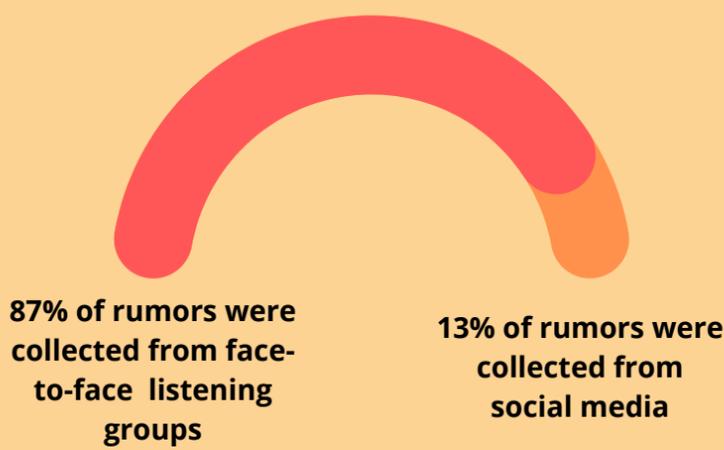


HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT - DECEMBER 2022

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

In December 2022, Internews collected **347 rumors, misconceptions, and community feedback from social media and via face-to-face listening groups, in Arabic and Dinka, about Polio, the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccines in Sudan**. During listening groups held in **Al-Gedaref, Central Darfur, West Darfur, North Darfur, and East Darfur States, 79 rumors** were shared by displaced and conflict-affected people. Rumors were also shared by people residing in Abu Shouk, AlHasahisa, Karyo and Sharg ElNile Camps. Additionally, **45 rumors** were collected from social media sources most commonly used in the country, including **Facebook and Twitter**. The community feedback and rumors were selected based on a risk analysis which identifies misinformation that could potentially impact vulnerable people, which are the target communities of the Rooted in Trust Sudan project.

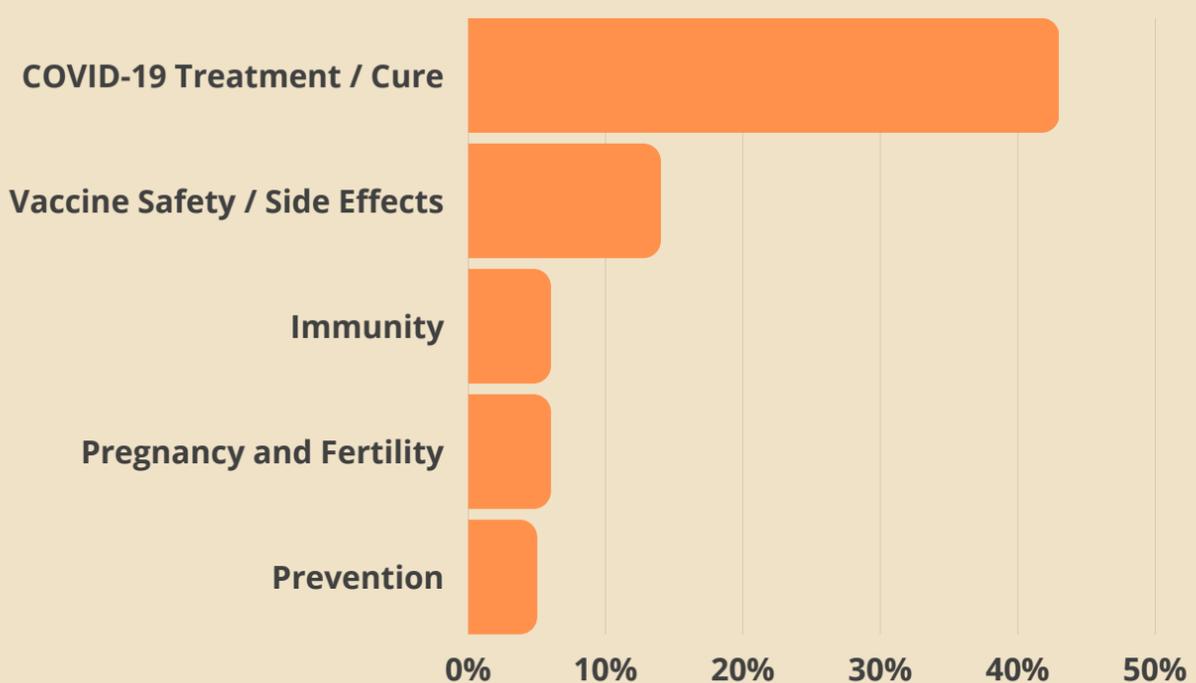
COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMORS IN DECEMBER 2022



*Internews and its Rooted in Trust partners, collected a total of **347 COVID-19 and vaccine rumors in December 2022. Additionally, 22.7% of the rumors were shared during listening groups held in IDP and refugee camps.***

During listening groups, people spoke about the safety and side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine, some said that taking the vaccine will "kill you after two years", while others said the vaccine is "slow death" and "kills faster than Corona". A number of people proposed that the vaccine can lead to infertility. A woman in Central Darfur said, "The shots cause Malaria".

