

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.

August 05, 2020

Whilst wearing a fabric mask well and safely protects, wearing it wrongly can pose more of a risk

New guidelines from the World Health Organization show that wearing fabric masks may prevent people from spreading COVID-19 to friends, family and other community members, and could reduce the chance of people getting infected with COVID-19. However, if masks are not worn well, they may actually pose more of a risk than protection.

Wearing your mask safely is simple, and should involve the following steps:

- Clean your hands before touching the mask
- Inspect the mask for damage or if dirty - if damaged or dirty, don't wear it.
- Adjust the masks to your face without leaving gaps
- Cover your mouth, nose and chin
- Avoid touching the masks whilst you are wearing it
- Clean your hands before removing the masks
- Remove the masks by the straps behind your ears or head
- Wash the mask in soap or detergent, ideally in hot water every day

It is also important, to note the following:

- Do not remove the mask when there are people within 1 meter distance of you
- Do not wear a dirty or wet mask
- Do not share your mask with others
- Do not wear a loose mask
- Do not wear the mask under the nose

Remember, the use of a fabric mask alone is not sufficient to provide an adequate level of protection. Maintain a minimum physical distance of at least 1 meter from others and frequently clean your hands. More information on safe mask use can be found: [here](#).

How to wear a fabric mask safely



Please contact:

Ms Jemila M. Ebrahim, Communication Officer, WHO South Sudan,
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Case count & stats

South Sudan

Epidemiological update

Tests performed to date:	14,447
Total numbers of samples pending testing the last 24 hours:	71
New cases confirmed in the last 24 hours:	13
Cumulative numbers of cases confirmed to date:	2,450
Total cases currently under follow up/active cases:	1,186
Number of cases recovered:	1,217
Number of new deaths in the last 24 hours:	0
Cumulative numbers of deaths:	47
Number of contacts currently under follow up:	219
Cumulative number of contacts followed:	5,587

Source: *Ministry of Health, 04 August 2020*

For more information, please contact South Sudan Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) - sspheoc@gmail.com or tel: +211 922 202 028.



*School girl talks to Radio Salam FM correspondent on cash support.
Credit: Internews*

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IN FOCUS

What are we hearing in Juba?



"The signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are not clear... we don't know if and how they are different from other common illnesses".











Male, Juba, PoC 1 Block E

Answer

WHO reports that the most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough, and tiredness. Other symptoms that are less common and may affect some patients include aches and pains, nasal congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, sore throat, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell or a rash on skin or discoloration of fingers or toes. Some people become infected but only have very mild symptoms. It is true that other illnesses - like malaria, the cold, flu - common in South Sudan could show the same or similar signs and symptoms as COVID-19 in human. To know whether or not you are sick with COVID-19 it is important to get tested by the Ministry of Health, or to seek health advice from licensed health providers.

Identifying the symptoms



Symptom	Coronavirus Symptoms range from mild to severe	Cold Gradual onset of symptoms	Flu Abrupt onset of symptoms
 > Fever	Common	Rare	Common
 > Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
 > Cough	Common (usually dry)	Mild	Common (usually dry)
 > Sneezing	No	Common	No
 > Aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common
 > Runny or stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes
 > Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
 > Diarrhea	Rare	No	Sometimes for children
 > Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common
 > Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No

SOURCE: World Health Organization

(CBC News)

Media contacts:

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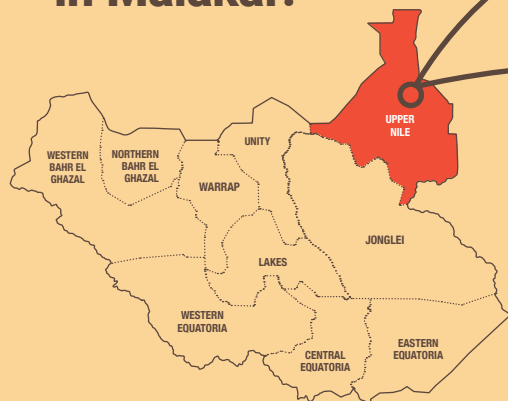
If you want to contribute to this media bulletin or have information to share, please contact:
Tusiime Wilfred Romeo, atusiime@internews.org or Dr. Michael Gubay, mgubay@internews.org
Internews welcomes feedback, comments and suggestions from all media receiving this newsletter and invites all of them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

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IN FOCUS

What are we hearing in Malakal?



"People of Malakal PoC are in panic ever since the first case was announced last week -- it's very important to establish a quarantine center, for suspected cases".

