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AFRICA CDC

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

Safeguarding Africa's Health

Africa CDC Rumor Tracking Report

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This report represents the main highlights of media coverage and analysis from Sunday – Saturday, August 16-22, 2020.
For a more extensive view of the database and dashboard used to compile findings, please reference the [Novetta Mission Analytics](#) platform

Rumor Tracking Categorization Tool



Questions to assess the potential consequences

- Could it cause harm?
- Could it stop people accessing services?
- Could it cause conflict?
- Could it result in risky behavior?
- Could it put your staff, partners and communities at risk?
- Could it stigmatize certain groups?
- Could it pose a significant reputational risk?



What severity of consequence does this rumor fall under?

- **Major** (urgent, high impact)
- **Moderate** (concerning, could have lasting effect)
- **Minor** (potential to develop into something larger)



Rumor Tracking Classification: Summary of Major Consequences

Focus of highest traction rumors from August 16-22, 2020

“@Malebohm: RT @simba_Mwinyi: President John Magufuli and officers at his ministry of health endorsed local herbs and use of ginger, garlic and lemon to treat covid-19. Covidol has however has not been approved as a covid-19 treatment in Tanzania or elsewhere in the world. Covid-19 still has no vaccine.” (Aug 23) (Eastern Africa - Tanzania)



Implication: Covidol, though already disproved as an ineffective and false treatment, could reemerge as viable treatment.

“Watch the video and wake up COVID 19 IS A SCAM FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. Stop believing that there is a pandemic. This is all a world dictatorship with a public health excuse. The elite's plan is to reduce the world population to 80%. Beware of the vaccine being published contains a product that can take many lives. Wake up, save your life and that of your family. Get rid of masks, isolation everything is a scam. Doctors were instructed to speed up numbers and deceive the population (...).” (Aug 20) (Southern Africa - Mozambique) ([Link](#))



Implication: Classist conspiracy theories regarding COVID-19 have grown in magnitude and claim that elite society plans to reduce the world population to 80% through the vaccine.

“@ahmaged: QT @AIMasryAIYoum: A country full of experimental animals Refuse, people of the serum, at least 3 years before its use; # Russia announces discussion of exporting # Corona virus vaccine to #Egypt: A very promising and important country” (Aug 23) (Northern Africa - Egypt)

