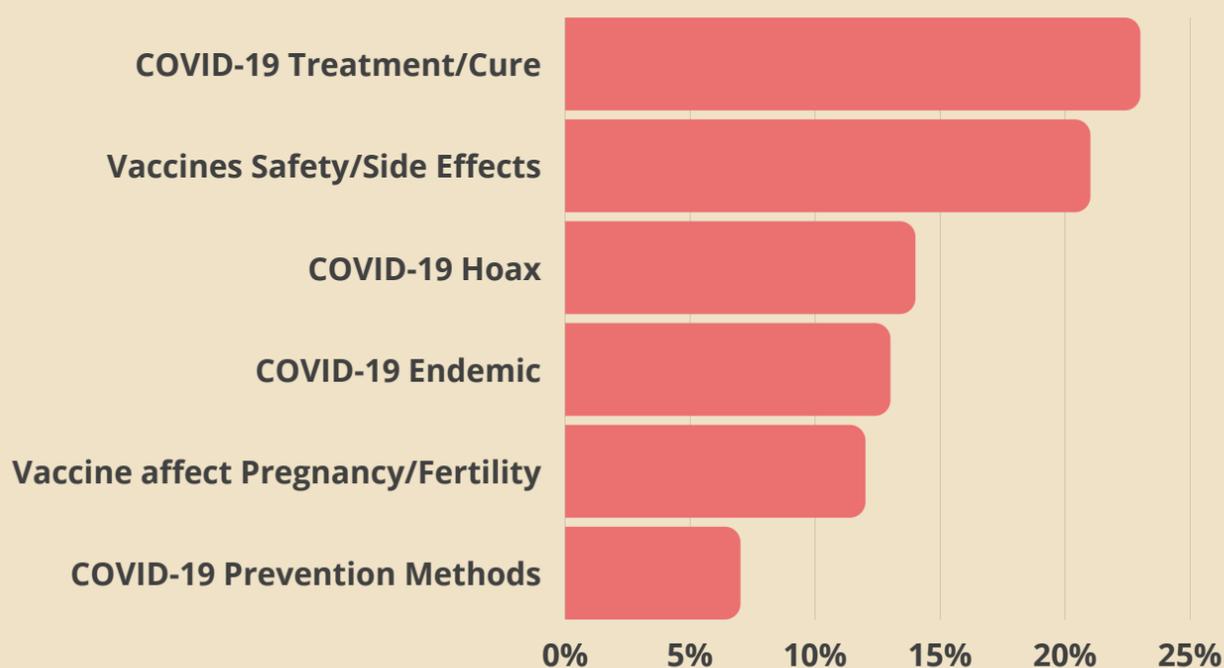


HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT - AUGUST 2022

SOCIAL MEDIA LISTENING AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON COVID-19 AND VACCINES

In August 2022, Internews collected **969 rumors, misconceptions, and community feedback from social media and via face-to-face listening groups about the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccines in Sudan**. During listening groups in **Blue Nile, East Darfur, West Darfur, Central Darfur, South Darfur, North Darfur, Kassala, Al-Gedaref, and the Red Sea States**, **711 rumors** were shared by displaced and conflict-affected people. Also, **258 rumors** were also collected from social media sources most commonly used in the country, including Facebook and Twitter. The community feedback and rumors were selected through a risk analysis that identifies misinformation that may potentially impact vulnerable people, which are the target communities of the Rooted in Trust Sudan project.

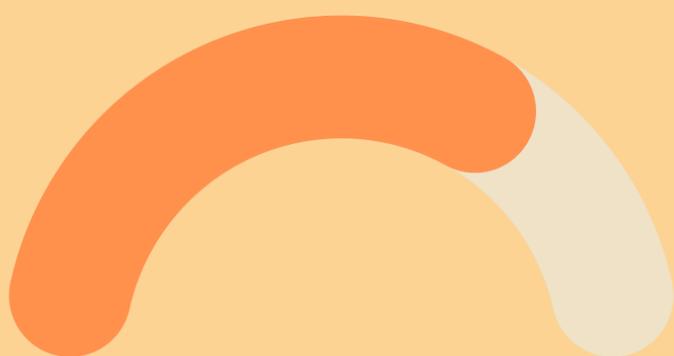
TOP COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMOR THEMES



COVID-19 treatment rumors were mostly shared by displaced and conflict-affected people, and only a handful of social media users spoke of COVID-19 cures. Rumors on prevention methods and treatments overlapped, for example bitter tea, millet water, and sour food like lemons. Also, 46% of rumors speaking about the harmful effects of the vaccine on pregnancy and fertility were shared from people in Blue Nile.

