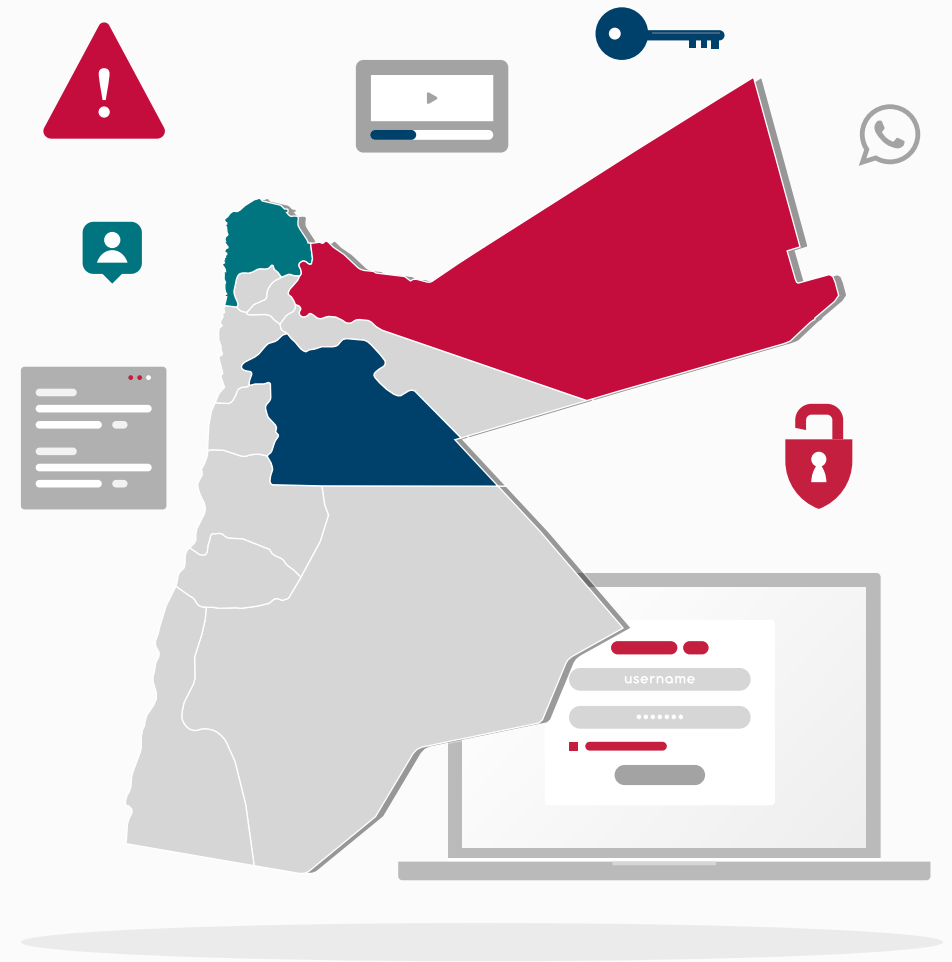




Building community resilience against cybercrime in Jordan: what the research recommends

As human life becomes increasingly digitised, how can communities protect themselves from the range of potentially harmful interactions they may face online? To better understand perceptions of safety and levels of access to protection actors in Jordan, **Siren conducted a representative survey¹ in January 2021 of 1,106 people across the Mafraq, Amman and Irbid Governorates.** Building on key informant interviews held in November 2020, the survey data offers some insights into what local organisations, state institutions and activists in Jordan can do to prevent online blackmail, harassment and abuse from taking place, and to support those who fall prey to online abusers.

¹ <https://sirenassociates.com/report/survey-perceptions-of-online-safety-and-access-to-protection-services-in-jordan/>





Community outreach



For maximal impact, campaigns targeting local communities to raise awareness on cybercrime-related issues should be done by, or in coordination with, the police or government representatives.

While community leaders and organisations benefit from a unique reach within communities, the perceived trustworthiness of messaging is highest among those with formal authority, such as the Public Security Directorate (PSD). Combining these advantages can lead to more effective campaigns. Campaigners could consider:



Including local community representatives in the planning phase to support with devising an outreach strategy,

