



Internews

1 WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING

"In Manila, their local government has let their people to go back to normal... surprisingly, our province Lanao del Sur is still getting stricter because they still believe in COVID-19, even if the pandemic is now over." (Male, 26-35 years old)

This Facebook post garnered 755 reaction, 181 comments, 214 shares in the span of four days from October 3 to October 6. The post has been deleted but given the large engagement, the rumor has the potential to be passed on to the community.

METRO MANILA IS BACK TO NORMAL; LANA O DEL SUR IS UNDER STRICTER QUARANTINE STATUS AS PEOPLE STILL BELIEVE IN COVID-19

Salig Bangsamoro (*Trust Bangsamoro*) is Rooted in Trust Philippines' biweekly rumor bulletin for journalists. Rooted in Trust is a global and local humanitarian response run by Internews to fight the spread of rumors on COVID-19. In the Philippines, the focus is on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

REPORTING TIPS

- Journalists are expected not only to reveal specific events like the details of lockdown, but also to explain why the event occurred so that their audiences can have a better understanding of it and act or react appropriately.
- Avoid oversimplifying complex issues which can lead to misunderstandings, the drawing wrong conclusions, and blaming others. Instead, the journalist should consider writing a more comprehensive depiction of the larger issue.
- Focus on broad themes where the narrative uses the experience of particular individuals to explain societal or collective outcomes like the pandemic's impact on the economy.

THIS WEEK

This week's bulletin answers three concerns we have gathered from the ground. People questioned the implementation of a stricter quarantine rule in Lanao del Sur while they believe that Metro Manila has returned to normal. In Maguindanao, people said getting tested for COVID-19 will tag them as positive and believe that taking home remedies can cure COVID-19.

THE CONFLICT-SENSITIVE JOURNALISM TEACHING GUIDE

- Emphasize that the aim of a local lockdown is to control the spread of the coronavirus pandemic by containing it within a particular area which eases pressure on the healthcare system overwhelmed by rising COVID-19 infections.
- Each regional healthcare system has different capacities so restrictions may also vary accordingly. Informing people about the context of the "new normal" during the COVID-19 pandemic allows the public to make sensible and appropriate decisions about what is the best course of action.



2 WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING

Maguindanao,
word of mouth

STIGMA ON TESTING

Many people do not want to get tested for COVID-19 because they sense that they will be perceived by others that they are already infected.

3 WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING

Maguindanao &
Lanao del Sur,
word of mouth

SELF-MEDICATION

People say that paracetamol can treat COVID-19 and that when COVID-19 symptoms are observed, one is not encouraged to get checked or medically diagnosed but just fight it with antibiotics. At the start of quarantine some people have also shared that egg, garlic, and banana could cure COVID-19.

REPORTING TIPS

- Stigma creates unnecessary, and sometimes life-threatening consequences to ordinary people instead of focusing on the disease that is causing the problem.
- Social stigma may result in people hiding symptoms, avoiding health care support and not adopting preventive measures to maintain their health. This makes it even more difficult to control the spread of the virus.
- Follow the [guidelines](#) created by WHO, Unicef and IFRC that address the social stigma associated with COVID-19.
- Avoid certain terms that discourage people from getting tested or following quarantine regulations.
- The use of 'people-first' language that respects and empowers people is highly recommended. We should also seek to amplify the voices, stories and images of locals who have experienced COVID-19 to show that patients do recover.
- Address misconceptions but acknowledge that people's feelings and subsequent behavior are real, even if the underlying assumption is false.
- Share sympathetic narratives or stories that humanize the experiences and struggles of individuals or groups affected by COVID-19.
- Be aware that locally stranded individuals (LSIs) are usually target of blame on the increasing local transmission. Even the local government units even suspend arrivals of returning constituents despite Department of Health's statement dismissing this assumption.

REPORTING TIPS

- Be up-to-date on what the healthcare professionals recommend. Public safety is the top priority and that is why health experts make medical decisions based on the latest scientific information.
- Explain to your audience that people with flu symptoms who fear quarantine measures and are likely to self-medicate are putting themselves at greater risk as well as hampering the efforts to stop the spread of the virus.
- Be upfront when reporting on new medical treatments by including details of the comparative benefits, potential harm, and costs. Use only reliable sources to explain the treatment and its availability.

HOW WE DO IT

The rumors presented here were collected by the Coalition of Moro Youth Movements, a consortium of Moro youth groups advocating for peace and inclusive development in BARMM, and the Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services (IDEALS), a non-profit organization helping in the legal and technical needs of marginalized, disempowered and vulnerable groups.

These were taken from various platforms (Facebook, posts, comments, stories, and Instagram) and peer-to-peer sharing via word of mouth.



The selection was based on a risk assessment matrix that accounts for the frequency of the scenario or social media engagements and its potential impact on the community.