TOP COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMOR THEMES



In December 2022, 43% of rumors spoke about the COVID-19 treatments, mostly sharing home-made remedies to cure the virus rather than medical solutions, such as the vaccine. A man from Al Fao locality in Al-Gedaref stated "Taking herbal remedies is more effective and safer than your vaccine shot". Additionally, 6% of rumors spoke about the possible side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine on pregnancy and fertility, a woman from Zalingi, Central Darfur said: "Corona injections stop you from giving birth".

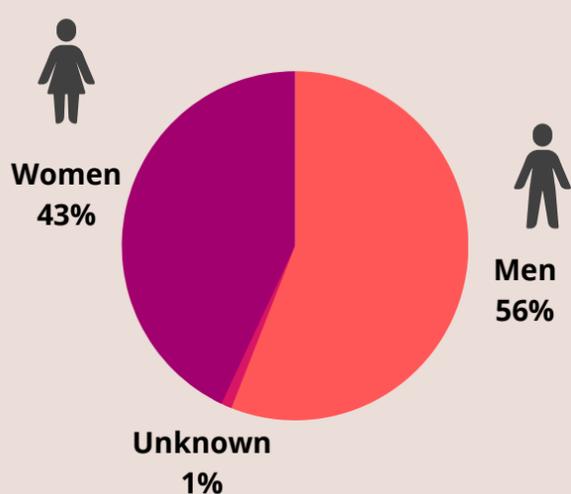
Please visit: [Internews Sudan COVID-19 Rumor Bulletins](#)

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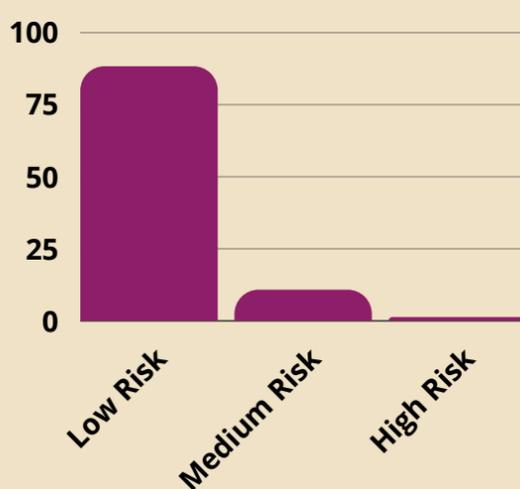
Most of the rumors shared on social media and during listening groups in December 2022, were about COVID-19 treatments. People between ages 19 and 35, shared 99 rumors under the Treatment/Cure theme which amounts to 66% of the treatment rumors, and 28.5% of overall rumor data. A man from Kulbus locality in West Darfur shared a high-risk rumor, saying: "Cutting your skin with a razor" treats COVID-19. However, most of these rumors focused on using herbal remedies, with the most popular being acacia, tea, and hibiscus. For example, a man from Central Darfur said: "Boiling acacia with ginger treats Corona". Others shared alternative cures, such as drinking raw eggs, and or Fenugreek tea.

RUMOR BY GENDER DISTRIBUTION



In total, men shared 56% of the COVID-19 rumors from both social media and face-to-face listening groups, while 46% of the rumors shared during listening groups came from women.