Female, 39 years, Malakal

"Suspected cases are still at home with their parents, and this may be a risk to the rest of the family".

Male, 30 years, Malakal

Additionally, in Malakal, there were multiple requests for COVID-19 testing kits to confirm that the disease is spreading in the community: "Is there really COVID-19 in the area?", asked respondents. Other people reported being fearful now cases are going up and report that they are unsure of the rules around quarantine.



When should a person be in quarantine?

According to WHO, a person should be in quarantine when a person is a "contact" of a confirmed COVID-19 case. A "contact" is a person who is involved in any of the following activities (from 2 days before and up to 14 days after the start of symptoms in the confirmed patient):

- Having face-to-face contact with a COVID-19 patient
- Providing direct care for patients with the COVID-19 disease without using proper personal protective equipment
- Staying in the same close environment as a COVID-19 patient (including sharing a workplace, classroom or household or being at the same gathering) for any amount of time
- Traveling in close proximity with a COVID-19 patient
- and other situations, as indicated by health authorities.

This means that family and household members of a confirmed COVID-19 patients will likely need to observe quarantine as they have may been exposed to COVID-19. Quarantine can be done in a separate room in your household, or in a dedicated room in a quarantine center, depending on what local health authorities decide to recommend, and is feasible for families.

What should you do when in quarantine?

People in quarantine should stay at home/the quarantine centre, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their health authorities to prevent others from getting ill (CDC). You can minimize the risk of infecting others by staying away from them, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19 like the elderly, those living with HIV/AIDS, etc. (read more here). You can also help by staying inside for at least 14 days.

How can you help someone in quarantine?

You can help people being able to stay inside by providing food, water and other basic needs of people in quarantine. Being sick is lonely, and it can help people's well being and morality if they are able to speak with family members on the phone (or at safe distance). It will also be important to communicate clearly about how long they will need to stay and what will happen if they get sick.

Answer

Public health officials in Malakal want to prevent people from getting sick with COVID-19, which is an infectious disease that can be transmitted from person to person, and are therefore testing sick people for COVID-19, and where necessary, are isolating them from the healthy people. Quarantine is the term used when public health authorities keep someone who they fear have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine also helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

According to the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC), the virus that causes COVID-19 is believed to spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact - around 1-2 meters - with one another (Source: CDC). Anyone who has been in close contact with someone who is ill with COVID-19, may be infected and can infect other people.

Media contacts:

Dr. Joshua / Santino Arop - Secretary, State's COVID19 taskforce/DG, State Ministry of Health, Upper Nile
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IN FOCUS

What are we hearing in the rest of South Sudan?



Based on information collected by partners part of the Communication and Community Engagement Working Group (including Internews, IOM, REACH and UNICEF), the following concerns were frequently recorded (see the State-Level Analysis of June 2020 - [here](#)).



A school-going boy explained the need for a library in Gendrassa refugee camp in Maban - Credit: Internews

Question

Does COVID-19 only infect rich/white people, or women/people living with HIV/AIDS?

In Bentiu, Lakes and other areas in South Sudan citizens questioned the type of people that can easily get infected with COVID-19. Some people say only rich people can get infected, whilst others say only people with HIV/AIDS and women can contract COVID-19. Yet others are claiming that only white people can get infected: "COVID-19 can not make black people ill".


Fact-checked information:

This information is incorrect.

Everyone can get infected with COVID-19, as the disease does not discriminate. Your color of skin, amount of money you have, your gender or strength and where you live has no effect on whether or not you can get COVID-19. However, people of a certain age and people with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. For example, people with the following conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19: cancer, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), those with obesity, serious heart conditions, sickle cell disease and type 2 diabetes (source: [CDC](#)).

People living with HIV and those who are not taking antiretroviral treatment have an increased risk of infections and related complications in general. At present there is no evidence that the risk of infection or complications of COVID-19 is different among people living with HIV who are clinically and immunologically stable on antiretroviral treatment when compared with the general population. Some people living with HIV may have known risk factors for COVID-19 complications, such as diabetes, hypertension and other noncommunicable diseases and as such may have increased risk of COVID-19 unrelated to HIV (Source: [WHO](#)).

Media contacts:

For specific data from the area you are reporting in, please contact
Ingrid Gercama, Internews Communications and Learning Advisor, South Sudan:
 i.gercama@internews.com

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IN FOCUS

What are we hearing in the rest of South Sudan?

Question

Does COVID-19 cause infertility?

People in Maridi, Western Equatoria, in South Sudan questioned if COVID-19 can cause infertility - a concern which has been heard in other areas of the country as well.

