



The Sudan Rooted in Trust Project aims to address COVID-19 misinformation by collecting and analyzing rumors found on Sudanese social media and through face-to-face discussions with community members. This bulletin is based on an analysis of 1,336 rumors collected in Arabic between 27 January and 18 February 2021, from face-to-face discussions and on-the-ground rumor tracking from Kassala, Khartoum, West Darfur, South Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan States.

In this week's bulletin we shed light on a variety of rumors, such as alcohol-based sanitizers cure COVID-19, burnt coal as a treatment, killing pets to stop the transmission of COVID-19, rural areas do not get COVID-19 and Mihaya as a treatment. This regular collection of community insights aims to address questions and common misperceptions about COVID-19 found across Sudan. It aims to help volunteers and field staff provide fact-based answers to their communities' questions and concerns.

COVID-19 SITUATION IN SUDAN

As of 30 March 2021, the official number rose to more than 31,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases, compared to 27,202 cases on 30 January 2021. Most cases identified have been in the capital Khartoum and Al-Gezira State.

HOW WE DO IT

Between 27 January and 18 February 2021, Y-Peer Sudan, Internews' primary partner for face-to-face discussions and on-the-ground rumor tracking, collected 1,336 rumors and misperceptions from six Sudanese states, including Khartoum, Kassala, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, West Darfur and South Darfur. To better understand information gaps and misconceptions about COVID-19, Y-Peer conducted 160 listening groups, where a total of 1,844 men, women, children, youth, older people, people with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced people, participated in these interactive group discussions.

WHAT ARE RUMORS?

Rumors are currently circulating stories or reports of uncertain or doubtful truth collected from first-hand sources within the community which could take the shape of a question, criticism, or general comments on a situation or topic. We should also note that rumors can be tricky to tackle because they might carry some element of truth.

RUMOUR

ANSWER

RUMOR RISK LEVEL



HIGH



MEDIUM



LOW



COMMUNITY RUMOR BULLETIN #8

RUMOUR #1

“Sanitizer some people said they drank it and it cured them”

Female
Khartoum-Karari

According to the [World Health Organization](#), drinking hand sanitizer or any alcohol-based substances does not cure, prevent, or boost your immunity against COVID-19. Under no circumstances should you drink any type of alcohol products, especially sanitizers to treat a COVID-19 infection. Sanitizers contain highly concentrated amounts of alcohol that could be extremely harmful to your body and may lead to death.

For more information on the harmful effects of using alcohol to treat COVID-19, please refer to the [World Health Organization](#).

ANSWER

TREATMENT

HIGH RISK

RUMOUR #2

“To cure Corona when we have a sore throat, we put a burning coal inside a cup of water and we drink the water it helps with the sore throat and we also drink orange juice”

Male
South Kordofan-Dilling

Drinking orange juice can provide our bodies with important nutrients like Vitamin C and can be beneficial in boosting our immunity. However, there is no evidence that eating charcoal can cure COVID-19. When charcoal burns it releases other molecules that can be toxic to our bodies. Adding to that, eating charcoal can prevent your body from digesting food and absorbing nutrients. It can make medications and supplements less effective and it can also cause diarrhea, vomiting and in some cases blockage of the digestive tract. Always double check the information you receive, seek trusted sources of information, such as the World Health Organization, Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Ministry of Health.

ANSWER

TREATMENT

HIGH RISK

RUMOUR #3

“Wheat incense (corn) for shortness of breath”

Female
Kassala-Reifi Kassala

Since COVID-19 is a new virus, at present there are no known pharmaceutical or traditional cures. Traditional medicine and plant based remedies have always played a vital role in treating illnesses for many around the world. However, pharmaceutical or homemade remedies should be tested for potential side effects before use to better understand the efficacy of these treatments.

There is no evidence that inhaling wheat incense can help alleviate COVID-19 symptoms, such as shortness of breath. Infact inhaling smoke while experiencing breathing problems, may worsen your health condition. If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please seek help from a healthcare professional and always remember to follow the preventative measures set by the [Ministry of Health](#).