Most of the community feedback spoke of COVID-19 treatments, as well as some prevention remedies. The majority of the recommended **remedies and protection methods that are plant-based**, such as Acacia, Tamarind, bitter or unsweetened tea, Gum Arabic, millet, ginger, hibiscus, and guava leaves. Some remedies were more elaborate, such as “placing mahogany leaves in a *zir* (ceramic water pot) and drinking it”, while another said drinking a mixture of “bitter lupine with turmeric and camel milk” is the cure for COVID-19. It is worth noting that most of the treatments are **rooted in popular medicinal herbs and local cuisine**.

COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMORS IN AUGUST 2022



73 % of rumors were collected from face-to-face listening groups

27 % of rumors were collected from social media

*Internews and its Rooted in Trust partners, collected a total of **969 COVID-19 and vaccine rumors in August 2022**. Over **30% of the rumors were shared during listening groups held in IDP and refugee camps**.*

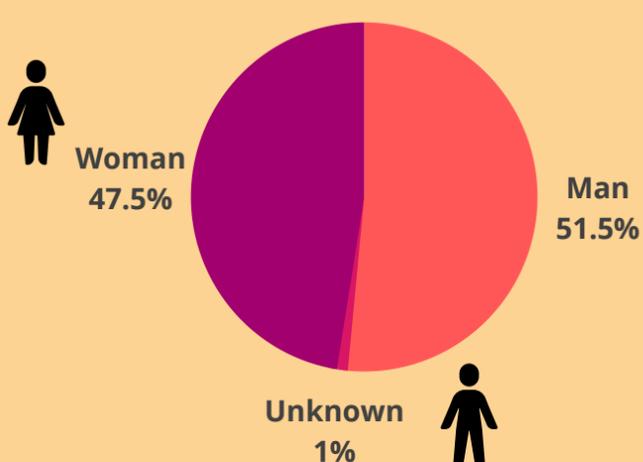
Please visit: [Internews Sudan COVID-19 Rumor Bulletins](#)

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT - AUGUST 2022

SOCIAL MEDIA LISTENING AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON COVID-19 AND VACCINES

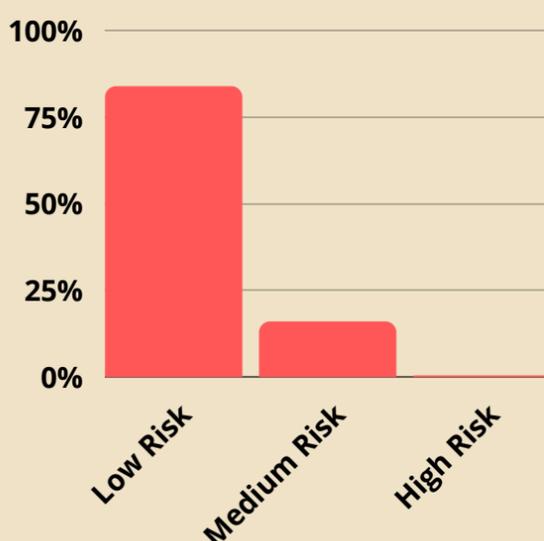
The rumor data illustrates that conversations on social media about the pandemic can differ from those taking place in listening groups. On social media, the conversation has shifted after the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 to discussions about the safety of the vaccines and minimizing the severity/impact of the pandemic. It is likely that in humanitarian and rural settings, information about COVID-19 and the vaccines is arriving at a slower pace, as opportunities to access such information are much more limited for communities that are **digitally disconnected or have unreliable internet access**. In August, treatment rumors were especially popular in Central Darfur, West Darfur, and South Darfur.

