Sept. 2026

From Individual to Institutional Protection:

Assessing Digital Safety Among Women Leaders in Jordan

The Karak Castle Center for Consultations and Training | The SecDev Foundation



IDRC · CRDI Canada
secdev.foundation
@سلامة
Karak Castle Center for Consultations & Training مركز قلعة الكرك

Acknowledgments

This study was conducted as part of a project of The SecDev Foundation and Karak Castle Center for Consultations and Training, with funding from International Development Research Centre. It also reflects the outcome of a research and institutional partnership among the participating organizations throughout all stages of its development.

Research Team

Marina Alsahawneh (Lead Researcher) is a researcher and technology specialist focusing on gender, women's issues, and digital technologies, particularly artificial intelligence and the intersection of technology and human rights. She serves as a researcher for SecDev's regional Digital Safety for Women project. Her expertise encompasses research design, quantitative data analysis, research reporting, and the visual design of publications and reports. She holds a master's degree in Women's Studies from the University of Jordan.

Dr. Nadia Al-Sakkaf (Oversight and Quality Assurance) is a Yemeni political researcher with expertise in media, digital safety, digital rights, women's studies, and democratic transitions in the Middle East and North Africa. She possesses over two decades of experience in research and public policy development and has led numerous regional studies on digital violence against women and women leaders. Currently, she serves as a Senior Researcher at The SecDev Foundation and holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Reading, United Kingdom. In 2014, she became the first woman to serve as Minister of Information in Yemen.

Dr. Ahlam Mohammed (Review and Editing) is a researcher specializing in linguistics and women's digital safety, with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa. Her experience encompasses academic research and linguistic analysis, contributing significantly to the development and management of various regional studies. Additionally, she has authored multiple book chapters and peer-reviewed academic publications within her fields of expertise.

Esraa Mahadin (Technical Review and Contextual Adaptation) serves as a legal consultant and lawyer specializing in gender-based violence. She represents the Karak Castle Center for Consultations and Training, an organization she established and leads as Executive Director. The Center has evolved into a prominent civil society organization focused on empowering women by addressing challenges related to their civil and political rights. The Center was among the pioneering organizations in Jordan to tackle issues of electoral violence against women and the digital safety of women engaged in politics.

Dr. Raed M. Sharif (General Supervision) is a prominent researcher, practitioner, and academic in the field of international development, with a particular emphasis on the intersection of technology and society. His expertise encompasses digital rights, resilience, freedoms, ethics, and innovation. He holds the position of Senior Director of Programs and Partnerships for the Middle East and North Africa region at The SecDev Foundation.

Additional Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to Ms. Rana Al-Nawaisa from the Karak Castle Center for her significant contributions to the implementation of the fieldwork. Her responsibilities included the design and distribution of the survey, communication with participants, and data collection. Her efforts were crucial in ensuring the data's quality, reliability, and inclusiveness.

We also thank Ms. Lina Al-Momani, Project Manager at The SecDev Foundation, for coordination and management of the study's implementation. Her role involved monitoring progress, overseeing evaluation processes, and ensuring methodological quality and effective execution throughout all stages of the research.

Supporting Organizations

International Development Research Centre

As part of Canada's international affairs and development efforts, IDRC supports and funds research and innovation within and alongside developing regions to advance global change. IDRC invests in high-quality research in developing countries, shares knowledge with researchers and policymakers to increase its uptake and impact and builds global partnerships to create a more sustainable and inclusive world.

The SecDev Foundation

This Canada-based non-governmental organization works globally to strengthen digital resilience among vulnerable populations. The foundation primarily works with women, youth, and at-risk civil society organizations, helping individuals protect themselves from an evolving landscape of digital harms. Ultimately, SecDev supports communities in building their own capacities to create safer and more empowering digital environments.

Karak Castle Center for Consultations and Training

Established in 2017, the Karak Castle Center is a women-led organization based in Karak and Amman, dedicated to empowering women and youth throughout Jordan. The center focuses particularly on political, economic, and legal empowerment while promoting democratic values, human rights, and gender equality through programs addressing electoral participation, legislative reform, and digital violence.

The center also manages the Observatories for Electoral Violence and Digital Violence Against Women, national monitoring mechanisms launched in 2022 to document and address violations targeting women in electoral and digital spaces.

