

# THE HUMANITARIAN SNAPSHOT

*A product which provides a quick snapshot, on health rumor data, analysis and recommendations in Zimbabwe.*

“Mweya wakataura kare kuti majekuseni e COVID-19 ndeenhema awo invura.”

Community Listening Group, Masvingo

RUMOR

## TRANSLATION:

“The Holy spirit told us that these COVID-19 vaccines are fake actually they are water.”

## Background

The rumor which emanated from Masvingo indicates the influence of religious and cultural beliefs on the spread of misinformation on COVID-19 vaccines and their effectiveness. The rumor may fuel vaccine hesitancy among Christian communities, who form an estimated 85 percent of the Zimbabwe population.

## Facts

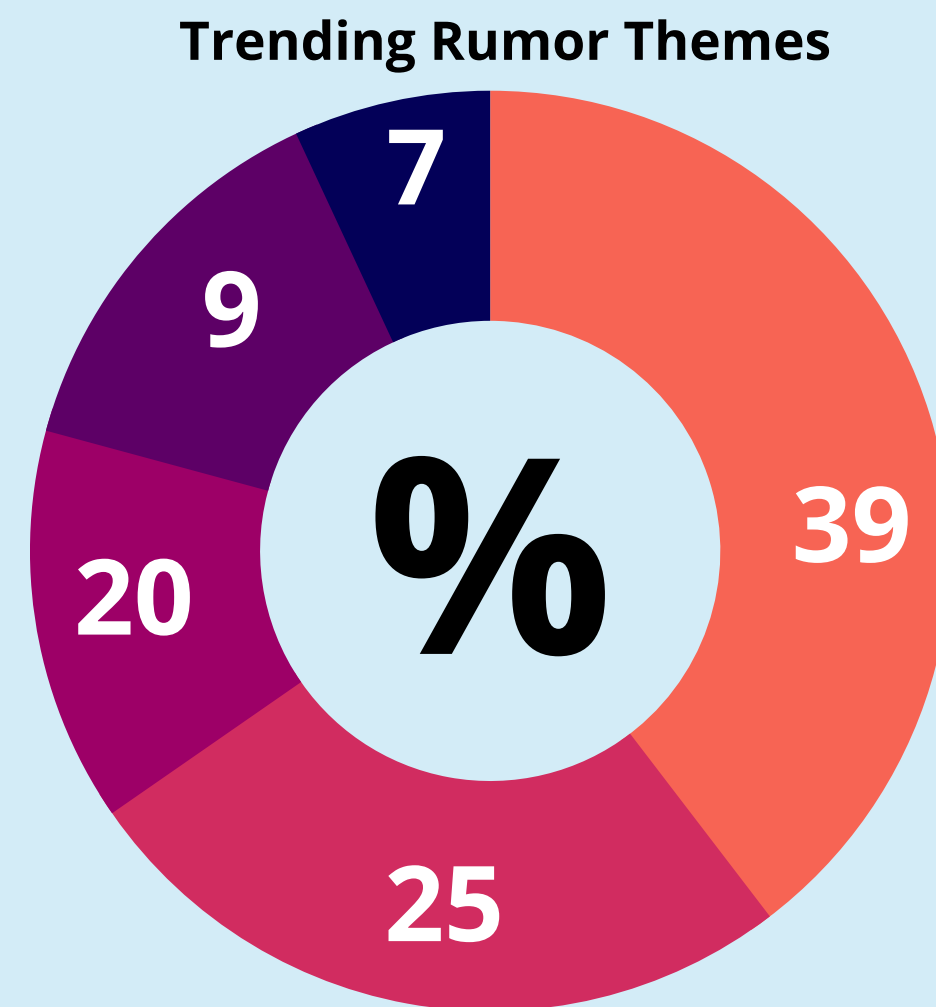
- Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and Apostolic Women's Empowerment Trust (AWET) acknowledge that vaccination hesitancy is prevalent in faith communities and there is need for community level engagement to address it.
- Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC), has advised that COVID-19 vaccines are effective in preventing severe illness and death, they also provide protection against long COVID-19 which has been linked with the Omicron variant.
- Although COVID-19 vaccines contain water for injections, they also contain various ingredients depending on the manufacturer including messenger RNA (mRNA), harmless versions of the virus or harmless pieces of the virus (spike protein) amongst other ingredients.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) also notes that approved COVID-19 vaccines have been proven to be safe, effective and lifesaving.

## What can we do as humanitarian actors?

- **Humanitarian and health organisations can share information** and information educational communication (IEC) materials with women, men, youths, and migrants, highlighting COVID-19 vaccine ingredients and how these ingredients help to protect the body from the COVID-19 virus.
- **Associations of religious leaders such as Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA)** can share posters and infographics with religious leaders who can use these tools to educate themselves and debunk myths about the contents of COVID-19 vaccines amongst church members.



