

RUMOR BULLETIN #3

RUMOR TRACKING UPDATE FOR JOURNALISTS #3 | NOVEMBER 2020



Internews

WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY SAY?

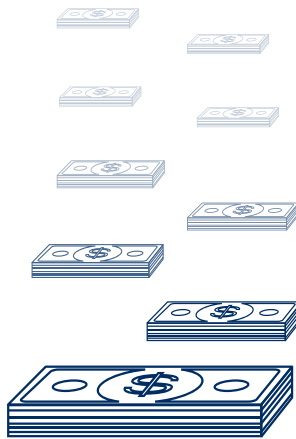
Word of mouth rumor circulating through Ipiales, November 2020



¿SCAMS BETWEEN MIGRANTS?

"Venezuelan associations are demanding 10% of the financial aid that migrants in Ipiales receive through humanitarian assistance."

This comment has been spread by word of mouth between migrants who reside or have recently arrived in Ipiales, and has even been investigated by local journalists. This rumor has gone viral in Nariño and is creating distrust among migrants and associations that have been formed to offer assistance and guidance to those arriving in Colombia through the southern border and disrupts possibilities of building stable social ties among migrants.



TIPS FOR JOURNALISTS

- ✓ **Investigate** thoroughly, do not allow your objectivity to be affected by the emotionality implicit in the rumors.
- ✓ **Remind** your audience that only through formal complaints can authorities investigate and verify information.
- ✓ **Find out** from the Mayor's Office of Ipiales (the inspection and monitoring body for social organizations in that city) whether there have been any findings in the management of migrant associations in the city.
- ✓ **Be aware** that in situations of humanitarian crisis, misinformation can burden assistance programs and reinforce the isolation of migrant populations in a context of xenophobia and mistrust of local authorities and humanitarian actor.
- ✓ **Please note** that not all information received is worth being told. A piece of news is always a verified fact. Do not fall into speculation. It is important to report facts of corruption as long as you can confirm them.
- ✓ **Report** independently, especially if you find yourself mistrusting certain source.

Internews' **Rooted in Trust** project, funded by USAID, seeks to respond to the "infodemic" (misinformation, fake news, rumors, and excess information) that deepens discrimination and affects access to basic services and assistance for vulnerable communities in Nariño. It is directed in particular towards the migrant and LGBTQI+ population of Ipiales and Tumaco.

FACTS

- ➔ To date, the Attorney General's Office in Nariño has not received any claims of extortion against the Venezuelan population on behalf of the migrant associations in Ipiales.
- ➔ In Ipiales there are 4 associations of Venezuelans that migrants can go to: Association Bienestar Migrante (Solidarios Contigo); Organization Asubifuy; Organization Venezuela Migrantes por el Mundo; y Organization Casa del Migrante.
- ➔ The law has established a discount of up to 25% of the amount in income tax for Non-governmental organisations that receive funds from international cooperations.
- ➔ On August, 17 people who pertain to a network of human traffickers/smugglers and were charging migrants for crossing the Colombo-Ecuadorian border were captured. Among the people detained was the director of the Risk Management Office of the municipality of Ipiales and the manager of the Transit Terminal in the municipality. Both were later released without charges remain connected to the process. Another 8 people captured are going to jail, but none of those pertain to migrant organizations.
- ➔ At the beginning of November, Migración Colombia captured an immigration official in Ipiales for crimes of extortion and human trafficking/smuggling. The migrant population is the victim in this case, not the perpetrator.
- ➔ In the past week, several leaders of Venezuelan associations have denounced threats to the officials after these rumors were spread among the migrant population.
- ➔ The Interagency Group of Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM, platform that brings together humanitarian organizations in the department) began a public campaign to help migrants bring forth cases in which they have been victim to fraud or scams. At present, there are no concrete cases.

Sources:
Attorney General of Colombia
Direct interviews with migrant organizations

SUGGESTED CONTACT

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ETHICS IS AN INSEPARABLE COMPANION

"Ethics is not an occasional condition but must always accompany journalism like the buzzing of a blowfly."

- Gabriel García Marquez. *The best job in the world* (1996)

WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY SAY?



Male
Comment on Facebook, november 2020

¿FREE COVID-19 VACCINE?