Intellectual property

© The SecDev Foundation, 2026

This study was implemented as part of a project funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of IDRC, The SecDev Foundation, or their respective governing bodies.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. This allows you to distribute and adapt the material but requires you to credit the creator. To see a copy of this license: creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

This study was originally written in Arabic.
You can find the original version here.

Abstract

This study examines the state of digital safety for women involved in or interested in public and political participation in Jordan. It explores the relationship between public engagement and exposure to digital violence, while identifying the key risks, gaps, and needs for creating a safer digital environment. The study employed a quantitative methodology, using an online survey of 507 respondents from across Jordan's governorates between March and April 2026.

The findings show that digital platforms have become central to public participation, increasing women's exposure to digital violence. The nature of these risks varies according to women's public roles. The results also reveal a gap between participants' basic understanding of digital safety and their ability to manage and respond effectively to digital threats, alongside limited use of available protection and support resources.

Despite these challenges, women continue to participate in public life, relying to varying degrees on individual protection strategies in the absence of comprehensive institutional support. The study concludes that improving digital safety requires moving beyond awareness-raising initiatives toward an integrated institutional framework that supports secure and sustainable public participation.

Contents

Executive Summary 6

Introduction 9

Assessment Objectives 11

Methodology and Data Collection 12

Digital Safety Realities Among Participants 15

- Public, Political, and Community Participation 15
- Digital Space as a Platform for Public Participation 18
- Experiences of Digital Violence and its Prevalence 20
- Digital Violence Impact on Public Participation and Expression 24
- Addressing Digital Violence Challenges 27
- Digital Resilience 30
- Technical Knowledge and Digital Readiness 32
- Legal Awareness and Institutional Protection Mechanisms 34
- Awareness of Psychosocial Support Resources 38
- What Distinguishes Women Planning to Run in Future Elections? 40

Capacity-Building Priorities and Training Needs 41

Conclusion and Recommendations 45

Executive Summary

In recent years, technology and digital platforms have generated unprecedented opportunities to enhance women's participation in public life. Concomitantly, they have introduced new risks and challenges associated with digital presence, particularly digital violence in its various forms. In the Jordanian context, this issue is especially pertinent for women involved in or interested in public and political participation, given the increasing role of digital platforms in enhancing their visibility, influence, and engagement, as well as their heightened exposure to digital targeting and abuse. Therefore, this assessment aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the state of digital safety among women engaged in or interested in public and political participation in Jordan. It also identifies key challenges, gaps, and needs that should be considered in the design of future programs and interventions to foster a safer and more supportive digital environment.

In addition, this study investigates the correlation between digital presence and engagement in public, political, and community activities. It analyzes patterns of digital platform usage, women's experiences with digital violence and its effects on their participation, levels of digital readiness and resilience, and legal awareness. It also examines protection and reporting mechanisms, as well as the training and institutional support required to enhance a safer digital environment for women's participation.

This study reflects the experiences of 507 women from across Jordan who share a commitment to public engagement and an interest in contributing to and leading their communities, including potential candidates for upcoming local elections.

This study was conducted between March 3 and April 30, 2026, using a quantitative online survey developed jointly by The SecDev Foundation and the Karak Castle Center for Consultations and Training. The survey was informed by accumulated expertise in monitoring digital violence against women, adapted to the Jordanian context, and statistically weighted to ensure balanced geographic representation. The sample included women engaged across diverse areas of public participation, including political work, institutional and community leadership, volunteer activities, professional sectors, private-sector employment, and women interested in entering public life.

One of the study's key findings is the presence of a broad base of women aspiring to future public and political participation. This shifts the focus beyond protecting current women leaders toward investing early in the preparedness and resilience of emerging women leaders. The findings also demonstrate that digital violence does not only affect women who experience it directly; it also influences other women by shaping perceptions of the potential costs of public participation, which may discourage some from entering public life in the first place.

The findings confirm that the digital sphere is no longer merely a supportive tool for public participation; it has become a direct extension of public life and a primary space for communication, influence, and advocacy. Accordingly, digital violence should no longer be understood as a series of isolated individual incidents, but rather as a phenomenon that affects the experience of public participation itself and requires women to continuously adapt how they engage and present themselves online.

