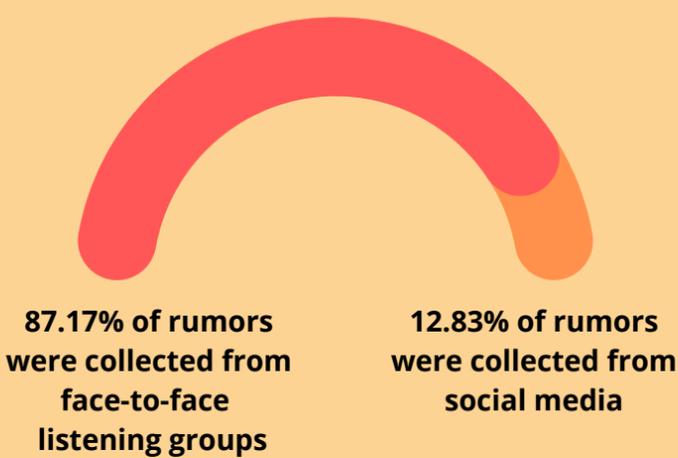


HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT - JANUARY 2023

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

In January 2023, Internews collected **265 rumors, misconceptions, and community feedback from social media and via face-to-face listening groups**, in **Arabic** and **Angasana**, about **COVID-19 and vaccines in Sudan**. During listening groups held in **Al-Gedaref, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, North Darfur, East Darfur, and Red Sea states**, **231 rumors** were shared by displaced and conflict-affected people. **Forty-two rumors** were shared by displaced people residing in Abu Shouk Camp in North Darfur, and Al-Shaheed Afandi Camp and Agageer village in Blue Nile. Additionally, **34 rumors** were collected from social media platforms most commonly used in the country, including **Facebook** and **Twitter**. The community feedback and rumors were selected based on a risk analysis that identifies misinformation that could potentially impact vulnerable people, which are the target communities of the Rooted in Trust Sudan project.

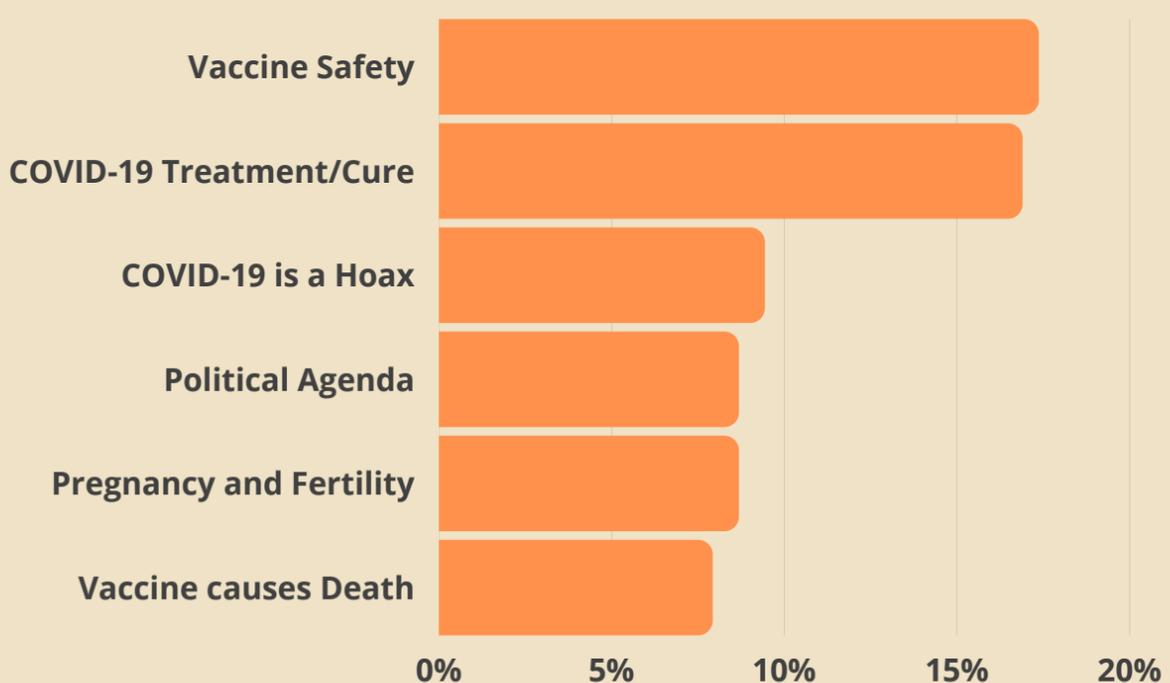
COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMORS IN JANUARY 2023