✓ Fact-checked information:

There is not enough evidence on this issue.

Currently, very little is known about the impact of COVID-19 on reproduction. A small number of studies (including this [one](#)) are reporting that COVID-19 may cause infertility in men, but the World Health Organization do not seem to have conclusive evidence on this issue. As such, the answer is that we simply do not know enough about the short and long-term effects of COVID-19 on male and female fertility.

At present, there is no evidence of sexual transmission of the virus responsible for COVID-19. The virus can be passed however, through direct contact with saliva, for instance, kissing. Sexual activity does not cease with the COVID-19 pandemic, and by following the guidance for safe and consensual sex during periods of self-isolation, you can protect your health and the health of your sexual partner(s). (Source: [WHO](#)).

Question

Can COVID-19 be cured by traditional or plant-based medicine?

People across South Sudan shared that people in their communities report the use of various types of traditional medicine and local cures to prevent or treat COVID-19 including the drinking of blood of livestock, hibiscus tea and a salt locally called "kombo".

✓ Fact-checked information:

There is not enough evidence on this issue.

WHO recognizes that traditional, complementary and alternative medicine has many benefits and Africa has a long history of traditional medicine and practitioners that play an important role in providing care to populations (source: [WHO](#)). But - whilst some local medicine may have healing and potentially even preventive characteristics, it is not scientifically proven that such medicine will protect you from getting infected or cure you from COVID-19.

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⊕ Additional press contacts, networks and resources

Please reach out to the following Ministry of Health spokespersons/focal points in the States for interviews or fact-checking:

Contact details of COVID-19 State Spokespersons in South Sudan

#	Name State	Name of spokesperson/focal	Designation	Email address	Contact Number
1	Upper Nile	Dr. Joshua/Santino Arop	Secretary, state's COVID19 taskforce/DG, SMOH	N/A	912470084/912501955
		Jok Chuli	DG, SMOH	jokakouch77@gmail.com	917257381
2	Unity	Dr Duol Biem	DG SMOH	dbiem1981@gmail.com	915621932
		Tony Chol	DG SMOH - RAA	tonycholayatin2015@gmail.com	917881990
3	Jonglei	Dr Samuel Majur Deutong	DG SMOH	samuelagot@gmail.com	924585047
		Malual Abijok	Director of Health Education and Promotion	mabijok@gmail.com	926030000
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		Mr John Agany	DG former Lol State and Chairperson RC TF	john.aganydeng@gmail.com	925999660
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6	Warrap	Dr. Chok Deng Malueth	DG	chokdengmalueth@gmail.com	916391422
7	Lakes	Dr.Makuach Anyuon	DG SMOH	drmakuac@gmail.com	927076708
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		Dr.Marial Cuir	Director general	marialcuir@gmail.com	N/A
		Abraham Majok Achiek	CHD director	N/A	925774784
8	EES	Dr. Elijo Omoro	DG - SMOH	elijoomoro@gmail.com	924577131
9	WES	Samuel Timatio	Acting DG, Health	samueltimb@gmail.com	961625384
10	CES	Dr Jamal Haseen Guma	DG	N/A	927074095
11	Yei	Dr. James Wani	DG - Health - Defunct Yei River State	ntpcecoordinator@gmail.com	921776781

Source: South Sudan COVID-19 RCCE Technical Working Group

→ **World Health Organization (Global)'s Press registry and Audio Downloads:**

to be added to the Global WHO press list, subscribe [here](#).

Access to press briefings of the World Health Organization in Geneva, can be found [here](#).

WHO also makes available audio fragments and transcriptions which you can download and use in your radio broadcasting, [here](#).

