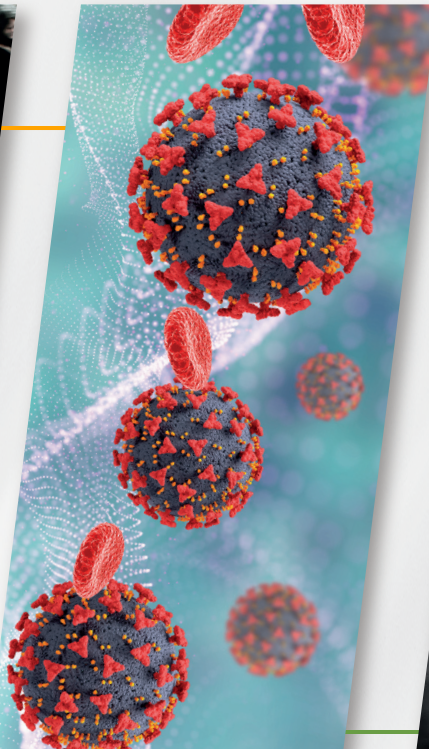


IRAQ SITUATION REPORT

A monthly situation report aimed at combating
COVID-19 rumors to debunk the infodemic



January 2023

About Rooted in Trust

Rooted in Trust is collecting, analyzing, and responding to rumors in 13 countries with generous support from USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs (BHA). We focus on equipping journalists and humanitarian communicators with the tools they need in the languages they prefer, to combat rumors and misinformation during the COVID-19 crisis.

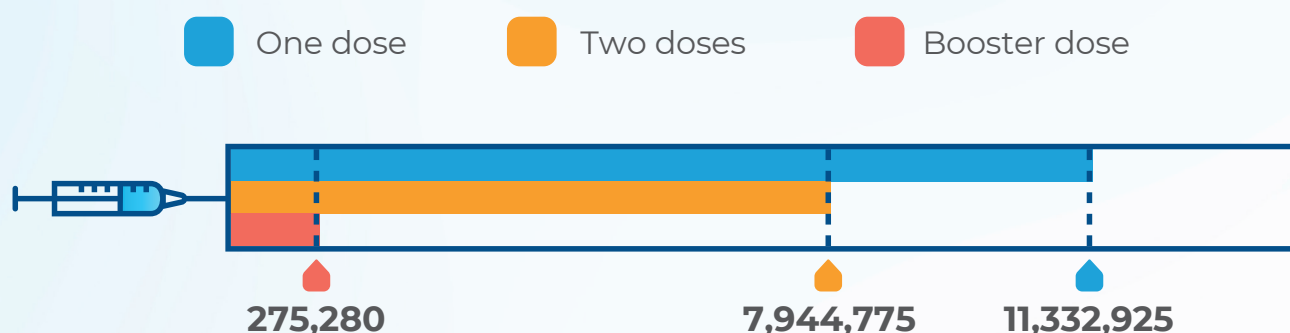
How do we do it?

We identify and analyze rumors to help humanitarian actors and health workers better inform their Risk Communication & Community Engagement (RCCE) strategies.

Situation by the Numbers (WHO)¹

- Positive Covid-19 cases reported during January 2023: **172** (83.7% decrease compared to December 2022)
- Number of total cases: **2,465,545**
- Total of vaccine doses administrated until January 2023: **19,557,364**
- Total number of fully vaccinated people: **7,944,775** (19.8%)
- Death cases reported during January: **1**
- Total death cases reported until January: **25,375**

