



PRESS STATEMENT

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION RESPONDS TO FIRE INCIDENT IN BLUE HILLS CALLS FOR ONGOING SUPPORT AND URGENT HOUSING SOLUTIONS

JULY 27TH, 2025



Turks and Caicos Islands Human Rights Commission



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Sunday, July 27th, 2025

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION RESPONDS TO FIRE INCIDENT IN BLUE HILLS, CALLS FOR ONGOING SUPPORT AND URGENT HOUSING SOLUTIONS

The Human Rights Commission expresses deep concern following the fire that occurred in the community of Blue Hills on Thursday, July 24th, 2025. While we are grateful that no lives were lost, the impact has been significant, displacing a community of residents, destroying homes and personal belongings, and affecting families with infants as young as 12 days old. The need for urgent, sustained support is critical.

In response, a temporary shelter was quickly established to provide safe accommodation, meals, clean water, and other basic necessities. The Commission acknowledges the swift efforts of emergency services and partner organizations. On Friday, July 25th, I, along with our Education and Outreach Officer and the Turks and Caicos Islands Red Cross, visited the shelter and the affected site. During our outreach, we engaged individuals, particularly women with young children who had remained at the fire site out of fear or uncertainty. Many of them have since sought refuge at the shelter.

Despite these efforts, there is currently no transitional housing plan in place for displaced persons once they must exit the temporary shelter. This presents a serious and immediate concern, especially for families with children and other vulnerable groups. The Commission is therefore urgently calling on landlords, employers, civil society organizations, faith-based groups, and the wider community to assist by offering temporary housing support where possible. We also encourage family members and friends to open their homes to those in need during this difficult time.



PRESS STATEMENT

Additionally, we are appealing to the public and businesses to donate essential items such as food, hygiene supplies, clothing, and financial contributions to help ease the burden on those affected.

This incident highlights the broader need for affordable housing mechanisms and a national resettlement strategy, particularly for persons living in densely populated or informal housing communities. Access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing is a fundamental human right. The absence of long-term housing solutions places affected persons at continued risk and exposes gaps in our national housing and disaster response frameworks.

The Commission remains in close coordination with the Department of Disaster Management and Emergencies (DDME), the Turks and Caicos Islands Red Cross, and the Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force (RTCIPF). We will also participate in upcoming discussions with high-level government stakeholders on longer-term resettlement measures. Our role will remain focused on protecting the dignity and rights of the displaced and advocating for a humane and coordinated response.

We thank all who have already stepped forward and urge continued compassion and support as we work together to uphold the rights and welfare of all affected persons.

Mrs. Kabatha Smith

Director

Turks and Caicos Islands Human Rights Commission

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