



Internews

The Sudan Rooted in Trust Project aims to address COVID-19 rumors, misconceptions, and misinformation by collecting and analyzing rumors found on Sudanese social media. This bulletin is based on an analysis of 408 posts collected in Arabic between 8 May and 8 June 2022, from Facebook and Twitter.

This regular collection of community insights aims to address questions and common misperceptions about COVID-19 found across Sudan. It is meant to help volunteers and field staff provide trustworthy information, and resources to help respond to their communities' concerns and information needs around COVID-19 and the vaccines.

COVID-19 in Sudan

As of 21 June 2022, the official COVID-19 statistics rose to 62,533 confirmed cases. As of 5 June 2022, a total of 9,710,092 vaccine doses have been administered.

How are rumors collected?

Misconceptions, questions, and comments about COVID-19 were collected by Internews' analysts, who compiled and assessed feedback gathered from Sudanese social media. The rumors, perceptions and misinformation identified have been assessed to be the most prevalent or damaging to the health response. Selection was based on the level of engagement and potential harm to the community.



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
COVID-19 HOTLINE - SERVING ALL
AREAS OF SUDAN: 9090



MINISTRY OF HEALTH FACEBOOK
PAGE
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/FMOH.SUDAN



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WWW.EMRO.WHO.INT/AR



COVID-19 IS REAL AND THERE ARE NEW CASES DIAGNOSED ALL THE TIME!
BE SAFE: MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCE, WASH YOUR HANDS, WEAR A MASK

WHAT ARE RUMORS?

Rumors are currently circulating stories or UNVERIFIED content of uncertain or doubtful information collected from first-hand sources within the community which could take the shape of a question, criticism, or general comments on a situation or topic. Rumors can be tricky because they might have some element of truth in them!

RUMOR RISK LEVEL HIGH MEDIUM LOW

RUMOUR #1

SAFETY

“We have received medical waste that we will not be able to dispose of later, and corona vaccination is an example” Woman - Facebook

“It appears to be expired; if it wasn't expired, they wouldn't have brought it from Khartoum, and specially to you in Darfur” Man - Facebook

COVID-19 is a respiratory virus that could lead to serious complications especially in vulnerable groups, such as those with chronic disease and older people and may even result in death. Cases have been reported all over the world, including Sudan. Many deaths have been reported in Sudan, so far 4,950 people have died due to COVID-19. Cases are reported from all parts of Sudan, as people travel within the country which can be an effective way of transmitting the disease to other areas, like the Darfur region.

As COVID-19 is a global pandemic, the WHO has stated: “No one is safe until everyone is safe”, and that's why all communities around the world are being prioritized for vaccinations, including people in Darfur. In addition, Dr Muna Abdelaziz, Sudanese UK-based Public Health Director, clarifies that the Sudanese Ministry of Health in collaboration with COVAX (a worldwide initiative aimed at providing equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines) is responsible for vaccine safety. Moreover, Dr Abdelaziz explains that the vaccines are kept in the right temperature to ensure they are highly effective when they arrive in the country.

Dr. Dalya Altayeb, Director General of the Primary Healthcare Directorate at the Ministry of Health, has also elaborated that the vaccines are stored according to the recommended temperatures and international standards. To ensure vaccines remain effective, the Ministry of Health has also installed generators which secure regular electricity supply even during power cuts, so that the vaccines remain safe and effective.

According to Dr Mohsin Alneemah, Sudanese Health Advocate, COVID-19 cases are reported from Darfur states as well. So far, the Ministry of Health has reported more than 62,500 COVID-19 cases in the country. Dr. Alneemah emphasizes that COVID-19 could lead to hospitalization or even death, and he explains that we can protect ourselves, and our loved ones and communities by taking the COVID-19 vaccine, which has been proven to protect us from developing a severe illness should we contract the virus.

All Sudanese lives matter, regardless of where you are located, your ethnicity or religion. The vaccines are made for your safety, your community's safety, and to preserve your loved one's precious lives.

