

This bi-weekly bulletin is designed for journalists in South Sudan reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, and other related health and development challenges. It contains practical tips for reporting, provides verified information about public health measures of the Ministry of Health and partners, and gathers trustworthy media (re)sources for media partners. It also shares citizen concerns on COVID-19 and the humanitarian response.

October 08, 2020

SITUATION UPDATE

South Sudan continues to see a rise in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases, with 2,748 confirmed cases, 2560 recoveries and 50 deaths, as of 7 October 2020. (Source: Ministry of Health). Continued caution is needed with neighboring countries reopening airports and land borders for travelers. On 1 October, for example, the Ugandan Government announced that it will reopen Entebbe airport and land borders like Elegu and Nimule for both tourists and other travelers.

Journalists in South Sudan report that misinformation continues to exist, which may lead people to ease restrictions and personal protective measures. Citizens across Juba report that there is a strong disbelief around the existence of COVID-19, with many stating that "COVID-19 is over". Additionally, speculations about COVID-19 being "good business" for response organizations was common, particularly across Juba. Feedbacks collected from Bor reported that citizens in the area believed COVID-19 was washed away by the recent floods and that locals believe they have strong immunity against COVID-19.

In UN House PoC in Juba there was mention of humanitarian staff being "bad examples" by moving around without face masks while conducting COVID-19 response activities. Besides COVID-19 PoC residents stressed the need for additional, urgent humanitarian needs including food, and security. Victimization and stigmatization of people wearing masks was also frequently recorded, and could be one of the main reasons why some people fear wearing masks (as they are labelled "corona carriers").

Announcement

We are proud to announce the election of Richard Jale, editor and journalist, to the Lugara newsletter's editorial board. As co-editor, Jale - who has a wealth of experience working across various news agencies and media initiatives in South Sudan - will be responsible for linking in with colleagues across the country for maximum uptake, dissemination and will be ensuring accuracy and relevance of reporting. Join us in welcoming Richard to the Lugara team!

Case count & stats



South Sudan | cumulative cases: **2,748**

New cases: +193 | **Deaths:** 50 | **Recovered:** 2,560

Source: *Ministry of Health*, 07 October 2020



Africa | cumulative cases: **1,526,000**

New cases: +172,717 | **Deaths:** 37,098 | **Recovered:** 1,262,348

Source: *Africa CDC*, 07 October 2020



Global | cumulative cases: **35,347,404**

New cases: +6,428,404 | **Deaths:** 1,039,406 | **Recovered:** 27,192,802

Source: *WHO, Worldometer*, 07 October 2020

To date, there is no specific medicine recommended to prevent or treat the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

However, those infected with the virus should receive appropriate care to relieve and treat symptoms, and those with severe illness should receive optimized supportive care. Some specific treatments are under investigation, and will be tested through clinical trials. WHO is helping to accelerate research and development efforts with a range of partners.