Vaccination Uptake Per Dose until January 2023

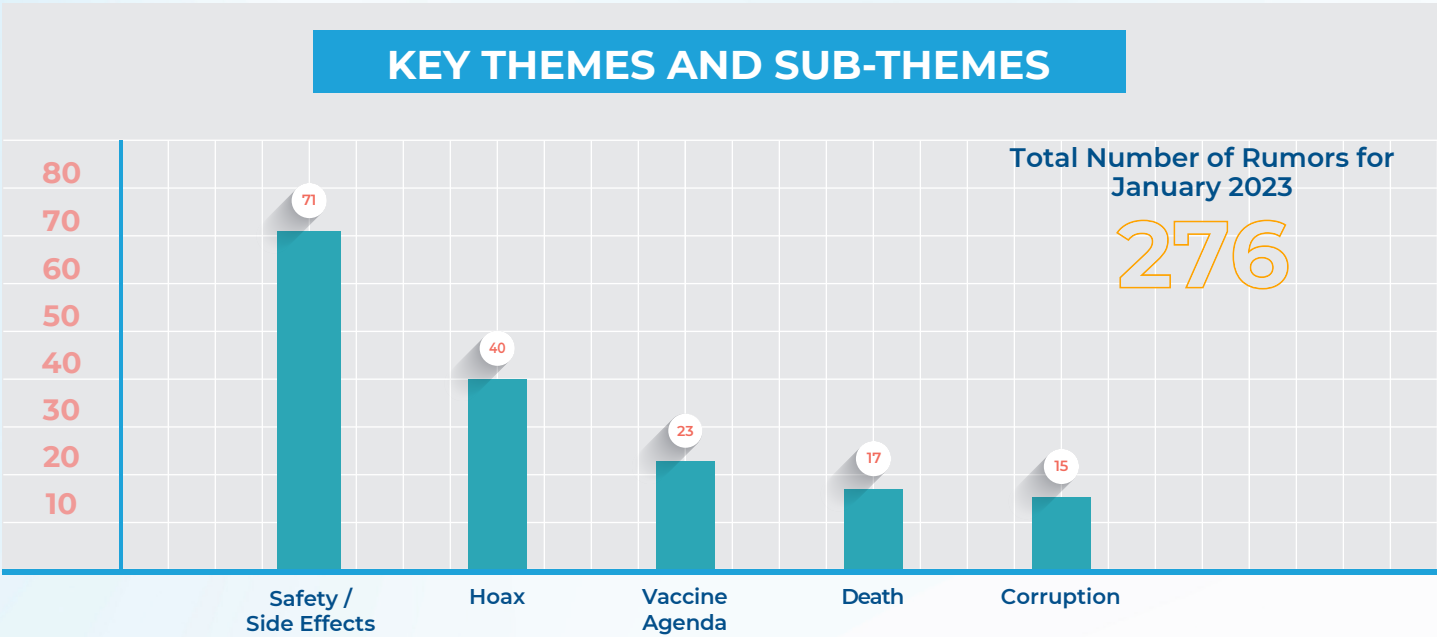


Introduction

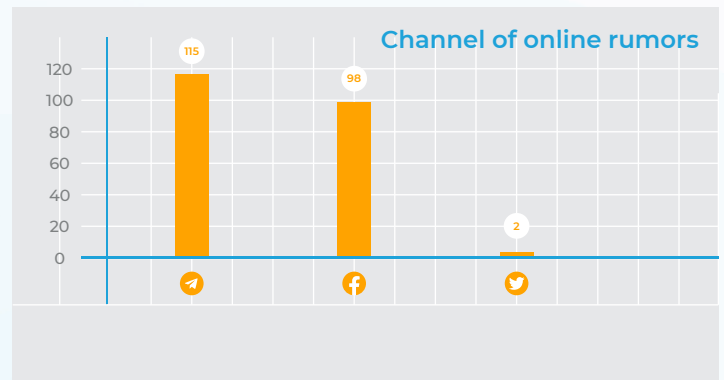
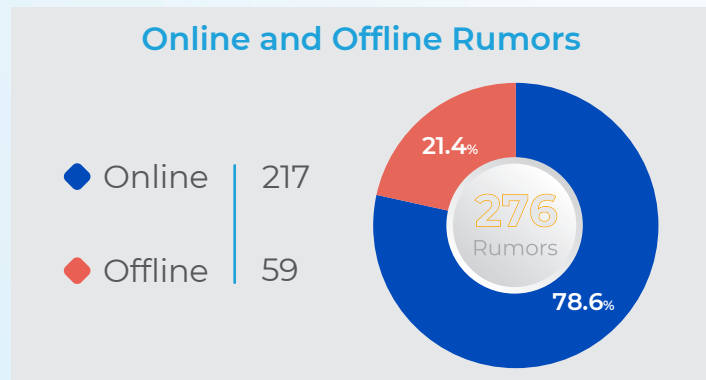
According to the WHO dashboard, Iraq reported 172 confirmed COVID-19 cases in January 2023, an 83.7% decrease compared to December 2022. Death cases also decreased in January 2023 compared to December 2022, in which there was only one death case as a result of COVID-19 in January 2023, as compared to December 2022, which were nine death cases. Moreover, starting in January, the Ministry of Health of the Federal Government has stopped publishing the number of cases and other information related to the COVID-19 virus on its social media platforms. Despite the decrease in COVID-19 cases, people are still spreading rumors about the virus and its vaccines. Only in January, 276 rumors were collected, in which the number of rumors increased by 62% compared to December 2022. Vaccination coverage remained low, with only 19.8% of people fully vaccinated. According to the WHO dashboard, the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic until the end of January 2023 is 2,465,545, and 25,375 death cases.

Data Overview

With a total of 276 rumors collected during January 2023, we have noticed that misinformation trends are revolving around the top subtheme of "safety/side effects"; they mainly stated the risk and danger of taking the vaccines. Rumors linked to death, hoax, efficacy, corruption, and vaccine agenda also continue to circulate among different communities in Iraq, especially IDP communities in northern Iraq. Out of the 276 collected rumors, 59 of them were collected from IDPs inside and outside the IDP camps in Erbil Governorate. On the other side, Telegram is one of the top online sources for spreading false information, out of 217 online rumors, we collected 115 rumors on Telegram public accounts and groups during January 2023, which shows that more than %50 of the total online rumors was collected on Telegram. Also, Facebook ranked the second social media platform for spreading rumors in Iraq with 98 collected rumors only from public accounts, pages, and groups. The majority of both online and offline rumors were in the Arabic language, in which more than %80 of collected rumors during January 2023 were in Arabic.



Channels



Analysis

Despite the decrease in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in January 2023 compared to December 2022, rumors and false information on COVID-19 (mainly on the COVID-19 vaccines) still spread daily basis among Iraqi communities through online and offline practices. The rumors are also associating the COVID-19 vaccine with other outbreaks and diseases such as seasonal flu and scabies. At the same time, people constantly develop thoughts and theories against the COVID-19 vaccines. All the theories have generally one main purpose, which they work on deepening people's hesitancy in taking the vaccine.

Under the activities of Rooted in Trust 2.0, Internews Iraq team continues to collect and analyze the trend rumors and false information that spread in Iraq. Then, several publications including Community Bulletin, Humanitarian Bulletin, Media Bulletin, and social media content are produced every month as a response to the trending rumors. These publications provide the fact-check and recommendations for various target groups. These publications can be found on [Iraq – Rooted In Trust](#).

Source

<https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/iq>

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For more information on the project, please visit:

[Internews In Iraq \(Facebook Page\)](#)

[Iraq – Rooted In Trust](#)