

## Examples Indonesia: Countering COVID-19-Related Misinformation

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has prepared and published a guide that explains how scientists can work collaboratively across scientific disciplines and sectors to identify and address inaccuracies that could fuel mis- and disinformation about biological threats.<sup>1</sup> The creation and spread of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, in general or building on inaccurate, misleading, misinterpreted, and/or hyped scientific information, can result in social and individual harms. Within the public health context, the consequences of false claims can vary from limiting response efforts such as poor vaccination rates, mask-wearing, and cooperation with health aid workers to affecting national and regional efforts to detect, assess, and control outbreaks and epidemics.

This document describes examples of identifying and countering misinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic from Indonesia. The efforts to counter false claims during the pandemic may inform future efforts for countering misinformation.

Misinformation Events	Efforts to Detect and Counter False Claims	Reference
<p>As of August 8, 2020, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo) recorded the spread of about 1,028 hoaxes related to COVID-19 disinformation on social media platforms.</p> <p>Details of the hoaxes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>January - 40 hoaxes</li><li>February - 100 hoaxes</li><li>March - 265 hoaxes</li><li>April - 219 hoaxes</li><li>May - 172 hoaxes</li><li>June - 102 hoaxes</li><li>July - 108 hoaxes</li><li>August - as many as 22 hoaxes</li></ul>	<p>The Ministry's cyber-crime division continuously monitors social media and news outlets for false claims about COVID-19. The official website (Covid19.go.id) is a collaboration between Kominfo and the Ministry of Health.</p> <p>Kominfo provides validated data, the sources of which can be checked and confirmed. This process enables openness to and participation of the public.</p>	<p><i>Kominfo News 12 August 2020.</i> <a href="#">URL</a></p>
<p>The Center for Digital Society (CfDS) of the Universitas Gadjah Mada (UMG) conducted a survey on public perceptions about the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine in February 2021. The survey results suggested that most Indonesians access information about the COVID-19 pandemic through social media channels, a large majority of whom continuously visit channels perpetuating conspiracy theories. These theories reinforce public views such as the vaccines are made to benefit pharmaceutical companies, or the microchips are delivered to people through vaccines.</p>		<p><i>A. Nugroho (2021). "Membaca Persepsi Masyarakat terhadap Vaksin COVID-19. Translation: Reading Society Perception towards COVID-19"; Report released from University of Gadjah Mada.</i> <a href="#">URL</a></p>

<sup>1</sup> See <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/26466/interactive/>

Misinformation Events	Efforts to Detect and Counter False Claims	Reference
<p>CfDS also conducted an analysis of tweets and posts on various social media platforms, which revealed 18,400 tweets containing the phrases “reject vaccines” or “anti-vaccines” between March 2020 and February 2021. Platforms that use audio and video can amplify messages about rejecting the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine.</p>		
<p>The Hoax Buster channel on the Indonesian Government’s website (<a href="http://www.covid19.go.id">www.covid19.go.id</a>) classified types of the content of hoaxes in news items into four groups: misleading, manipulated, false and fabricated. During a four-month period, this channel classified a majority of the hoaxes on news sources as misleading, i.e., accurate information that is twisted and reshaped to provide a different, possibly misleading, narrative. This information is spread among the population informing public opinion. As information about the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine coverage increased, so too did the number of false claims about the vaccine.</p>	<p>The Hoax Buster channel provided accurate information to counter the hoaxes and serve as a clarifying and an educational platform.</p>	<p>C.W. Priastuty et.al. (2020). “Hoaks tentang Vaksin COVID-19 di tengah Media Sosial. Proceedings of National Seminar of UNIMUS, Vol. 3, 2020. E-ISSN: 2654-3168. Translation: Hoax about COVID-19 Vaccine within Social Media. <a href="#">URL</a></p>
<p>The Provincial Office of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo Manado) conducted a survey about hoaxes during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the survey, the online media shares the false news followed by social media, television, instant messaging, and government websites. Online media sources spread information with lesser accuracy and verified data more quickly than conventional media, which can cause misperception and misinterpretation of facts.</p> <p>During the pandemic, most of the claims were health related but some politically-related claims were spread. Prevalent motivations for spreading false claims were economic and social.</p>	<p>The article shared several methods for identifying false claims spread through the news:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checking the sources</li> <li>• Checking titles for accuracy and/or exaggeration</li> <li>• Checking the source credits of images to check their accuracy and relevance</li> <li>• Verify information on other, authoritative websites</li> <li>• Check accuracy of the information provided</li> </ul>	<p>D.H. Santoso (2020). “Hoax di Tengah Pandemi COVID-19. Book of COVID-19 dalam Ragam Tinjauan Perspektif, pp. 451-460; Editors: D.H. Santoso &amp; A. Santosa; MBridge Press; 2020 Translation: Hoax in the Midst of COVID-19 Pandemic; COVID-19 in Various Perspective Reviews. <a href="#">URL</a></p>
<p>A survey conducted in Indonesia found that while respondents could identify</p>	<p>The authors recommended collaboration between government,</p>	<p><i>Christiany Juditha (2020). Perilaku</i></p>

Misinformation Events	Efforts to Detect and Counter False Claims	Reference
<p>hoaxes about the COVID-19 pandemic, they still struggled with distinguishing the false information from accurate information.</p>	<p>nongovernmental, and community-based institutions to counter hoaxes through social media and instant messaging to minimize the spread of false claims among the public. They also suggested creation of an active, trusted online resource that provides accurate information.</p>	<p><i>Masyarakat terkait Penyebaran Hoaks COVID-19. Jurnal Pekommas, Vol. 5 No. 2, Oktober 2020, p. 105 – 116. <a href="#">DOI</a></i></p>
<p>The Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information (KOMINFO) and Katadata Insight Center conducted a national survey about online misinformation. The survey revealed that nearly three quarters of respondents, who primarily receive their information through social media, could not recognize misinformation. Misinformation can spread fear, anxiety, and false medications to others.</p> <p>The article states that false information about health, politics, and religion are particularly challenging to counter.</p> <p>KOMINFO estimates at least five new false claims that need to be countered with corrective information are identified daily on online platforms.</p>	<p>MAFINDO is an organization in Indonesia that works to fact check false news online and increase digital literacy. MAFINDO worked with UNICEF during the COVID-19 pandemic. They produced 870 articles evaluating online COVID-19 content and provided media literacy training.</p> <p>UNICEF established the Inoculation Project to address misinformation and tracks COVID-19 sentiments and mentions on social media platforms in Indonesia via a digital dashboard.</p> <p>When the COVID-19 vaccination program was declared, UNICEF issued “confidence messaging” and warnings about receipt of false information about the vaccine, equipping people with information to counter future misinformation.</p>	<p>Countering an ‘infodemic’ amid a pandemic (May 2021) UNICEF and partners respond to COVID-19 misinformation, one hoax at a time. <a href="#">URL</a></p>
	<p>UNICEF worked with 17 Indonesian universities to train students to monitor misinformation and behavior. They provided a real-time monitoring platform, RapidPro, which displays information about pandemic compliance measures. Students were engaged in identifying areas that are at low, middle, and high risks of SARS-CoV-2 transmission and monitoring public behaviors.</p>	<p>University students bolster COVID-19 prevention; article by Hafiz Al Asad, UNICEF Communication Officer. <a href="#">URL</a></p>