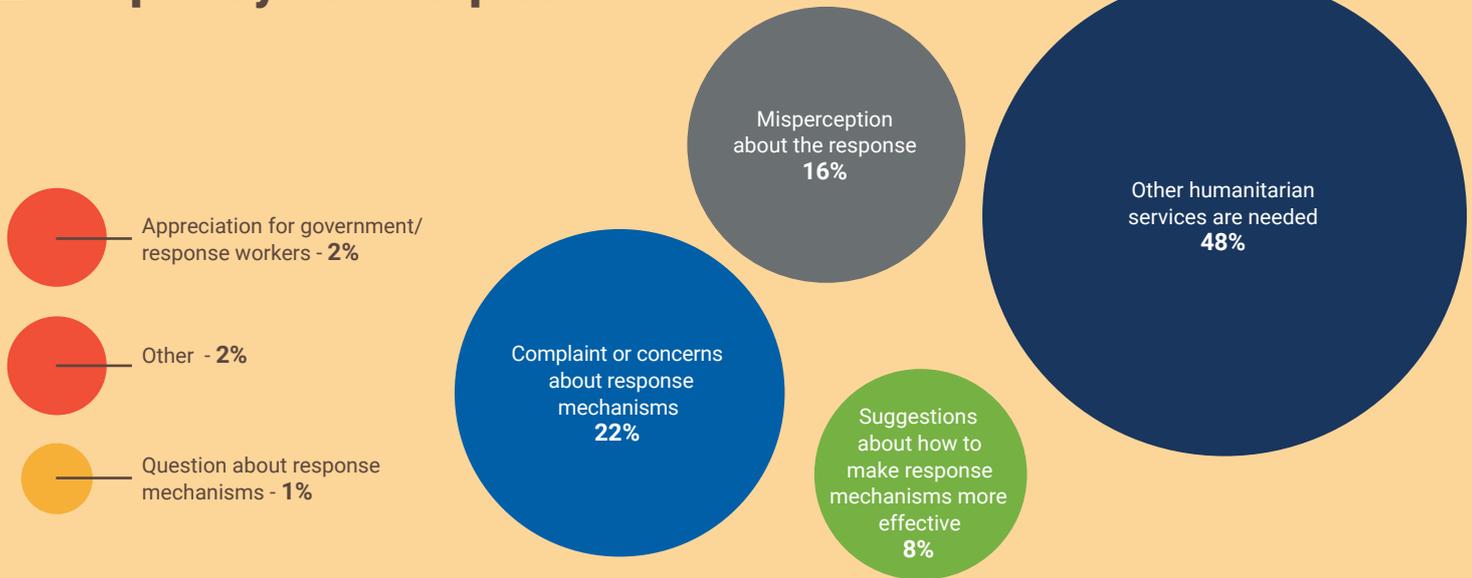


Are there any specific medicines to prevent or treat the new coronavirus?

This bi-weekly bulletin is designed for journalists in South Sudan reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, and other related health and development challenges. It contains practical tips for reporting, provides verified information about public health measures of the Ministry of Health and partners, and gathers trustworthy media (re)sources for media partners. It also shares citizen concerns on COVID-19 and the humanitarian response.

October 08, 2020

Frequently heard topics



School reopening

Normal classes at school have started and children are not using Face masks; because nobody can say the coronavirus is not there, Teachers should arrange social distancing for children in the classes

male, 32, Juba PoC

I request for the reduction of the number of the pupils per class this time in schools. That could help maintaining the social distancing in the classes have started and children are not using Face masks; because nobody can say the coronavirus is not there, Teachers should arrange social distancing for children in the classes

female, 26, Juba

Facemasks

People do forget the face mask when going to latrines and it is compulsory to use it

female, 49, PoC

Food insecurity

The food has got finished and most of the population are starving in the sites

male, 62, Juba PoC Un House

Immunity

He said people in Bor have strong immunity against coronavirus and therefore cannot get them

male, 45, Block 2, Bor

Challenges with 6666

I want to know whether the 6666 number is working or not because most of the time its off or sometimes no response

Male, Hai Tarawa, Juba

We called the toll-free number 6666 so that we know whether the deceased died of COVID-19 or not we tried like 50 times but there is no response

Male, Atlabara, Juba

COVID-19 is over/not real

There is no coronavirus in Bor. It is just a way for government to look for money from the whites

male, 35, block 3, Bor

My opinion is there is no coronavirus in Juba since people are not using masks. We could not put mask only here in the PoC.

male, 56, Juba

People are feeling there is no corona that's why people are not washing their hands

female, Kondokoro

In total unique 112 feedback points were collected between 4-30 September 2020 by media partners Voice of Reconciliation, BBTT, and Sama FM in Juba and Bor.

If you want to contribute to this media bulletin or have information to share, please contact: Tusiime Wilfred Romeo, atusiime@internews.org or Dr. Michael Gubay, mgubay@internews.org
Internews welcomes feedback, comments and suggestions from all media receiving this newsletter and invites all of them to forward, share and re-post this newsletter as widely as possible.

This bi-weekly bulletin is designed for journalists in South Sudan reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, and other related health and development challenges. It contains practical tips for reporting, provides verified information about public health measures of the Ministry of Health and partners, and gathers trustworthy media (re)sources for media partners. It also shares citizen concerns on COVID-19 and the humanitarian response.