ANSWER

TREATMENT

HIGH RISK

COMMUNITY RUMOR BULLETIN #8

RUMOUR #4

COVID-19 IMPACTS

“If you get Corona you will not be able to give birth again”

Female | West Darfur-Geneina

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information there is no evidence recorded by scientists to date that suggests COVID-19 can impact fertility among women or men. Since COVID-19 is a new virus, scientists are still trying to understand how it affects us on the short-term and long-term.

Always remember to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating nutritious food, exercising, and taking care of your mental health.

ANSWER

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #6

TRANSMISSIONS

“It’s Allah’s wisdom that water from clay-pots does not transmit diseases”

Female | Kassala-Reifi Kassala

There is no evidence that suggests COVID-19 can be transmitted through water. However, since these water sources are publicly available and hundreds of people are drinking from the same cups, this might increase the possibility of transmitting contagious diseases.

Therefore, the environment surrounding water-drinking clay-pots (sabeel), such as using a single-shared cup, many people touching the pot/cup with their hands, and not changing the water for a while may result in transmission of COVID-19, or other diseases due to contamination.

We should wash our water pots regularly and change the water whenever possible to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases and limit the spread between people. We should also refrain from sharing the same cup, as COVID-19 can be transmitted through droplets of saliva.

ANSWER

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #5

TREATMENT

“There is Corona but it can be treated with Aragi (locally made alcohol)”

Female | West Darfur-Geneina

According to the World Health Organization drinking alcohol does not cure or prevent a COVID-19 infection, the virus is not affected by alcohol. We should also keep in mind that the harmful use of alcohol can increase your risk of health problems.

COVID-19 is a respiratory infection that spreads when an infected person coughs, sneezes or comes in contact with other people. The best way to protect ourselves from the virus is to follow the preventative measures set by the Ministry of Health, such as social distancing, wearing a mask in public and washing our hands regularly with water and soap for 40 seconds.

ANSWER

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #7

TREATMENT

“Acacia wood smoke cures Corona”

Female | Kassala-Reifi Kassala

Even though Acacia wood has many benefits, it has not been proven that burning Acacia wood could cure a COVID-19 infection. In fact, inhaling large amounts of burning smoke can be hazardous to the body, especially for people with asthma and other respiratory diseases. Always consult with your doctor for effective healthy practices.

To this day, there are no treatments for COVID-19, so the best way to keep ourselves safe is by following the preventative measures set by the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health, such as social distancing, washing out hands with soap for 40 seconds and wearing our masks in public remain the best ways to avoid catching the disease.

ANSWER

MEDIUM RISK



COMMUNITY RUMOR BULLETIN #8

RUMOUR #8

“Cow urine treats Corona”

Male | South Kordofan-Dilling

TREATMENT

RUMOUR #9

“Cow urine with Tamarind prevents from Corona and other diseases like Malaria”

Male | South Kordofan-Dilling

PREVENTIVE

RUMOUR #10

“Corona is treated with Cow urine”

Female | South Kordofan-Dilling

TREATMENT

Cows can be useful to us in many ways, we can drink their milk which can be beneficial to our bodies as they are packed with minerals and vitamins, which can also help strengthen our immune system. However, there is no evidence that cow urine (or any other cattle urine) has medicinal properties that can cure COVID-19. The best way to protect ourselves as we continue with our daily lives, is to wear a face mask or cover with a scarf when in public, maintain a distance of two meters from others, avoid touching our eyes, mouth and nose, and wash our hands regularly with soap and water for at least 40 seconds.

ANSWER

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #11

“A doctor died after taking the vaccine, it is not a treatment, this is their plan to kill us”

Male | Khartoum-Omdurman

VACCINE

RUMOUR #12

“They brought in the vaccine to kill people and this might be true or not, I'm also helping in spreading rumors”

VACCINE

Unknown
Blue Nile
Damazine

RUMOUR #13

“Polio vaccine minimizes Corona”

Female | Khartoum-Bahri

VACCINE

Vaccines help our bodies recognize the virus which can help in fighting off the symptoms that causes severe illness. According to the World Health Organization, COVID-19 vaccines go through rigorous clinical testing to make sure they are safe before being approved for public use. There is no cure for COVID-19, and there is no evidence suggesting the Polio vaccine helps reduce the effects of a COVID-19 infection.