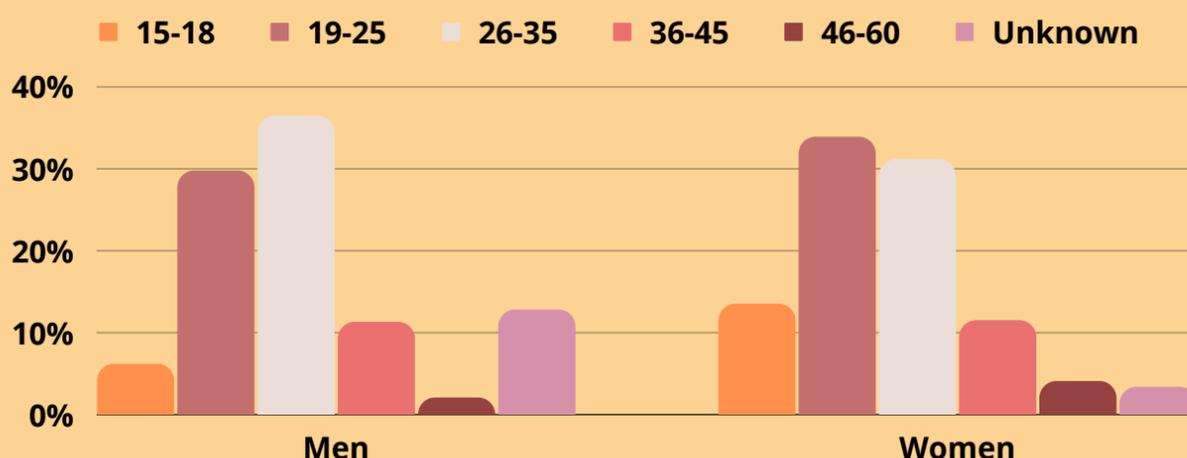
RUMOR BY RISK LEVEL



It is important to respond to high risk rumors swiftly, as these types of rumors can harm people. For example, a man in Central Darfur, said: "Boiling neem leaves and drinking it for three days, afterwards if you vomit once...you've been cured from Corona. And if you don't vomit after three days...you should continue drinking it until you throw up".

Immunity rumors are those that rely on certain features that can or cannot protect us from a COVID infection. For example, some people shared that "Corona does not come to Muslims", and "Africans and black people". While other rumors revealed that only certain groups of people can get COVID-19, like children, older people, white people, and men. A man in Fao, Gedaref state, said: "The virus comes to Chinese and Europeans because of their weak immunity and cold weather". Moreover, a few people highlighted that "our hot sun" or "the body's immunity" can offer protection from COVID-19.

COVID-19 AND VACCINE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK BY GENDER VS AGE



People between age 26 and 35, accounted for 34% of the rumor data, followed by those between ages 19 and 25 who account for 31% of the rumors. It is worth noting that 75% of social media rumors were shared by social media users that did not disclose their age, this accounts for 10% of the overall rumor data.