October 08, 2020

IN FOCUS

What are we hearing in Juba?



I see many people sharing Shisha pipes. Is it safe to share? Can it not transmit coronavirus to healthy persons?

Female, Block Q, 63

As community, we are not happy about the UN decision to withdraw the forces from the POCs before the implementation of the peace agreement

Female, 29, block Q, Juba

This is a suggestion. Services provided by humanitarian need increase in this critical period of coronavirus. E.g. Food, water, medicines and even in NFI. Now services are reducing. It needs to be addressed

Male, 36, PoC 3, zone C, block 5

Shisha and COVID-19:

Tobacco and waterpipe use increases the risk of suffering from COVID-19, says WHO. Early research, WHO states, indicates that, compared to non-smokers, having a history of smoking may substantially increase the chance of adverse health outcomes for COVID-19 patients, including being admitted to intensive care, requiring mechanical ventilation and suffering severe health consequences (WHO, 2020).

Public health officials in Canada, for example, also indicated that shisha pipes: “are ideal for transmission and may exacerbate the risk for severe COVID-19 through shared use. They have difficult-to-clean long pipes and a cold water reservoir, ideal for transmission of SARS-CoV-2”. (NCBI, 2020).

Several countries have already placed restrictions on shisha use, given the public health risks of COVID-19 transmission it poses. The cities of Cairo, Egypt, and Abu-Dhabi and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, recently banned shisha use (NCBI, 2020). Read more [here](#).

Other needs:

UNOCHA reports that South Sudan is facing multiple humanitarian crisis (Source: [UNOCHA](#)). Critical funding is needed not only for COVID-19 related health and prevention services, and OCHA reports that only 37% of the required funding for all humanitarian needs is currently in place (Source: [OCHA](#)).

By the end of August, the UN agency reported, an estimated 500,000 people had been affected by flooding (Source: [UNOCHA](#)). UNOCHA also reports that: “in Bor South County, over 33,000 people earlier displaced by conflict and flooding”. It was also reported that “violence intensified... with Central Equatoria, Unity and Warrap experiencing heavy displacement” (Source: [UNOCHA](#)).

Additionally, the agency reports that: “a swarm of desert locusts moved from northwest Kenya into Kapoeta East, Kapoeta North and Budi counties in Eastern Equatoria. An outbreak of fall armyworms infested and destroyed 27 maize farms in Magwi County, Eastern Equatoria” (Source: [UNOCHA](#)).

Media contacts:

Antony Burke, Public Information Officer
 ☎ +211922406014 ✉ burkea@un.org

From the 105 feedback instances collected by partners in Juba – Boda Boda Talk Talk and Sama FM, most (51%) were calls for wider humanitarian assistance, particularly for those in PoC camps in Juba with the UNMISS withdraw, food insecurity, shelter and health related challenges. 23% were concerns and complaints about COVID-19 response mechanisms, 11% misperceptions about the COVID-19 response, 10% suggestions about how to make the response better, 2% appreciation for government and response workers, 2% other concerns and 1% questions about response mechanisms.



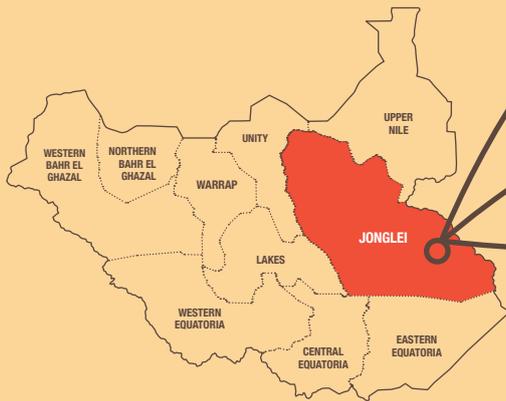
If you want to contribute to this media bulletin or have information to share, please contact: Tusiime Wilfred Romeo, atusiime@internews.org or Dr. Michael Gubay, mgubay@internews.org. Internews welcomes feedback, comments and suggestions from all media receiving this newsletter and invites all of them to forward, share and re-post this newsletter as widely as possible.

