

# VACCINE MIS/DISINFORMATION

WEEKLY REPORT

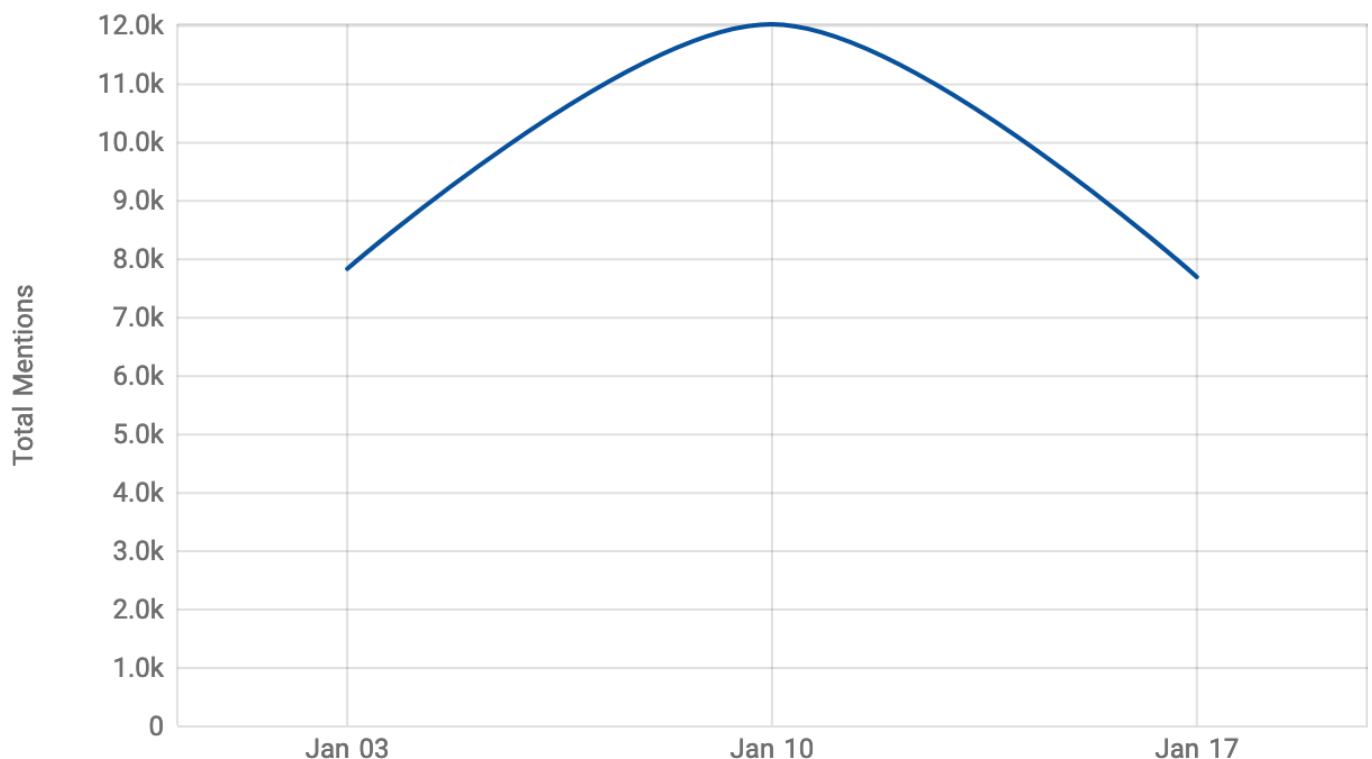
This Vaccine Mis/Disinformation report looks into the last four weeks of social media conversations. These were driven by: conspiracy theories, ways to apparently cleanse oneself of the vaccine, vaccine mandate controversies, and questions about the vaccine's effectiveness.

