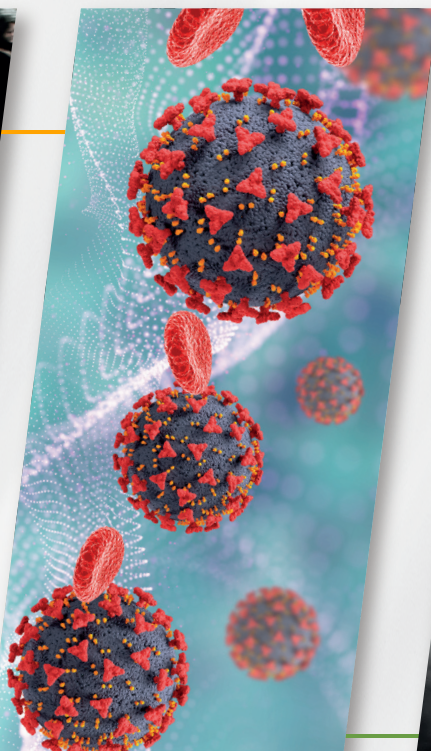


# IRAQ SITUATION REPORT

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



August, 2022

## About Rooted in Trust

Rooted in Trust is collecting, analyzing, and responding to rumors in 10 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 COVID19 crisis.

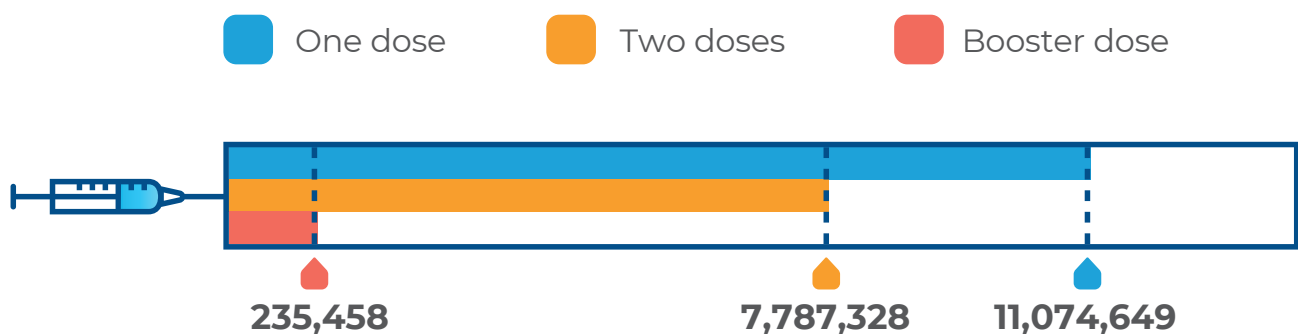
## How do we do it?

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)<sup>1</sup>

- Positive Covid-19 cases reported during August 2022: **14,099** (85.6% decrease compared to July 2022)
- Number of total cases: **2,457,871**
- Total of vaccine doses administrated until August 2022: **19,097,435**
- Total number of fully vaccinated people: **7,787,328 (19.4%)**
- Death cases reported during August: **33**
- Total death cases reported until August: **25,346**