# Rumor Trends Analysis



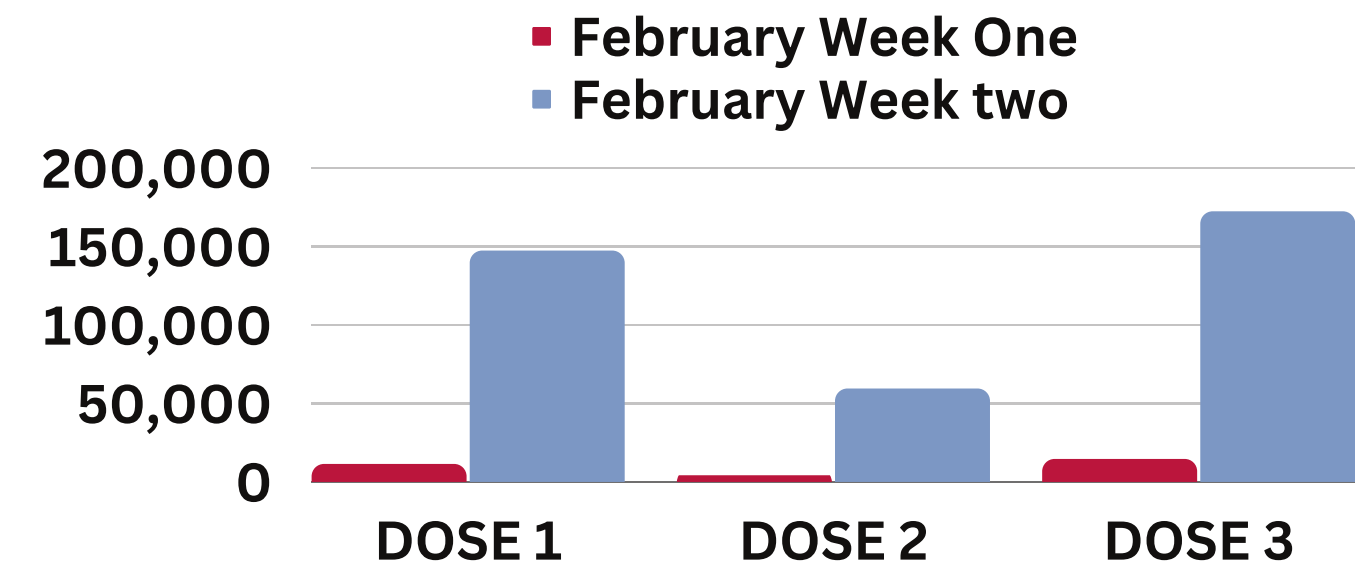
- COVID-19 vaccines cause death.
- COVID-19 vaccines are experimental.
- COVID-19 is a hoax.
- COVID-19 is a punishment from God.
- Drug abuse is causing mental health challenges among youths.

Source: Infographic by Internews: Data by RiT 2.0 Global Rumours Dashboard

Between February 8 and February 14, 2023, Internews in Zimbabwe collected 188 COVID-19 and other health related rumours. Fourteen rumours were collected online (Facebook: Four (4) and Twitter: 10) and 174 through in-person interaction. Trending rumour themes were, "COVID-19 vaccines cause death" (39%), "COVID-19 vaccines are experimental" (25%), "COVID-19 is a hoax" (20%), "COVID-19 is a punishment from God" (9%) and that "Drug abuse is causing mental health challenges among youths" (7%).

## COVID-19 context

### Week-on-Week Vaccination Comparison



Source: Visualisation by Internews: Data by Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC)

- Zimbabwe recorded a 1,183% increase in first vaccine dose uptake from 11,451 doses administered in week one of February 2023 to 146,993 doses in week two of February 2023.
- There was a 1,294% and 1,075% increase in the uptake of second and third vaccine doses respectively. Second vaccine dose uptake increased from 4,236 to 59,066 doses, while third vaccine dose uptake increased from 14,630 to 172,020 doses.
- The increase in vaccination rates is due to a COVID-19 vaccination campaign rolled out by the MoHCC from February 13 to 17, 2023 targeting children from 12 years. The campaign also targeted girls aged 10 years and above with Human Papilloma Vaccine (HPV) for protection against cervical cancer. New COVID-19 cases decreased by 53% from 898 cases recorded in week one to 421 recorded in week two.
- As of February 14, 2023, there were 1,141 active cases and 35 hospitalisations (23 vaccinated and 12 unvaccinated). No COVID-19 related deaths were recorded during week two.
- Cumulatively, Zimbabwe has vaccinated 6,764,273 people with the first vaccine dose and 5,038,007 people with the second vaccine dose, translating to 50,3% of the 10 million herd immunity target initially set for end December 2022. A total of 1,512,725 people have received the third vaccine dose to date.