*Internews and its Rooted in Trust partners, collected a total of **265 COVID-19 and vaccine rumors in January 2023**. About **19% of the rumors were shared during listening groups held with displaced people**.*

In January 2023, rumors featuring death due to COVID-19 vaccines were a rising stand-alone theme, accounting for 8% of rumor data. For example, a man over 60 years old in Agageer IDP Camp in Blue Nile shared: *"They said 65 years old people should not take the dose because they will die"*. While a woman in the Red Sea state said, *"We have someone who died one week after taking the vaccine and he was fine before that and had no disease"*. In line with a recent trend on social media, a tweet from [a verified Japan Arabic speaking account](#) that was retweeted 169 times and viewed by 171.6 thousand people, cited that the families of five people who died after taking the vaccine in Japan received government compensation. These types of posts may increase vaccine hesitancy and confirm some of the fears and misconceptions people have about the vaccine.

TOP COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMOR THEMES



In January 2023, 17.36% of rumors spoke about the COVID-19 vaccine safety and side effects, followed by treatments (16.89%) that are mostly sharing herbal and homemade remedies to cure the virus rather than medical solutions. Additionally, 9% of rumors spoke about the side effects of COVID-19 vaccines on pregnancy and fertility specifically, while 8% of the rumors said COVID-19 vaccines cause death.

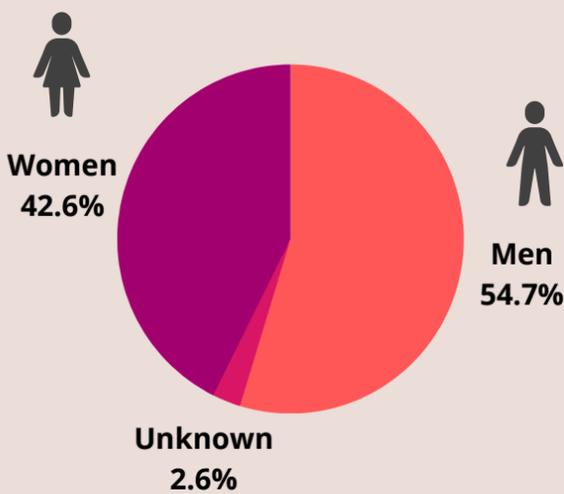
Please visit: [Internews Sudan COVID-19 Rumor Bulletins](#)

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

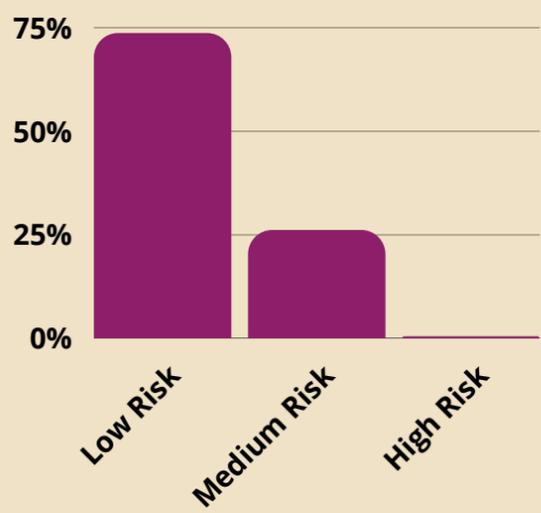
Rumors about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines accounted for 38% of social media posts, and 17% of community feedback collected during listening groups. A woman between ages 36 and 45 in Port Sudan, Red Sea said: *“Some people said the vaccine causes fever and complications”*. Some were concerned with other vaccine side effects, like back pain, diarrhea, and stroke. A man between ages 36 and 45 in Damazine, Blue Nile expressed: *“The contradiction...on social media there are people who are speaking about the importance of the vaccine and the dangers of Corona and others spreading that the vaccine has negatives and effects”*. This sentiment articulates some of the challenges people may face because of the infodemic in distinguishing between misinformation and accurate information.