### Vaccination Uptake Per Dose Until August 2022



# Introduction

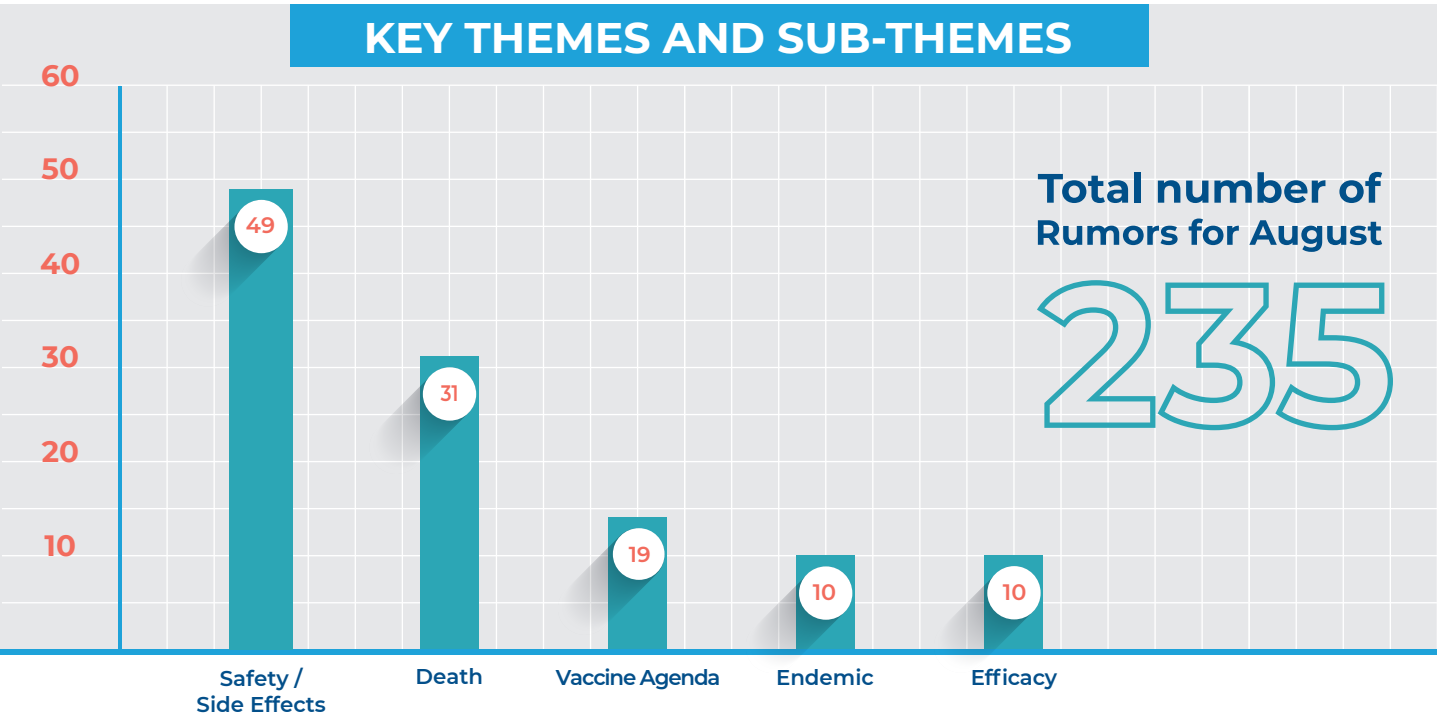
Iraq recorded 14,099 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in August, an 85.6% decrease from July. Deaths also reduced from 74 in July to 33 in August. Vaccination coverage remains low, with only 19.4% of people fully vaccinated. According to, WHO, the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases reached 2,457,871 by August 31st. Saif Al-Badr, Ministry of Health's spokesperson, stated that " despite all the rumors about overcoming the crisis, the challenge of the Coronavirus still exists. We are expecting new epidemic waves and mutations, as happened in the past. "He also added, "we still stress the need to adhere to preventive measures, wear masks, apply physical distancing, and receive vaccinations."<sup>2</sup>

Regarding Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) cases in the country, the Iraqi Ministry of Health confirmed that "the number of people infected with CCHF has exceeded 300, including 60 deaths, since the beginning of 2022. Moreover, Cholera disease is still spreading in various areas of the country, in which by the end of August, the confirmed cases have exceeded 1,100, including five deaths."<sup>3</sup>

