



Promoting Your Rights

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY 2023-2024





MISSION

The Turks and Caicos Islands Human Rights Commission is dedicated to upholding the principles of Human Rights. We aim to encourage and facilitate a positive relationship between Government and individuals and to ensure that the internationally pro-claimed standards are protected in law and practice. We are committed to promoting awareness and education; fostering diversity; eliminating discrimination; and providing protection for all people living in the Turks and Caicos Islands.



VISION

- To provide effective and timely means for resolving individual complaints;
- To promote knowledge of human rights in Turks and Caicos Islands and to encourage people to follow principles of equality;
- Foster the development of values and attitudes which uphold human rights;
- Encourage action aimed at defending human rights violations;
- Procure, collect, produce and disseminate information on human rights;
- Protect and promote human rights by monitoring, investigating, advocacy, and taking actions.



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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

27th January 2025

Her Excellence the Governor
Turks and Caicos Islands
Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands

Dear Her Excellence the Governor,

On behalf of the Human Rights Commission, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the fiscal year 2023-2024. The Commission has continued its efforts to safeguard and promote human rights across the Turks and Caicos Islands, despite the challenges posed by operational constraints this year.

This report provides a summary of our activities, including complaints and investigations, monitoring efforts, education and outreach programs, and the much-anticipated Humanitarian Awards. We also highlight our achievements under difficult circumstances, and our plans to enhance our operations in the coming year.

The Commission remains committed to upholding the human rights of all residents in the Turks and Caicos Islands, and we look forward to working closely with the Government and other stakeholders to improve our services.

Sincerely

Marc Rawlins
Chairman



MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR

The 2023–2024 financial year represents a period of transition, institutional strengthening, and renewed strategic focus for the Turks and Caicos Islands Human Rights Commission (HRC). Although I did not serve in the Director’s role for the full reporting cycle, I was appointed to act in this capacity in September 2023 and continued through March 2024.

This Annual Report therefore presents a consolidated account of work undertaken during April 2023–March 2024, which predates my tenure and is summarized based on the documentation available to me, together with the work executed under my leadership from September 2023 to March 2024. In preparing this report, I have relied on inherited records for the earlier months while being able to report comprehensively and directly on the activities, reforms, and achievements undertaken during my acting period.

From September 2023 onward, the Commission prioritized strengthening internal governance, stabilizing workflows, formalizing procedures, refining reporting mechanisms, and closing inherited operational gaps. Together with the staff, we advanced the development of the 2024–2027 Strategic Plan, strengthened monitoring and investigative systems, expanded community outreach, consolidated case management tools, and conducted key institutional reviews of the Detention Center and His Majesty’s Prison.

Despite staffing constraints, periods of intense national migration activity, and the natural pressures associated with leadership transitions, the Commission remained resilient and committed to fulfilling its statutory mandate. The reforms initiated in the latter half of the year have positioned the institution for more structured, accountable, and sustainable human rights programming.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Board of Commissioners, the staff of the Commission, and our key stakeholders for their support during this period of significant consolidation. Their cooperation and dedication have strengthened our institutional capacity and reinforced the Commission’s role as an essential national human rights body.

As we move into the 2024–2025 financial year, the Commission is better organized, more strategically aligned, and well positioned to operationalize the priorities set out in the new Strategic Plan. We remain steadfast in our commitment to protecting, promoting, and upholding the rights and dignity of all individuals in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Mrs. Kabatha Smith

Acting Director (September 2023 – March 2024)

Turks and Caicos Islands Human Rights Commission



EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

The 2023–2024 reporting period reflects two distinct operational phases:

1. April–August 2023: Prior to Acting Director’s Appointment

Activities summarized from available documentation, including work in:

- child safeguarding planning
- informal settlements monitoring
- detention and immigration oversight
- early Humanitarian Awards preparations
- interagency coordination across social protection and immigration agencies

2. September 2023–March 2024: Acting Director’s Tenure

A period of organizational consolidation marked by:

- strengthened governance and accountability structures
- development of the 2024–2027 Strategic Plan
- enhanced public outreach and community engagement
- major facility reviews (HM Prison and Detention Center)
- expanded monitoring and interagency cooperation
- improved case management systems
- delivery of the 2023 Humanitarian Awards

Overall, the financial year reflects both continuity and transformation as the Commission navigated evolving human rights challenges, leadership transition, and increased operational demands.





QUARTERLY SUMMARIES

Quarter 1: April–June 2023

(Based on documentation inherited prior to Acting Director's appointment)

Key thematic areas included:

- Child safeguarding training preparations with NSPCC
- Engagement on demolition exercises in informal settlements
- Multiple detention and immigration-related interventions
- Participation on the Crown Land Advisory Panel (CLAP)
- High-level meetings on child protection and nationality documentation concerns

This quarter established early foundations for child rights, migration oversight, and settlement monitoring.