The results indicate that digital violence is no longer a distant possibility but an anticipated reality accompanying public participation. Seven out of ten participants considered digital violence against women leaders to be widespread, while five out of ten, nearly half of respondents (46.34%), reported

experiencing at least one form of digital violence. These findings reflect the extent to which digital violence has become an expected cost of public visibility, prompting many women to adopt individual coping strategies to manage risks, including self-censorship, and in some cases leading to withdrawal from public spaces.



This study also confirms a clear relationship between increased public visibility and greater exposure to digital targeting, with patterns of exposure varying according to the nature of women's political, leadership, or community roles. This relationship does not indicate insufficient digital skills; rather, it reflects the increased visibility and engagement of women in public spaces, making those who are more active more likely to become targets. Therefore, the primary challenge is not limited awareness of basic digital safety concepts, but the need for advanced skills that enable women to manage digital crises and respond to defamation campaigns, coordinated attacks, and other forms of targeting associated with public participation.

The study indicates an increasing association between the level of public visibility and the level of exposure to digital targeting.

The findings reveal significant gaps between theoretical knowledge and actual preventive practices, as well as challenges related to legal awareness and access to support and reporting mechanisms. Interestingly, women do not respond to these risks by withdrawing from public life. Instead, they continue to participate while developing different strategies to adapt to and manage digital risks, allowing them to maintain their presence despite these challenges.

Digital violence does not only discourage women from public participation; it also places the burden of adaptation and risk management on them through individual efforts.

This study further shows that more experienced women leaders and politicians demonstrate greater awareness of the importance of professionally managing their digital presence. As engagement in public and political work increases, women become less likely to manage their accounts independently and more likely to rely on individuals or specialized teams. The findings also highlight an urgent need to prepare for emerging digital threats, particularly fabricated content and generative artificial intelligence technologies, which women leaders identified as among the most dangerous and destabilizing forms of digital violence. At present, specialized preparedness and response mechanisms to address these threats remain largely absent.

AI-based digital threats represent one of the most serious forms of digital violence, while preparedness to address them remains largely absent.

This study distinguishes between digital readiness and digital resilience. Not all forms of digital violence can be prevented through technical measures alone. While digital readiness contributes to reducing risks related to account security and privacy, addressing defamation campaigns, hate speech, and coordinated attacks requires broader digital resilience, including crisis management skills, communication strategies, confidence in legal pathways, and access to psychosocial support services. The findings reveal that these areas remain significant gaps. Hesitation to report digital violence is linked less to a lack of legal knowledge and more to limited confidence in the effectiveness of protection and accountability mechanisms. Additionally, more than half of participants are unaware of available psychosocial support services, despite recognizing their importance, while awareness of such services increases among women with greater experience in public and political engagement.

These findings demonstrate that effective responses to digital violence require moving beyond traditional awareness-raising approaches toward specialized and sustainable interventions that address the actual risks faced by women in public life. Digital violence is no longer simply a technical challenge; it has become a structural issue requiring an integrated institutional response that includes education and awareness, legal and institutional protection, psychosocial support, and specialized technical services. The goal should no longer be limited to enabling women to protect themselves individually. Rather, it should focus on building a safer digital environment that allows women to exercise their public roles without disproportionate psychological or professional burdens, making digital safety an integral component of the right to public and political participation.

Based on these findings, this study provides recommendations aimed at strengthening digital protection and empowerment systems. These include developing specialized capacity-building pathways, improving referral and response mechanisms, enhancing preparedness for emerging digital threats, developing systematic digital risk assessment tools, strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, and providing integrated legal, psychological, and technical support.

Addressing digital violence is not the responsibility of women alone; rather, it requires an integrated system of prevention, protection, response, and support that enables women to exercise their public roles safely and sustainably.

The recommendations, therefore, seek to support a transition from managing digital risks as an individual responsibility toward establishing an integrated institutional framework for prevention, protection, response, and support. Ultimately, these efforts aim to contribute to a safer and more equitable digital environment where women can exercise their public and political roles with confidence and sustainability, and where digital safety is recognized as an essential component of participation rather than an individual burden borne by women alone.

Introduction

Amid the rapid technological developments shaping our world in recent years, the boundaries between physical and digital spaces have become increasingly blurred. With more than 96% of people in Jordan regularly using the internet[1], digital platforms are no longer merely tools for communication; they have become an integral part of professional, personal, social, and public life. As a result, it is no longer possible to discuss women's participation in public, political, and community life without considering the digital dimension.

