SITUATION UPDATE
Second wave? Concerns for increased COVID-19 cases in South Sudan

The South Sudan Doctor's Union is concerned about the current COVID-19 situation in the country, says Dr. Bol Deng, Secretary-General of the South Sudan Doctor’s Union (Source: Eye Radio).

"The COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet as long as the National Public Health Laboratory continues to confirm new positive cases within our borders," said Dr. Bol Deng to Eye Radio on Sunday. "We need to continue observing the measures so that we prevent escalation of new infections," he added (Source: Eye Radio).

Dr. Bol stated: "There is relaxation from the general public and also some institutions in observing the measures to prevent COVID-19. We want to remind the general public and institutions and concerned authorities that COVID-19 is not yet over".

Public institutions, shops and medical centers are becoming complacent and often no longer providing handwashing facilities or sanitizers, Eye Radio shared. Social distancing is also reportedly not being observed at most meetings, weddings, funerals and other public gatherings (Source: Eye Radio).

Contact tracing is also becoming increasingly difficult as was discussed in the National Steering Committee meeting of 19 October 2020. According to the meeting multiple people refused to provide contact tracers with contact details and other required information about their “contacts” or gave wrong addresses. Communication and communication engagement on importance of contact tracing and the critical role of local government structures in this process was emphasized.

In their 33rd weekly COVID-19 update (covering 2-18 October, week 42), the Ministry of Health also reported challenges in reaching patients for home-based care due to incorrect phone numbers and reported that some people refuse to comply with quarantine measures or deny exposure even if they are known to be a contact (NTF, 2020).

This section was written by Dr. Michael Gubay and Richard Jale.
INTERNEWS COVID-19 MEDIA BULLETIN
Reporting on COVID-19 in South Sudan

October 28, 2020

Frequently heard topics

Concerns about masks - 2%
Concerns about school reopening - 6%
Complacency by leaders - 7%
Questions about response mechanisms - 5%
COVID does not exist/is gone/is a demonic disease/only for the rich - 21%
Questions about floods and COVID-19 - 6%
More facemasks, soap, radios needed - 5%
Other - food insecurity, safety, shelter, WASH, economics - 36%
Other - 10%

Response measures

“Smoking Sisha users are still sharing pipe when smoking at the market areas.”
male, 50, PoC 3, Zone D, Block 3

“Social distancing is still a great challenge in the sites. People are still sitting in group around without spacing themselves.”
male, 58, PoC 3, Zone B, Block 5

Local medicine

“Local communities are taking herbal medicines as a treatment for COVID-19 in village.”
male, 30, Jarweng

Misinformation/rumours

“Corona does not kill the richer people, it was meant to kill poor.”
Male, 20, Munuki

“There is no coronavirus in Bor. It is a kind of job creation.”
male, 25, Bor

“People say that the disease doesn’t affect people in hot weather. However, if the diseases has already affected someone who has been living in the cold weather and he/she travels to the hot country, can he affects the population there?”
female, 39, Turalei

Facemasks

“We receive a lot of complaints from students about the face mask, that when they put on they feel irritated, we permit them to remove for a while and put back.”
female, 40, Unsratuna Primary School

“We think it is how coronavirus is transmitted, then it will be hard for the school going children to avoid contracting it and am urging the schools administrators to ask the students and pupils practice one meter social distancing, regular washing of hands and others.”
male, 52, Majak Aher

“Wearing the masks make my breathing difficult.”
female, 36, Bor

“Smoking Sisha users are still sharing pipe when smoking at the market areas.”
male, 50, PoC 3, Zone D, Block 3

“Social distancing is still a great challenge in the sites. People are still sitting in group around without spacing themselves.”
male, 58, PoC 3, Zone B, Block 5

In total unique 137 feedback points were collected between 1-15 October 2020 by media partners Advance Youth Radio, Eye Radio, Sama FM, TRC, UN House Boda Boda Talk Talk and the Voice of Reconciliation 98.4 FM.

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

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IN FOCUS
What are we hearing in Juba?

"Bring for us someone who recovered from coronavirus. It has never happened that we heard from someone who recovered from corona virus."
male, unknown age, Sherikaat

"Is COVID-19 still there? I thought it has gone."
male, 62, Prison

"Women who are serving food to people in the market, they are sharing plates, spoons and even chairs and tables meanwhile, we have heard that if an infected person touched any object then you are likely to get infected. We need to know!"
female, 39, zone D block 6

Survival on surfaces

Can COVID-19 survive on surfaces like plates, spoons, chairs and tables? The World Health Organization reports that it is highly unlikely that people can contract COVID-19 from food or food packaging. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness and the primary transmission route is through person-to-person contact and through direct contact with respiratory droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes (WHO, 2020).

