Social Media Monitoring
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Rumours and Allegations Trending on Social Media

Bulletin 6
June 2020

This week: Threats and misinformation targeting international humanitarian organisations continue unabated, at times compounded by allegations circulating in Europe.

Misinformation and threats targeting international humanitarian organisations:

Speech in Italian parliament targeting Bill Gates and WHO finds traction in African social media.
- On 14 May, Italian deputy Sara Cunia alleged that vaccines funded by Bill Gates, the "primary financier of the WHO", have resulted in the "sterilisation of millions of African women" as part of Gates' plan to decrease the world's population.

  These allegations by a European member of parliament found resonance on African social media in Angola and the DRC, where misinformation targeting the WHO and Bill Gates - often construed as the face of humanitarianism - features on a regular basis. Such rumours are bound to reinforce existing community resistance to local vaccination campaigns.

Humanitarian organisations accused of being behind Ebola resurgence.
- More than a month after the reappearance of Ebola in North Kivu, which had led to riots in Beni targeting Ebola treatment centres, mistrust about the causes of this sudden resurgence continues to be subject to misinformation.

  Veranda Mutsanga has recently claimed to have information of plans by the Ebola response team in Beni to activate a new Ebola outbreak. The vigilante organisation insinuated that the plan involved an escaped Ebola patient, who is still unaccounted for.

Threats if demands for the resignation of Ebola response coordinator in Beni are not met.
- Possibly compounded by rumours and insinuations that the Ebola response in Beni may have been responsible for the escape of an Ebola patient from a treatment centre, the vigilante group Veranda Mutsanga threatened "appropriate" action if the Ebola response coordinator in Beni is not changed. Veranda Mutsanga was behind a riot on 16 April which resulted in **the attack of at least three ETCs in Beni**.

Insecurity Insight

Public confrontation between Madagascar's president and the WHO over COVID Organics framed in neocolonialist discourse on social media.

- False rumours of Madagascar withdrawing from the WHO are being shared extensively on social media. According to this misinformation, the president of Madagascar Andry Ranoelina withdrew from the international body saying that "Europe has created organisations with the objective of keeping the Africans dependent on them".

  The **government of Madagascar** has been promoting COVID Organics - a herbal potion mainly based on artemisia - as an 'African solution' to COVID-19, and has been sending much-publicised donations of the product to African countries. However, the WHO has refused to endorse the remedy, warning about the lack of underpinning clinical evidence, drawing criticism from president Rajoelina, claiming that "the problem is that it comes from Africa".

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