

US and Bahamas Sign Updated Search and Rescue Agreement

By [crb@bahamas](#) - December 10, 2020

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U.S. Chargé d'Affaires John McNamara (right) joins his signature on the updated Search and Rescue Agreement between the United States and The Bahamas (J. Nassi), The Bahamas, December 10, 2020

On 10 December 2020, after years of close cooperation, the United States Coast Guard, in coordination with the Departments of State and Transportation (including the Federal Aviation Administration) concluded a binding United States - Government of The Bahamas aeronautical and maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) agreement.

This agreement serves as the basis for future bilateral cooperation and coordination of SAR operations off southeast Florida, the Florida Straits, and The Bahamas, areas in which both the United States and The Bahamas are responsible for managing SAR services.

In 2020 alone, joint SAR operations have assisted or saved over 200 lives at sea in or near The Bahamas, and assisted or saved thousands over the past decade. Today's agreement means we will save many more in the years to come. U.S. Chargé d'Affaires John McNamara, who signed the agreement on behalf of the United States, said "today's signing is a testament to the deep commitment The Bahamas and the United States both share to saving human lives and keeping our seas safe."

The signing of this agreement is a momentous event which advances the previous U.S.-Bahamas SAR agreement—the Grey Agreement—into the 21st century, and it codifies the legacy SAR processes between our two countries. Additionally, the agreement further strengthens the mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and The Bahamas, ensuring both countries continue to work hand-in-hand on critical initiatives, including protecting mariners and saving lives at sea.

Rear Admiral Eric C. Jones, Commander of the U.S. Coast Guard's Seventh District, participated in the signing virtually from the United States. After the signing, he noted that today's agreement "is a renewed promise as a partner that we are committed to working together now and into the future. I greatly value my relationship with The Government of the Bahamas, the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, and what this formal agreement represents as we face new challenges and opportunities together in the region."

This agreement also sets the stage for future SAR cooperation between our two countries, providing the necessary framework for effective and efficient communication and coordination during life-threatening events. The provisions agreed upon in this critical document, and the continued partnership between the U.S. and The Bahamas, will improve the safety of life at sea and will result in lives being saved in our shared region well into the future.