Taking the COVID-19 vaccine, is our best protection from the virus coupled with the recommended preventative measures, such as wearing a mask in public, social distancing and washing our hands regularly with soap and water for 40 seconds. In March 2021, Sudan launched its COVID-19 vaccination campaign, and intends to vaccinate 8.5 million people in total, which is a fifth of its population.

We should keep in mind that spreading false information can have a negative effect on our communities, especially during a pandemic. It is our responsibility to refrain from spreading misinformation. Always follow trusted sources like the Ministry of Health to keep up-to-date on COVID-19 related news

ANSWER

MEDIUM RISK



COMMUNITY RUMOR BULLETIN #8

RUMOUR #14

“They said anyone with a pet at home they should kill it so that it does not transmit the virus to them”

TRANSMISSION

Female
South Kordofan
Kadugli

Although COVID-19 is a Zoonotic disease, according to the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#), there is no evidence that the virus can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of pets. In fact, a few cases have been reported worldwide of pets contracting the virus from humans. Generally, pets do not play a significant role in the spread of the virus.

Despite the zoonotic nature of COVID-19, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people remains low. Follow these guidelines to protect yourself and your pet from COVID-19:

- Treat pets as you would other human family members – do not let pets interact with people outside the household.
- If a person inside the household becomes sick, isolate that person from everyone else, including pets.
- Pets or other animals should not be allowed to roam freely around the facility, and cats should be kept indoors.
- Avoid public places where a large number of people gather.
- Do not put a mask on pets. Masks could harm your pet.
- Wash your hands after handling animals, their food, waste, or supplies.
- Practice good pet hygiene and clean up after pets properly.

Talk to your veterinarian if you have questions about your pet's health.

ANSWER

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #15

“If someone died from Corona they don't bury them, they burn them because the virus can survive and emerge”

PREVENTIVE

Male
South Kordofan
Kadugli

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that is caused by a virus that attacks the lungs. It can be transmitted through droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or comes in close contact with others. According to the [World Health Organization](#), the COVID-19 virus is not airborne. To date, there is no evidence of people getting infected due to their exposure to deceased persons infected with COVID-19. Therefore, it is never a public health-necessity to burn the bodies of those that have died due to a COVID-19 infection.

Family members and traditional burial attendants who tend to people who have died from COVID-19, should prioritize the recommended preventative measures, and follow the burial guidance set by the [World Health Organization](#), such as wearing personal protective equipment when possible or rewashing the clothes worn by all those involved in the burial, keeping the number of people preparing the body for burial at minimum, wearing a facemask and protecting your eyes from becoming exposed to the deceased's bodily fluid, and diligently washing your hands before and after tending to the body.

Losing a loved one to a COVID-19 infection is extremely painful. Honoring our loved ones through burial practices is an important ritual in our society. Therefore, it is important to respect the cultural and religious traditions of COVID-19 patients' families in the cases of death, while following the recommended protective measures to contain the spread of the virus amongst our loved ones and communities.

ANSWER

MEDIUM RISK



COMMUNITY RUMOR BULLETIN #8

RUMOUR #16

TREATMENT

“If someone gets Corona, they take them to the church and they become well”

Male | Blue Nile-Baw

During times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, people usually find comfort within their communities of faith. However, according to the [World Health Organization](#) and the Ministry of Health preventative measures, those that experience COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for the virus are instructed to isolate themselves from others immediately, and follow the recommended hygiene practices by washing their hands regularly with soap and water, coughing or sneezing into their elbows or using a tissue, avoiding touching their eyes, nose, and mouth, and regularly cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces. Severe cases are usually admitted to isolation centers and kept under close medical supervision.

Although places of worship are places of spiritual comfort during such grim times, they are neither equipped nor have the medical expertise to tend to COVID-19 patients.

ANSWER

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #17

TRANSMISSION

“This illness only infects Jews and Christians and does not infect Muslims. There is one reason to prove there is no Corona in Sudan, which is being united and as long as we stand together we will not get Corona. Our Corona is not as severe as China’s I had a fever for 3 days and called my doctor friends and did not follow the protective measures. This COVID that entered Sudan is not the same as the one in China”

Male | Khartoum-Sahafa

RUMOUR #18

TRANSMISSION

“They said people in rural areas do not get Corona”

Female | Blue Nile-Baw

According to the [Sudanese Ministry of Health](#), more than 30,000 cases been reported in the country, across all states since the pandemic started. Sudanese people do not have a special immunity against the virus, despite their beliefs or place of resident.

