USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
Internews Local voices. Global change.

INTERNEWS COVID-19 MEDIA BULLETIN
Reporting on COVID-19 in South Sudan

Lugara

ISSUE #07

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.

**November 18, 2020**

## SITUATION UPDATE

# COVID-19 is not over, say public health officials

South Sudan COVID-19 Incident Manager Dr. Richard Lako has sounded a warning for the increase of coronavirus cases in the past weeks, predicting a second wave of the virus in the country. Lako attributed the increased rate of the virus to the recent influx of refugees from the neighboring countries Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Uganda. *"From last months, we nearly received new additional 90 imported cases that came from neighboring country Uganda and these are South Sudanese who are returning homes,"* Dr. Lako said: *"The concern was that these 90 cases from returnees in the country would generate new infection into the community"* (Source: Radio Tamazuj).

Likewise, the Ministry of Health has warned of a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic after having registered an increase in positive cases in recent weeks. The Director of the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre at the Ministry of Health Dr. Mathew Tut Moses reported to Eye Radio: *"It seems the number of positive cases is increasing and that is an indication that the disease is still with us". "So, people don't need to relax and think that COVID is over and feel complacent,"* Dr. Tut added. (Source: Eye Radio). Additionally, the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) warned the continent to brace for a second wave of the coronavirus as cases surge in Europe and some African countries (Source: CNN).

However, Internews media partners continue to report that citizens belief that the opening of borders, schools, worship places and relaxation of restrictions must mean *"that COVID-19 is over"*. Journalists also reported that some of the schools and worship places did not fulfill the government guidelines when opening services again. Misperceptions about masks and negative attitudes towards those wearing masks also continues to be a challenge. The flood disaster in many parts of the country has displaced citizens and forced them to live in crowded shelter, which again is providing additional risks related to the spread of the COVID-19 virus (Source: Internews partners part of the "Info Saves Lives" project).

Remember, as a women in Bunagok reported, through our rumor reporting mechanism: *"vital information regarding health is to be taken seriously in this difficult time of COVID-19. This could help and can even save the lives of our people"*, she wisely stated. WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the World Health Assembly are critical: *"We might be tired of COVID-19. But it is not tired of us. Yes, it preys on those in weaker health. But it preys on other weaknesses, too: inequality, division, denial, wishful thinking and willful ignorance. We cannot negotiate with it, nor close our eyes and hope it goes away. It pays no heed to political rhetoric or conspiracy theories. Our only hope is science, solutions and solidarity."* (Source: WHO)

*This section was written by Dr. Michael Gubay, Health Communication - COVID-19 response Project Manager, Internews.*

## Case count & stats

### South Sudan

cumulative cases: **3,009**

| New cases: | Deaths: | Recovered: |
|---|---|---|
| +177 | 59 | 2,774 |

Source: *Ministry of Health, 17 November 2020*

### Africa

cumulative cases: **1,986,864**

| New cases: | Deaths: | Recovered: |
|---|---|---|
| +259,027 | 47,647 | 1,676,584 |

Source: *Africa CDC, 17 November 2020*

### Global

cumulative cases: **54,301,156**

| New cases: | Deaths: | Recovered: |
|---|---|---|
| +11,334,812 | 1,316,994 | 38,578,703 |

Source: *WHO, Worldometer, 17 November 2020*

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.

November 18, 2020

# Frequently heard topics

### Flooding

*"Flooding in Bor has disrupted preventive measures against COVID-19."*

male, 31 Block 2, Bor

### Appreciation

*"Thanks for BBTT team for the awareness of COVID-19 that has been done here in POCs"*

female, 36, PoC 1, Block H, Juba

*"As community we very thankful for BBTT work your doing great job in our community by carrying out the COVID-19 awareness in the PoCs it good because some of community don't have radio we 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 going to doing good the community."*

male, 38, PoC 1, Block A, Juba

### Touching objects

*"Everywhere I go I am hearing about COVID-19 being spreading through touching any object infected, greetings etc. This is danger. It needs people to take care."*

male, 18, PoC 3, Zone H, Block 2, Juba

### Vulnerable people

*"COVID-19 still in the country. People should keep distancing everywhere."*

female, 60, PoC 1, Block S, UN House, Juba

*"Covid-19 and Hygiene, encouraging cleanness is good, I really appreciated the radio for this topic. if regular handwashing can reduce chances of infection, then we have to stick to hygiene and sanitation. I know there are so many ways of dealing with this kind of disease."*

