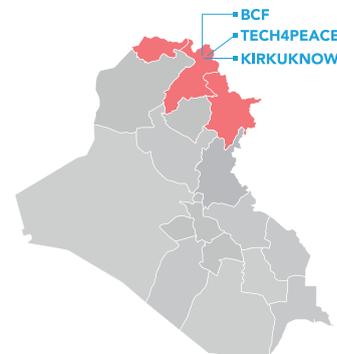


## Introduction to Rooted in Trust



Rooted in Trust (RiT) is a USAID Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs (BHA)-funded project by Internews that aims at countering the unprecedented scale and speed of the spread of rumors and misinformation on COVID-19 health response and COVID-19 vaccines among vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian crisis. In Iraq, Rooted in Trust works with media, community-based organizations, and health and humanitarian actors to build a healthier information ecosystem that is responsive to the needs of internally displaced populations in northern Iraq, with the goal of disrupting and mitigating the flow of misleading and inaccurate information.



## Methodology



In Iraq, RiT 2.0 collects, manages, and addresses any instance of an online and offline COVID-19 rumor in targeted communities and population groups of concern (Women, Disabilities IDPs, etc.) in two local languages Arabic and Kurdish. Following the fact-checking process, rumors go through categorization, qualitative and quantitative data analysis, and then producing products to be shared with the target population.

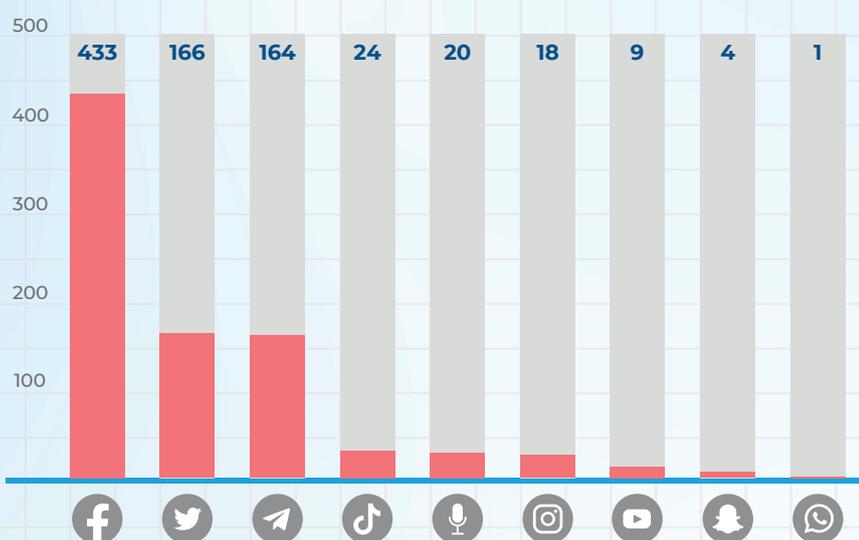
Total number of collected rumors from December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 is:

1,017

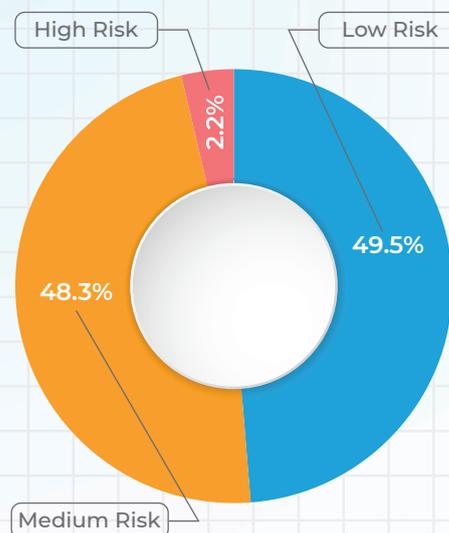
839  
online rumors

178  
offline rumors

## Channel of online rumors



## Risk Strength



# CRIMEAN-CONGO HEMORRHAGIC FEVER

## What is hemorrhagic fever?

Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) is the most widespread tick-borne viral disease affecting humans. The CCHF virus is transmitted to people either by tick bites or through contact with infected animal blood or tissues during and immediately after slaughter. The majority of cases have occurred in people involved in the livestock industry, such as agricultural workers, slaughterhouse workers, and veterinarians. CCHF outbreaks have a case fatality rate of up to 40%. So far, there is no vaccine available for either people or animals.<sup>[1]</sup>