RUMOR BY GENDER DISTRIBUTION



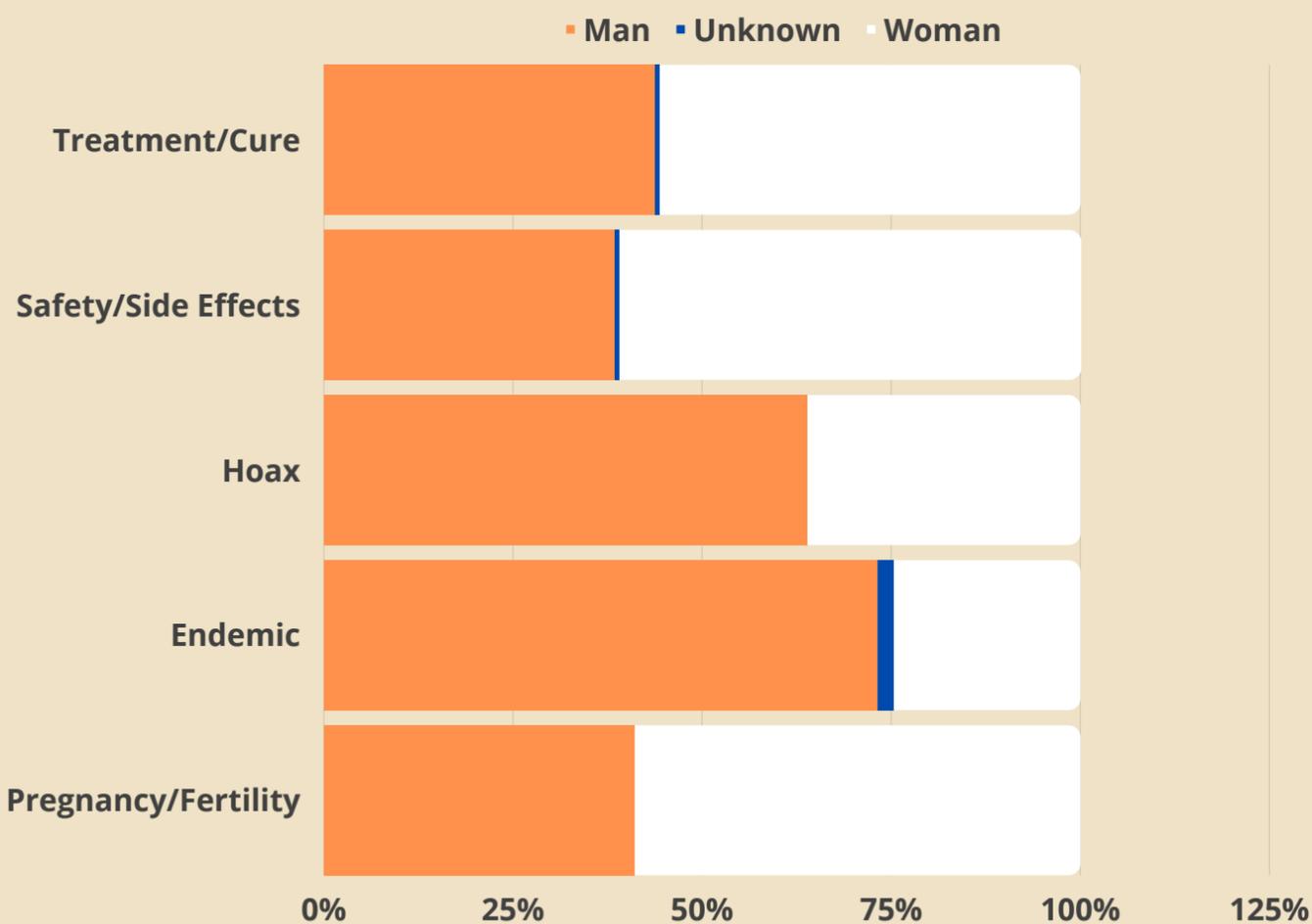
Seventy-three percent of COVID-19 rumors were shared by men, while 56% of rumors shared during face-to-face listening groups came from women.

RUMOR BY RISK LEVEL



Despite high risk rumors being the least common, they require our immediate response due to the potential harm they can cause. In August, one of the high risk rumors came from Alneem IDP Camp in East Darfur, citing that the vaccines are used to kill people living in IDP Camps.

COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMORS THEMES BY GENDER



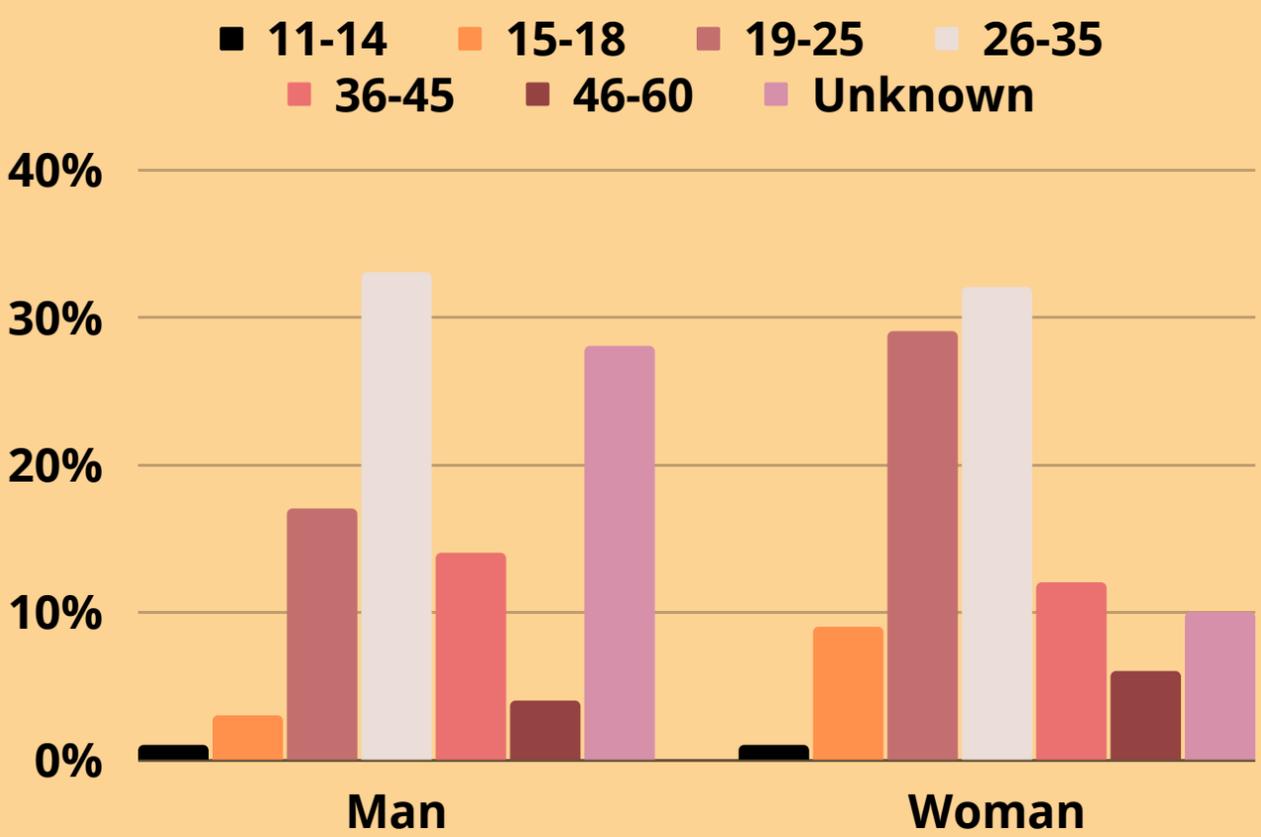
The term "unknown" refers mostly to social media users that have not disclosed their gender.

Please visit: [Internews Sudan COVID-19 Rumor Bulletins](#)

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT - AUGUST 2022
**SOCIAL MEDIA LISTENING AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
 ON COVID-19 AND VACCINES**

About 21% of the rumors questioned the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines. Some said it causes paralysis in children, blindness, cancer, and kidney failure. Some people said they took their first vaccination dose but chose to **abandon the second dose** as they experienced severe side effects, such as hallucinations. In Blue Nile, rumors speaking of harmful effects of vaccines on reproductive health were prevalent, such as vaccines affecting masculinity, fertility, and pregnancy. While a young woman in South Darfur said: "The vaccine targets Africa with the aim of reducing childbearing." Also, a woman in Blue Nile said she was discouraged from taking the vaccine by a healthcare worker who said it was harmful. Some community feedback went so far as to say that the vaccines are deadly, and kill children, older people, internally displaced people, and those with diabetes.

**COVID-19 AND VACCINE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK BY
 GENDER VS AGE**



People between age 26 and 35, shared 32% of the rumor data. It is worth noting that 77% of social media rumors were shared by social media users that did not disclose their age, this accounts for 21% of the overall rumor data.

SENTIMENT ANALYSIS: COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMORS



Most rumors collected in August 2022, expressed apathy and indifference, especially for those sharing that COVID-19 is a hoax, others minimizing the severity of the virus by citing the availability of plant-based and localized treatments for COVID-19, and those citing religious rituals as a form of protection. Also, Fear was the second most expressed sentiment in rumors. All of the rumors speaking about vaccine safety expressed fear.