## 20 January Summary:

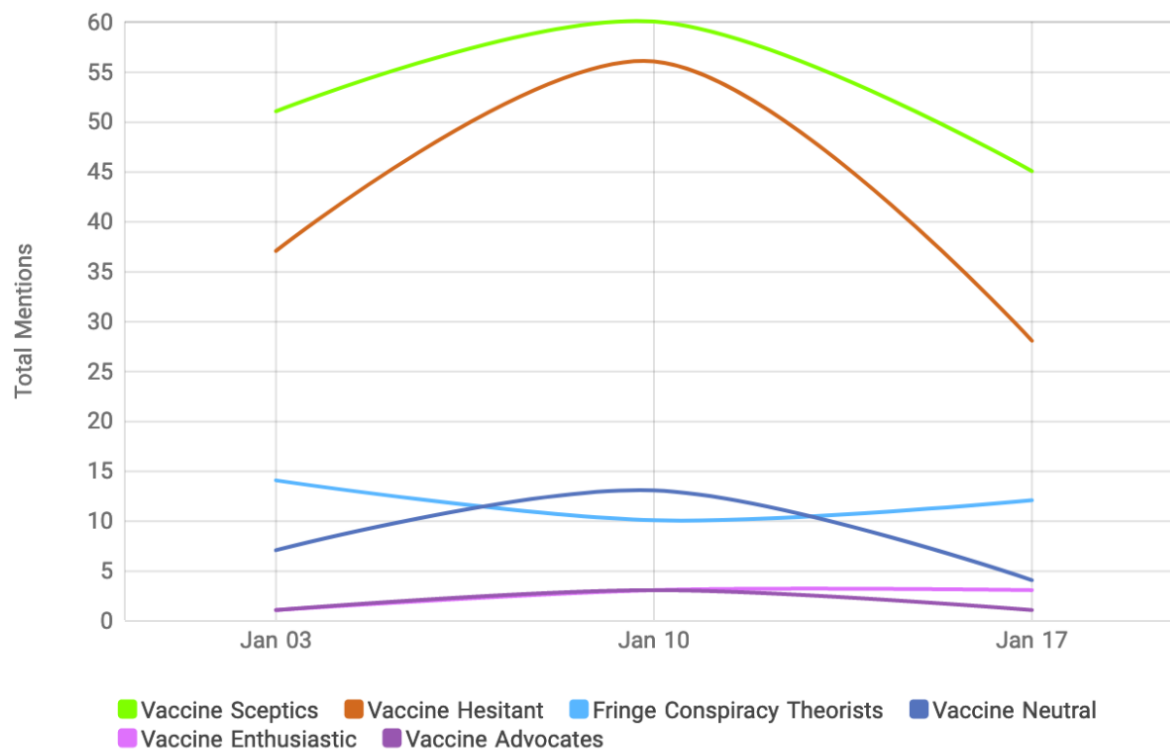
- **Wild conspiracy theories**
- **Justice for Zakhele Goqo / ACDP**
- **Detoxing from the vaccine**
- **Vaccine apartheid and vaccine expiry dates**
- **Vaccine effectiveness and natural immunity of children**
- **Controversies around vaccine mandates**

### Part 1

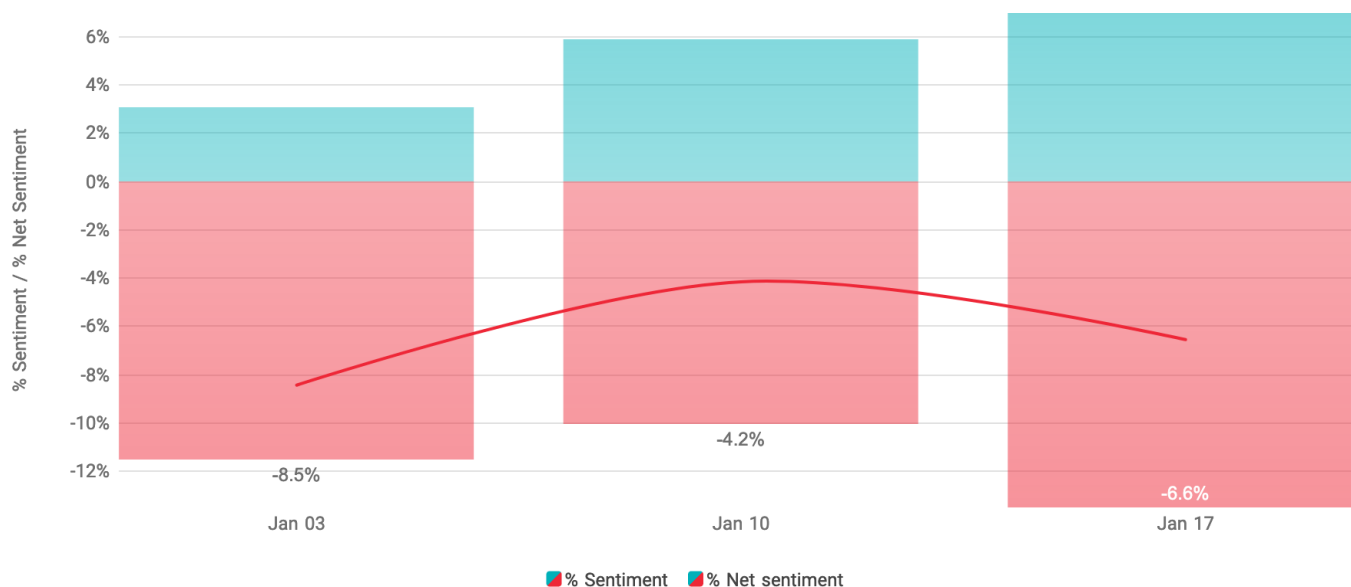
Over the last week, Twitter conversations regarding the COVID-19 vaccine gained considerable traction in terms of volume. See the graph below:



The graph below illustrates the different tones of the Twitter online conversation according to our vaccine trust spectrum. It noting that that vaccine hesitancy and vaccine skepticism have been the most prominent:

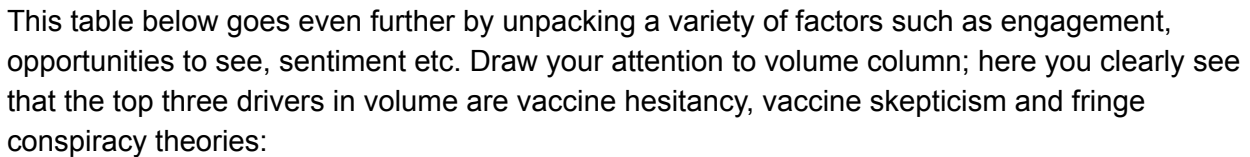


The graph below shows the overall net sentiment of mentions over the last week. The blue indicates positive sentiments and the red indicates negative sentiments. Most of the sentiments over this period have been in the negative zone:



The graph below is another example of this. The green line represents negative sentiment:





## Part 2

#covid19 #vaccinesideeffects #vaccinesavelives #vaccineswork #novaccinepassport #covid19vaccine #nogreenpass #ivermectin #novaccine mandates #vaccinesaveslives #sabcnews #stopthestread #getvaccinated #comment #pfizer #science #booster #covidvaccination #covid19sa #omnicron #coronavirus #playyourpart #donotcomply #mandatoryvaccination #getvaccinatedsa #ausopen #genderequality #covid\_19 #vaccinedeaths #sunneterra #vaccines #passaportesanitarioao #staysafe #covidvaccine #vaccinemandate #vaccinated #ichooseevaccination #djokovic #israel #sarscov2 #novak\_djokovic #moderna #noalpasanitario #southafrica #vaccineequity



As discussed in Part 1, recent online conversations have been largely driven by vaccine hesitancy and vaccine skepticism. This section will unpack some of the top trending issues that were picked up by our analysts. These topics will also be accompanied by dialogue facilitation suggestions highlighted in *italics*:

## Wild conspiracy theories

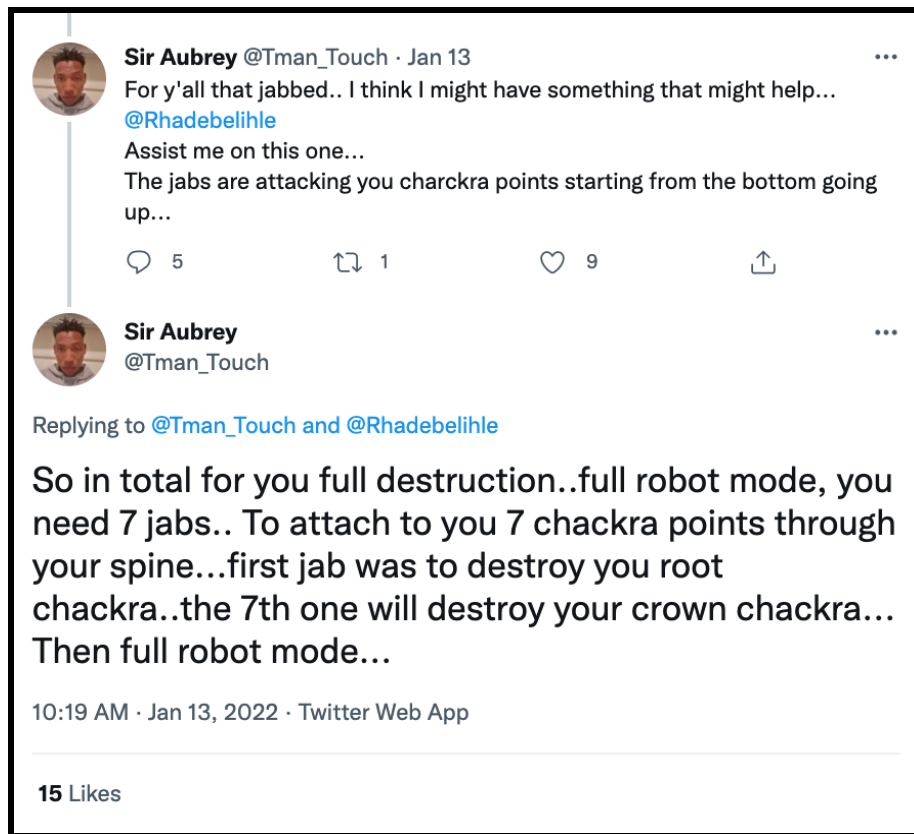
Fringe conspiracy theories have been making the rounds online. This bizarre [tweet](#) below claims that the vaccine will turn people into zombies:



### Suggested Responses

- I always wanted to be in a Zombie movie! Jokes aside, there is absolutely nothing true about this and is indeed a very wild conspiracy theory. What makes you think the vaccinated will turn into Zombies?*
- Can we stop sharing wrong information vaccines saves lives and it is not a joke people really be confused*
- I think we should not associate comic sorties with reality of things, as covid is real*

Similarly, this [tweet](#) claims that the vaccine will turn people into robots:

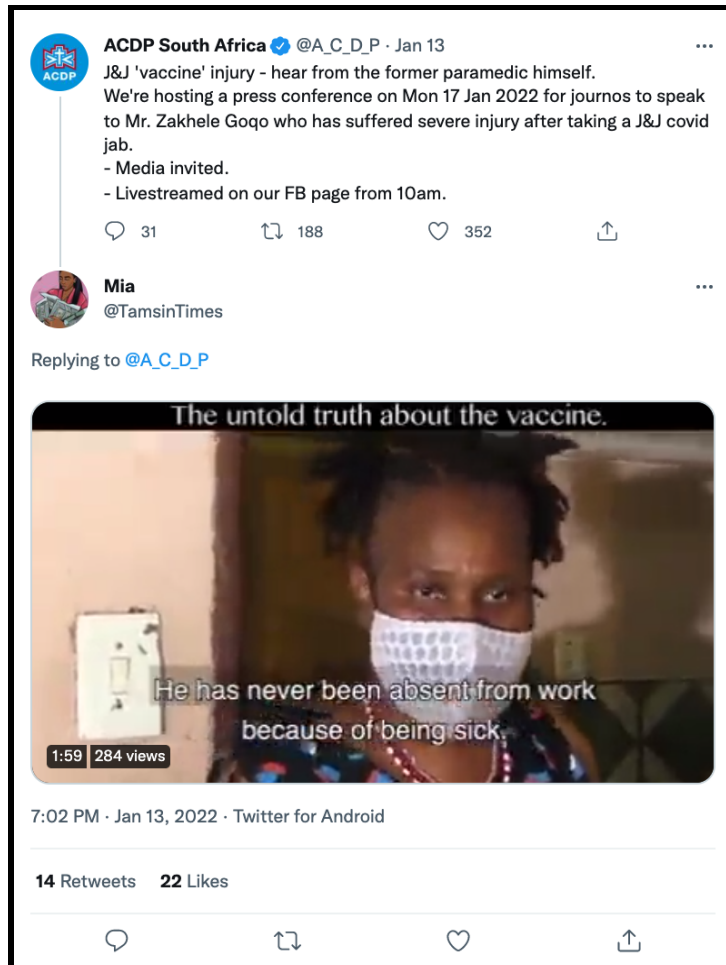


### **Suggested Responses:**

- *Haibo guys, where is all this creativity coming from? Write a script, direct a movie! This type of content is needed in Hollywood!*
- *I wonder where you got all that information from I'm sure you won't be able to verify it*
- *If we are being serious, jabs are here to protect*