This bi-weekly bulletin is designed for journalists in South Sudan reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, and other related health and development challenges. It contains practical tips for reporting, provides verified information about public health measures of the Ministry of Health and partners, and gathers trustworthy media (re)sources for media partners. It also shares citizen concerns on COVID-19 and the humanitarian response.

October 08, 2020

IN FOCUS

What are we hearing in Bor?



Flood has washed away coronavirus and so there is no need to take preventive measures.

Female, 29, Fanjak

God is our protector and he cannot leave us to be killed by coronavirus.

Female, 30, Block 4

Coronavirus is just a normal flu and therefore it has been there before

male, 25, Maror

Flu vs. COVID-19:

Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2) and flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses, according to CDC (Source: [CDC](#)).

CDC also reports: "Because some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone, and testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis. Flu and COVID-19 share characteristics, but there are some key differences (see on the right).

Because Flu and COVID-19 share many of the same signs and symptoms, it is critical that people get tested when they get ill with such symptoms, so health workers can say for sure what the person suffers from. Testing is critical as COVID-19 can be extremely dangerous, particularly for already ill and old people. When we test for COVID-19 we protect our family, our community and our nation!

✓ Similarities:

Both COVID-19 and flu can have varying degrees of signs and symptoms, ranging from no symptoms (asymptomatic) to severe symptoms. Common symptoms that COVID-19 and flu share include:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults

Differences:

Flu viruses can cause mild to severe illness, including common signs and symptoms listed above. Other signs and symptoms of COVID-19, different from flu, may include change in or loss of taste or smell.

Read more here: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>

Media contacts:

Dr. Thuoi Loi, Ministry of Health

☎ 0927134045/9171103275 ✉ loi.ezekiel92@gmail.com

From the 7 feedback instances collected by our partner Voice of Reconciliation (VoR) in Bor, 86% were misperceptions whilst 17% were concerns with response measures, which were reported to be: "too complicated to be followed".

This bi-weekly bulletin is designed for journalists in South Sudan reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, and other related health and development challenges. It contains practical tips for reporting, provides verified information about public health measures of the Ministry of Health and partners, and gathers trustworthy media (re)sources for media partners. It also shares citizen concerns on COVID-19 and the humanitarian response.

October 08, 2020

 **FEATURE**

Editorial note: schools across the country have been closed since March to prevent further spread of the COVID-19 virus, but on 5 October the Ministry of Education has announced that schools will reopen in a phased approach. Not all classes will open, and this leaves us wonder - how is lockdown for South Sudan's teens? What are they experiences? Read more below.

School closures: “My mom almost forced me to get married”

Richard Jale

Schools have reopened but for a 17-year-old girl the wait is not yet over...

Mary*, a senior grade 3 girl at Bishop Abangite College in Yambio, Western Equatoria State will have to wait for April next year until her class will resume learning. So far only candidate classes have been told to restart, leaving a large part of children at home.

This is a long delay for she knows it means she must continue fighting to remain a girl. “My mum almost forced me to get married,” Mary explains.

It was during the COVID-19 lockdown when the 17-year-old got surprised one evening by her mother, with an offer to get married.

Mary says: “I was no longer going to school and I was just staying at home, so she wanted me to get married [so] maybe the dowry will help her.”

Luckily, she says: “my father could not support her [mother’s desire to marry out the girl]”.

Teenage mothers and forced brides

Unlike Mary who survived the attempt for marrying her off, many girls in South Sudan have either been forced to get married or got pregnant during the six months of school closure due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In July, two United Nations (UN) agencies – UNICEF and UNESCO called for reopening of schools, arguing that when girls remain out of school for long, they would be

at higher risks of sexual exploitation and abuse, including child marriage.

According to an assessment carried between April and August 2020 by Support Peace Initiative Development organization (SPIDO), a national non-governmental organization, the rate of child marriages and teenage pregnancies increased during the COVID-19 lockdown, especially in the Equatoria region. SPIDO says it documented more than 1,500 cases of child marriages and teenage pregnancies in the Eastern, Central and Western Equatoria states since March 2020. Some of the cases are attributed to forced marriages while others are as a result of unplanned and unprotected sex.

