Aid Security and COVID-19

Latest available information on COVID-19 developments impacting the security of aid work and operations. Access the **data on HDX** to see the events referred to in this bulletin.

General Aid Insecurity and COVID-19

Anti-Foreigner Sentiment

Misinformation targeting foreigners on social media has contributed to an explosion in aggressive rhetoric directed specifically at Europeans and other foreigners working in the aid sector.

Central African Republic

April 2020: Data provided by Novetta indicates that from 1-15 April, **negativity towards the UN and NGOs** constituted around 40% of total non-neutral sentiment. In Ombrella M'Poko, Nana-Grebezi and Mambere-Kadei prefectures, as well as in Bangui, more than 45% of COVID-19 coverage was negative.

Furthermore, a systematic campaign on social media targeting MINUSCA was observable following **a fatal road accident** involving MINUSCA soldiers in the North West on 9 April, which also sparked the destruction of a MINUSCA forward base by local civilians, during which two peacekeepers were injured. The negative sentiment towards continued in the following weeks.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

April 2020: Public trust towards international respondents on social media deteriorated dramatically: by mid-April, **negative sentiment reached around 75% of total monitored social media content related to the international response**, according to monitoring by Novetta. These included expressions of concerns that the Ebola epidemic was not over as well as language associated with hate speech against the organisations involved in tracking the disease and also contained what appears to have been incitement to violence that culminated in attacks on three health facilities in Beni (see below).

Mistrust towards foreign aid continued to be expressed after WFP rice supplies had to be destroyed for being inappropriate for human consumption: **the UN was accused of administering 'poison'** to the Congolese, and of there being plans for the 'extermination' of the local population.

South Sudan

April 2020: Anti-foreigner tensions have continued to increase after a international UN staffer who had come into contact with a COVID-19 patient broke quarantine rules and left the country. This comes after a Dutch UN worker was identified as the country's first confirmed COVID-19 case.

This information bulletin provides the latest available information on COVID-19 developments impacting the security of aid work and operations to help aid agencies meet duty of care obligations to staff and reach people in need.

It is published by Insecurity Insight using verified security incidents from aid agencies and information available in open sources.

It covers threats and violence against aid organisations, and health providers and general insecurity related to COVID-19.

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Insecurity Insight
Data on People in Danger

Accusations on Social Media

- **Profiteering:** Opinions are expressed that health organisations benefit from epidemics, and of using their funding not to eradicate diseases but for their own interests. This has been notably reported in the DRC (see above anti-foreigner sentiment).

- **Undermining indigenous approach:** Widely circulated beliefs have been circulating on social media that international COVID-19 vaccines are being developed to harm Africans, and that 'Westerners' have been trying to sabotage efforts by African scientists working on developing COVID-19 remedies. This has been **mostly observed in the DRC**, but also in the CAR and South Sudan.

Healthcare Insecurity and COVID-19

Threats and Violence Against the COVID-19 Response in the Context of Armed Conflict

Libya

05 April 2020: In Tarhounah city, Al Mourqoub district, the Government of National Accord air force targeted a rebel Libyan National Army plane, which purportedly was carrying COVID-19 medical assistance.

06 April 2020: In Tripoli city and district, Tripolitania, shelling fired by suspected Libyan National Army forces hit the Al Khadra hospital, causing damage to the hospital. The hospital was treating COVID-19 patients.

Myanmar

20 April 2020: In Minbya Township, Mrauk-U District, Rakhine State, a marked WHO vehicle transporting COVID-19 testing samples came under attack, resulting in the death of the driver. A healthcare worker was also injured in the accident. Both Myanmar's army and the non-state armed actor group United League of Arakan Army denied responsibility for the attack and accused each other.

Yemen

08 April 2020: In Al Malagim district, al Bayda governorate, two medical quarantine centres were hit by airstrikes.

Threats and Violence Against Health Workers During Health Interventions

This is an update covering the events reported between 6 to 28 April 2020. For previously reported incidents, please see Bulletin 3.

Conducting COVID-19 Screening and Testing

- Attacks have been reported from India, Nigeria. **Access data**.
- In Sudan, doctors were assaulted by military forces after the military refused to observe the screening measures set-up to control the spread of coronavirus. **Access data**

Overlooking Quarantined Civilians

- Attacks have been reported from Azerbaijan, Benin, and India. **Access data**

Speaking Out

- In India and the US, reports of threats of dismissal in retaliation for speaking out in public about the lack of personal protective equipment have emerged local residents pelted health workers with rocks during the burial of a former COVID-19 patient. **Access data**

Burials

- In Peru, local residents pelted health workers with rocks during the burial of a former COVID-19 patient. **Access data**

Threats and Violence Against Health Providers
This is an update covering the events reported between 6 to 28 April 2020. For previously reported incidents, please see Bulletin 3.

Democratic Republic of the Congo
Since mid-April, in Beni three health centres have been attacked and vandalised, while surveillance and vaccination teams and vehicles belonging to international organisations have been threatened and stopped, having an adverse impact on their work. These attacks have been reported against a background of suspicions by the local population that the recent resurgence of Ebola in the country is proof that pandemics are financially lucrative for international organisations.

Threats and Violence Targeting Health Facilities
This is an update covering the events reported between 6 to 28 April 2020. For previously reported incidents, please see Bulletin 3.

Opening of Isolation Centres
- Latest reports indicate that in Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Peru, Venezuela, local communities protested against the opening of quarantine centres for possible COVID-19 in their area. **Access data**

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