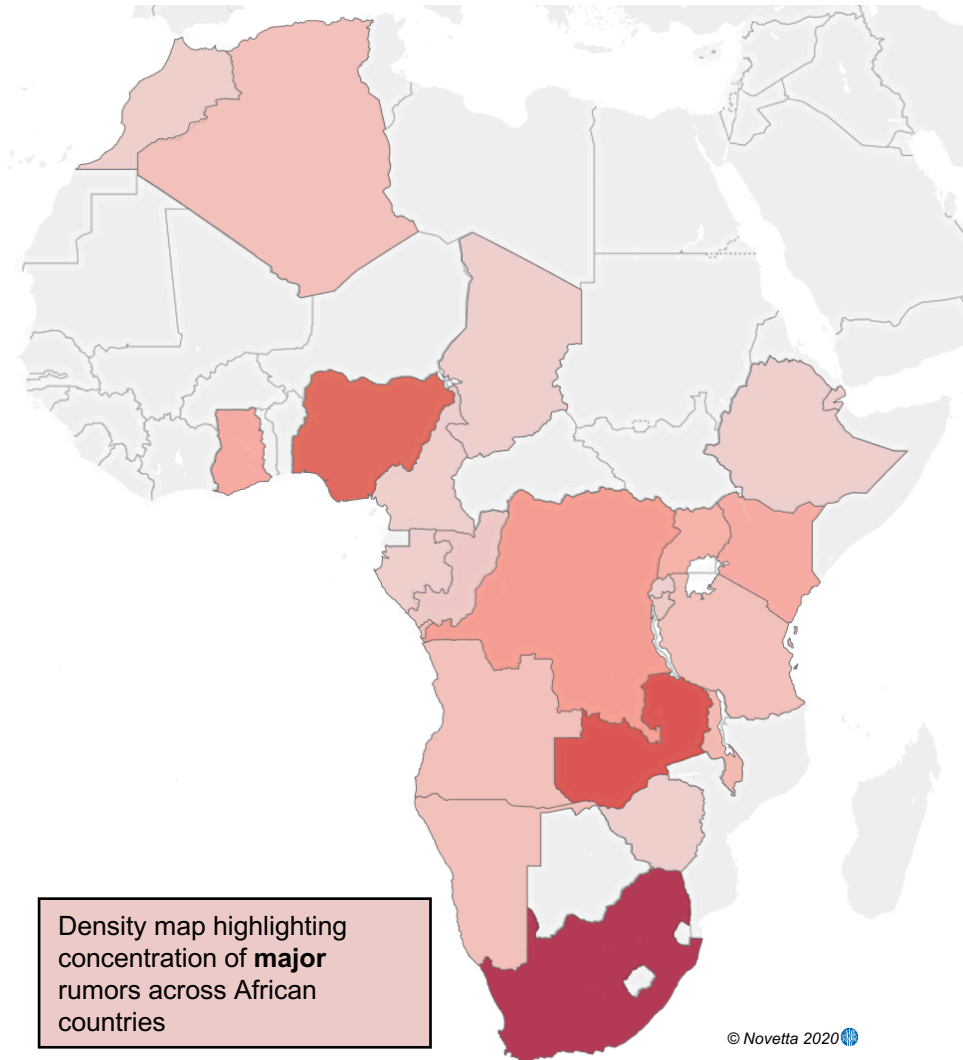


Implication: Waiting 3 years to receive a vaccine is indicative of the strong resistance building against uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine.



Rumor Tracking Classification: Geospatial View of **Major** Consequences

Focus of highest traction rumors from August 16-22, 2020



Analyst Summary:

- Posts and comments categorized **major rumors** had a significant presence in **Tanzania, Mozambique, and Egypt.**

Tracked Response to Major rumors:

- There have been minimal tracked responses to new mentions of Covidol in media.
- There have been minimal tracked responses to theories that the COVID-19 vaccine will wipe out 80% of the world's population.
- There have been minimal tracked responses to advice that civilians should abstain from the COVID-19 vaccine for at least 3 years.



Rumor Tracking Classification: **Moderate** and **Minor** Consequences

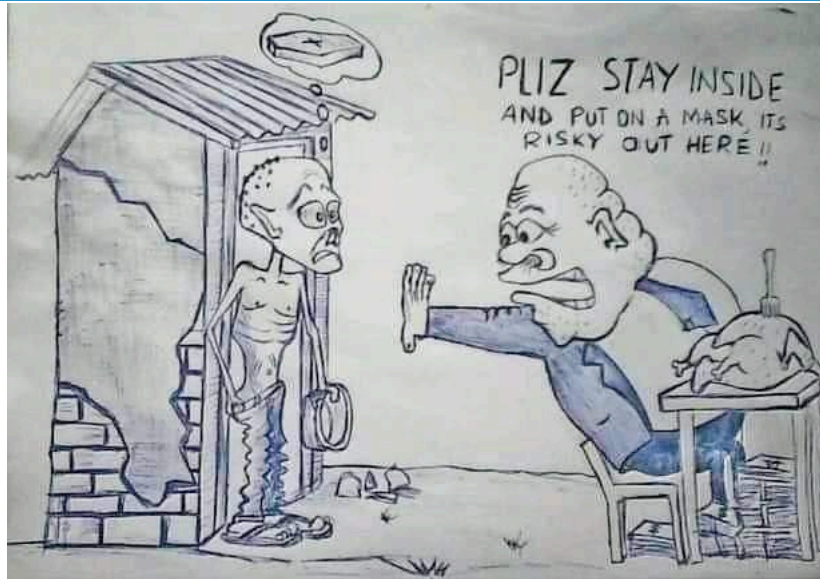
Focus of highest traction rumors from August 16-22, 2020

Top Rumors/Concerning Language	Prevalent Country	Circulation Date(s)	Rumor Traction/Responses
“@5467dieweg: RT @Marita_1010: Uganda and Tanzania are the only 2 countries in Africa with proper leaders. South Africa sold out to Gates for the tracing vaccine. https://t.co/NcxhkKqMGQ ; Uganda was 42 million people HCQ is used liberally for malaria Uganda has 13 deaths from Covid since pandemic began.”	Eastern Africa - Uganda	August 17, 2020	Minimal official response has been tracked in response to this rumor.
“I am not surprised by the recoveries, I know four people who recovered by just steaming with water they added anaconda /scorpion ! Corona is real stop being negative! Even some international doctors proved that steaming can help in curing Corona!”(Link)	Southern Africa - Namibia	August 17, 2020	Minimal official response has been tracked in response to this rumor. Other replies to this comment expressed belief in steam as a treatment to COVID-19.