COVID-19 does not discriminate. People living in rural and urban areas can become infected with the virus, including in under-resourced and high-income settings. COVID-19 can come to the poor and rich, young and old, men and women, and people of all beliefs. According to the [World Health Organization](#), there are more than 110 million cases worldwide.

We should all recognize that COVID-19 is a public health threat and should not be taken lightly.

Since it is a highly contagious virus, we should all work together to protect each other, by following the preventative measures set by the Sudanese Ministry of health, such as social distancing, washing our hands with soap for 40 seconds and avoiding public gatherings as much as possible as they could be suitable places for the spread of the virus.

ANSWER

MEDIUM RISK



COMMUNITY RUMOR BULLETIN #8

RUMOUR #19

MEDIUM RISK

TREATMENT

“Mihaya (Sheikhs write Quran verses and Hadith in a canvas, washed down in a bowl and people drink the water) is a treatment for Corona”

Male | West Darfur-Geneina

RUMOUR #20

LOW RISK

PREVENTIVE

“Corona is a test from Allah because people neglected their beliefs and shifted away from what is right, if people prayed every day at night Corona will no longer exist”

Male | South Kordofan-Dilling

According to the Ministry of Health, there is no cure or treatment for the virus. COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

While many rely on their faith for protection and strength during times of crisis, complying with the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization's precautions will help protect us from contracting the virus. Precautionary practices such as physical distancing, wearing face masks, keeping rooms well-ventilated, avoiding crowded areas and close contact, regularly cleaning hands, and coughing into an elbow or tissue, can help lower the risk of catching or transmitting the virus to other people in our community.

ANSWER

RUMOUR #21

IMMUNITY

“People with long and pointy noses can contract the virus but we have big and wide noses so the virus cannot get in”

Female
South Kordofan
Dilling

RUMOUR #22

IMMUNITY

“We heard that it can come to you if you are in a cold place with a fan or an air conditioner”

Male
South Kordofan-Kadugli

RUMOUR #23

IMMUNITY

“People who walk in the sun in the middle of the desert they have hot blood, Corona does not come to them”

Female
South Kordofan-Kadugli

COVID-19 can be transmitted in any climate, including very hot and very cold weather. Countries where the weather is hot, like the Arabian Gulf countries, have recorded over a million COVID-19 cases according to the GCC Statistical Center. COVID-19 is a new virus, so no one has immunity. Anyone can get COVID-19, whether they have a pointy nose or wide nose. COVID-19 does not discriminate based on appearance, race, religion, climate, or nationality. We are all susceptible to becoming infected with the virus.

To date, Sudan has reported more than 30,000 cases, which proves that Sudanese can contract the virus just like anyone else and do not have special immunity to COVID-19.

To protect ourselves and communities, we should follow the preventative measures set by the World Health Organization, such as physical distancing, washing your hands, and wearing face masks in public places.

ANSWER

LOW RISK



COMMUNITY RUMOR BULLETIN #8

RUMOUR #24

“Corona affects the chest and causes a wound, we do not know the reason”

SYMPTOMS

Male | South Kordofan-Kadugli

RUMOUR #25

“One of Corona’s symptoms is heavy sweating and nosebleeds”

SYMPTOMS

Male | South Kordofan-Kadugli

COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that affects the respiratory system. The virus spreads if an infected person coughs, sneezes, or comes into close contact with others or through touching contaminated surfaces, like tabletops and doorknobs. According to the World Health Organization these are the known symptoms of COVID-19:

Most common symptoms:

- Fever
- Dry cough
- Fatigue

Less common symptoms:

- Loss of taste or smell
- Nasal congestion
- Conjunctivitis (also known as red eyes)
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Muscle or joint pain
- Different types of skin rash
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chills or dizziness.

Severe illness symptoms:

- Shortness of breath
- Loss of appetite
- Confusion
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- High temperature (above 38 °C)

Other less common symptoms are:

- Irritability
- Confusion
- Reduced consciousness (sometimes associated with seizures)
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Sleep disorders
- More severe and rare neurological complications such as strokes, brain inflammation, delirium and nerve damage.

