

# CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

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## THE DANGERS OF MISINFORMATION

During high profile global events like the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus, it is unfortunate that some people may create and disseminate content that contains false or exaggerated information.

This “fake” information can often be very convincing and appear true, which can make this type of misinformation potentially harmful and provocative.



Misinformation about the COVID-19 coronavirus has resulted in certain groups of people facing unnecessary stigma and discrimination and is even believed to be the cause of a violent riot that broke out in the Ukraine mid-February, after a false email about the virus was widely circulated.

During a recent speech in Munich, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, had the following to say on the dangers of spreading and consuming misinformation:

“But we’re not just fighting an epidemic; we’re fighting an infodemic.

Fake news spreads faster and more easily than this virus, and is just as dangerous.

That’s why we’re also working with search and media companies like Facebook, Google, Pinterest, Tencent, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube and others to counter the spread of rumours and misinformation.

We call on all governments, companies and news organizations to work with us to sound the appropriate level of alarm, without fanning the flames of hysteria.”

The Director-General expressed his belief that it is not the disease itself that we should be concerned about so much as the stigmatisation and discrimination being caused around it that would set us one against the other.

Reliable sources for information about the COVID-19 virus include the following websites:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>