At the same time, digital platforms have created unprecedented opportunities for women to communicate, influence, advocate, build public profiles, and reach wider audiences. They have enabled women to engage in public discussions, contribute to social issues, and establish professional and social networks that transcend geographic boundaries. However, this expanded digital presence has also introduced new challenges and risks, some of which represent extensions of the barriers women already face in public life.

Digital violence against women has emerged as one of the most prominent challenges of the past decade. Women experience various forms of online abuse, including cyber harassment, account hacking, blackmail, threats, and the unauthorized sharing of personal information. Women with greater public visibility, such as leaders, activists, politicians, and journalists, are often more exposed to these forms of harm than others[2]. Jordan is no exception to these challenges. Numerous national studies have highlighted growing concerns regarding digital violence targeting women engaged in public life[3] and its significant impact on levels of participation, engagement, and visibility in public spaces. The importance of this issue has further increased with rapid technological transformations, particularly artificial intelligence and deepfake technologies, which have fundamentally altered the nature, scale, and potential consequences of digital violence.

This research was developed within the context of preparations for the anticipated 2026–2027 local elections. Previous electoral experiences indicate that women's participation as candidates at the local council level has remained limited compared to parliamentary elections, despite the growing reliance of electoral campaigns on digital spaces, particularly for communicating with voters and building public visibility.[4]

In this context, the present needs assessment aims to comprehend the digital safety requirements of women who are either candidates or potential candidates in forthcoming elections, whether at the local or parliamentary level. It investigates the challenges these women may encounter during electoral campaigns and endeavours to promote a safer and more equitable electoral environment, thereby

---

[1] World Bank. (2026). Individuals using the Internet (% of population)- Jordan [Data set]. Retrieved June 4th, 2026, from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?locations=JO.

[2] Posetti, J., Hellmueller, L., Williams, K., Renaud, P., Aboulez, N. and Shabbir, N. (2025) Tipping Point: The Chilling Escalation of Violence Against Women in the Public Sphere in the Age of AI. New York: UN Women. https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/tipping-point-the-chilling-escalation-of-violence-against-women-in-the-public-sphere-in-the-age-of-ai-en.pdf.

[3] The SecDev Foundation, & Karak Castle Centre. (2025, June). Silenced with a Click: Digital Violence Against Female Candidates in Jordan's 2024 Parliamentary Elections. https://secdev-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Jordan-DVAW-2025-candidates-EN.pdf.

[4] Jordanian Women's Solidarity Institute Association. (2025). Tadamon: Increasing women's and youth representation in local administration is an urgent societal and legislative responsibility. https://www.sigi-jordan.org/article/6643

facilitating women's effective participation in public life without digital impediments. Currently, digital violence has transcended isolated individual acts of hostility, evolving into a systematic tool with cumulative impacts that extend beyond digital spaces. Through rapid dissemination, amplification via repeated sharing, and coordinated campaigns, digital violence can erode confidence, inflict lasting psychological effects, damage reputation and credibility, affect social relationships and public standing, and ultimately restrict women's capacity to assume leadership roles and participate freely and confidently in public life.[5]

International literature and practice in needs assessment and program design emphasize the importance of directly engaging with target groups to understand their experiences, priorities, and needs. Effective interventions should not rely solely on broad trends or national indicators; instead, they necessitate a thorough understanding of the realities encountered by affected groups, their perceptions of risks and challenges, and the types of support, resources, and skills they consider most valuable.

This needs assessment seeks to enhance the understanding of digital safety among women involved in public life in Jordan, encompassing community leaders, activists, writers, former candidates, and potential future participants. It identifies key challenges, gaps, needs, and priorities for capacity building. Additionally, it aims to establish an evidence base to inform the design of future programs, interventions, and initiatives aimed at strengthening digital safety, enhancing the ability to manage digital risks, and supporting women's safe, meaningful, and effective participation in public life.

[5] Al-Ashqar, L., & Basumi, N. (2024, December). *Digital violence against Palestinian women: A new tool of repression*. Sada Social. https://sada.social/storage/app/media/alaanf-alrkmy-dd-alnsaaa-alflstynyat-ada%40-kmaa-gdyd%40.pdf

Assessment Objectives

This assessment is a component of the project titled "From the Margins to the Public Sphere: Enhancing Digital Readiness of Women Leaders in Jordan," executed by The SecDev Foundation with backing from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). As previously mentioned, the project seeks to produce practical evidence and indicators to guide the formulation of future programs, capacity-building activities, advocacy and awareness initiatives, and support mechanisms designed to enhance the digital resilience of women leaders in Jordan. Given that women leaders, activists, candidates, and those aspiring to participate in public life increasingly depend on digital platforms for communication, advocacy, community engagement, and political participation, this assessment also aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and risks associated with digital engagement in Jordan. Specifically, the assessment is intended to:



Investigate the patterns of public, political, and community participation, as well as the role of digital platforms in facilitating and broadening such participation.