We can all become infected with COVID-19, regardless of our age, gender, ethnicity or background. The best way to protect ourselves, families and communities is by practicing the preventative measures set by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization, such as physical distancing, wearing masks when in public, washing our hands with soap and water for 40 seconds, and self-isolating and getting tested when feeling sick.

ANSWER

LOW RISK

COMMUNITY RUMOR BULLETIN #8

RUMOUR #26

PREVENTIVE

“They said a prediction came from a one-day-old baby with teeth, who had a vision and said drinking bitter tea will protect you from the Corona infection, and he died afterwards”

Male | South Kordofan-Kadugli

Even though tea has many benefits for our bodies, there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that bitter tea cured or protected people from COVID-19. In fact, there is no cure for COVID-19, and so we must continue to follow the preventative measures set by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization, while we wait for the vaccine which will help reduce the risk of experiencing severe symptoms from the virus.

Always remember to double-check the information you receive as it can be fairly easy to become a victim of misinformation, which may negatively impact you and your community by strengthening the spread of the virus.

ANSWER

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #27

IMMUNITY

“There is no Corona in Sudan this is just politics, here in Sudan natural breastfeeding prevents you from catching diseases and gives you natural immunity”

Male | South Kordofan-Kadugli

COVID-19 is real and it is a global pandemic. According to the World Health Organization there more than 110 million COVID-19 cases reported worldwide. The Sudanese Ministry of Health has recorded more than 30,000 cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic started across multiple states.

Breastfeeding is essential for babies to grow and develop, as breastmilk is chock-full nourishing nutrients that are vital for babies' development. However, there are no studies that suggest breastfeeding babies or people that have been breastfed as infants can develop a special immunity against the virus. The best way to protect ourselves against COVID-19 is by following the protective measures set by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization.

ANSWER

LOW RISK

COMMUNITY RUMOR BULLETIN #8

RUMOUR #28

“People should not be scared, Corona is just like any other disease. Sometimes fear kills before the disease does”

Male
Kassala
Reifi Kassala

COVID-19 is a global pandemic that continues to affect our lives in many ways, the feeling of uncertainty triggered by the COVID-19 preventative measures like social distancing and self-quarantining when feeling ill or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, may cause stress, anxiety and depression. However, these protective measures are especially important in keeping us safe from the virus. It is vital to take care of our mental health and learn how to cope with the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic by following these short steps:

- Take deep breaths and stretch!
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use.
- Get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when available.
- Connect with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

COVID-19 may have serious complications especially for older people and those with chronic disease, such as high blood pressure and diabetes. These dangerous complications should not be softened, as they may discourage people from following the protective measures set by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization.

Please visit the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention page for more information on how to cope with stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ANSWER

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #29

“They are saying the virus comes in different shapes”

Male | South Kordofan-Kadugli

RUMOUR #30

“They said there are 3 types of the Coronavirus”

Male | South Kordofan-Kadugli

Every virus, including COVID-19, mutates over time when transmitted a lot of times. These mutations change how the virus affects our bodies, how transmittable it becomes, and the strength of the virus. Some of these mutations are advantageous to the virus, allowing it to survive in new environments, for example the two new variants that were discovered in South Africa and the United Kingdom. According to the World Health Organization, these variants tend to spread faster among populations; however, they do not seem to cause more illness or deaths.

