

Security Media Trends

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Trends and insights from social media monitoring

Bulletin 4

April 2020

As COVID-19 spreads in North-Eastern DRC, humanitarian organisations face a delicate and complex situation on the ground as they struggle to shore up a **dilapidated** local healthcare system, made worse by the **resurgence** of Ebola and the intensification of local **armed conflicts** and concomitant **internal displacements** of civilians since the end of 2019.

Key Trends

Deteriorating Humanitarian Context Fuels Mistrust Towards International Organisations

- New Ebola case - reported **two days before** the WHO was planning to declare an end to Ebola in the DRC - has been met with accusations that foreign NGOs are seeking to sustain the “Ebola business”.
- This situation has been compounded by the widely-shared reports of the **destruction of 296 tons of rice** supplies by the WFP, after Congolese authorities declared the supplies as inappropriate for human consumption. Social media posts have been shared accusing the UN of administering ‘poison’ to the Congolese, and of there being plans for the ‘extermination’ of the local population.^{1 2}
- The WHO has been accused of being hijacked by donors pursuing their own financial and ideological interests.

Future Covid-19 Vaccination Programmes Will Face Resistance to Implementation

- As was the case during the Ebola epidemic, COVID-19 vaccines are suspected by locals of being developed to harm Africans.
- Rumours are circulating that a Congolese scientist in Madagascar has discovered an African remedy to COVID-19, despite “efforts by the WHO and Westerners to [...] to sabotage the remedy”.

Deterioration of Public Trust in the Ebola Response Informs the Evolution of the Security Situation

- Attitudes towards international responders in Beni deteriorated significantly following the announcement of a new Ebola case on 10 April. By 16 April, negative sentiment reached around 75% of total content related to the international response.

This bulletin shares key trends and insights from media monitoring carried out by Novetta Mission Analytics (NMA) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It has been developed by Insecurity Insight and **Novetta**, using Novetta Mission Analytics to **deliver** near real-time pattern and behavioural analysis of social, print, and broadcast media (radio and television) content and incident data.

Visit our **website** for further security related information for aid agencies in the context of the Covid-19 epidemic.

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For more details on social media monitoring, please get in touch and we can share additional information -

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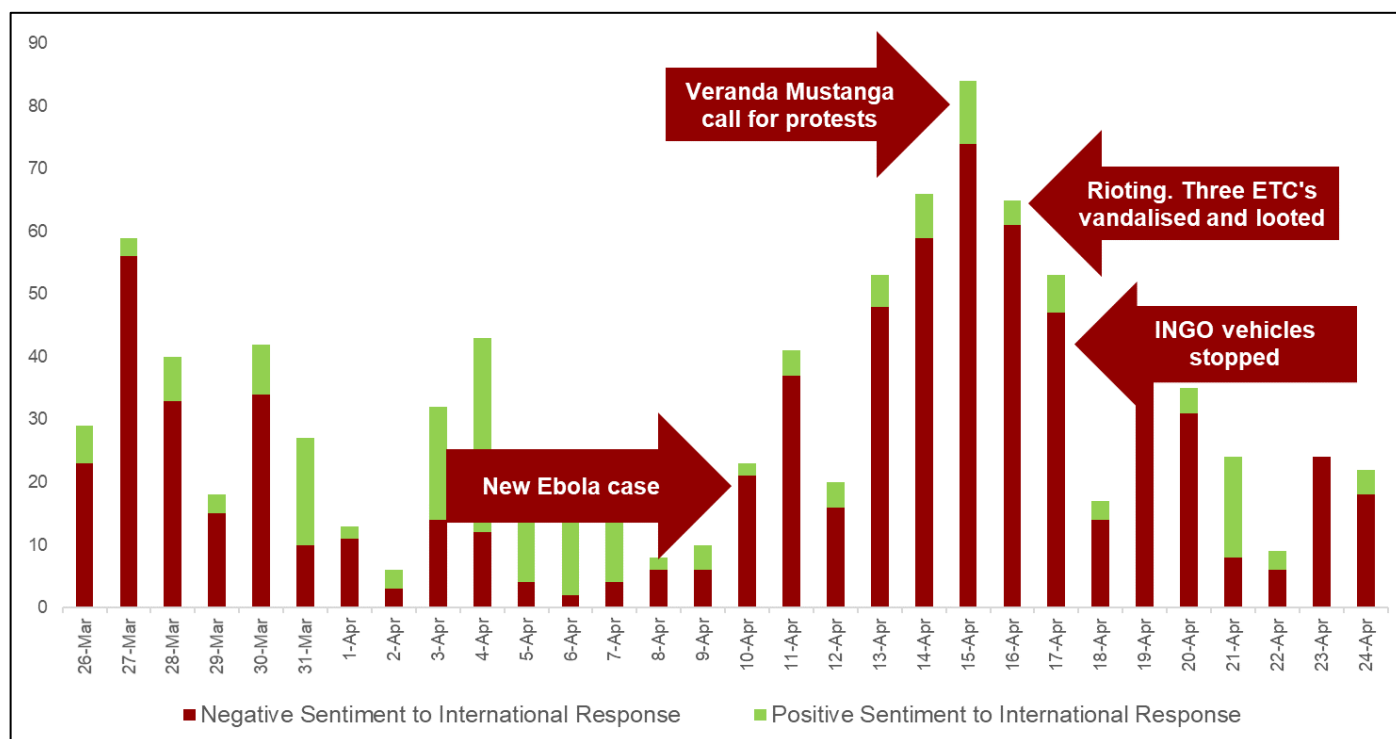
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- Civil society groups in Beni initially reacted to the new cases in disbelief, calling for **additional testing**. However, as negative sentiment grew, they organised demonstrations.
- On 16 April, riots organised by Veranda Mutsanga ensued in Beni, during which three ETC's were attacked, vandalised, and looted.
- On 17 April, threats of violence were directed at vehicles belonging to international organisations. In one case, the vehicle was reportedly stopped.

Sentiment on Social Media Towards International Responders

This chart shows the breakdown between positive and negative sentiments towards international responders in monitored Beni social media channels from 26 March to 24 April 2020.



¹ "PAM une organisation sataniste, il nous amene du Poison". Shared at least 182 times on social media.

² Il y'un plan d'extermination du peuple de Beni Lubero

Coming Soon!

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In this 10-min mobile guide, learn how to implement appropriate security risk management measures to enable public health emergency actors and healthcare workers to effectively address security challenges during a public health emergency response or outbreak.

Join our **Attacks on Healthcare** mailing list to find out when the guide goes live.