WHO does note that the virus may be able to survive on plastic and stainless-steel surfaces for up to three days (Source: NIH). As such, the health organization calls for good hygienic practices of food handlers including:

- Proper hand hygiene – washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Frequent use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Frequent cleaning/disinfection of work surfaces and door handles, tables and plates
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing; dispose of tissues and wash hands

Read more tips from WHO on how to clean surfaces here.

Recovery

The Ministry of Health reports, as of 21 October 2020, that a total of 2655 people have recovered from the COVID-19 virus (Ministry of Health, 2020). Worldwide, around 30 million people have recovered (Source: Statistica).

Survivors of the COVID-19 virus have been speaking out on radio stations about the virus and their health. Doctor Ajak Mabor, for example, a medical doctor who was ill with COVID-19. He tells about his experience, how he called for isolation for 14 days, and what happened when he called for care. "We are vulnerable, all of us", says Dr. Mabor, "People should take it seriously, all of us are vulnerable to the virus". Listen to the broadcast here (Source: SAMA FM).

Media contacts:
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IN FOCUS
What are we hearing in Bor?

"There is a need for us to be more vigilant and serious on preventive measures intended of lifesaving from this world pandemic disease."

male, 28, Bor

"Some say the virus doesn't infect South Sudanese and those who are poor, but people like the president and the ministers."

male, 40, Bor

"Following coronavirus measures is difficult due to some of the cultural behaviours that allow people to stay together and shake their hand."

female, 30, Bor

Poor vs. Rich

COVID-19 does not discriminate between poor and rich people, and has been devastating for people in both poor countries and in rich countries. In South Sudan, poorer people (for example refugees and PoC residents in Maban, Malakal) as well as rich people (including peacekeepers, and humanitarians) have gotten ill.

So, no matter who you are, it is important that you follow the five simple rules to keep yourself and your family safe (Source: IFRC):

1. Wear a face mask when out in public.
2. Always wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer. This will kill any viruses that are on your hands and stop them getting into your body.
3. Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth – this increases the chance of passing the virus from your hands into your body.
4. The virus spreads from person to person so try to limit your contact with other people. If you do go out, try to keep a safe distance from others. Imagine you are holding a big broom - you are at a safe distance if you can't touch anyone with it.
5. If you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow.
6. Stay at home if you feel unwell and call 6666.

Alternative greetings

Avoid shaking hands, holding hands, kisses on the cheeks or hugs (Source: IFRC). Although it may be difficult to stop some cultural behaviors that you are used to, it is important to keep in mind that by doing these activities, you are putting your family, friends and neighbours in danger of getting COVID-19, and getting very ill. As such, it is better to create alternative greetings like making shapes with your hands, or doing a silly dance. How creative can you and your friends get? See a video from Children's Health Queensland here with cool alternative greetings here.

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This bi-weekly bulletin is designed for and by media partners, journalists and other interested stakeholders in South Sudan reporting and working on COVID-19, and other related health and development challenges. It shares citizen concerns on COVID-19 and the humanitarian response, provides verified information about health measures of the Ministry of Health and partners and profiles trustworthy (re)sources and responses. It also shares citizen concerns on COVID-19 and the humanitarian response.

COVID-19’s origin

The COVID-19 virus has not been created in a lab as a bioweapon. The virus is also not spread intentionally in Africa (Source: IFRC). The virus comes from nature (source: WHO), likely from bats, animals that are sometimes consumed by humans. Not all animals have the COVID-19 virus, but just like humans animals can get ill.

As IFRC writes: “coronaviruses are known to jump from animals to humans and it is believed that the disease began when workers at a seafood market in Wuhan/China got this disease from the animals they were in contact with. Nature is always producing new viruses and unfortunately this coronavirus is just another example of how clever nature can be”.

COVID-19 and weather

You can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is, says WHO (Source: WHO, 2020). Countries with hot weather – including South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and South Africa - have reported cases of COVID-19. WHO states: “exposing yourself to the sun does not prevent of cure COVID-19”.

COVID-19 is spread from people to people and it is possible that an ill person from a country with many COVID-19 cases can make a person in another country ill. This is why governments across the world ask travellers to quarantine when they come into a new country, and often ask them to be tested for COVID-19 to ensure they are healthy.