male, Mingakaman

### Rumors

*"Corona is only affecting people in town not the village."*

animal market, male 32 Kapoeta – Eastern Equatoria

*"I don't believe corona is there because I have never seen serious cases in the hospital here."*

male, 28, vegetable market, Kapoeta – Eastern Equatoria

### Fairness

*"If the government have failed to distribute the face masks to the general public, why can't it at least do it to the vulnerable population like the elders, pregnant mothers and others? This is because they are the one that are badly affected by the disease based on their health conditions."*

female, 54, Gol

### Follow rules

*"People should not move freely because it is easy to carry the disease from place to place."*

male, Nakordula

*"Since it is believe that COVID-19 is not going to leave us, the Ministry of Health and partners should figure a way of dealing with those that avoid the law or the preventive guidelines because am so sure if we all take this measures so serious then we won't have more people recorded every day and even the virus will automatically leave this country for good, now if you walk around you will find people hugging shaking hands, walking freely without face mask, sit at the crowd places and this are some of the things that have been banned from happening am worried though."*

male, Aweil

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
Internews Local voices. Global change.

INTERNEWS COVID-19 MEDIA BULLETIN
Reporting on COVID-19 in South Sudan

Lugara

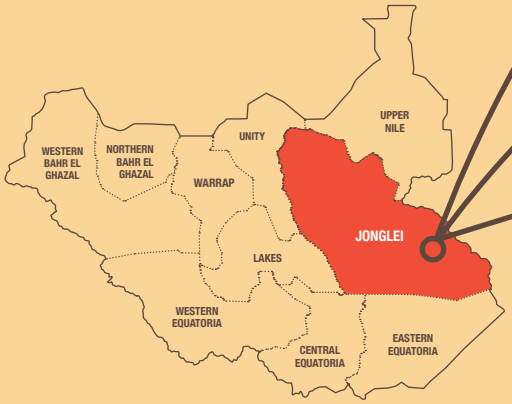
ISSUE #07

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.

**November 18, 2020**

## IN FOCUS

# What are we hearing in Bor?




***"If people are not showing signs, will they still spread the virus?"***
*female, 50, Bor, block 1*

*"People are now thinking about floods and not the COVID-19 virus."*
male, 40, Bor, block 7

***"Wearing of facemasks is a learning process."***
male, 36, Bor, Block M

## Asymptomatic cases

Many people who are ill with COVID-19 don't show signs and symptoms of the virus and may not notice that they are ill. As such, they can still spread the virus, as they don't know they are ill. Doctors call such patients "asymptomatic cases" (Source: WHO). Normally, when people get sick from the coronavirus, it takes on average 5-14 days to develop symptoms that can range from mild to extremely dangerous (Source: Conversation).

Health officials don't know yet how much of the COVID-19 has been spread worldwide by asymptomatic patients. However, reports from some countries suggest that asymptomatically infected individuals are much less likely to transmit the virus than those who develop symptoms (Source: WHO). It is always smart to always wear a mask when in public spaces and to wash your hands frequently with soap and water.

## Wearing masks

Wearing masks is indeed a learning process, and it is hard to get it right. This is why the Africa Centre for Disease Control has made this useful poster showing how NOT to wear your mask!

## Media contacts:

- Africa CDC has a new social media toolkit which includes very nice images like the one above which you can use for free to debunk rumors in your community. Please find it here: https://africacdc.org/download/covid-19-social-media-support-kit/

CCE Communication & Community Engagement South Sudan

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.

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
Internews Local voices. Global change.

INTERNEWS COVID-19 MEDIA BULLETIN
Reporting on COVID-19 in South Sudan

Lugara

ISSUE #07

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.