Preaching hope

For this reason, SPIDO started a group named Child Protection Ambassadors – comprising mostly of teenage girls. The group moves from home to home preaching messages of hope and encouraging young girls and boys to protect themselves from sexual and drug abuse.

It is this group that convinced Jacqueline to give up becoming a prostitute after falling out with her mother. The 17 year-old-girl was desperate to find money to eat, unable to return home. “My mum used to insult me telling me things I didn’t want to hear. I had to leave home and wanted to associate with girls who had engaged themselves in prostitution”.

“When SPIDO approached me, I

decided to join them and [I have now] become the chairperson of the group”, says Mary. The 17-year-old says after joining the group, her life has changed. “They said [that] if I went back to school, my life will change. It was difficult to go back to my mum [but] I decided to go back home. [...] I have now built the relationship back.”

Schools save lives

Mary blames mothers in Yambio for many of the forced marriages of young girls. “They are the ones forcing their daughters to get married because we have nothing to do at home and we are no longer going to school. They want us to get married so that they can get the dowry.”

The 17-year-old girl has a message for such parents. “You should not give away your daughters for early marriage. As schools are reopening, send all girls back to school and stand strong in supporting your daughters in education,” says Mary. For Mary, going back to school would mean having a better future where she would not depend on a man for resources. She says: “I will help my mum in many ways because I plan to go for further studies and when I finish [...], I will help her in many things”.

“That will be better than the dowry that she wanted to chase me for”, says the 17-year-old. Despite facing resistance from some hostile parents, SPIDO’s Child Protection Ambassadors’ determination to see changes is keeping them going strong.

School closures: selling sweets turns sour

Editor note: the prolonged school closure does not only have detrimental effect on girls in South Sudan, but also affects boys, many of whom are working and vulnerable to abuse.

When the schools closed Jacob*, a 16-year-old boy attending Primary School Grade 7, Bright Star Primary School in Yambio, started a small street side business selling sweets and other items.

“When the coronavirus came, the situation became worse”. It was in his shop that he met a group of “bad boys”. Jacob explains: “Many children came to the streets. We started smoking shisha and cigarettes and we started fighting among ourselves”.

“This group (child protection ambassadors) came to me that’s when I joined them. They have helped me to leave cigarettes and I have changed my life.” The 16-year-old boy says he now wants to go back to school when his grade starts up again.

* All names in this article are pseudonyms as the children featured in this piece are minors. The editors of the newsletter have their real names.

This bi-weekly bulletin is designed for journalists in South Sudan reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, and other related health and development challenges. It contains practical tips for reporting, provides verified information about public health measures of the Ministry of Health and partners, and gathers trustworthy media (re)sources for media partners. It also shares citizen concerns on COVID-19 and the humanitarian response.

October 08, 2020

The COVID-19 Beat Updates from the Media

→ Eye Radio: stories of stigma amongst COVID-19 survivors

Lasuba Memo, presenter with Eye Radio in Juba, aired a special programme on COVID-19. In the second edition of the show Memo focused on stigma of survivors of the COVID-19 virus and their family members. Some of them say have been forced to relocate from their initial areas because, *"of humiliation by their area residents"*, reported Memo.

In the show, John Wani, a 52-year-old survivor from Gudule, also shared that he *"was called names associated with the disease"* and that some people in his area avoided him, even if he had recovered. It pains Wani when people in his area are treating him differently: *"even after recovering from the illness, some shopkeepers refused to serve me because their customers ran away after I visited those shops"*.

Wani reported that he does not know how and where he contracted the virus from but it is likely he got ill when attending a funeral of a relative. Wani realized something was wrong with him when he lost taste and smell for food while eating with friends in a restaurant.