Document the experiences of digital violence and the forms of targeting encountered by women involved in public life.



Evaluate the impact of digital violence on women's expression, participation, and engagement in public affairs.



Assess the levels of awareness and practices concerning digital safety and security.



Explore legal awareness, reporting mechanisms, and available response pathways for those experiencing digital violence.



Identify knowledge and skills gaps, along with capacity-building priorities among target groups.



Examine differences in experiences and needs among various participant groups.



Develop practical recommendations to support women's safe, meaningful, and effective participation in both digital and public spaces.

The assessment aims to enhance comprehension of the opportunities and challenges women encounter in digital spaces. It seeks to furnish actionable evidence to aid in the creation of programs and interventions that are more responsive to the needs of women involved in public and political life in Jordan.

Methodology and Data Collection

The assessment employed a quantitative methodology through an online survey aimed at gathering data on the digital safety and readiness of women involved in public, political, and community spheres in Jordan. The survey investigated patterns of public participation, usage of digital platforms, experiences of digital violence, levels of awareness and practices concerning digital safety, as well as training needs and priorities for capacity building.

The research instrument employed in this report was developed by the Salam@ Program, a regional initiative managed by The SecDev Foundation. This development leveraged the program's extensive field experience and accumulated expertise in monitoring and analyzing digital violence against women. The tool underwent a review process to ensure its relevance and validity within the Jordanian context. Its content validity is based on practical insights gained from years of documenting patterns of digital violence through Salam@, which facilitated the creation of survey sections that directly address the unique challenges encountered by women leaders in Jordan. This context-specific approach ensures that the data captures the intersectional nature of digital violence and social stigma, dimensions that are often overlooked in standardized international measurement tools.

This survey encompassed five principal areas to develop a comprehensive understanding of digital safety among women involved in public life in Jordan. Specifically, it analyzed patterns of public, political, and community participation, alongside the nature of digital presence and the utilization of online platforms for public engagement. Furthermore, it investigated women's experiences with various forms of digital violence and their effects on participation, expression, and engagement in public spaces. The survey also evaluated levels of digital readiness, including technical and behavioral knowledge and skills pertinent to digital safety and risk management, as well as awareness of legal frameworks and available reporting and protection mechanisms. Lastly, it identified training needs, institutional support requirements, and capacity-building priorities essential for enhancing women's safe and effective participation in digital spaces.

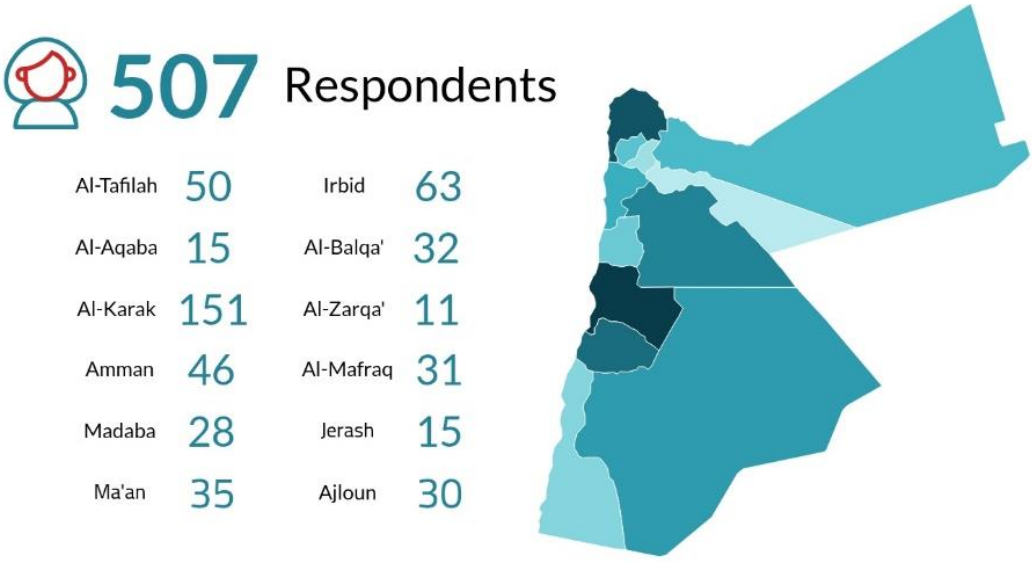
This study was conducted in collaboration with the Karak Castle Center for Consultations and Training, which facilitated the data collection process from March 3 to April 30, 2026. The survey was distributed via the center's networks, local partners, and various digital channels to effectively reach the target groups.