Quarter 2: July–September 2023

(April–August based on records; September under Acting Director's oversight)

Highlights included:

- Large-scale migrant landings and intensified detention monitoring
- Increased concerns regarding safety and due process in informal settlements
- Staff development of SOP drafts
- Clarification of statutory access to the Detention Center
- Acting Director's appointment in September, beginning immediate governance and operational alignment work

Quarter 3: October–December 2023

Key achievements:

- Completion of the 2023 Humanitarian Awards
- Strategic Plan development
- Risk register refinement
- Strengthened budget planning in collaboration with the Board
- Heightened public outreach planning and school engagement
- Expanded monitoring activities and interagency coordination
- Audit Committee participation and improved compliance mechanisms

Quarter 4: January–March 2024

Major developments:

- Grand Turk Open House with increased community reporting
- Formal institutional reviews of HM Prison and Detention Center
- Recruitment of Education & Outreach Officer (to begin in March)
- Strengthened case management systems and reporting templates
- Preparedness for upcoming inter-island outreach clinics
- Continued work on aligning operations with the Strategic Plan



INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

The 2023–2024 financial year marked ongoing institutional strengthening. Early-year operations were guided by the Director, while the Acting Director, appointed in September, introduced structured governance enhancements, system consolidation, and organizational coordination.

April–August 2023 (Pre-Tenure Summary)

- Participation in CLAP meetings
- Engagement in demolition-related briefings
- Social Development coordination on safeguarding and child residency matters
- Early-year planning meetings for programme priorities

September 2023–March 2024 (Acting Director’s Leadership)

- SOP consolidation and organizational workflow improvements
- Strengthened financial reporting and interagency statutory requirements
- Development of the 2024–2027 Strategic Plan
- Increased Board engagement and structured oversight
- Preparations for Prison and Detention Center reviews



PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The Commission's outreach evolved from early planning in Quarter 1 to high visibility and community engagement in Quarters 3 and 4.

Key achievements under Acting Director's tenure:

- Multilingual child rights materials
- School engagement sessions
- Grand Turk Open House (January 2024)
- Planning for North & Middle Caicos clinics
- Revitalization of public education tools, including newsletters and outreach templates
- Delivery of the 2023 Humanitarian Awards as a major public-facing event







MONITORING AND INVESTIGATIONS

A core function of the Commission, monitoring and investigations progressed significantly over the year.

Pre-September 2023 Summary:

- Detention visits following repeated migrant landings
- Monitoring of informal settlements demolition activity
- Case intake across immigration, employment, and access concerns

September 2023–March 2024:

- Structural redesign of case management templates
- Strengthened SOPs for investigations
- Formal facility reviews of HM Prison and the Detention Center
- Increased clarity in investigative documentation and closure processes
- Community-based case intake during Grand Turk Open House



INTERAGENCY AND POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Institutional partnerships expanded significantly under the Acting Director.

Key stakeholder engagements included:

- Immigration Department
- Informal Settlements Unit
- Social Development & Gender Affairs
- His Majesty's Prison
- DDME (Business Continuity training)
- Crown Land Advisory Panel
- Budget Department and Governor's Office
- Education stakeholders for school engagement

These collaborations advanced human rights safeguards across land use, migration management, social protection, detention monitoring, and public accountability.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

Professional development strengthened institutional readiness.

Highlights:

- NSPCC child safeguarding preparatory work
- Domestic Violence Protocol training
- Development and review of SOPs by all staff
- Audit Committee and statutory reporting training
- Business Continuity Planning with DDME
- Increased investigative capacity through institutional reviews



FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Commission maintained fiscal stability while navigating rising operational demands.

Key achievements:

- Routine subvention management and adherence to budget
- Financial reporting to the Board
- Cost management for the Humanitarian Awards
- Administrative support for prison and detention reviews
- Preparations for the 2024–25 budget submission
- Strengthened administrative workflows under Acting Director



CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

The 2023–2024 financial year demonstrates the Commission’s resilience and continued commitment to its mandate despite leadership changes, staffing limitations, and heightened national operational pressures.

Under the Acting Director’s leadership from September 2023 to March 2024, the institution:

- Strengthened governance frameworks
- Expanded community outreach
- Improved monitoring and investigative systems
- Enhanced stakeholder engagement
- Completed major institutional reviews
- Positioned itself for effective implementation of the 2024–2027 Strategic Plan

Looking ahead to 2024–25, the Commission will prioritize:

1. Implementation of the 2024–2027 Strategic Plan
2. Increased visibility through regular outreach clinics
3. Enhanced monitoring of detention and prison facilities
4. Strengthening of child safeguarding frameworks
5. Expansion of community education initiatives
6. Continued institutional strengthening through training and SOP adoption
7. Improved interagency cooperation with key national stakeholders

The institution enters the new financial year with improved structure, clearer priorities, and renewed commitment to protecting human rights across the Turks and Caicos Islands.



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