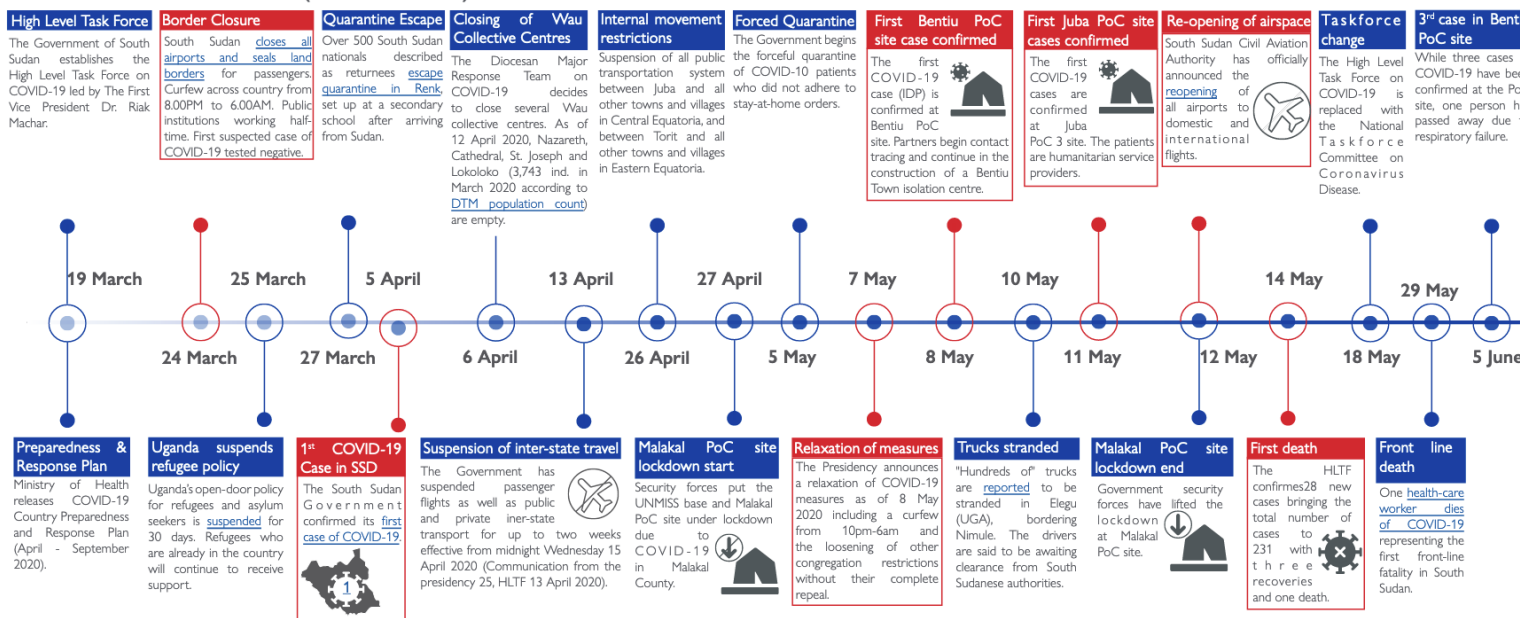
→ **International Organization for Migration's COVID-19 guideline:**

IOM in South Sudan has made available [a useful timeline which captures the main events related to the COVID-19 outbreak](#). This may be useful to you and colleagues when reporting on the outbreak and can be useful to verify events and dates to ensure quality reporting.

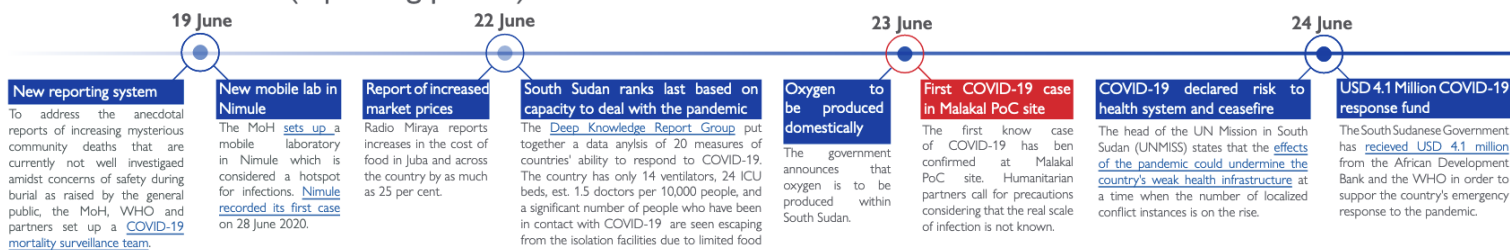
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South Sudan COVID-19 Timeline (main events)



South Sudan COVID-19 Timeline (reporting period)



→ Project update:

In June 2020, Internews has launched our new Information Saves Lives - COVID-19 project - with the support from BHA/USAID. The project is implemented in partnership with local media partners and targets densely populated areas and PoCs across South Sudan including PoC-UN House, Malakal, Bentiou.

The project will see the production of radio programmes in different formats; the re-establishment of Boda Boda Talk Talk in Juba PoCs and expand interventions to Renk, Melut and Gok Machar. The project will also provide training opportunities for journalists across South Sudan. It also uses social networks like WhatsApp to strategically connect journalists in South Sudan to ensure accurate reporting and support to media partners.

If you want to be part of our social media network or distribution list, please send a message to igercama@internews.org. If you want more information about the project, please contact mgubay@internews.org.