RUMOR BY GENDER DISTRIBUTION



In total, men shared 54.7% of the COVID-19 rumors from both social media and face-to-face listening groups, while 45.5% of the rumors shared during listening groups came from women.

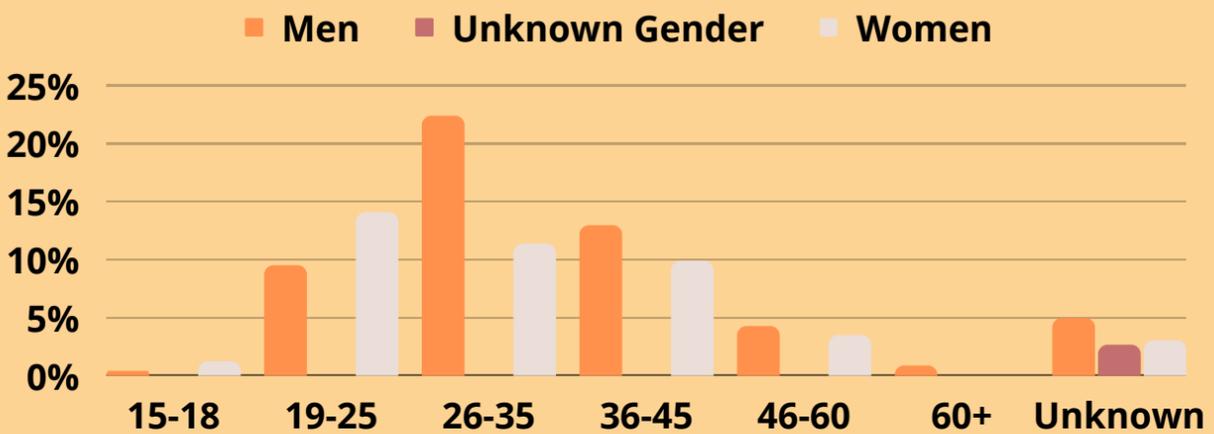
RUMOR BY RISK LEVEL



In January, 69 medium risk rumors were recorded. One high risk rumor surfaced from 265 rumors in total. It is important to respond to high risk rumors swiftly, as these type of rumors may harm people. For example, a man in Al Gadaref said: "Anemia people don't get corona because they have boosters".

Since the early stages of the pandemic, people around Sudan have been relying mostly on local remedies to treat the virus. In January, these types of rumors were shared primarily by women, ages 19 and 25, expressing that acacia, cumin seeds, neem, ginger, and lemon can treat a COVID infection. One woman between ages 19 and 25 in Areif Ashargi, South Kordofan said, *“Any bitter tree can treat Corona (acacia, neem, bark wood)”*. While men between ages 26 and 35 shared rumors about a COVID-19 political agenda, such as *“Corona is created for economic competition”, “Corona is brought to reduce Africa’s population”, and “...to kill black people”*. A boy between ages 15 and 18 tied the pandemic to current events in Sudan, citing: *“They brought Corona so they can stop protests”*.

COVID-19 AND VACCINE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK BY GENDER VS AGE



People between the ages of 26 and 35 accounted for 33.58% of overall rumor data, with a dominant male representation (66%) within this age range. While those who are between ages 19-25 (of which 60% are women), and 36-45 (43% women), accounted for 23.4% and 22.6% of the overall rumor data, respectively. It is worth noting that 82.4% of social media rumors were shared by users that did not disclose their age, as this accounts for 10.6% of the overall rumor data. Also, 2.64% of the overall data has no gender disclosure, all from social media.