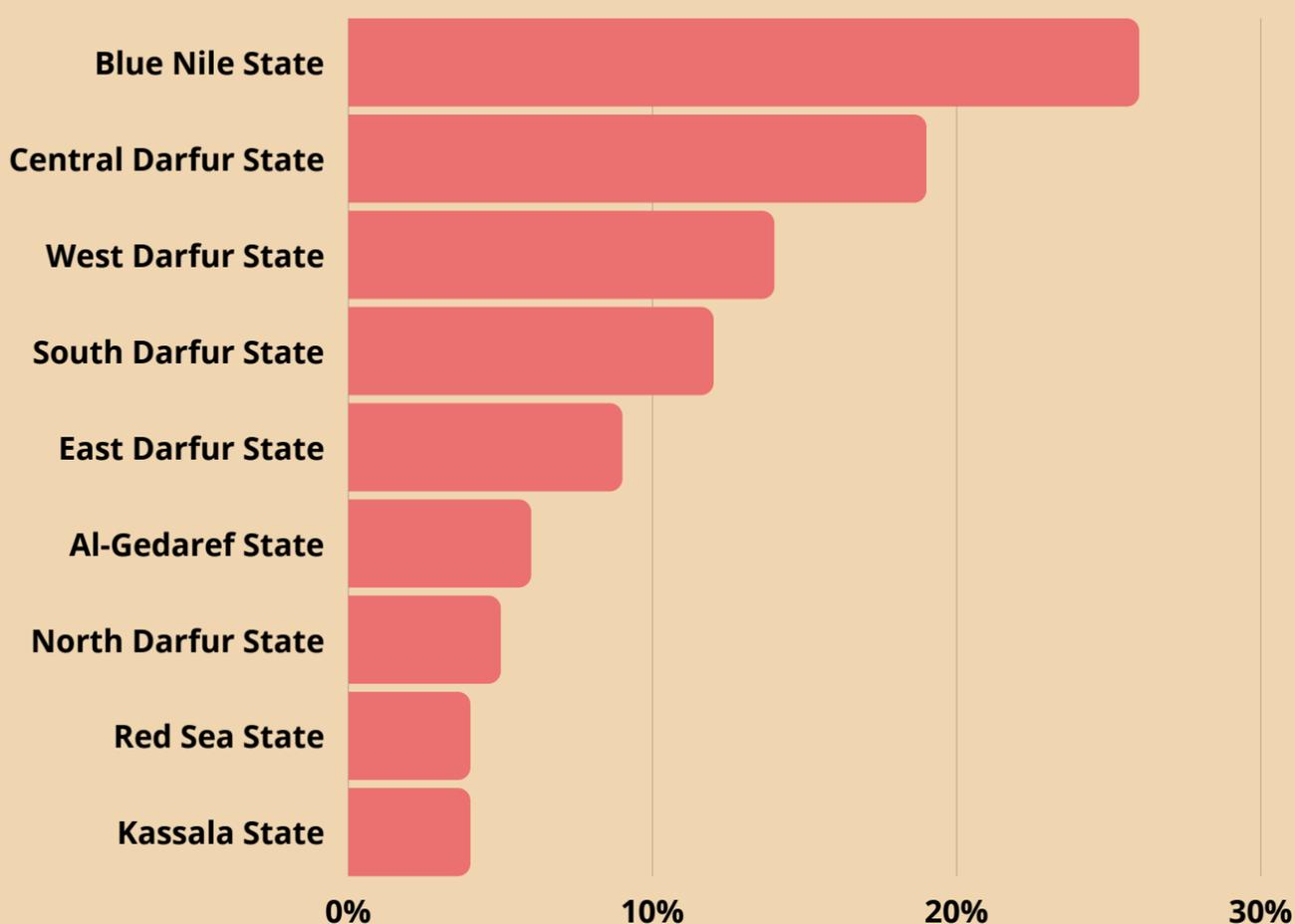
[Please visit: Internews Sudan COVID-19 Rumor Bulletins](#)

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT - AUGUST 2022

SOCIAL MEDIA LISTENING AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON COVID-19 AND VACCINES

Meanwhile, there are people that continue to deny the existence of the virus. Some social media users said the **pandemic is a political game** to get funding from donors and gain empathy and attention from other states in a humanitarian manner. Others are also critical of the support Sudan gets through the pandemic response and think it should be shifted to help **people affected by floods**. Some have called on the health authorities to prioritize **Malaria** instead. While a few social media users have said both COVID-19 and **Monkeypox** are a hoax, and that we are now entering the **Monkeypox era**.

COVID-19 AND VACCINE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK BY STATE



In August 2022, 73% of COVID-19 and vaccine rumors were collected through listening groups. The above graph shows rumor distribution by state.

SUDAN ROOTED IN TRUST

We aim to tackle misinformation and rumors about the pandemic and vaccines, to engage and support humanitarian, public health and media actors in responding to vulnerable communities' COVID-19 information needs.



Please visit: [Internews Sudan COVID-19 Rumor Bulletins](#)

We welcome your feedback and suggestions. Please contact: Mayada Mahdi, Information Management Officer, mibrahim@internews.org