November 18, 2020

IN FOCUS

# What are we hearing in Central Equatoria?

***"Those who putting on facemask have corona."***

40-year-old male, Juba

***"I heard that COVID-19 is spread through body contact, What about sleeping together with a family member who is suspecting with corona virus? Is it safe or not."***

male, 62, Prison, Juba

*"I never put on facemask and will not put on, I don't fear death"*

female, 39, zone D block 6, Juba

## Home-based care

When someone in your household has COVID-19, and others in the household have not yet gotten tested, it would be best to keep the person in a separate room away from others. It would be good to ensure that the person eats and sleeps separately from other members of the household to ensure that they don't get ill from the virus too (Source: Ministry of Health, SOP.
Hospital care is only needed for those with severe or life-threatening illness. Those with mild or moderate illness will be told to isolate at home while they recover. One person, called a "caregiver," should be identified to care for a person isolating at home for any reason if they cannot care for themselves. This person should ideally be a young adult that is healthy, and cannot be a child, an elderly person or someone who is already ill. The caregiver helps the patient follow the directions given to them on home-based isolation and care. They should make sure to protect themselves against infection while providing care by wearing a mask, regularly washing their hands with soap and water, and maintaining 2 meters distance from the patient whenever possible (Source: Ministry of Health, SOP).

## Stigmatization

As the CDC says: "*stigma is discrimination against a group of people, a place, or a nation. Stigma is associated with a lack of knowledge about how COVID-19 spreads, a need to blame someone, fears about disease and death, and gossip that spreads rumors and myths. No single person or group of people are more likely than others to spread COVID-19*" (Source: CDC).

Disease outbreaks, and in particular pandemic outbreaks, are stressful times for people and communities. Fear and anxiety about a disease can lead to negative attitudes and beliefs toward people, places, or things. For example, stigma and discrimination can occur when people link a disease, such as COVID-19, with a population, community, or nationality. Stigma can also happen after a person has recovered from COVID-19 or been released from home isolation or quarantine (Source: CDC).
As CDC states: "*Stigma hurts everyone by creating more fear or anger toward ordinary people instead of focusing on the disease that is causing the problem. Stigma can also make people more likely to hide symptoms or illness, keep them from seeking health care immediately, and prevent individuals from adopting healthy behaviors. This means that stigma can make it more difficult to control the spread of an outbreak*". We should all stop to make fun of people with facemasks.

## Media contacts:

See a list of useful digital newsletters from the WHO here.
You can subscribe to them, and in that way, you are always on top of all the latest news!

CCE Communication & Community Engagement South Sudan

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.

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
Internews Local voices. Global change.

INTERNEWS COVID-19 MEDIA BULLETIN
Reporting on COVID-19 in South Sudan

Lugara

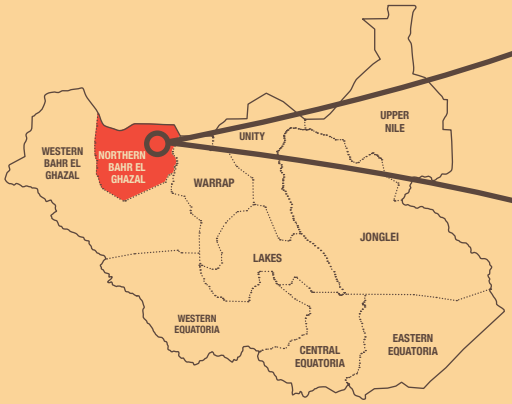
ISSUE #07

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.

November 18, 2020

## IN FOCUS

# What are we hearing in Northern Bahr al Ghazal?




*"Some of us will now start practicing good hygiene since most didn't know without being told that the virus can easily be spread where there is poor hygiene and that is through this radio. Thanks so much for the great work. We have been hearing how this virus have been killing many people across the world after it was discovered which was caused by lack of knowledge, if people knew how this was done they won't have died from the disease.* ***So, let's stand together and fight to stop the virus from spreading."***

male, Aweil

*"COVID 19 is a scary disease. This is because it kills in shortest period of time with shortness in breathing, dry cough and others.* ***Hence, may I know the incubation period of the virus in the body, air, and in the food?"***

female, 28, Aweil

## Together as one!

As Dr. Tedros from the WHO states in a speech earlier this year: *"Outbreaks can bring out the best and worst in people. Stigmatizing individuals or entire nations does nothing but harm the response. Instead of directing all our energy against the outbreak, stigma diverts our attention and turns people against each other. I will say it again: this is a time for solidarity, not stigma"* (Source: WHO).

## Incubation time

The incubation period of COVID-19, which is the time between exposure to the virus and symptom onset, is on average 5-6 days, but can be as long as 14 days (Source: WHO). As we wrote in Lugara #6 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 made when an infected person coughs or sneezes (Source: WHO). CDC say most people get infected because of exposure to respiratory droplets carrying infectious virus. Researchers in a indoor laboratory study described how aerosolized coronavirus particles can remain active for up to three hours in the air. However outside in the open air, humidity and other conditions affect how long the virus stays active in its aerosolized form (read more about this in Internews's Rumour COVID-19 bulletin).