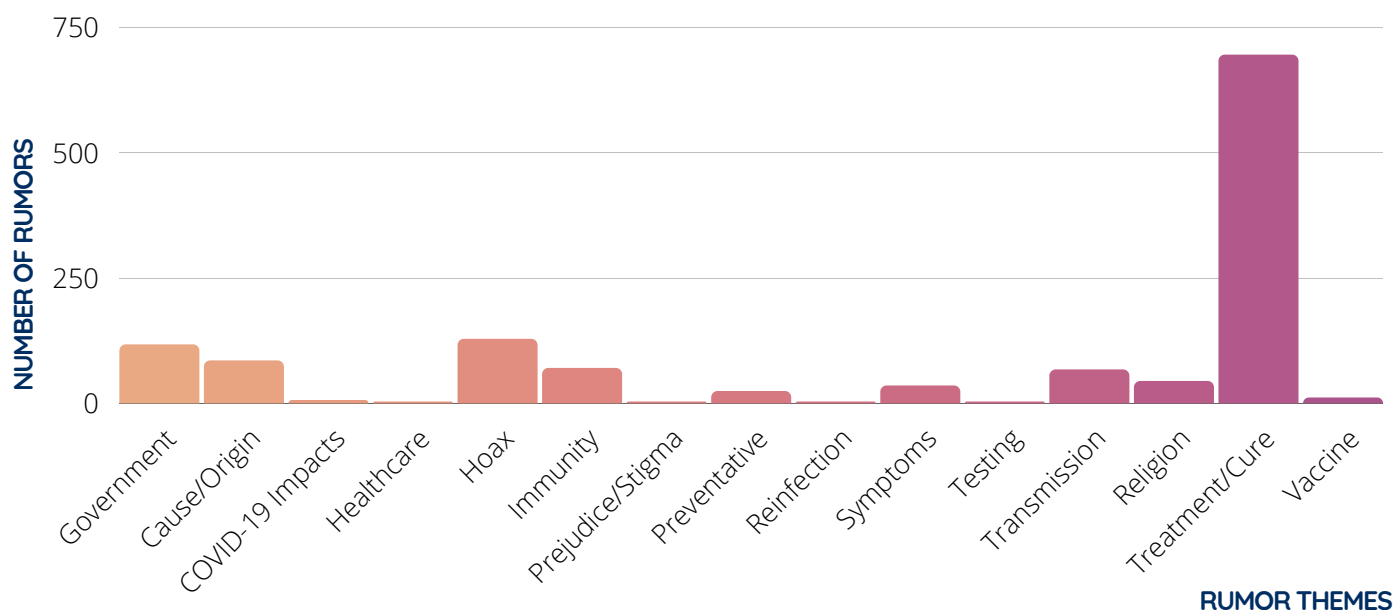
Scientists and health professionals are studying the virus constantly and are aware of these mutations, their knowledge is evolving to further develop a treatment and ensure that vaccines are effective in treating these new variants. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to keep ourselves and communities safe, and that can be achieved by following the preventative measures set by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization.

ANSWER

LOW RISK

COMMUNITY RUMOR BULLETIN #8

TOP RUMOR THEMES



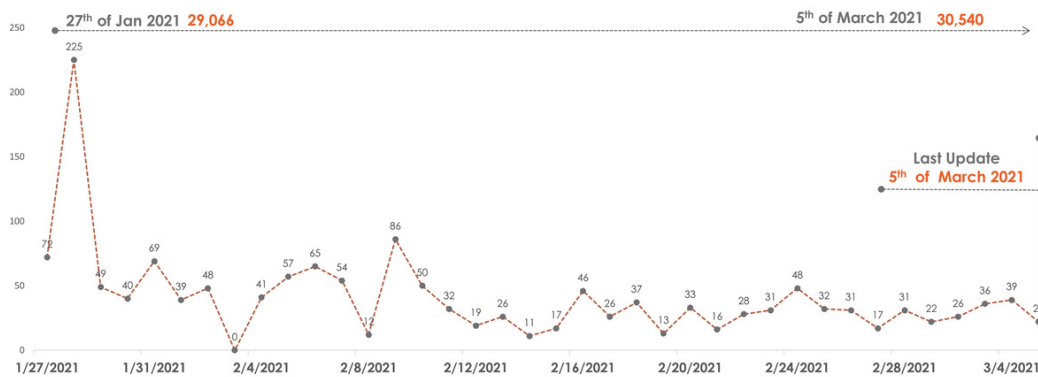
Analysis of 1,336 rumors collected in Arabic between 27 January and 18 February 2021

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
COVID-19 HOTLINE - SERVING ALL
AREAS OF SUDAN: 9090

SUDAN HEALTH OBSERVATORY
WWW.SHO.GOV.SD/CONTROLLER

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WWW.EMRO.WHO.INT/AR

Sudan COVID-19 Confirmed Cases (27 Jan to 5 March 2021)



Data Source: World Health Organization Daily Report

As of 5 March, the official number rose to 30,540, compared to 29,066 cases on 15 January 2021. Most cases were recorded in the capital Khartoum, and Al-Gezira states.