



**STATEMENT ON BIMINI**  
**The Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis**  
**Prime Minister**  
**Thursday, 14 May 2020**

Good afternoon.

I am announcing today that after consultation with health and other officials, including officials on Bimini, that Bimini will be placed on a two-week lockdown in order to slow and control the community spread of the COVID-19 virus on this island.

This complete lockdown will take effect beginning, Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 9

p.m. until Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 midnight. This date will be extended to a total of 14 days when Parliament reconvenes.

I note that similar lockdown periods were applied in other countries to help to control the spread of COVID-19.

This measure is absolutely necessary in order to save and to protect the lives of the residents of Bimini.

Epidemiological management of the COVID-19 outbreak in Bimini requires strict adherence to shelter in place to prevent and to control the spread, which will worsen if preventative measures are not taken quickly and adhered to.

Bimini has been classified as a COVID-19 hotspot by health officials.

This lockdown is being carried out to slow and control the spread of the virus on the island.

The first COVID-19-related death was recorded on Bimini.

To date, health officials have confirmed a total of 13 cases of COVID-19 on Bimini. This includes two additional cases confirmed earlier today.

A total of 102 residents have been swabbed for COVID-19.

Outside of New Providence, Bimini, with a population of approximately 2,000, has the largest number of recorded cases in The Bahamas.

The number of confirmed cases is expected to increase if much of the population continues to fail to practice recommendations for physical distancing,

wearing protective face coverings, and frequent, and thorough, hand washing.

During the period of April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 2<sup>nd</sup>, members of the Surveillance Team from the Ministry of Health was on Bimini.

The team:

- provided education support for medical personnel;
- assisted with identifying contacts of confirmed cases;

- visited the Government quarantine facility;
- helped to try to enforce infection prevention and control strategies;
- conducted testing and
- hosted a virtual town hall meeting.

On that visit, 37 people were swabbed for COVID-19 and three tested positive.



Residents are urged to make the necessary preparations.

Officials from the central government are collaborating with the Island Administrator for food and water distribution and other considerations unique to Bimini.

The National Food Committee and the Department of Social Services are making arrangements to ensure that food needs

will be met before and during the lockdown.

I assure the residents of Bimini that there will be sufficient food and medicine for everyone.

Additional support, security and enforcement of the lockdown will be provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force.

Various measures are being taken to ensure the safety of essential workers on the island, including the use of PPEs.

Health officials will respond to any health-related matters about this lockdown.

I want to speak directly to the residents of Bimini, a number of whom have asked the Government to place the island on a lockdown.

A lockdown like this is not something that would have been preferred.

But it is absolutely necessary because things will get much worse on Bimini if we don't take this strong measure now.

I know that a measure like this even further disrupts daily life and economic activity.

But we are in an emergency situation.

We must work now to stop the spread of the virus on Bimini before it gets even more out of control.

Time is of the essence.

I ask the residents of Bimini to cooperate with health and other officials to prepare for the lockdown and to adhere to this measure over the next two weeks.

I thank the residents of Bimini in advance for their cooperation.

The Government of The Bahamas will do all that it can to assist those in need of help during the two-week period.

The lockdown measure will be strictly enforced in order to save lives and to protect the general health of the residents of Bimini.

I thank officials on Bimini and New Providence who are helping to coordinate this lockdown period.

Thank you and good afternoon.

