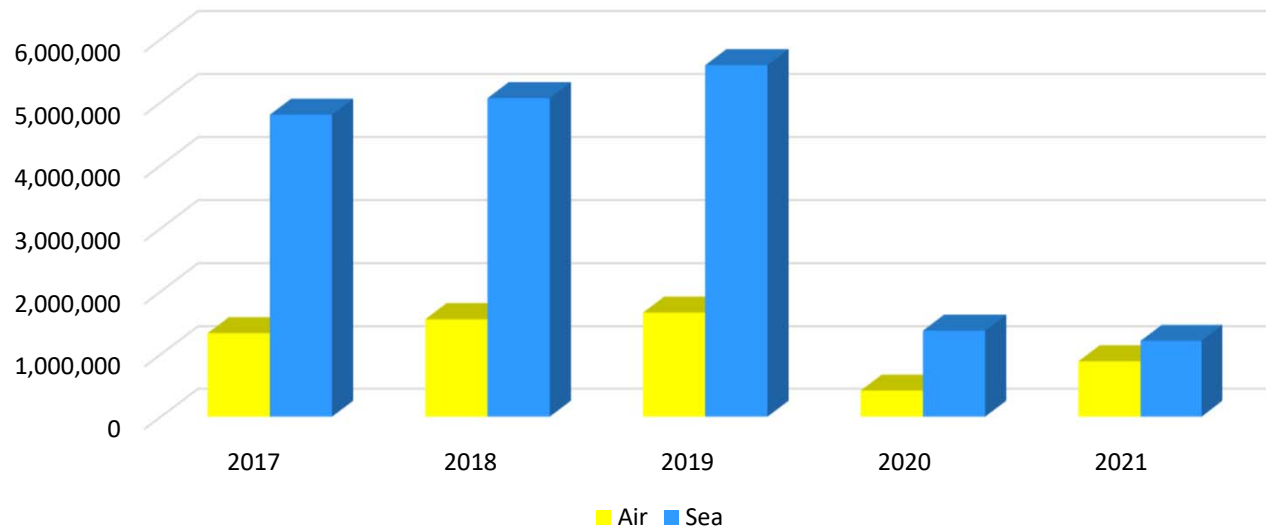




## TOURISM: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

YEAR	AIR	SEA	TOTAL	
2017	1,335,613	4,800,226	6,135,839	100.0%
2018	1,558,086	5,063,929	6,622,015	100.0%
2019	1,662,419	5,587,110	7,249,529	100.0%
2020	418,329	1,376,193	1,794,522	100.0%
2021	886,629	1,213,989	2,100,618	100.0%

**TOTAL FOREIGN ARRIVALS BY AIR & SEA**



## TOURISM: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

### ECONOMIC IMPACT:

**According to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC): Hurricane Dorian and the Covid-19 Pandemic caused \$13.1 billion (US) in losses to the economy of the Bahamas.**

**The Covid-19 Pandemic caused \$9.5 billion in economic losses (IDB & ECLAC).**

**Employment: period 2019 to 2023 estimated 30,000 job losses (IDB & ECLAC).**

**The Central Bank of the Bahamas indicates that the economy will fully rebound in 2023.**

**The International Monetary Fund (IMF) indicated that the Bahamas economy expanded by 13.7% in 2021 as a result of a tourism-led rebound.**

**The World Bank foresees the Bahamas' economy growing 6% in 2022 and 4.1% in 2023.**

## CONCLUSION

### LESSONS LEARNED:

National contingency planning must continuously be amended to effectively mitigate against the threats of international health concerns. The planning must reflect current scientific research and global sector practices.

Tourism sector-led economic recovery should be supported by including in their plans customized mitigation methods for different markets and unique tourist attractions.

Economic expansion should be supported by increasing and strengthening economic linkages through trade and investment to help sustain international economic shocks.

Avoid sudden openings and closures that could be an event causing traumatic shock to the travel industry.

Communication campaigns should be developed using mass media and plain language that can effectively inform and educate all economic levels in society.

International relations should be widened, its bonds strengthened, information exchange and cooperation promoted in order to improve and increase knowledge locally, regionally, and globally.



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# Thank You