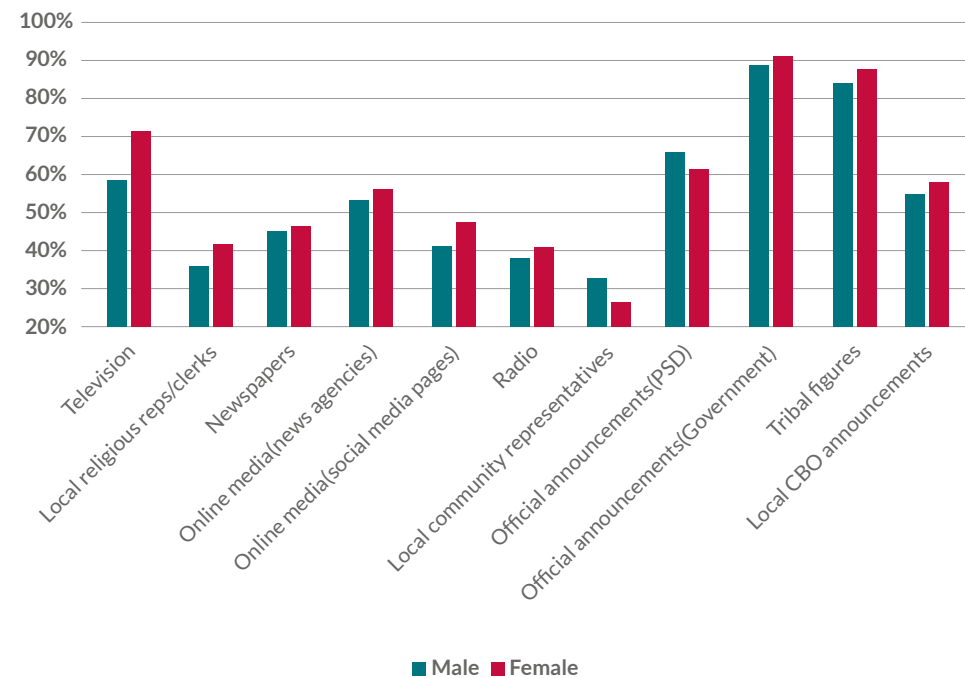


Collaborating with the PSD to conduct outreach on social media, and



co-facilitating campaigns led by various stakeholders during implementation.

Perceptions of trustworthiness of sources of news and information (by gender)





Community outreach



Outreach messages should be personal.

People in the survey, particularly women, rated highly the importance of knowing others' experiences of dealing with the police and community-based organisations (CBOs) before seeking help from them. Using role models to front campaigns, and personalising messaging, is likely to be an effective approach. Personalised outreach messaging could also help reduce the fear of reporting. This fear was picked up in the survey by the significant gap between what people claimed they were willing to do if they were a victim of cybercrime, and what they actually did in reality.



81% said they would report a cybercrime to a family member in theory,

but in practice this fell to just



12%



Outreach messages should be adapted to the different types of cybercrime.

Each type of interpersonal cybercrime leads to varied protection issues.



86% of people said that they might go to the police to report "cybercrime,"



66% said they would go to the police if they were a victim of "online blackmail."

Specificity of language and imagery in outreach messages (e.g. talking about blackmail through private photos, can help get messages across effectively, catch people's attention, and make subsequent messages more likely to hit home about what options people have when reporting.



Community outreach



Outreach to Syrian refugee communities should concentrate on the services offered by relevant police units,

ways of accessing the police (in person and remotely), and details of official procedures, including the lack of costs initially involved.



One in ten Syrians felt that costs are a barrier to lodging a complaint with the Cybercrime Unit, despite it being free to open a file with the police.



Syrians were **24% less likely** than Jordanians to know about the Public Security Directorate's (PSD) Cybercrime Unit or the Family Protection Department.



Outreach targeting women should focus on family safety and the available mechanisms for women to report issues safely on their own.



Siren's research found that women were **27% more concerned than men about the safety of their female family members online**. They are therefore an appropriate group to target with information about prevention measures and protection services.

Furthermore, while men are largely the decision-makers when it comes to seeking external services, they are not always in a position to make this decision for a family member (if, for example, their daughter or wife has not told them about an incident), or should not be in a position to make the decision (if, for example, they or another family member pose a threat to the safety of the women). Awareness should therefore be raised among women about the formal and informal protection services available, including remote options, and the procedures involved. Campaigning could be done in a personal manner, with a role model figure of someone similar to them, talking about the specific types of online protection concerns that girls and women face.



Community outreach



Outreach should not only focus on the prevalence of cybercrime but also on the benefits of internet use.

Being a victim of cybercrime can bring a cascade of financial, reputational, social, physical and mental consequences. Yet, in conjunction to emphasising the risks of cybercrime for all, outreach should also promote the benefits of using the internet (e.g. for work or education) and how it can be managed safely. This will help to avoid the use of negative coping mechanisms, such as limiting or restraining one's access to the internet, which could have adverse long-term effects on vulnerable groups.



Community engagement should be tailored to each district

For example, Al Khaldieh is a smaller, closed community. The use of theatre, workshops, and school activities conducted through local actors with PSD support will likely work well there. Al Mafraq, by comparison, is a large city, where community engagement activities could be more effectively conducted through mass media methods.

Message tone should be tailored according to the specifics of each location: for example, the survey found that men in tribal areas were more concerned about both their own and others' online safety and, in particular, the sharing of personal photos or videos.

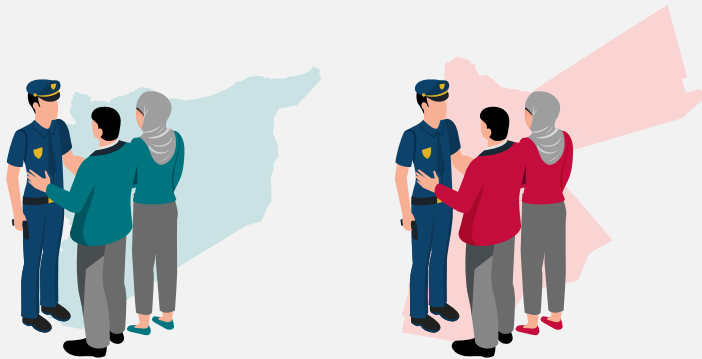


Capacity building for the PSD



Support the PSD with its efforts to engage further with people of different nationalities.