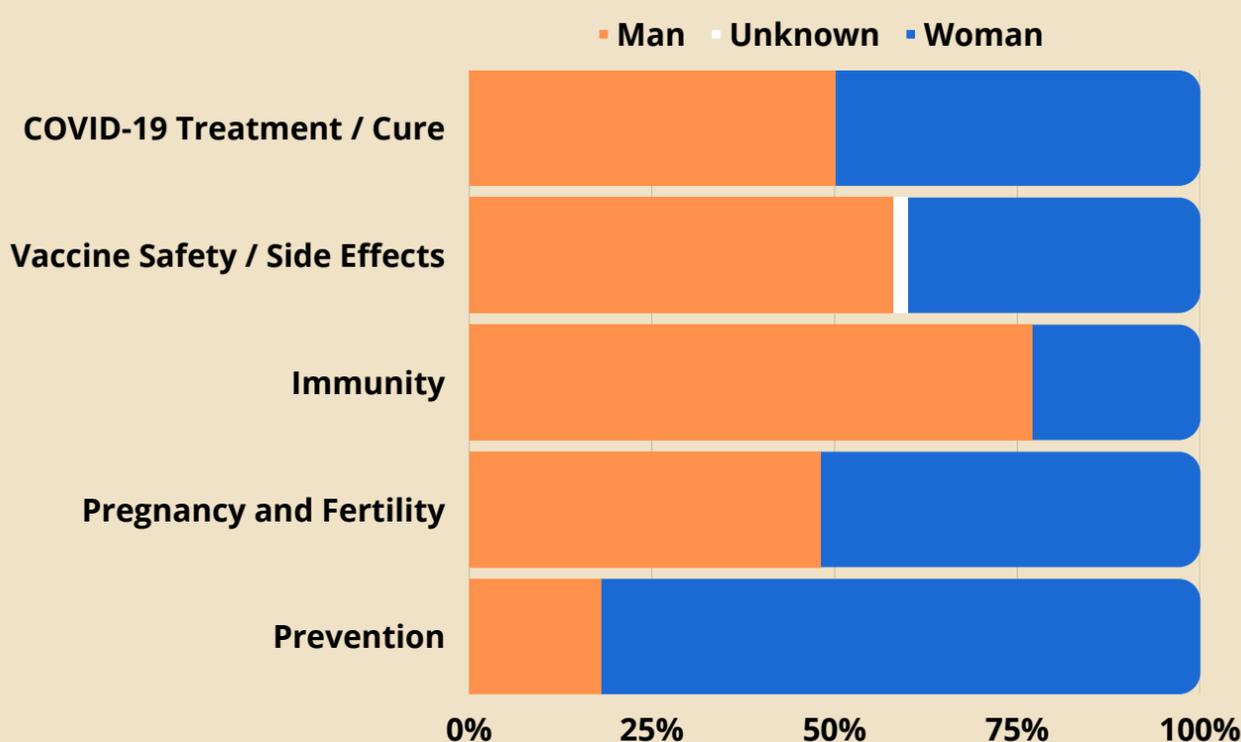
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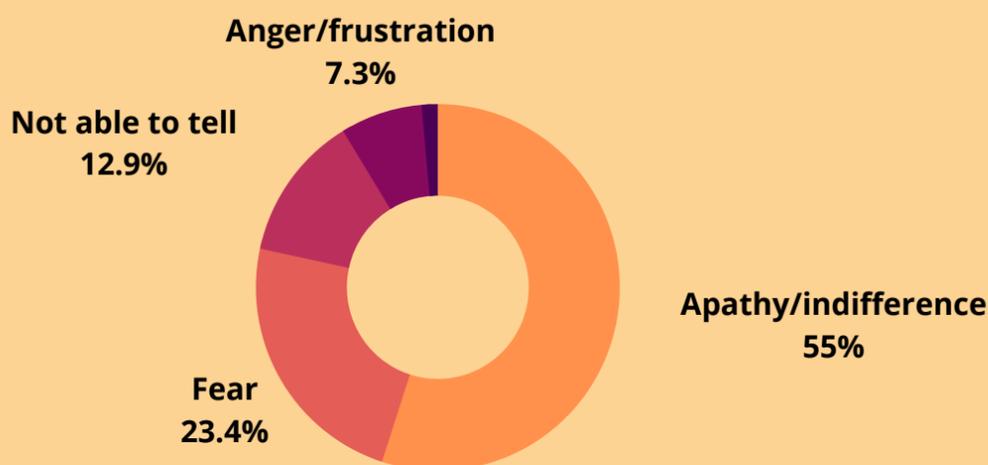
In December, the Ministry of Health confirmed two **polio** cases in the country, and shortly after a vaccination campaign was launched. Rumors started surfacing on social media about the safety of the **polio vaccine**. A man on Facebook shared “We are in good health... We will not **poison** our children with poisons made in the West..... Nothing happened to our forefathers... They never got...any dose of these **poisons**”. While another implied that the polio vaccine might be weakening children’s immunity: “Are these the **toxins** that millions of children get in Africa and third-world countries preventing infection from diseases today our children are likely exposed to diseases more than before. In your opinion what is the reason?”. Meanwhile, other social media users were asking **questions** about the **prioritized age group for polio vaccination**, and **when will the vaccine be available in other states**.

COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMORS THEMES BY GENDER



In December, men were sharing most of the rumors about immunity, giving a false idea that Sudanese people are immune because of the hot weather or their identity. Others downplayed the importance of taking a COVID-19 vaccine, saying that "Even if the virus comes to you, you will get better by yourself because of your immune system, there is no need to take the vaccine". Meanwhile, women were more concerned with sharing ways to prevent COVID-19, as 82% of rumors that fall under the Prevention theme were shared by women. Also, some women shared that the use of homemade remedies such as "cardamom water" and "Jujube tree leaves" can prevent COVID-19 infection. Both men and women equally shared ways to treat or cure COVID-19 infections.

SENTIMENT ANALYSIS: COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMORS



Most rumors collected in December, expressed apathy and indifference, driven by those sharing that COVID-19 is over or a hoax, and others minimizing the severity of the virus by citing the availability of plant-based and localized treatments for COVID-19. A man from East Darfur said, "Corona is just a normal flu because it has the same symptoms". Meanwhile, rumors that exuded fear expressed concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine. For example, a woman from Central Darfur shared that "Vaccine shots kill after a specific period of time".

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

We welcome your feedback and suggestions. Please contact: Mustafa Omer, Data Analyst, momer@internews.org