## SYMPTOMS



FEVER &  
HEADACHE



MUSCLE  
ACHE



DIZZINESS



SORE EYES



VOMITING

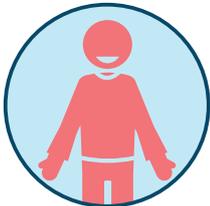


DIARRHEA



BLEEDING &  
BRUISING

## PREVENTION METHODS



LONG SLEEVES, LONG  
TROUSERS, SOCKS



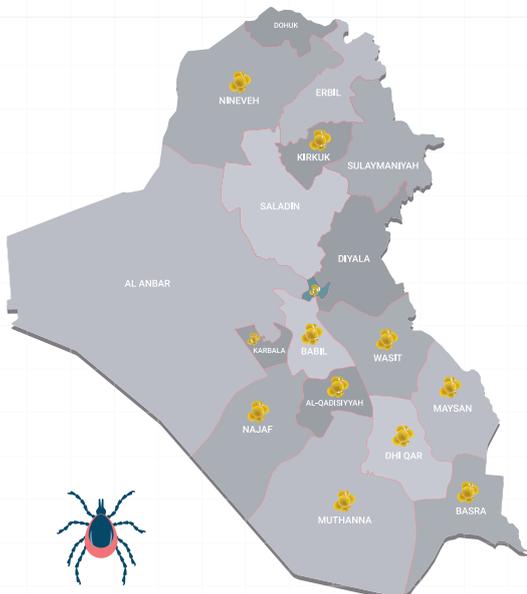
AVOID PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH  
CCHF-INFECTED PEOPLE



WASH HANDS REGULARLY  
AFTER VISITING ILL PEOPLE



DON'T TOUCH ANIMALS  
AND RAW MEAT



## Country Update:

From January 1<sup>st</sup> to May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, **212 cases** of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) have been reported to the WHO by the Iraqi health authorities of which **169 (80%)** were reported in April and May alone, in which 115 were suspected and **97** were laboratory confirmed. **27** deaths occurred overall, of which 13 were in laboratory-confirmed cases. Among confirmed cases, most had direct contact with animals and were livestock breeders or butchers.<sup>[2]</sup>

In response to the outbreak, Iraq has issued stricter hygiene standards for livestock slaughterhouses, which ban the slaughter of livestock outside the designated places. Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi has allocated one billion Iraqi dinars to combat the Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever; mainly to purchase pesticides and support the campaign to address hemorrhagic fever and reduce its effects.<sup>[3]</sup>



“

CCHF is an artificial virus same as the COVID-19 virus, so let's see when they will come out with a vaccine. Anyway, be careful, it is not only the meat, come and convince me why only the meat has the virus at a time when the milk is coming from the same cow and doesn't have the virus. Avoid milk, meat, and yogurt because they all transmit the current artificial virus until they find a solution for us with a second mandatory vaccine.

