In April 2022, Internews collected rumors, misconceptions and community concerns on Facebook and Twitter about the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccines in Sudan. People on social media continue to question the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines. One concerning post spoke of doctors in Al-Hikma Medical Complex refusing to get vaccinated. This post may influence communities’ perceptions of the vaccines and their decision to get vaccinated, especially since healthcare workers are considered trusted sources of information within their communities. Another concerning post on Facebook argued that more people are dying from hunger than from COVID-19. This post reflects some of the frustration people are feeling with increasing food prices and inflation in Sudan.

Endemic rumors are those noting that COVID-19 is no longer a concern, and has become endemic. Rumors that fall under the Secondary impacts theme are highlighting the effects of COVID-19 on communities and states, like education, employment and economy.

Although there are relatively few high-risk rumors, they require a rapid response, as they could cause significant harm to community members.

Endemic rumors: 76%
COVID-19 Hoax: 25%
Political Agenda: 15%
Vaccine Safety: 10%
Secondary Impacts: 5%

Low Risk: 80.5%
Medium Risk: 15.5%
High Risk: 4%
Other: 7%

RUMOR RISK LEVEL

RUMOR BY GENDER DISTRIBUTION
Some social media users (other) choose to not share their gender identity.

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

Please visit: Internews Sudan COVID-19 Rumor Bulletins
The Rooted in Trust project aims to promote a healthy information ecosystem, by dispelling rumors and misinformation about COVID-19 and vaccines by collecting and analyzing community feedback found on social media. We aim to address the information needs of vulnerable communities impacted by armed conflict and other humanitarian crises, such as people with disabilities and displaced people. By collecting community feedback and sharing people's questions, complaints, and comments, together with humanitarians and public health responders we can address information voids and cater our programs and activities so that they are relevant and responsive to communities' needs.

Rumors were selected through a risk analysis that identifies misinformation with the highest risk and potential impact on vulnerable people, which are the target communities of the Rooted in Trust Sudan project. Other prevalent rumors during the month of April, include COVID-19 vaccines affect fertility and sexual drive, the pandemic has come to an end with the Russia-Ukraine war and the summer season, COVID-19 is endemic, and the virus has returned once again with people reporting flu-like symptoms. One community member also complained that vaccines are centralized in Khartoum and have not been equitably distributed to reach other states.

While men shared more rumor posts on social media in April 2022, both men and women between ages 26 and 35 accounted for most rumors shared when compared to other age groups.

Internews' data analysts were able to access rumor data in private groups and accounts. Community feedback collected in April, consisted mostly of rumors, and other posts, such as perceptions and concerns reflecting people's hopes and fears during the pandemic.

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We welcome your feedback and suggestions. Please contact: Mayada Mahdi, Information Management Officer, mibrahim@internews.org