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #2

SAFETY

“People should take care as there is no COVID-19 in Darfur, all these are medicines to experiment them on the vulnerable Darfurians”
Man - Facebook

The first case of COVID-19 in Sudan was reported in March 2020. Since then, as of 21 June 2022, there have been 62,533 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 4,950 COVID-related deaths. These cases have been reported from all 18 states of Sudan, including the five Darfur states.

Ms Fayha Mohamed Hamed works at the Emergency Directorate at the State Ministry of Health in North Darfur, she highlights: “There are people from all over the world, and all over Darfur and Sudan who received a COVID-19 vaccination”. She clarifies that it is often people affected by conflict and displacement in North Darfur that believe that COVID-19 is a hoax, and says it is best to work with trusted members of these communities to debunk COVID-19 and vaccine rumors, but to also address people’s information needs.

Vaccines continue to be the first line of defense in Sudan against the virus, combined with the precautionary measures that we can rely on to protect ourselves and our communities from getting infected. As of 5 June 2022, a total of 11,854,673,610 vaccine doses have been administered worldwide. In Sudan, a total of 9,710,092 vaccine doses have been administered so far, and by the end of 2022 the Ministry of Health aims to vaccinate 70 percent of the population.

Vaccines teaches our bodies how to fight of viruses and infections when they enter our system, they allow us to develop antibodies which strengthen our immunity. The COVID-19 vaccines have been effective in reducing severe illness and COVID-related deaths.

When you get injected with the vaccine, the vaccine gives your immune system instructions on how to fight the virus by allowing it to develop antibodies that function as your defense system against a COVID-19 infection.

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #3

SAFETY

“I took a dose of the (Pfizer) vaccine for Corona, two doses, and I received the vaccination card. Someone told me that you will die after 3 years 🤔 and he swore to me by God that whoever took the doses will die after 3 years, I don't know where he got that from? I mean, I have two years and 4 months left to die? For God's sake, please advise me. This is a of concern for me and I cannot sleep because of this, I stay in the mosque all the time now”

Man - Facebook

There are no studies that suggest that the Pfizer vaccine, or any other approved COVID-19 vaccine, can cause death. According to [Sarah Elmalik Ahmed](#), Director of Health Promotion at the Federal Ministry of Health, the COVID-19 vaccines are very safe and effective, and are offered free-of-charge in all authorized health centers across Sudan. Ahmed clarifies that people should not get confused with the different COVID-19 vaccines, as all available vaccines are safe and have been authorized by the World Health Organization. Currently, Sudan offers four COVID-19 vaccines, including AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer and Sinopharm.

Although the COVID-19 vaccines do not prevent us from contracting the disease, they significantly reduce our chances of developing severe illness due to COVID-19, hospitalization, and COVID-related deaths. Therefore, if you are vaccinated and contract the virus, the symptoms or complications are likely to be minor.

Dr Najwa Yahya, Former Director of the Health Promotion Department and Health Awareness Expert at the Federal Ministry of Health, shared during an interview with Radio Al-Rabaa 94 FM that the only available means for Sudanese people to protect themselves against COVID-19 is through getting vaccinated and practicing the protective measures set by the Ministry of Health. Dr Yahya also clarifies that to eradicate the virus from our communities we need to reach a high percentage of immunization, by vaccinating 70% of the population. She also emphasized the importance of taking the second shot for two-dosing vaccines, and taking your booster shot when it's due.

If you've already taken the vaccine and you're concerned about developing serious side effects, you can return to the health center where you first took the vaccine and speak with the health staff about your concerns and fears and seek some clarifications. You can also call the pandemic hotline at 9090 and speak with a public health professional.

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #4

ENDEMIC

COVID-19 is over now, it is monkeypox time stop lying, if you travel to KSA in Ramdan for Umra, you will find three thousand people from different countries moving without masks or social distancing then you will know that COVID is over from the world.

Woman -Facebook

COVID-19 remains a global pandemic, and all over the world new cases are being recorded, including in Saudi Arabia. So far Saudi Arabia, has reported 786,069 COVID-19 cases, and 9,173 COVID-related deaths. As more and more pilgrims prepare for the upcoming Hajj season, health measures and vaccination requirements have been put in place to ensure that people can worship and perform the Hajj rituals in a safe space.