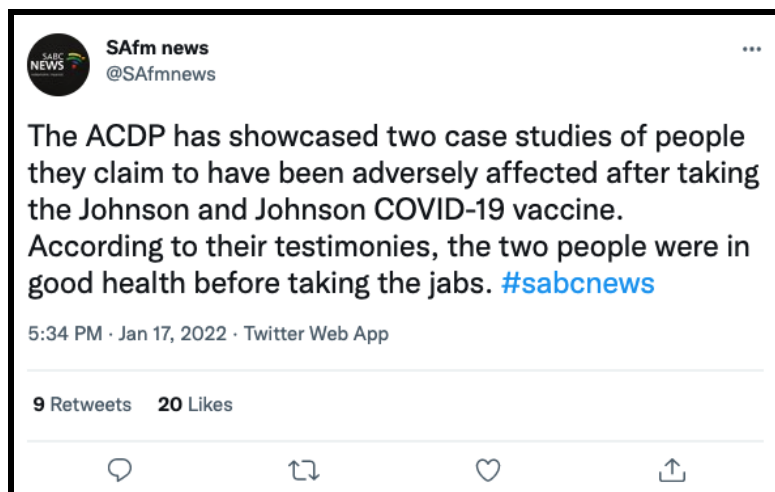
## **Justice for Zakhele**

The conversation regarding Zakhele Goqo has still got some traction which is mostly driven by the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), as the party geared up for a conference discussing [vaccine injuries](#). Zakhele Goqo has alleged that he has sustained an injury due to the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. In a [video](#) posted under the ACDP tweet, Zakhele is shown with his injuries and states that after receiving the vaccine based on the advice of his employer, he fell sick.

**Suggested responses:**

- *Has it been confirmed that it was caused by taking the vaccine?*

In a [tweet](#) posted by the SAfm News, the ACDP states that it has two cases of people who claim that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine negatively impacted their health.





**Suggested responses:**

- Key word here is 'claim'. These claims must be investigated and the ACDP should be interdicted from overstating adverse effects from the vaccine and fear mongering. This is getting out of hand.
- So far it was not proven that the vaccine is the direct cause of the problem in the throat
- When speak things that that affect lives of it is always good that we have all the the fact have you guys checked that it was be vaccine

While the below [tweet](#) is based on the American Covid situation, it gained some attention in South Africa, with Letshela Mofokeng, alleging that 1 million Covid-19 vaccine injuries and deaths were reported in America. This tweet shares the same sentiment as the ACDP tweets regarding the health safety of the vaccines.

**Suggested responses:**

- My first question is, where was it reported? Vigi Access? Vaers? Because anyone can go on there and report an adverse effect and manipulate the data. Let's be careful about our sources, no?
- Where did you get this information from?

## Detoxing from the vaccine

Methods of how to apparently cleanse one's body of the vaccine have gained traction as seen in this [tweet](#) which suggests that the vaccine contains heavy metals:



### Suggested Responses

- *And then? What heavy metals? Does the vaccine play for Jurgen Klopp? In all seriousness, the vaccine has some initial side effects after taking it that may be uncomfortable. This is not a bad thing. And there is absolutely no need to "detox"*
- *We should be careful on self medication on claims that it may or may not do something in reaction of the vaccine intakes*

## Vaccine apartheid and vaccine expiry dates

The conversation around vaccine apartheid has ranged from the raise of vaccine passports which was supposedly aimed at limiting human movement to vaccine hoarding by wealthy nations and recently the delivery of nearly expired vaccines to African countries.

The [tweet](#) below highlights that the vaccines are being delivered close to their expiry dates, regardless of the guidelines provided by COVAX and Africa CDC.



### Suggested responses:

- *This is indeed very worrying. And civil society must stand up and speak out against this! It is incomprehensible that wealthy countries donate near-expired vaccines. But on the same token, it is also our responsibility to get people to get vaccinated as soon as possible.*
- *Where did you get that Africa is receiving only expired doses of covid 19?*

South Africa has started administering COVID-19 vaccine booster shots for people who have been fully vaccinated for over 6 months for both Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer. The below [tweet](#) alludes to the possibility that in South Africa vaccine dates are changed and extended due to the low number of people returning for booster shots.