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
Internews Local voices. Global change.

INTERNEWS COVID-19 MEDIA BULLETIN
Reporting on COVID-19 in South Sudan

Lugara

ISSUE #07

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.

November 18, 2020

PANDEMIC POST

# Boda Boda drivers report being stigmatized for wearing facemasks

*By Lasuba Memo, Juba*

***Boda-boda riders are being stigmatized by people in Juba for wearing facemasks to protect themselves from the coronavirus. Public health officials are concerned about complacency with measures, with the country plunging into the second wave of COVID-19 infections.***

*"I only wear glasses to cover my eyes from the dust, but do not wear facemasks"*, reports Matthew James, a 26-year-old boda-boda driver from Gudele *"If I wear a mask some people say bad words against us and consider us as criminals… these words are tarnishing out my image"*, he explains. Afraid of losing customers the young driver feels he has to choose his economic survival over personal health.

Samuel Maring, a boda-boda rider from Juba, believes in the benefits of wearing a mask: *"the masks are good for protecting oneself from coronavirus"*. But: *"when we put on the facemasks some people utter negative things against you"*, Maring says. Several passengers have now told him not to wear a mask, and the intimidation has discouraged him from wearing his personal protective equipment.

This is concerning, officials at the Ministry of Health stated earlier this week, when they warned for a second wave of the pandemic as more than forty cases were recorded in South Sudan in one week. Dr. Angelo Goup, the Chief Operations Manager at the Public Health Laboratory, says that the government is reconsidering their strategy with cases going up fast.

*"If we reach the limited, I'm sure we will impose a lockdown. Lockdown is not good because it will stop a lot of things but if people do not listen, it can be implemented"*, says Goup. He emphasized mask-wearing is mandatory, so boda-boda riders can stop their passengers from contracting the coronavirus.

The medical professional blames misperceptions and denial as the main drivers for people failing to follow preventive measures set out to protect themselves. Guidelines from the World Health Organization which teach that masks act as a barrier to prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people, particularly when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice.

Dr. Goup urges everyone to desist from circulating misinformation regarding the virus. *"Give the right information when you talk about COVID-19. Do not intimidate people whenever they wear facemasks"*, Goup says: *"don't tell someone who wear facemask they have corona because it will discourage people from wearing it."*

A longer version of this article has been published on Eye Media, read it here: https://eyeradio.org/juba-covidiots-avoid-boda-bodas-with-face-masks/

**Methanol, ethanol, and bleach are poisons. Drinking them can lead to disability and death.**

**Methanol, ethanol and bleach are sometimes used in cleaning products to kill the virus on surfaces – however you should never drink them. They will not kill the virus in your body and they will harm your internal organs.**

**To protect yourself against COVID-19, disinfect objects and surfaces, especially the ones you touch regularly. You can use diluted bleach or alcohol for that. Make sure you clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose.**

**FACT:**
**Drinking methanol, ethanol or bleach DOES NOT prevent or cure COVID-19 and can be extremely dangerous**

World Health Organization #COVID19 #coronavirus

5 April 2020

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.

November 18, 2020

# The COVID-19 Beat Updates from our media partners

***This section is compiled by our media partners, with support from Kenneth Pitia, Internews Project M&E officer. Please contact him on: kpitia@internews.org***

→ **Advance Youth Radio** reports that poets, like Alith Cyer, are using their talents to pass COVID-19 messages to the public. Cyer also reports that most youth are engaged on social media, so this also remains a good way to target young people across South Sudan. The poets, states Cyer, should write in the right local languages. AYR also reported on what people should do when their family member gets ill with COVID-19. The citizens whose relatives are sick with COVID-19 should follow the preventive measures in order to protect themselves from COVID-19 according to Dr. Munir Morris, MOH. Citizens report that the COVID-19 tests results take long, and that advise is hard to follow.

→ **Capital FM** reports that the use of facemask in South Sudan is fading with time. The call-in audience said it is due to relaxation of measure of Ministry of Health whilst others stated it is expensive. Citizens also gave recommendations for how response workers can better convince others, they state that: *"to convince people to understand what corona virus is by giving evidence and provide examples. Use the language of the public, show love and be caring to pass the information required about COVID-19. Many community outreaches lack good approach and language to use"*.

