



**National Address
Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis
Prime Minister and Minister of Finance**

General Election

Thursday, 19 August 2021

My Fellow Bahamians:

Good morning.

We live in a vibrant parliamentary democracy, secured by our Founders for the promotion of the common good and the general welfare.

Our rich democratic heritage includes free and fair elections through which the people choose their representatives.

Earlier today Parliament was dissolved.

It is time for you, the people, to choose who you will elect to form the next Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

For the past year and a half, we have battled the COVID-19 pandemic together.

This is the worst public health crisis in our modern history.

This deadly virus has killed millions of people around the world, and made hundreds of millions of others sick.

Here at home many of our loved ones have died or fallen ill.

You have worked with my Government and the public health team, abiding by the rules and doing

your best to help to protect lives and livelihoods.

I thank you for partnering with us on this difficult journey.

Dear Fellow-Bahamians

On Wednesday August 11, I announced in the House of Assembly that the United States of America donated 397,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine to The Bahamas.

We received 128,000 of those doses the following day.

The Bahamas received earlier today, 38,400 doses of the one-shot Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

These doses are in addition to the AstraZeneca vaccines we received over the past few months.

In total, including doses received and those arriving in the coming weeks,

The Bahamas was able to secure well in excess of 550,000 doses of the life-saving vaccines.

We can now vaccinate ourselves out of the emergency phase of the pandemic.

This does not mean the pandemic will quickly go away.

Indeed, the pandemic will continue for some time around the world, with the risk of other variants.

We will, for a time, still have to abide by commonsense public health measures such as wearing masks.

My Government has provided for public consultation a draft of new legislation to replace the Emergency Orders.

The Emergency Orders will end on Saturday, November 13, 2021.

Although there has been progress in securing vaccines, we still face challenging times in the short term due to the current surge in cases.

Much of the world is battling increased cases due to the delta variant.

My Government is spending more than seven million dollars on public health resources to help battle this wave.

This includes creating more beds and spaces to treat those who are ill as well as bringing on more health care and medical personnel.

My sympathies and prayers go out to all who have lost loved ones to this terrible virus.

Let us all remember to keep abiding by the public health measures to definitively defeat this surge.

Dr. Merceline Dahl-Regis chairs our National Covid-19 Vaccine Consultative Committee.

This past Sunday, August 15th, Dr. Dahl-Regis indicated that the country hoped to fully vaccinate 60,000 Bahamians over the next six weeks.

I am encouraged by the high number of people coming forward to get vaccinated.

With our new supply and you doing your part taking the shots, we are beginning the process to end the emergency phase of the pandemic.

Our goal is for The Bahamas to be one of the most vaccinated small-island developing countries in the world.

Dear Fellow Bahamians

As a result of our country reaching the goal of securing the vaccines we need, it is now time for the Bahamian people to choose who they want to lead them as we move toward vaccinating every Bahamian who wishes to be vaccinated.

Your next Government will have key decisions to make in enacting post-pandemic public health legislation.

Your next Government will have to make other key decisions to build on the robust economic growth started on our watch.

Your next Government will have to make important decisions on rebuilding and renewing a post-COVID-19 Bahamas.

A new mandate is needed to ensure that a Government is in place to do this difficult work over the long term as we

are reaching a critical turning point in the pandemic.

I have advised the Governor General to issue the writs of election which will be held on Thursday the 16th September 2021.

We have a long tradition of peaceful elections.

Let us continue that proud tradition.

We must discuss the issues rigorously and peacefully, contrasting our various visions for the country.

In our democratic tradition the people rule.

Your collective wisdom will decide our way forward.

Your collective wisdom will decide our shared future.

All political parties should conduct their campaigns in keeping with public health guidelines.

May God continue to bless and guide our Bahamas.

Thank you for listening.

Good morning.