**Suggested responses:**

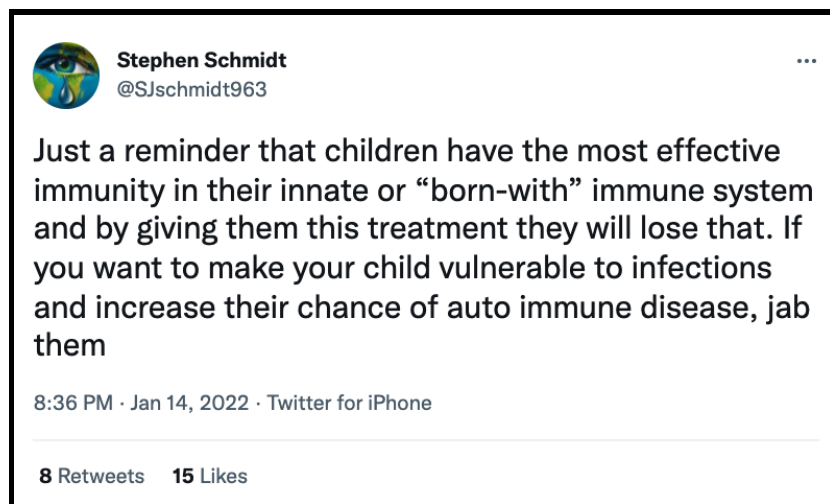
- *How do you know we will extend expiry dates? How can you be so sure of that?*

A [tweet](#) with an image depicting the vaccine dose administered globally highlights that Africa is far behind in rolling out vaccines in comparison to other nations and highlights that the vaccine administration issue in Africa is an access issue.



## Vaccine effectiveness and natural immunity of children

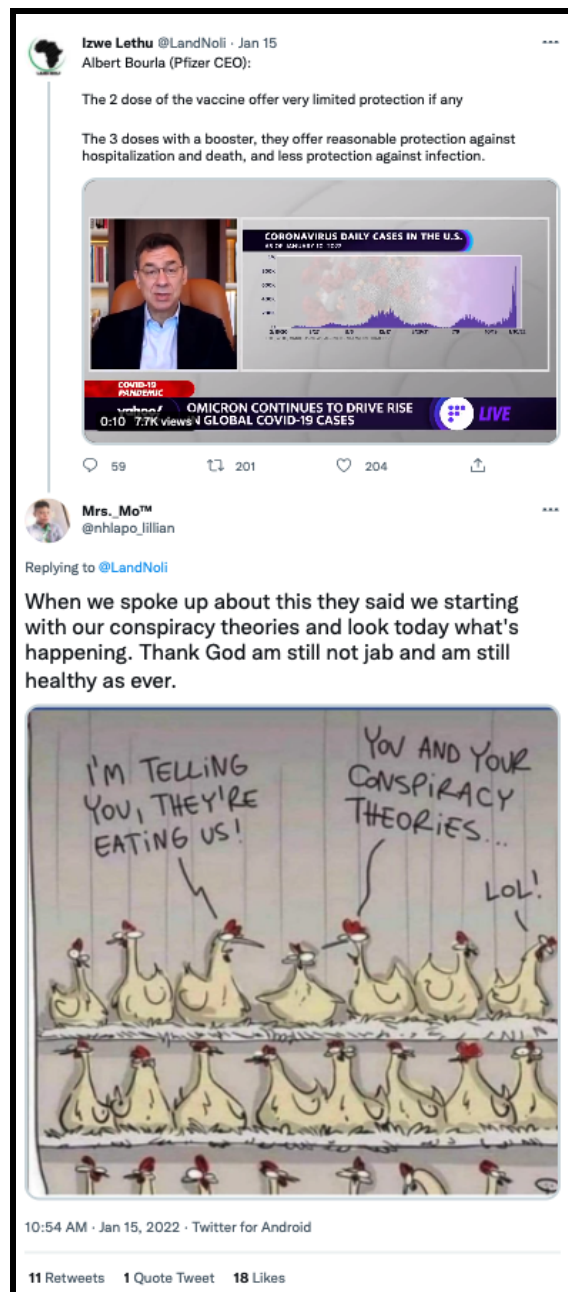
The conversation about natural immunity has long been an argument against getting the vaccine. This has particularly been the case as it pertains to children. See [tweet](#):



**Suggested responses:**

- *Where do you get this information from? Can you provide a source, or a peer reviewed study that says it weakens the child's immune system?*
- *Where did you get all of that information? Do you have any evidence of what you are saying?*
- *Well it is not proven that the vaccine will affect children in a negative way, but we know that children can carry the disease around without even realizing*

