

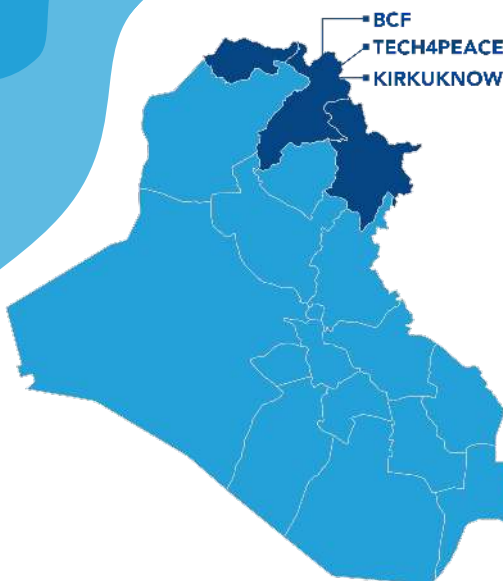
# Community Bulletin

## #2

Iraq  
March 2022

### Introduction to Rooted in Trust

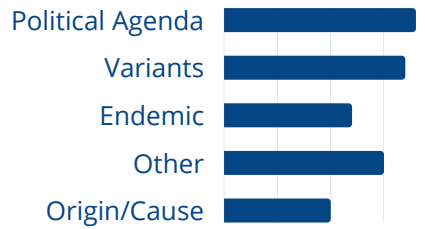
Rooted in Trust (RiT) is a project run by Internews that aims at countering the unprecedented scale and speed of the spread of rumors and misinformation on COVID-19 health response and COVID-19 vaccines among vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian crisis. Rooted in Trust works with media, community-based organizations, and health and humanitarian actors to build a healthier information ecosystem that is responsive to the needs of internally displaced populations in northern Iraq, with the ultimate goal of disrupting and mitigating the flow of misleading and inaccurate information.



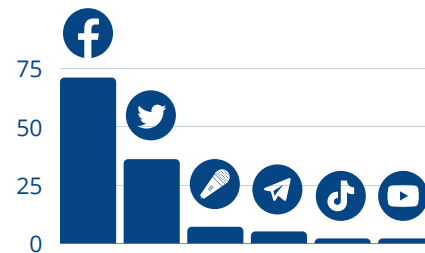
### About This Bulletin

Rooted in Trust (RiT) is an Internews project supporting humanitarian and public health agencies in tackling rumors and misinformation about COVID-19. In this bulletin, Internews examines common rumors found on social media in northern Iraq during March 2022. This bulletin aims at providing the communities and those working with them with the latest rumor data identified among internally displaced populations in northern Iraq with the aim of better guiding and informing risk communication and community engagement efforts within the health response.

### Top Rumor Themes



### Rumor Sources



### Methodology

In Iraq RiT 2.0 collects, manages, and addresses any instance of an online and offline COVID-19 Rumor in targeted communities and population groups of concern (Women, Disabilities IDPs,...etc.) in two local languages Arabic and Kurdish. Following the fact-checking process, rumors go through categorization, qualitative and quantitative data analysis, and then producing products to be shared with the target population.

### COVID-19 situation overview in the country

On March 14th, the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority announced that it will follow the decisions taken by the health authorities to ease COVID-19 restrictions on travellers arriving in or leaving Iraq starting April 1st. The Iraqi Higher Committee for Health and National Safety has decided that all travellers who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 only need to submit a certificate of receiving two doses of vaccines, and no longer need to take PCR test.

On March 31st, the Iraqi Ministry of Health reported the total number of COVID-19 infections reached 2,319,550, an increase of 2,422 from the 2,317,128 reported on March 24. Ministry data indicated that there were 26 new COVID-19 deaths in the last week of March, bringing the total from 25,138 to 25,164. To date, Iraq has tested a total of 18,336,480 samples for COVID-19. The number of people who received the COVID-19 vaccine reached 10,352,610, (which is %18) including 30,553 who received their shots on March 31.

17,778,382  
Doses Administered

175  
Death

16,757  
COVID-19 Cases



# Rumor #1

Theme: Hoax

## Fact Checking

- ✓ Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022, there has been much false information and rumors from Iraqi people on social media suggesting that COVID-19 was a politically motivated hoax, and has now ended because of the Ukraine conflict. However, starting from the first day of the Russian invasion until the end of March 2022, the total number of global new COVID-19 cases is 55,340,850 and the total number of newly reported deaths globally has been 200,712 [1]
- ✓ Only in Iraq, 21,045 new cases were recorded from the first day (February 24th) of the Russian-Ukrainian war until the end of March 2022. Also, 232 deaths have been recorded during the same period.[2] This data has been shared publicly on the Facebook pages of both the Iraqi Ministry of Health [3] and the Ministry of Health of the Kurdistan Regional Government [4].
- ✓ The second part of this post speaks about changes in the color of blood after vaccination. However, human blood is red because it contains a protein called haemoglobin. Haemoglobin's color comes from a red-colored compound called heme that helps transport oxygen throughout the body. Without haemoglobin, blood would likely appear to be a lighter, yellower, clearer tone. People who are vaccinated against COVID-19 do not have lower levels of haemoglobin in their blood and COVID-19 vaccines do not change the color of blood.[5]
- ✓ There has been a decrease in media attention to COVID-19 and, understandably, a lot of media focus is now on the conflict in Ukraine. This does not mean that COVID-19 is over; only that media priorities have changed.

122 Corona

### Sources

1. <https://covid19.who.int/>
2. <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/iq>
3. <https://www.facebook.com/MOH.GOV.IQ>
4. <https://www.facebook.com/KRG.MOH.Official>
5. <https://health-desk.org/articles/covid-19-vaccines-do-not-change-the-color-of-blood>

### "COVID-19, the lie of the century"

My friends, I want to say something about all the lies that come from the west. What happened to the coronavirus in the war between Russia and Ukraine? Where is the vaccine regulation for Ukrainians when they enter other countries? Where is the news of deaths and infections all over the world? I have posted a photo that contains two injections the one with dark red blood is from a vaccinated person, and the normal light red one is from an unvaccinated person. Look only intelligent people refuse to take the vaccine. I hope Putin receives Nobel Prize for Medicine because he ended the coronavirus. Do not take the vaccine and protect your family from it"

Published in Kurdish on Facebook with over 156 likes, 13 comments, and 3 shares.

## Recommendations for outreach workers and communities

- For anyone who wants to know the up-to-date data on the COVID-19 virus, it is important to receive information and data from reliable sources such as WHO, the Iraqi Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Health-KRG.
- Since the source of this rumor is a Facebook post, remind communities to identify the source of information and compare the information presented across different sources to ensure that it is true and based on facts.
- Develop social media posts and conduct outreach activities to inform communities that COVID-19 continues in Iraq and that protective measures and vaccination are still important.
- Health and outreach workers should explain that the pandemic is still a danger. Referring to the WHO and government data, they should remind communities that there are still many people who get infected by the virus on a daily basis.
- Health care and community outreach works should explain that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has a sharp impact on Iraq's economy, including shortages of food in Iraq and forcing the government to pay more in gasoline subsidies. And this was one of the reasons behind the media's focus on the war.

### Important Links and Helplines:

- MOH KRI website: [www.gov.krd/moh/](http://www.gov.krd/moh/)
- Self-Registration for Covid-19 vaccination: [vac.health.digital.gov.krd](http://vac.health.digital.gov.krd)
- Corona hotline: **122**



USAID



Internews



Rooted  
in Trust