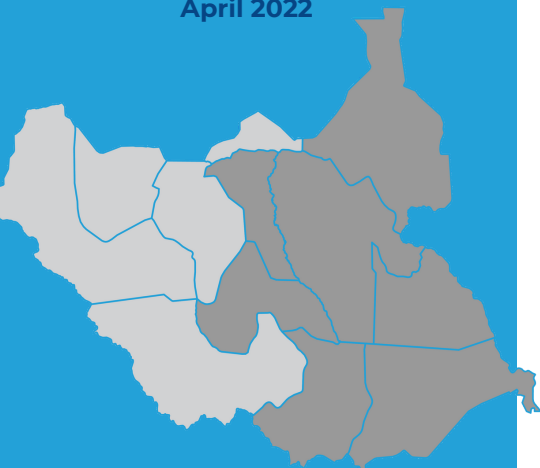




Lugara Media Factsheet



South Sudan
April 2022



Rooted in Trust 2.0 Project Areas

- Central Equatoria
- Eastern Equatoria
- Jonglei State
- Unity State
- Lakes State

Greater Pibor Administrative Area

The Internews Rooted in Trust 2.0 project in South Sudan is funded by USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID-BHA). It aims to respond to rumors, misinformation, and fake news that shape negative public perceptions towards COVID-19 response in the country.

USAID-BHA Rooted in Trust 2.0 South Sudan. If you want to contribute to or provide feedback on this Lugara Media Factsheet or have information to share, please contact:

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This Lugara Media Factsheet is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

This Media Factsheet has been reviewed by the Ministry of Health, South Sudan

About This Lugara Factsheet

This Media Factsheet is a periodic response to rumors and concerns about COVID-19 and provides verified information for journalists and community correspondents reporting on the pandemic. It is meant to provide information that is essential to understand the facts about the virus, vaccines and related issues, to help journalists respond to their audiences' questions, address rumors, and close the feedback loop.

A lot of information is circulating across South Sudan and beyond its borders about COVID-19, vaccinations and related issues. So, it is important to know what's true and what's not.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY?

Rumor #1 COVID-19 General



"People say they have stopped following preventive measures because COVID-19 does not matter any more."

Heard from various sections of communities in South Sudan.

Fact File

- ✓ This rumor is false, and it was debunked by the Ministry of Health. **"COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person, especially between people who are physically near each other (within about 6 feet). People who are infected but do not show symptoms can also spread the virus to others. therefore, the Ministry of Health advises everyone that COVID-19 still exists so there's need to keep all the preventive measures,"** advised by Mabior Kiir Kudior, Chief of Planning and Information at Public Health Emergency Operation Centre, Ministry of Health, Republic of South Sudan, 26 April 2022. I think, because this message is not new, that we should have the date of when MoH said this, to confirm that it is still a danger to be taken seriously.
- ✓ The preliminary results of the South Sudan COVID-19 health facility prevalence survey published on April 13, 2022, confirmed that COVID-19 is still a danger to be taken seriously. The Preliminary results found a 18.7% COVID-19 positive test rate using RT-PCR amongst 723 participants aged 1-80 years (43% female) in 8 health facilities in Juba, Bentiu, Rumbek, Bor and Wau counties, and 40% positive test results of those between 20-49 years of age. The Largest proportion of positive cases in Juba

- ✔ hospitals was 38.5% at Juba Military Hospital, 23.7% at Juba Teaching Hospital, only 5.9% in Wau Teaching Hospital, and 4.4% at Bor Town Hospital, with 89.6% of individuals tested in Juba County. **Source:** COVID-19 weekly Update for South Sudan, April 13, 2022).

Besides, the COVID-19 weekly situation update from the Ministry of Health indicates that out of **5,274 sample tests** from **11th to 17th April**, **51 positive cases were recorded**, an **8.9% decrease in reported cases** compared to the prior week and the third consecutive week of observed decrease in the weekly case tally. However, this decrease does not mean COVID-19 is over and does not warrant relaxation of preventive measures. Even though cases seem to be on the fall, people are still getting seriously ill and without preventive measures, case counts are more likely to rise again.