Furthermore, many have continued to question the effectiveness of the vaccine. This [tweet](#) suggests that it provides minimal protection:



**Suggested responses:**

- *And? Im jabbed and healthy as ever too. The vaccine does not cause illness nor ill health. Billions have taken it and are fine. Why do you think that is?*
- *We need to be able to draw a line between what we hear and what the facts says about vaccination.*

**Controversies around vaccine mandates**

Vaccine mandates continue to be rejected by many who cite that they infringe on individual liberty and freedom. A controversial case that occurred in Canada was picked up by South African audiences as seen in this [post](#):

**Suggested responses:**

- *The law is the law. And we all must abide by it. I would urge that father to get vaccinated, there is nothing to fear!*
- *Unfortunately no one is above the law but if it was me I would just go and vaccinate for the sake of my child*
- *It is hard to hear that a father doesn't have the right to see his daughter, but if the risk for the child is too great, those kinds of measures can be explained.*

Another international conversation that garnered a lot of attention from South African audiences is with regards to the recent deportation of renowned tennis player, Novak Djokovic. As seen in the [post](#) below, many who are against mandates came out in support of Djokovic and condemned the Australian government:



**Suggested responses:**

- *Michael is correct in this regard. Your claim about immunity is completely irrelevant in this matter. Djokovic failed to obey Australia's **laws** and as such he was deported. He has also notably been in violation of isolation protocols - which is rather serious, don't you think?*
- *It is still possible to contract covid after getting it, and as he knew the law of the country he was traveling too. Him pleading to stay in the country would have brought complication into him as we all saw.*

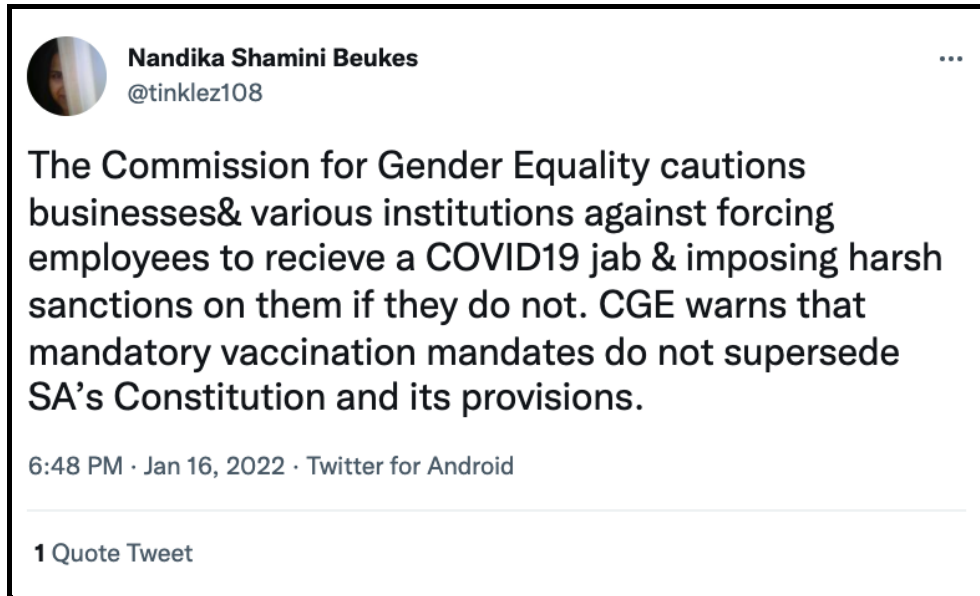
Conversely, others agreed with the Australian government as seen in this [tweet](#):



**Suggested responses:**

- *Exactly! I wish everyone saw the irony of this! Djokovic isn't some sort of martyr that must be praised. He has broken the law and has previously violated isolation protocols. That is reckless behaviour.*
- *It is difficult for a known person to avoid crowd i guess, but in my opinion social distancing measure should still be observed to be sure to lower the risk of infection*

Conversations regarding constitutional rights and the vaccine continue to be discussed online as seen in this [tweet](#):

**Suggested responses:**

- *Indeed they do not, but the Constitution provides that everyone has the right to a healthy environment. It is an employer's responsibility to ensure that his workplace is such a healthy environment.*
- *I think for the best interest of the company, however hard some people may find it to be,the company has the right to decide the path to follow if they judge it necessary,to guarantee a safe environment for all employees.*