This year, Saudi Arabia is welcoming foreign pilgrims for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, with 1 million pilgrims expected to participate in the Hajj pilgrimage. For the past two years, the annual hajj pilgrimage has been restricted to domestic residents.

The Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has set requirements for all pilgrims coming from Sudan including:

- All pilgrims are required to have received their COVID-19 vaccinations, and vaccination certificates are required
- Pilgrims will wear their mask and practice physical distancing when performing Umra and Hajj

The Saudi Ministry of Health has explicitly stated that those who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19, and adults above the age of 65 will not be permitted to perform Hajj this year. Moreover, Dr Gismallah Abdelghafar, Head of the Fatwa Division at Sudan's Islamic Fiqh Academy, passed a fatwa stating: "A person infected with COVID-19 and leprosy is not permitted to take part in the Hajj pilgrimage, as they can pass the infection to others."

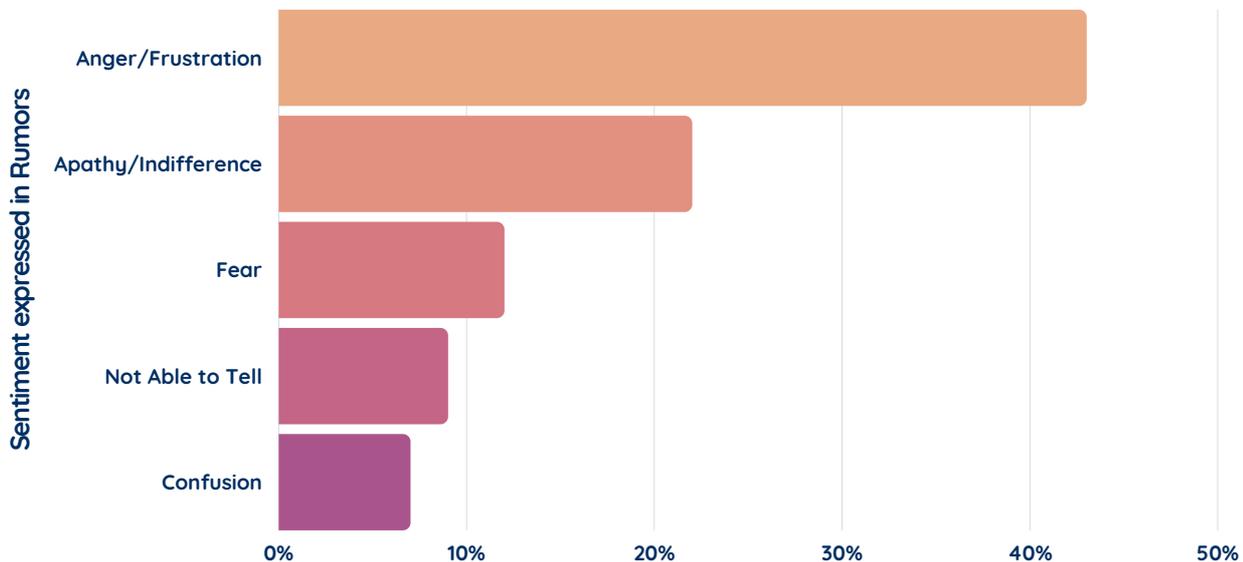
Also, the Supreme Council for Hajj and Umrah in Sudan, recommends that all pilgrims follow the precautionary measures to avoid getting infected with COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, by wearing a mask to cover your mouth and nose, washing your hands with soap and water regularly, avoiding crowds as much as possible, physical distancing, and completing the required COVID-19 vaccinations.

For more information on approved COVID-19 vaccines for Hajj, please visit the Saudi Ministry of Health website and refer to the Health of the Hajj and Umrah guide.