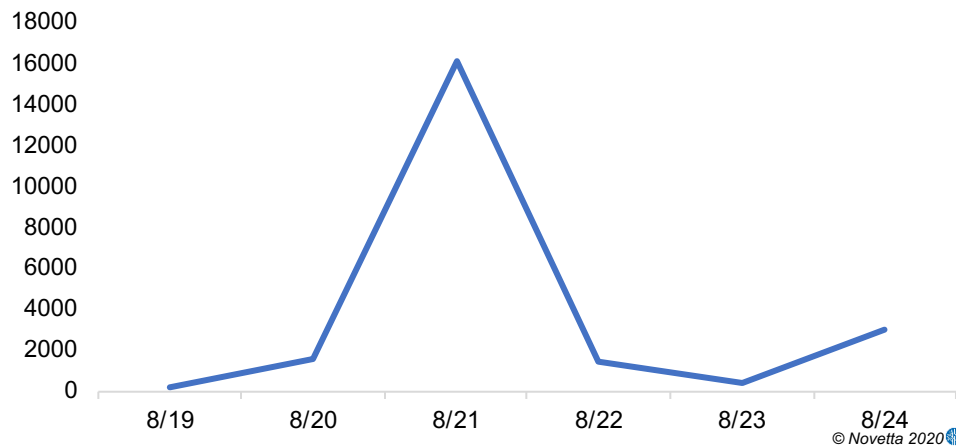
**to stay true to the source, all spelling and grammar is in its original form*



Rumor Focus: #ArrestCOVID19Thieves Demonstration Signals Mounting Tension and Unrest in Kenya



#ArrestCOVID19Thieves Hashtag Traction



Key Takeaway: The arrest of 12 human rights activists at a demonstration protesting the misuse of COVID-19 funds by the Kenyan government illustrates mounting tension and unrest as political mandate and COVID-19 policy become increasingly complicated.

- On Friday, August 21, protestors held demonstrations at Uhuru Park, Nairobi over the alleged misuse of COVID-19 funds in Kenya.
- Police used teargas to disperse protestors, and 12 protestors were arrested and taken to Central Police Station. Police actions have been condemned by the public and a new hashtag emerged in the media space: #ArrestCOVID19Thieves.
- Kenyan citizens have condemned the Kenyan government, President Uhuru Kenyatta, and the following senators for pocketing millions and only “supplying air” to KEMSA (Kenya Medical Supplies Authority). ([Link](#))

- Sen. Johnson Sakaja, CBS, MP;
- Sen. Michael Maling’a Mbiti, MP;
- Sen. Abshiro Soka Halake, MP;
- Sen. Mithika Linturi, MP;
- Sen. Erick Okong’o Mogeni, SC, MP;
- Sen. (Arch.) Sylvia Mueni Kasanga, MP; and
- Sen. Mwinyihaji Mohamed Faki, MP.

- The above list has been retweeted and shared 173 times since August 21st.

Analyst Summary:

- This event highlights the limited margins for governments to keep public support for adherence to public health and social measures, medical treatments, accurate case reporting and testing, and future vaccinations. Rumors and accusations need to be swiftly addressed and corrected.

Africa CDC Rumor Tracking Report Methodology



- **Traditional media analysis:** Research for this report was conducted using African media, as well as human-curated aggregation of open source content from a variety of key African sources. Article- and quote-level metadata was then added in the framework of Novetta Mission Analytics. Results were then culled on the basis of relevance, resulting in a sample of 284 articles from African media outlets from August 16-22, 2020



- **Social media analysis:** Research for this report was conducted using geo-located African Twitter sources, resulting in a set of content from the media listed below. Quote-level metadata was then added in the framework of Novetta Mission Analytics. Results were then culled on the basis of relevance, resulting in a sample of 581 Africa-focused Tweets from August 16-22, 2020.



- **Social media analysis:** Research for this report was conducted using geo-located African Facebook sources, resulting in a set of content from the media listed below. Post and comment level metadata was added in the framework of Novetta Mission Analytics. Results were then culled on the basis of relevance, resulting in the sample of 680 Africa focused Facebook posts from August 16-22, 2020