In December 2020, Siren conducted a national training needs assessment at the request of the Community Police, which found that the first training priority of field Community Police officers was to learn how to engage with people of other nationalities, such as Syrian refugees. This finding can likely be applied to other police units or departments. In addition, there is a clear need to increase the awareness of Syrians about the variety of police services offered and procedures involved, calling for direct interventions within these target communities.



The Community Police could be supported in creating linkages with individuals and organisations that are working actively on cybercrime and protection issues at the community level.

This is all the more important in light of the frequent need to work through intermediaries to reach the most vulnerable groups. Support activities could include working closely with active members of different segments of the Syrian population, creating partnerships with local CBOs who work with Syrian refugee populations, and supporting the PSD to conduct joint initiatives with these CBOs.



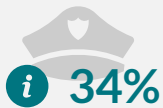


Capacity building for CBOs



Consider building the capacity of CBOs to conduct community outreach on the available protection services.

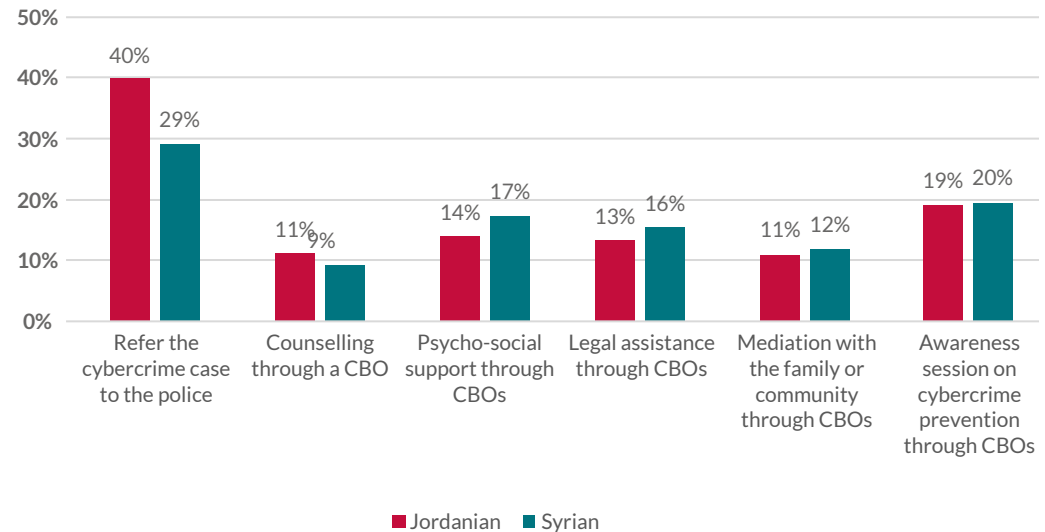
Despite there being good knowledge about the PSD Cybercrime Unit,



only 34% of people knew of the protection services provided by CBOs to support victims of cybercrime.

This indicates a clear need to support CBOs in raising awareness about their services in communities. CBOs have local networks, databases of vulnerable families, and established methods of communicating with communities, meaning they have the ability to reach out to people in both a targeted manner and / or across wide segments of local populations.

Level of knowledge about informal protection services offered for victims of cybercrime and related SGBV issues (by nationality)



Percentage of respondents who responded "yes" or "sounds familiar" in response to the question: "Do you know or have you heard of the following options to report or seek help for a cybercrime (informal options)"



Capacity building for CBOs



Raise awareness on the need for confidentiality, and build capacities to implement supporting procedures to maintain confidentiality.



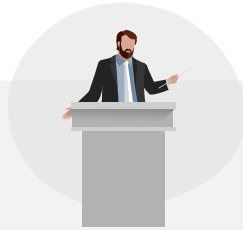
98%

Siren's research found that confidentiality was a priority for 98% of people.

Yet, key informant interviews with protection experts in November 2021 indicated that CBOs can be weak - or are perceived to be weak - in their confidentiality practices and procedures. This is particularly important considering victims' fear of community judgement, and potential repercussions. CBOs and community leaders should serve as platforms where victims can be pointed toward dedicated protection services. However, there is a strong possibility that through this work, CBO staff will come into contact with cases, and training to ensure they do no harm could be beneficial.



Capacity building for local activists



Local activists may be recruited to raise awareness about the protection issues related to cybercrime.

They should be selected based on their networks, community mobilisation and project planning skills. Siren's research found that, for fear of being judged, people are far more likely to report cybercrime incidents to those close to them than to those they know less well. Local activists will struggle to get around this barrier, which serves to protect victims' reputations. Rather, their value lies within their ability to rally people, and their understanding of their local community, which can help them to tailor innovative mechanisms to reach the most vulnerable populations.



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