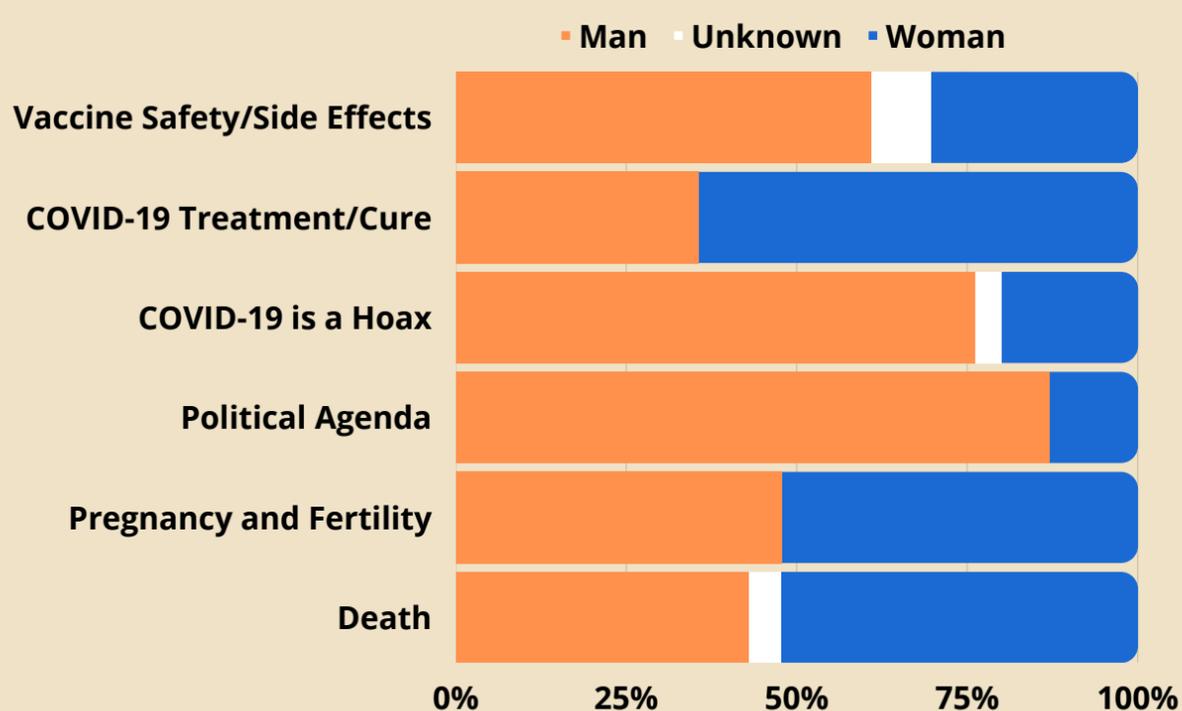
Please visit: [Internews Sudan COVID-19 Rumor Bulletins](#)

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT - JANUARY 2023

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

During listening groups held in January, people reflected on the effects of vaccinations on fertility and reproductive health. For instance, a man between ages 36 and 45 in Alshaheed Afendi IDP Camp in Blue Nile said: “...my wife was 3 months pregnant I told her to get vaccinated she had a miscarriage after 4 days she told me it’s your fault”. In Abu Shouk IDP Camp in North Darfur, a man between ages 26 and 35 said, “AstraZeneca vaccine causes disturbance to menstrual periods for women”. Meanwhile, a woman between ages 46 and 60 in Damazine in Blue Nile state said, “Young men who did not give birth, if they take the vaccine they will not be able to”.

COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMORS THEMES BY GENDER



In January, men were sharing most of the rumors about COVID-19 being part of a political agenda or a hoax. Men were also quite vocal about vaccine safety and side effects during this month. Meanwhile, women were more concerned with sharing COVID-19 treatments and cures, which are mainly homemade remedies. Both men and women equally shared their concerns about the effects of the COVID-19 vaccine on pregnancy and fertility, and the vaccine causing death.

SENTIMENT ANALYSIS: COVID-19 AND VACCINE RUMORS



Rumors exuding 'fear' (33%) have taken the top spot in the sentiment analysis data for the first time, since April 2022. Most of these rumors are linked to COVID-19 vaccine's safety or side effects (46.6%), effects on pregnancy and/or fertility (25%), and vaccines causing death (18.2%).

Many rumors collected in January also expressed apathy and indifference (26%), yet driven this time by those minimizing the severity of the virus, citing available plant-based and localized treatments for COVID-19, more than those undermining COVID-19 being a hoax or that it has ended.

SUDAN ROOTED IN TRUST

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



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

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