Media contacts:

Here is the database that gathers all of the rumors that have been detected by the CoronaVirusFacts/DatosCoronaVirus alliance of. This database unites fact-checkers in more than 70 countries and includes articles published in at least 40 languages.

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The COVID-19 Beat: Updates from the Media

This section has been compiled by our media partners across the country. This week our colleagues from The Voice of Reconciliation, Advance Youth Radio, Eye Radio, Boda Boda Talk Talk and The Radio Community have submitted content about the COVID-19 radio programming, broadcasted across South Sudan.

- **Voice of Reconciliation (VoR, Bor):**
  VoR has broadcasted various stories on COVID-19 in October. They, for example, broadcasted a program on the impact of the virus on the lives of people in Bor. A caller from Block 4, reported: “the lockdown that was imposed made goods to be scarce in the market and that resulted in the increase of prices. For us not to see another lockdown, we should adhere to protective measures to end the spread of the virus”. A student from Bor, also mentioned: “many of his colleagues have become parents during the coronavirus lockdown”. He also said that had it not been for COVID-19 virus, some of the boys and girls who have dropped out of school would have remained in school.

- **Eye Radio (Central Equatoria, Torit, Kuajok, Aweil, Wau, Yambio, Rumbek, Bor):**
  Eye Radio hosted a live call-in debate on the role of youth in protecting themselves and the vulnerable groups such as elderly persons as part of the COVID-19 awareness campaign. The broadcast shared experiences of some families practicing health guidelines on prevention of COVID-19. Heads of families on the radio encouraged other families to follow the rules. 62-year-old Lilly Kenyi Amuda says, for example: “I'm a tailor producing facemasks. I ensure anyone stepping out goes with a face mask. And at home, washing hands is mandatory. During the meal, everyone eats from their own plates.” Margret Barsaba says: “What I’m happy about, I have a five-year-old grandchild who whenever I return from an awareness campaign tells me mam stop, wash your hands because there is a coronavirus. This is what we do - we have water and soap at the door and whoever comes immediate washes their hands before entering the house.”

- **Boda Boda Talk Talk (Central Equatoria, UN House):**
  The Boda Boda Talk Talk team at UN House broadcasted about the relaxation COVID-19 measures on COVID-19 and partnered with International Medical Corps (IMC) who provided some tips to helps the community in the prevention COVID-19.

- **Advance Youth Radio (Central Equatoria):**
  Advance Youth Radio asked people on the street why they resumed shaking hands amidst COVID-19. The program talked about the effect of easing of the COVID-19 restrictions. Some citizens reported to have lost trust in the response, stopped following COVID-19 rules and AYR reported that: “people went into freestyle life which is so risky because coronavirus is still circulating in the communities”. AYR also hosted the spokesperson of the Ministry of health to talk about Case Management of Covid-19 at home and the emergence center. Dr. Thuou Loi who reported that now: “the most important thing is self-isolation. [...] Once you test positive, you take the general thing; isolate yourself, wear masks, take care of your nutrition, hygiene, and most people can fight the virus.” The programme explored the importance of other preventive measures too.

- **The Radio Community (TRC): Central Equatoria, Aweil, Turalei, Mingkaman & Kapoeta**
  TRC broadcasted on the differences between COVID-19 and the common cold as many people do not know how to differentiate corona virus disease from other diseases. As a source stated: “it is difficult for many people to understand the difference between COVID-19 and other common diseases like flu, pneumonia, coughing and many others. Therefore, people need to be enlightened by health personnel on the issue”. Dr. Dawomi Arallaric, Doctors with Africa, confirmed that signs and symptoms between flu and COVID-19 are different and called on the community to get in touch with health workers to get tested when ill. He also confirmed that COVID-19 can be transmitted through people shaking hands and during public gatherings.
Smoking Shisha Magnifies COVID-19 Risks, Say Health Officials

By Diing Magot

Health officials in South Sudan warn smokers of shisha pipes and cigarettes for severe disease when infected with COVID-19. Some residents in Juba say that they find it difficult to quit while others say smoking helps with preventing COVID-19.

Health officials from the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) are warning South Sudanese residents to stop smoking shisha or cigarettes during the coronavirus pandemic because smoking exacerbates severe illness when an individual is infected by COVID-19.