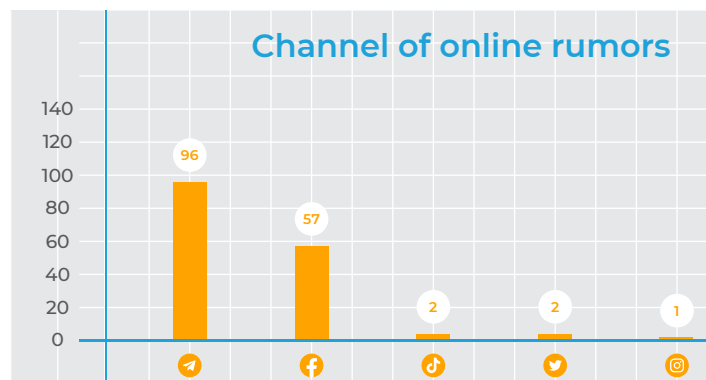
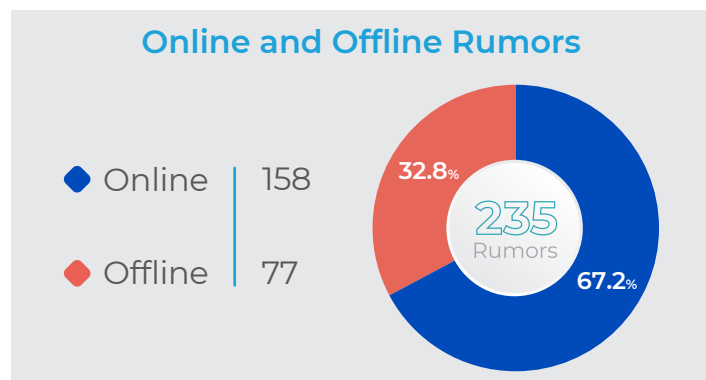
After more than three weeks of protests by supporters of Iraqi Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, there were heavy clashes in Baghdad on August 29th. At least 30 people were killed, and more than 180 others were injured in Baghdad as intense fighting continues between militias loyal to Muqtada al-Sadr and Iran-backed militias.<sup>4</sup>

# Data Overview

With a total of 235 rumors collected during August 2022, 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, vaccine agenda, and endemic also continue to circulate among different communities in Iraq, especially IDP communities in northern Iraq. Out of the 235 collected rumors, 77 of them were collected from IDPs inside and outside the IDP camps in Erbil Governorate. On the other side, Telegram is still one of the top online sources for spreading false information, out of 158 online rumors, we collected 96 rumors on Telegram during August 2022, which shows that more than %60 of the total online rumors was collected on Telegram. Also, Facebook ranked the second social media platform for spreading rumors in Iraq with 57 collected rumors only from public accounts and groups.



## Channels



## Analysis

Despite the political and economic issues in Iraq, rumors and false information on COVID-19 (mainly on the COVID-19 vaccines) spread on a daily basis among Iraqi communities through online and offline methods. The number of rumors increased by nearly 60% in August compared to July. According to the WHO reports, the level of community transmission all over the country has been moderate during August 2022.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, the vaccination rate is still low, and there are no effective campaigns to encourage people to get vaccinated. Meanwhile, people constantly develop thoughts and theories against the COVID-19 vaccines. All the theories have generally one main purpose, in which they work on deepening people's hesitancy in taking the vaccine. Regarding the Cholera outbreak in the country, WHO stated that the situation will be more critical for monitoring the cholera outbreak as historically the outbreaks occurred during August-September in Iraq.

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 Humanitarian Bulletin, Community Bulletin, Media Bulletin, and social media cards will be produced every month as a response to the trending rumors. These publications provide the fact-check and recommendations for various target groups.

### Sources

1. <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/iq>
2. <https://www.ina.iq/164465--.html>
3. <https://www.ina.iq/164465--.html>
4. <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/least-30-dead-clashes-baghdad-after-sadr-resigns>
5. <https://iraq.un.org/en/195561-who-situation-report-iraq-week-32>

### Contact

Project Manager  
**Sara Sofiwan**  
[ssofiwan@internews.org](mailto:ssofiwan@internews.org)

For more information on the project, please visit:

Iraq – Rooted In Trust

Rooted in Trust: Iraq Rumor Bulletins - Information Saves Lives | Internews