→ **The Radio Community** reported on COVID-19 and pregnancy. As a pregnant women stated: *"We need good care when we are pregnant during this corona virus it is affecting us both the baby inside the womb. It is not easy to get the COVID-19 experts in the county because the taskforce committee does not exist. It is true that women like me who is pregnant have a lot of challenges if we get this disease call corona virus because the child will not get enough oxygen it may die and a mother also can die"*. TRC also broadcasted on the importance of hygiene, not only for COVID-19 but also to prevent cholera, typhoid, and many other illnesses.

→ **Voice Of Reconciliation** explained how testing for COVID-19 is carried out. VoR colleagues in Bor reported: *"We wanted our listeners to understand that it is easy to test for COVID-19 so that they can feel encouraged to go for testing. We collected some vox pops on the experiences of some people and those who did not know. And then an expert was in the studio to clarify more details"*. Makuei Calling from Bor asked for clarification: *"When you go to the hospital, your temperature is tested, is that the whole testing or is there another one"*? On air a doctor immediately clarified that this is not COVID-19 testing. It is just a temperature check which can tell health officials whether to test more or not.

→ **SAMA FM** reported on importance or tailored messaging for people with disabilities. A blind singer who made a song against COVID-19 stated on air: *"It is painful that we have lost their loved one in the hands of COVID-19 and it's time for all to fight COVID-19. This song carried the message that people with disability can do anything. Most people don't want people to talk about COVID-19 anymore so that is we came up with this song… We are blind does but that does not mean we cannot sing"*.

→ **BBTT UN House** reported on the concerns that IDP have specifically related to the COVID-19 virus. As a reporter stated: *"People in the sites share bathing buckets with their families and children wash clothes and bathing in the stagnated pool's water"*. Another broadcast focused on how people at homes could live with and care for coronavirus patients and how to report any signs and symptoms that appear like coronavirus infection. Boda Boda Talk Talk also reported on the impact of COVID-19 on teenagers.

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.

November 18, 2020

## Capacity building opportunities:

**InfoNile** invites photographers and photojournalists in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda to submit proposals for an online multimedia photojournalism campaign to communicate River Nile-related stories and scientific information. Grants to produce photo stories will be up to USD 1000.

**The World Bank** is inviting residents of Sub-Saharan Africa to write a blog post on the following question: How can young people work with their governments and civil society organizations to respond to the impact of COVID-19 and build a stronger post-pandemic economic and social system? Entries must be in English, French or Portuguese and have no more than 500 words. Anyone age 18 to 28 can enter the #Blog4Dev contest. Prizes include an invitation to attend a dedicated program during the World Bank – IMF Spring Meetings 2021 in Washington, a chance to intern at a World Bank Africa country office and an opportunity to have their blog published on the World Bank Africa blog Youth Transforming Africa. The deadline is Nov. 30.

## Project update:

BHA/USAID supported Internews South Sudan's COVID-19 response project continued producing lifesaving, fact-checked content that corresponds to citizens' concerns around the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Internews COVID-19 response project has focused on several areas:

• The project through its media partners collected rumors and feedback (723 rumors & feedbacks between August - October 2020) from affected populations including fears and concerns; and responded to in our bi-weekly Lugara COVID-19 Media Bulletin and ensured that radio journalists have access to fact-checked information and trusted media contacts.

• Based on analysis of community feedback and rumors, Internews media partners produced and broadcast 289 unique radio programs reaching an estimated 7 million COVID-19 affected and at-risk people across South Sudan. The programs were produced in 9 different languages and in variety of formats. The project is working in partnership with 20 radio stations and is broadcasting programs in 9 languages and a variety of formats. Our media partners include Eye Media shortwave services and 8 repeaters stations in the country and 19 FM radio stations inc. The Radio Community (TRC), Capital FM, SAMA FM, Voice of Reconciliation (VoR), and Advanced Youth Radio (AYR).

• Internews actively participates in humanitarian coordination structures and multiple subcommittees, participates in and organizes capacity building training, and presents regular updates on public perceptions & project progress. All our efforts are integrated within the national COVID-19 response.

• A summary of all published "Lugara" bulletins in Arabic and English can be found here.

*For more information, please contact Dr. Michael Gubay, Health communication - COVID-19 response Project Manager, Internews at mgubay@internews.org*