”

 From Facebook

## FACT-CHECKING



- CCHF has a long history in which it was first characterized in Crimea in 1944 and given the name Crimean hemorrhagic fever. It was then later recognized in 1969 as the cause of illness in the Congo, thus resulting in the current name of the disease.
- The virus is primarily transmitted to people from ticks and livestock animals. Human-to-human transmission can occur resulting from close contact with the blood, secretions, organs, or other bodily fluids of infected persons.
- There have been a few reports of infection after drinking unpasteurized milk or after consumption of raw meat from freshly slaughtered livestock.<sup>[4]</sup>
- Both Iraq and the IKR Ministry of Health circulated official letters about rules and regulations for combatting Hemorrhagic fever to all health directories in 18 districts of Iraq which shows the seriousness of the new virus.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEDIA



- ▶ Media outlets must verify media products and their contents before publishing them, specifically those contents that are related to scientific facts, in order to reduce the risks that social media platforms already created on COVID-19 through spreading misinformation and rumors.
- ▶ Media outlets should immediately deal with any health issues and diseases that the community face in order to disseminate correct and factual information and guidelines.
- ▶ Media outlets should have health specialist journalists who can have a better understanding of health issues and pandemics.
- ▶ Social media users often write comments containing rumors and false information under the posts of media outlets on health issues. It is essential for media outlets to monitor those comments and have a rapid response with accurate information and clear sourcing.
- ▶ Media outlets should cover the health issues as one of their daily news priorities and investigate the issues to provide transparent messaging to the people.

## Sources

1. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/crimean-congo-haemorrhagic-fever>
2. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-DON386#:~:text=Between%20%20January%20to%20%2022,13in%20laboratory%20confirmed%20cases>
3. <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/28052022>
4. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/crimean-congo-haemorrhagic-fever/facts/factsheet>

Hotline

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## Tips for Journalists:



- ▶ it is essential that journalists provide true information and use clear language and headlines. The headline must be factually accurate, easy to understand, and in line with the article's content.
- ▶ Please note that a piece of news should be always a verified fact. It is important to fact-check the information and data with relevant authorities, such as the Ministry of Health and WHO, before publishing them.
- ▶ Keep your data clear and authentic. Investigate the data and information on health issues thoroughly, and do not allow your objectivity to be affected by the emotionality implicit in the rumors. Do not fall into misinformation.
- ▶ Focus on the measures being taken by local and national authorities and humanitarian organizations to assist the community during the pandemic.
- ▶ Avoid using complicated terms, try to explain the meanings of scientific terms.
- ▶ The role of a journalist is to provide a clear picture of the pandemic and the diseases to their audiences. Avoid giving personal opinions when stating a piece of information, so that the audience does not confuse the facts with your points of view.
- ▶ There is always new research on health issues, therefore, it is important to provide dates and sources within your piece of work on any health subject, so that the audiences do not generalize the fact and information.
- ▶ Journalists should avoid causing fear or panic when covering the health issue-related news, paying attention to providing balanced and in-depth coverage.

## Useful Sources for Journalists:

1. [Internews Health Journalism Network](https://healthjournalism.internews.org/)  
<https://healthjournalism.internews.org/>
2. [Addressing COVID-19 Misinformation: Lessons From The Frontlines In 100 Countries](https://healthjournalism.internews.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/07/Adressing-COVID-19-Misinformation-in-100-countries-report.pdf)  
<https://healthjournalism.internews.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/07/Adressing-COVID-19-Misinformation-in-100-countries-report.pdf>
3. [Reporting on the Omicron variant](https://healthjournalism.internews.org/resource/reporting-on-the-omicron-variant/)  
<https://healthjournalism.internews.org/resource/reporting-on-the-omicron-variant/>
4. [COVID-19 Journalist Guidance: How to report on traditional medicines and COVID-19](https://healthjournalism.internews.org/resource/covid-19-journalist-guidance-how-to-report-on-traditional-medicines-and-covid-19/)  
<https://healthjournalism.internews.org/resource/covid-19-journalist-guidance-how-to-report-on-traditional-medicines-and-covid-19/>
5. [TWB glossary for COVID-19](https://glossaries.translatorswb.org/covid19/)  
<https://glossaries.translatorswb.org/covid19/>
6. [WHO – Iraq Country Webpage](http://www.emro.who.int/countries/iraq/index.html)  
<http://www.emro.who.int/countries/iraq/index.html>



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