LOW RISK

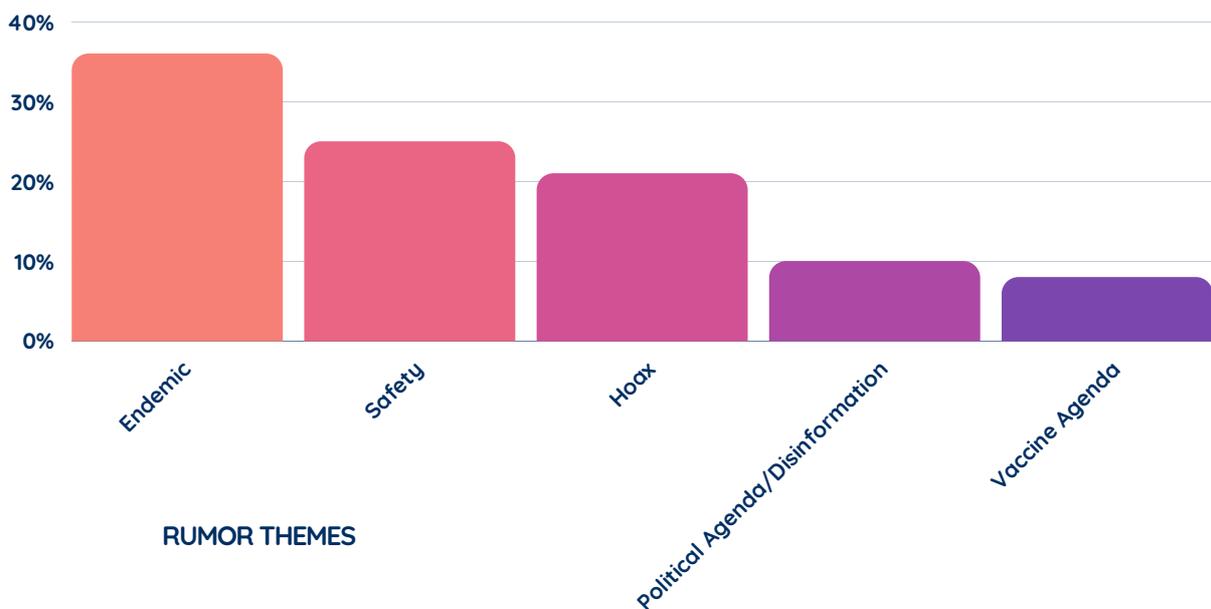
ANSWER

Sentiment Analysis of COVID-19 and Vaccine Rumors



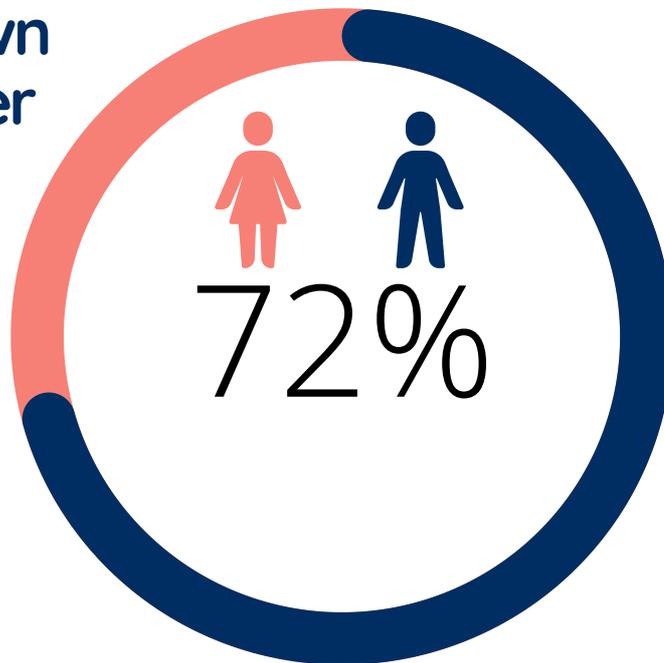
This is an analysis of the emotions expressed in 408 rumors collected in Arabic, between 8 May and 8 June 2022.

Top COVID-19 and Vaccine Rumor Themes



These are the top 5 rumor themes based on the analysis of 408 posts collected in Arabic, between 8 May and 8 June 2022.

Rumor Breakdown by Gender



Gender breakdown based on the analysis of 408 rumors collected in Arabic, between 8 May and 8 June 2022

COVID-19 and Vaccine Rumors on Social Media

Platform breakdown based on the analysis of 408 rumors collected in Arabic, between 8 May and 8 June 2022