John Wani is not the only COVID-19 survivor to experience stigma from members of the public. The deputy chairperson of South Sudan Aids Commission, Dr. Achol Ayong faced a similar situation. Dr. Achol tested positive for the virus in late May this year. She immediately isolated herself after she noticed that she lost her smell for the perfumes she wanted to buy in Juba. Achol reported being stigmatized because *"she as a doctor got COVID-19"*.

Philip Nyang is another survivor of the pandemic. A famous professional lawyer, he noticed he lost his ability to taste and went to test for the virus. Five of his close friends contracted the virus too. He immediately confined himself to one place and got tested. He did not experience much stigma, as his friends also got ill: *"we could talk to each and encourage one another, do exercises and take good care of themselves"*. All of them fought off the virus, reports Memo.

With special thanks to Lasuba Memo and Rosmary Wilfred from Eye Media.

→ SAMA FM: reporting on the elderly & stigma

Denis Morris, Awate William Umba, and Jerry Okeny Patrick at SAMA FM reported on vulnerability, youth and the elderly during COVID-19. They spoke with young people including Miss Grace Soga (also known as "Dia Sisi"), members of the South Sudan Youth Fight against COVID-19 and other citizens in Juba. The broadcast explored why is it important for families and community to protect the elderly and people with comorbidities and explored how young people can help protect the elderly and other vulnerable groups. The live broadcast concluded: *"elderly persons are very important in our communities and it is our responsibilities to care for them"*.

→ VoR: Funerals and stigmatization

Voice of Reconciliation (VoR)'s David Mayar reported on prevention of COVID-19 during funerals, the bullying of people who are trying to observe preventive measures, stigmatization and case management of COVID-19 patients. The radio station also produced two COVID-19 bulletins, which include a weekly briefing on COVID-19 numbers, testimonies of survivors, and interviews on different themes.

This bi-weekly bulletin is designed for journalists in South Sudan reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, and other related health and development challenges. It contains practical tips for reporting, provides verified information about public health measures of the Ministry of Health and partners, and gathers trustworthy media (re)sources for media partners. It also shares citizen concerns on COVID-19 and the humanitarian response.

October 08, 2020

+ Capacity building opportunities:

The McGraw Fellowship for Business Journalism

Are you a journalist with a great idea for a story that "Follows the Money," but no funds to get it done? If yes, then apply for this McGraw Fellowship for Business Journalism. Deadline January 2021. For more information, visit [here](#).



African Investigative Journalism Conference Oct 6 + 30, 2020

The [African Investigative Journalism Conference](#), organized by the [Journalism Department of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg](#), will take place as a series of online events between Oct. 6 and 30. The [program](#) features more than 25 panels, training sessions, keynotes and workshops. Topics include great stories, issues in investigative reporting, tools and techniques, health, science and the pandemic. See [here](#).



Nieman Foundation for Journalism – funding for journalism innovation

The [Nieman Foundation for Journalism](#) and the [Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society](#) host fellows for an academic year to carry out a research project on journalism innovation. Candidates must propose a project relating to journalism's digital transformation. The application deadline is Dec. 1 for international journalists. See more [here](#).



→ Project update:

The USAID BHA funded Internews COVID-19 response project continued to produce and broadcast programs on COVID-19 in September. The project consists of a total of 6 partner radio stations - Voice of Reconciliation, Advanced Youth Radio, SAMA FM, Capital FM, City FM, Eye Media - and 2 radio networks (CRN & TRC, managing 7 & 4 radio stations) and HIS (humanitarian information system).

In September a total of 121 original radio programs were aired in various formats (radio call-ins, vox pos, PSAs and talk shows). Media outlets also produced

unique programs in various formats that include radio skits, bulletins, radio debate and personal testimonies. Internews shared COVID-19 programs among media outlets in different parts of the country to share experiences and lessons among audiences.

On September 30, 2020 Internews held a monthly review meeting with their media partners. The objective of the meeting was to review progress, challenges, lessons; and to plan for the next month programs.

For more information about the project please contact: Dr. Michael Gubay – mgubay@internews.org

Have questions about **COVID-19**?

WE HAVE ANSWERS.



WHO Health Alert
now available on
Facebook Messenger

<https://m.me/who>

