

The Bahamas is open for business as weather conditions improve and relief efforts are underway...

*OFFICIAL BAHAMAS TOURISM
COMMUNIQUE: HURRICANE JOAQUIN AND
THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS - Tuesday,
October 6, 2015 at 1pm EST*

NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS, October 6, 2015
/EINPresswire.com/ -- NASSAU, The Bahamas –
Tourism industry partners are teaming up with
government officials in an effort to bring much-
needed relief to Family Islands affected by
Hurricane Joaquin. The islands most heavily
impacted by the Category 4 hurricane include
Acklins, Crooked Island, Rum Cay, San Salvador
and Long Island.

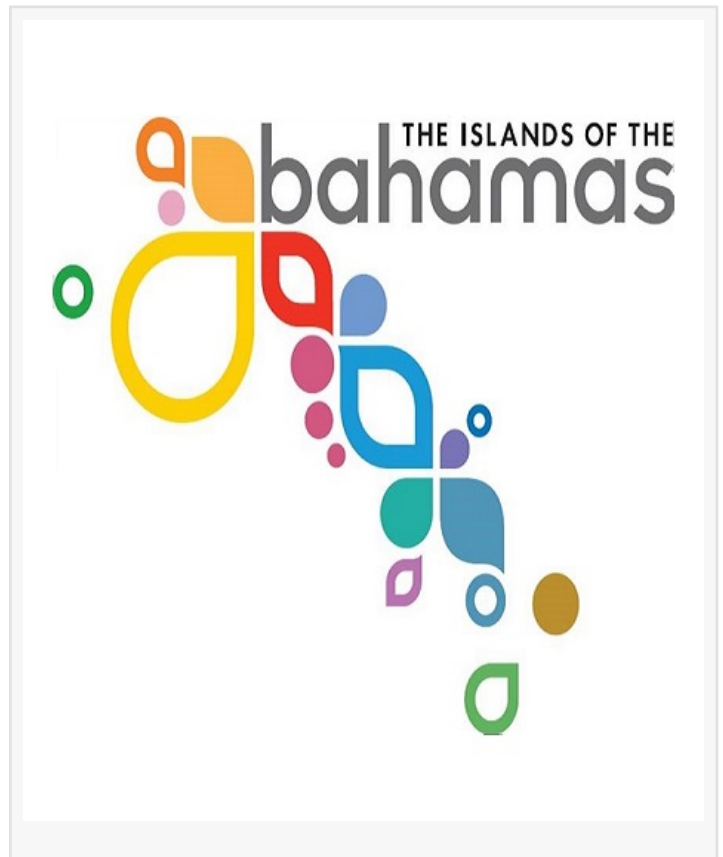
American Organization USAID donated food,
water, bedding and other necessities that were
delivered to the Acklins, Crooked Island, Long
Island and San Salvador. Tourism industry
partners will coordinate their efforts once the
National Emergency and Management Agency
(NEMA) has advised aid distribution protocols
and the main needs in the various affected

islands.

As part of the Tourism Stakeholder's disaster relief effort Eastern Airlines will soon send a cargo plane from Grand Bahama Island with donated goods to the affected islands. The plane will land in Exuma or San Salvador. Joining them will be Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association Representatives, who will assist with the distribution of the goods amongst all the islands affected. Items should be dropped off at the Red Cross in Grand Bahama. The Government of The Bahamas expresses heartfelt gratitude for all who have come to the aid of those affected by Hurricane Joaquin.

Disaster Relief Operations

The Ministry of Finance advises the public that where disaster relief operations are carried out by charitable and non-profit organizations, provisions exist under the VAT Act for exemptions and refund of VAT expenses. Charities must register online and obtain a TIN or Tax identification number from the VAT Department. They must ensure that the TIN is quoted on all of their local expense receipts.



Most relief organizations have already received a TIN. Others are encouraged to register. In most cases, the process of getting a TIN takes less than 24 hours.

All donations of relief supplies shipped from outside The Bahamas are eligible for exemptions of both the VAT and Customs duties, once advance notice and documentation is given to the Ministry of Finance, or NEMA sanctions the request.

Where charities incur direct expenses on their relief operations, whether for supplies or charter operations, they can apply to the VAT Department for refunds. Refunds, however, cannot be provided to private individuals for goods donated to charities, whether purchased or used. However, where monies are donated, the relief organizations qualify for the VAT refund, when they use these funds.

To avoid being victims of fraudulent schemes, it is strongly recommended that persons making donations to relief organizations request proof that the organization has a tax identification number.

That Bahamas Ministry of Tourism has issued a notice to industry partners advising them to allow NEMA, the appropriate Government agency, to conduct the initial damage and needs assessment in all the affected areas so that offers of assistance are appropriate. BMOT stressed that it is not recommended for private entities to travel to the affected areas at this time.

The Bahamas Red Cross is accepting supplies and donations at their Headquarters on John F. Kennedy Drive. Contact The Bahamas Red Cross.

Address:

John F. Kennedy Drive

P.O. Box 8331

Nassau, Bahamas

Tel: +1 (242)-323-7370, +1 (242)-328-4415

Fax: +1 (242)-323-7404

Email: redcross@bahamas.net.bs

Weather Updates

General Situation:

The combination of a stationary front and a post-frontal trough in the vicinity of the Northwest Bahamas will increase rain chances across the area today.

Special warnings: boaters and swimmers should continue to exercise caution due to moderate northeasterly swells and the risk of rip currents mainly along the northern and eastern shorelines.

The daytime high temperature is 90°f 32°c; the overnight low temperature will be 75°f, 24°c.

Northwest and Central Bahamas:

Weather: Partly to mostly sunny and hot with a few scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms this afternoon, mostly fair tonight with the chance of a passing showers.

A small craft advisory remains in effect ... boaters should be alert for gusty winds and higher seas in or near heavy showers or thunderstorms. Winds are southwest to west at 15 knots over open waters. Seas are running 3 to 5 feet but up to 7 feet in northeasterly swells.

Southeast Bahamas:

Weather: Mostly sunny and hot with the chance of a few isolated showers this afternoon. Fair and warm tonight.

A small craft advisory remains in effect. Winds are south to southwest at 10 to 15 knots, falling light and variable at times. Seas are running 2 to 4 feet but up to 6 feet in northeasterly swells.

Airport Operations

Nassau, NP

- Business as usual in Nassau/Paradise Island.
- Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA) is open and operating.
- Business as usual at the Port of Nassau.

Grand Bahama

- It is business as usual in Grand Bahama.
- Balearia and Grand Celebration are in Port.

Family Island Airport Openings:

The Bahamas Department of Civil Aviation advises the public that the following Family Island airports have been inspected and are open:

- Abaco - Marsh Harbour, Treasure Cay, Sandy Point, Moores Island
- Acklins — Spring Point
- Andros - San Andros, Fresh Creek, Clarence A. Bain, Congo Town
- Berry Islands - Great Harbour Cay
- Bimini - South Bimini
- Cat Island - Arthur's Town, New Bight
- Crooked Island — Colonel Hill
- Eleuthera - North Eleuthera, Governors Harbour, Rock Sound
- Exuma - Moss Town, Black Point, Farmers Cay
- Inagua
- Long Island - Stella Maris
- Mayaguana

- Ragged Island - Duncan Town
- Rum Cay
- San Salvador

The Deadman's Cay, Long Island Airport remains closed.

Bahamasair has resumed service to the following islands: All Florida Gateways, Freeport, Grand Bahama, Marsh Harbour, Abaco, Eleuthera, Georgetown, Exuma, Havana, Cuba, Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands.

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