Some residents in Juba, however, say that smoking shisha and cigarettes will reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 whilst others say they have no choice as they smoke due to addiction. Deputy PHEOC Manager, Dr. Angelo Goup Thon, is urging the public to stop smoking during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Smoking shisha has bad effects on COVID-19

According to WHO, COVID-19 is an infectious disease that attacks the lungs. Smoking impairs lung function making it harder for the body to fight off coronaviruses and other diseases. Tobacco is also a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease and diabetes which put people with these conditions at higher risk for developing severe illness when affected by COVID-19.

Dr. Angelo Goup Thon confirms that anything that introduces smokes in the lungs will lead to symptoms that may lead to death. "The advice that I want to continue giving to those who are smoking shisha please let them stop immediately, at least for this time for pandemic, if you continue smoking shisha in this time you are actually three times likely to get serious symptom when compared to the people who don't smoke shisha," the doctor says.

That smoke burns COVID-19 away

A doctor who practices at Atlaba, who speaks on the condition of remaining anonymous, smokes shisha up to five times a day "to concentrate at work", and smokes more twenty cigarettes a day. Whilst he knows the risk, and is thinking of quitting, his addition continues.

Shisha: a toxic killer say health officials

A consultant chest physician at Juba teaching hospital, Dr. Kajamsuk Abdullaa Moi says smoking 100-200 cigarettes, a day "to concentrate at work", and smokes more twenty cigarettes a day "to be between 35 to 45 to 60 minutes. Smoking shisha can be compared to smoking 100-200 cigarettes, a dangerous and potentially fatal act. Dr. Kajamsuk Abdullaa Moi confirms smoking can lead to heart failure, chronic bronchitis, and various forms of cancer, other heart diseases, and even loss of pregnancy.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) tobacco kills more than 8 million people globally every year. More than 7 million of these deaths are from direct tobacco use and around 1.2 million are due to non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.

35-year-old resident Faric Musa from Nyakuron, Juba city, says that he smokes shisha because he believes that it will prevent him from contracting COVID-19.

Musa states: "Shisha is burning the presence of corona in our bodies if we smoke it, it will help our body to prevent it against corona virus is why these days we have even been smoking more than before [... we believe it keeps us safe from getting the corona virus though the doctors are refusing it".

Follow us on Facebook for more information about COVID-19, media development and other lifesaving information!

@InternewsinSouthSudan

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Capacity building opportunities:

Watch again – webinar on the COVID-19 vaccine!
To fight the COVID-19 “disinfodemic,” journalists must move beyond simply debunking the false information spread online. ICFJ and the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) have filmed a panel discussion on vaccine hesitancy, mis and disinformation. Please watch it here!

Don’t just debunk misinformation: 4 tips for navigating the COVID-19 infodemic
“As I argued in an opinion piece last month, instead of viewing them only as misperceptions to be suppressed with accurate information, we should look at them as feedback we can use to help improve our reporting and in turn, ease public fears”. Read more here.

Goethe Institute looks for contributions on the theme of “movement”
The Goethe Institute in Germany is looking for contributions on the theme of "movement". The Goethe Institute is inviting creative contributions which focus on the things that enable us to move – literally or figuratively – trains, roads, space programmes, aeroplanes, ports, boda bodas, and many others – to question what it means to imagine living otherwise across borders. Read about the criteria here.

Project update:

“As community, we are very thankful for BBTT work. You are doing great job to our community by carrying out the COVID-19 awareness in the PoCs. It is good because some of community don’t have radios where they can get news from. But since BBTT come in the PoCs as community, we have join the world to heard more about the COVID-19. Keep doing good to com-munity”, UN House, Juba.

In the reporting period from 1-15 October, Internews media partners continue to produce and broadcast radio programs, Boda Boda Talk Talk narrowcasting, have done rumor & feedback collection, and produced and disseminated media bulletins aimed to support media reporting on COVID-19 in South Sudan. The project is working in partner-ship with two radio networks (TRC & CRN) managing eleven radio stations; six radio stations (AYR, VOR, SAMAFM, TRC, UN House, Eye Radio) and four humanitarian radio stations.

For more information please contact Dr. Michael Gubay, Health Project Manager, Internews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 radio programs produced and broadcasted (standard formats)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>Call-in, vox pops, PSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 radio programs produced and broadcasted (creative formats)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>COVID-19 radio bulletins, testimony, skits, drama</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rumors and feedback collected</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>Collected by media partners and BBTT programmes from PoCs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lugara media bulletins</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Of which 3 translations. The bulletin is produced in Arabic and English, portfolio can be found here.</td>
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