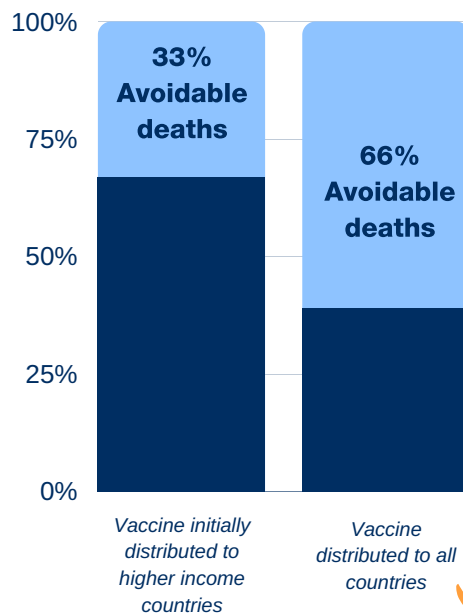
“This is truly the joke of the year, free vaccines, ha ha ha, they will be so expensive, almost inaccessible.”

Doubts concerning the vaccine against COVID-19 are very much present on social media. In Nariño, people have expressed their worries about the access and universality of the possible vaccine. The population is scared that if a vaccine deemed successful, it won't reach the south of the country, and additionally, it will be arduous to obtain with restricted means of circulation.

TIPS FOR JOURNALISTS

- ✓ **Explain** to your audience what COVAX is, and why it is important that Colombia is among the coalition of 176 countries for distribution equalization of vaccinations.
- ✓ **Remember** that Colombia already has confidentiality agreements with 6 of the companies producing the vaccine, including laboratories that are at the forefront of the global process: Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Janssen, Sinopharm, CanSino and the Serum Institute from India.
- ✓ **Emphasize** that COVID-19 is new for everyone, including pharmaceuticals, and the constant work against the clock to obtain a vaccine also prioritizes the reduction of secondary effects to a minimum.

Projection of COVID deaths according to vaccine distribution



Source: [gatesfoundation.org](https://www.gatesfoundation.org)

SUGGESTED CONTACT

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HOW WE DO IT

The Venga le Cuenta Rumor Bulletin is produced through the analysis of rumors collected by the Colombian team as part of the Rooted in Trust project. In the period of October 31st - November 15th of this year, the team collected 89 rumors, 71 from social media sources and 18 from other sources. The rumors discussed here were selected through a risk analysis that brings to the forefront the disinformation with the highest risk and potential impact on the communities of Ipiales and Tumaco, which are the target communities of the Rooted in Trust Colombia project.

FACTS

- ➔ [The COVAX Alliance](#) (collaboration for equal global access to the COVID-19 vaccine) is a global coordination initiative that aims to accelerate the development and production of tests, treatments and vaccines against the coronavirus and guarantee equal access for everyone in all countries.
- ➔ COVAX, co-directed by the Alliance for Vaccine Production (Gavi), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparation Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organization (WHO), aim to produce a total of 2 billion doses of the vaccine for the end of 2021, with which the most vulnerable populations in the world would be covered. [Colombia is one of the countries that has requested to be part of the COVAX Alliance.](#)
- ➔ Additionally, Colombia also has agreements with the six pharmaceutical companies that are leading the development of the COVID-19 vaccine. The Ministry of Health has announced that [the vaccine will be distributed free of charge through the general social security system in Colombia.](#) The application of the vaccine will be gradual. Initially it will be applied to the most vulnerable populations, such as people over 60 years of age, health workers, and those suffering from other comorbidities.
- ➔ The fear that the vaccine for COVID-19 will not have equal distribution is legitimate. According to projections by Northeastern University's Laboratory for Modeling Biological and Socio-Technical Systems (MOBS LAB), if the COVID-19 vaccine is distributed equally to all countries, 66% of deaths from the disease could be prevented. However, if the vaccine is distributed first to high-income countries, this percentage would drop to 33%.

Sources:
World Health Organization
Ministry of Health of Colombia



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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Local voices. Global change.

We welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions to help local media produce reliable and accurate reports on COVID-19. Contact: **Natalia Cabrera**,
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