



Internews

The world is not only fighting a deadly virus, but an information crisis. Sudanese journalists work in sometimes unclear and challenging conditions, so this bulletin aims to help them address rumours and misinformation by providing them with facts that combat fake news.

WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING

Sudanese Woman
commenting on Facebook

Using Acacia
Leaves and
Natural
Remedies for
COVID-19

“Grind acacia leaves and mix the powder with sesame oil in a jar. Massage the mixture onto your body just make sure you are wearing a mask and that you disinfect afterwards. Focus on applying the mixture to your chest and throat. May God cure you. This remedy can treat a diabetes patient in intensive care. Also, eat a lot of oranges for Vitamin C.”

THE FACTS

Acacia is a widely used plant in traditional medicines across many African countries. It has been passed down through generations in Sudan, as an herbal remedy for various illnesses. Despite some benefits, Acacia can have some harmful side-effects. There is no scientific evidence that Acacia is an effective prevention or treatment measure for COVID-19.

SUGGESTED CONTACTS

Yasir Marghani, Secretary General of the Sudanese Consumer Protection Society, 0912303839

For more information about COVID-19, preventative measures and treatment, please contact the [Sudanese Health Ministry](#).

REPORTING TIPS

- Since many Sudanese rely on Acacia, journalists must scrutinize and shed light on the facts, providing scientific evidence and sources revealing the true benefits and side-effects of using Acacia.
- One such organisation is the Consumer Protection Association.
- Journalists covering the use of herbal remedies should be aware of the context and deal with the story sensitively, due to common beliefs about its use. It is important not to alienate audiences.
- Some of Acacia benefits can be outlined in reports, while underscoring that it is not a cure for COVID-19.

PRINCIPLES OF JOURNALISM

Journalists should avoid publishing any information that could be seen as libellous or defamatory, attacking a person's character or reputation.

MEDIA BULLETIN

WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING

Sudanese Woman
commenting on Facebook

A
COVID-
19
"Hoax"

"China said COVID-19 is a hoax. All over the country people are queuing. If COVID-19 is real, we would find it in every home."

THE FACTS

China has **not** said that COVID-19 is a hoax and has reported some 91,500 cases to date. It is possible the number of cases dropped since the virus outbreak due to the Chinese common precedent for mask-wearing and because of its very strict lockdown at the start of the pandemic. Despite widespread rumours in Sudan that the COVID-19 pandemic is "over", no official body in the country has said the COVID-19 pandemic has ended. This rumour is not based on scientific data.

SUGGESTED CONTACTS

- For the latest official data and advice, contact Muawiya al-Tayeb, director of the culture and information minister's office and official spokesperson Malakal20@gmail.com
- Professor Montaser al-Tayeb Ibrahim, Director of the Institute of Endemic Diseases (0912576418)

REPORTING TIPS

- Journalists covering rumors that the pandemic is over should focus on sourcing information from organizations providing medical assistance to low-income families and individuals. Such organizations are field-based and have a wealth of information on the realities on the ground, including case numbers. This may be complimented with information from to academic and research institutions e.g. the Institute of Endemic Diseases
- Journalists in Sudan should source information from COVID-19 victims, survivors, and medical professionals working in hospitals and isolation centers. Journalists should shed light on their stories in a balanced and professional manner. It is important to respect a patient's desire for anonymity.
- When interviewing these types of sources, journalists should follow all the suggested preventive measures to avoid infecting themselves and others.



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Please contact Internews' Media Liaison Officer Mr. Hassan Ahmed Berkia (hberkia@internews.org) for support and further information.



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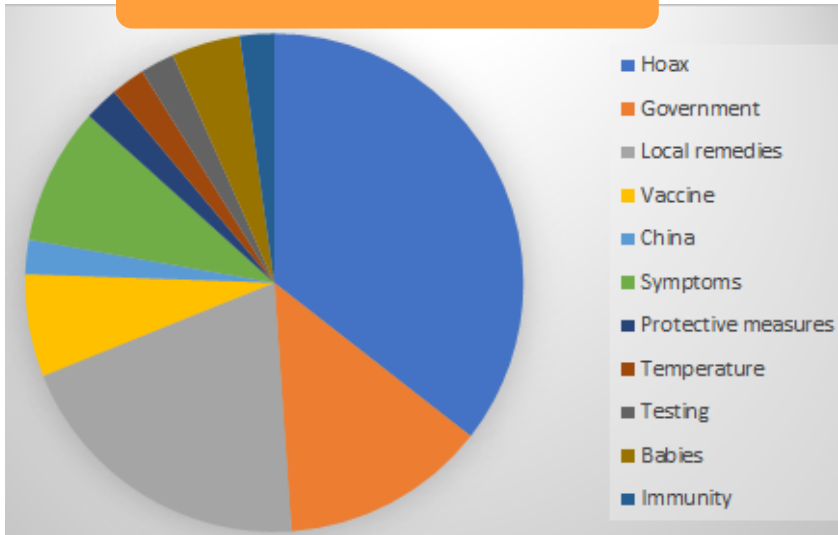


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MEDIA BULLETIN

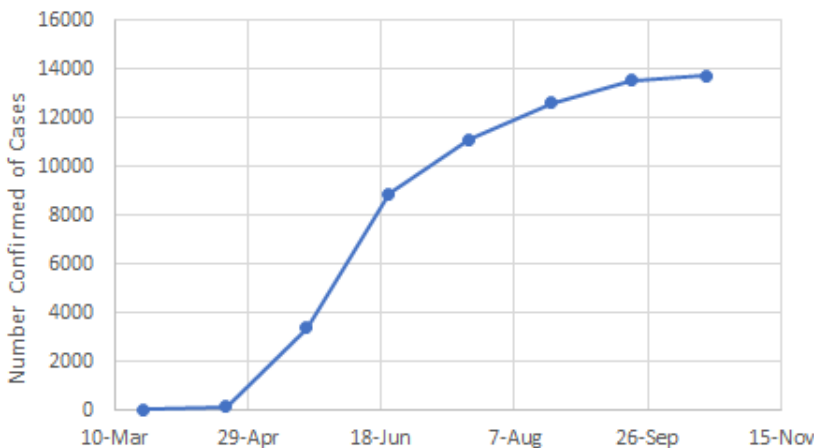
Combating rumours is an important step in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

TOP RUMOR THEMES



Thematic breakdown of 45 COVID-19 social media rumors collected between 5 and 22 October, 2020.

THE REALITY OF COVID-19 IN SUDAN



REPORTING TIPS

- For more statistics on COVID-19 in Sudan, please consult the [Sudanese Medical Observatory](#) and [Johns Hopkins University](#) websites.
- For further information on preventative measures for journalists covering the pandemic, see the [Committee to Protect Journalists' safety advisory](#).
- Combatting false information is just as important as combatting COVID-19. Do not publish any information before verifying it! Social media users often share false and misleading information. Journalists should always double-check and investigate to make sure any information found online is accurate.
- Journalists should avoid causing fear or panic when covering the story, paying special attention to providing balanced and in-depth coverage.
- Sudanese journalists should refer to the Sudanese Health Ministry and World Health Organization, and if necessary correct and verify prevalent rumors.



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