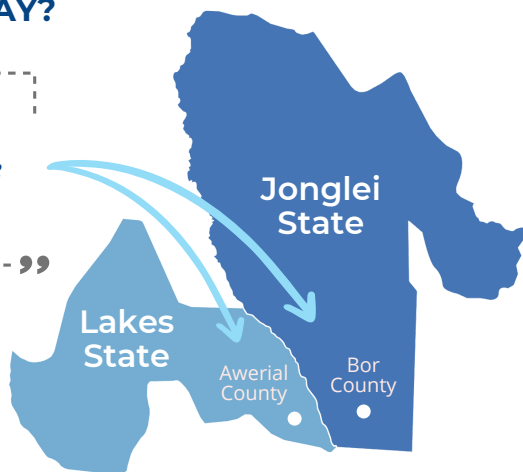
Rumor #2

Vaccines and conspiracies

WHAT PEOPLE SAY?

“Is COVID-19 vaccine a way of injecting people with microchip?”

Rumor heard from communities of Awerial County in Lakes State, and Bor County, Jonglei State.



Fact File

- ✔ This false claim was debunked by the Government of South Sudan. **“COVID-19 vaccines do not contain microchips. Vaccines are developed to fight against diseases, build the immunity and are not administered to track your movement. Therefore, it has nothing to do with microchip,”** said by Mabior Kiir Kudior, Chief of Planning and Information at Public Health Emergency Operation Centre, Ministry of Health, Republic of South Sudan.

Rumor #3

Vaccines and Breastfeeding

WHAT PEOPLE SAY?

“Some lactating mothers fear that COVID-19 vaccines may cause health problems to their breastfeeding babies.”

Juba, Central Equatoria State.



Fact File

- ✔ This rumor was debunked by the Ministry of Health and WHO. **“Currently no evidence shows that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause health issues with breastfeeding babies. The Ministry of Health, WHO and CDC recommended that COVID-19 vaccines cannot cause COVID-19 infection in anyone, including the mother or the baby. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain live virus. Vaccines are effective at preventing COVID-19 in people who are breastfeeding,”** explained by Mabior Kiir Kudior, Chief of Planning and Information at Public Health Emergency Operation Centre, Ministry of Health, Republic of South Sudan.

The WHO advised that “If you are breastfeeding, you should get vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as it is your turn. None of the current COVID-19 vaccines have live virus in them. This means there is no risk of you transmitting COVID-19 to your baby through your breastmilk from the vaccine. In fact, the antibodies you get after vaccination may go through your breastmilk and help to protect your baby.” [https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)-vaccines#](https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-vaccines#)



Tips for Journalists



South Sudan Journalists should note the following facts to improve on their knowledge, reporting techniques, and background checks about Covid-19.

- In order to understand the clear picture on why many sections of community members in South Sudan think COVID-19 does not matter anymore, journalists should talk to their local sources e.g community leaders, local government officers and health experts to gauge why COVID-19 was no longer a priority in their localities, and perhaps create their stories from that angle. Is it because of other pressing issues which have been overshadowed by COVID-19 pandemic? Are awareness campaigns about COVID-19 still ongoing in their communities? Is there any nearby health facility providing COVID-19 services, e.g testing?
- While writing stories about COVID-19 vaccination, journalists should focus on statistics about the number of males and females vaccinated in their counties and states; the statistics of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers vaccinated; and whether there were reports of any adverse vaccine effects on their babies.
- To avoid being part of the rumor mill in their communities, journalists should stick to reporting facts while giving less attention on publishing or broadcasting content that amplifies fear, ignorance, and rumor mongering about COVID-19 and other health emergencies in their localities.

Key links and resources

1. More information and stories by WHO on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines: <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/safety-of-covid-19-vaccines>
2. Official COVID-19 statistics including daily and weekly situation reports by Government of South Sudan's Ministry of Health: <https://moh.gov.ss/covid-19.php>

The Rooted in Trust 2.0 project works to combat COVID-19 rumors and misinformation, responds to the information challenges faced by vulnerable groups, encourages open dialogue between citizens and stronger collaborative partnerships between information providers.

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