Following the completion of survey data collection, four training workshops were conducted from May to June 2026 in the governorates of Karak, Ma’an, Aqaba, and Tafileh. These workshops involved 71 women, comprising candidates, leaders, activists, and community actors. The workshops focused on the technical, legal, and psychosocial aspects of digital safety and included a digital clinic offering personalized technical support, alongside pre- and post-training assessments. Nevertheless, due to the distinct methodological objectives of these activities, the training evaluations aimed to assess the intervention's impact on workshop participants. In contrast, this study was independently designed as a needs assessment based on survey data collected prior to the intervention. Consequently, the analysis in this report is confined to survey responses gathered between 3 March and 30 April 2026. The findings from the pre- and post-training evaluations were excluded from the study sample, indicators, and analyses presented herein.

The analysis incorporated 507 valid responses, encompassing participants from all governorates of Jordan, thereby ensuring extensive geographic representation that mirrors diverse local contexts. To enhance the comprehensiveness and pertinence of the findings, the study focused on a varied cohort of women, categorized by the nature and extent of their involvement in public life. The sample comprised community leaders, activists, board and administrative body members, and volunteers engaged in civic initiatives. Additionally, it included women with prior practical experience, such as those who had participated in elections or were directly involved in political and community activities, as well as women aspiring to future participation in public and political life. This diversity in participation levels facilitated comparisons across different experiences and enabled the analysis of digital safety needs across a wide spectrum, from women with established public roles to those preparing for future engagement, thereby enhancing the study's capacity to offer a balanced and comprehensive perspective.

Survey dissemination was conducted through project networks and local partners, resulting in variations in respondent numbers across governorates. These variations were attributed to differences in local outreach capacity, network reach, and levels of engagement and response. Notably, the highest proportion of respondents originated from Karak, largely due to the presence of many partners and beneficiaries of the Karak Castle Center within the governorate. To achieve a more balanced representation of findings across governorates, data adjustments were made during the analysis phase to prevent governorates with higher response rates from disproportionately affecting the results.[6] The application of statistical weighting was employed to achieve this outcome. Greater weight was assigned to responses from underrepresented governorates, while relatively lower weight was allocated to those with higher representation. This approach was based on actual population distributions as provided by the Department of Statistics.[7] The weights were consistently applied during all subsequent analytical stages, including the computation of figures presented in this report, to ensure a more balanced representation of the geographic distribution of women across Jordan.

Geographical distribution of participants in the evaluation



[6] This procedure is based on post-stratification weighting, whereby a weight is calculated for each governorate by comparing its share of the total female population at the national level with its share in the achieved survey sample.

[7] Department of Statistics, Jordan. (2025). Population [Statistical yearbook extract]. Statistical Yearbook of Jordan 2025. https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/databank/yearbook/YearBook_2025/Population.pdf.

Following data collection, an integrated database was established to clean, process, and code the responses. A standardized coding framework was devised to convert survey responses into statistical variables suitable for analysis, tailored to the nature of each question, including binary, categorical, ordinal, and other variable types. This process constituted the basis for subsequent descriptive and cross-sectional analyses and facilitated the extraction of the quantitative indicators presented in this report.

Descriptive statistics, such as weighted percentages and averages, were primarily employed to thoroughly understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and digital safety requirements. Furthermore, cross-tabulation analyses were performed to examine the relationships between key variables and to identify differences and patterns related to participants' characteristics and experiences.

These assessment findings serve as indicators that enhance the understanding of the realities, challenges, and needs concerning digital safety for women involved in public life in Jordan. They are not to be construed as statistical estimates representing all women in Jordan, nor as findings that are generalizable at the national level.

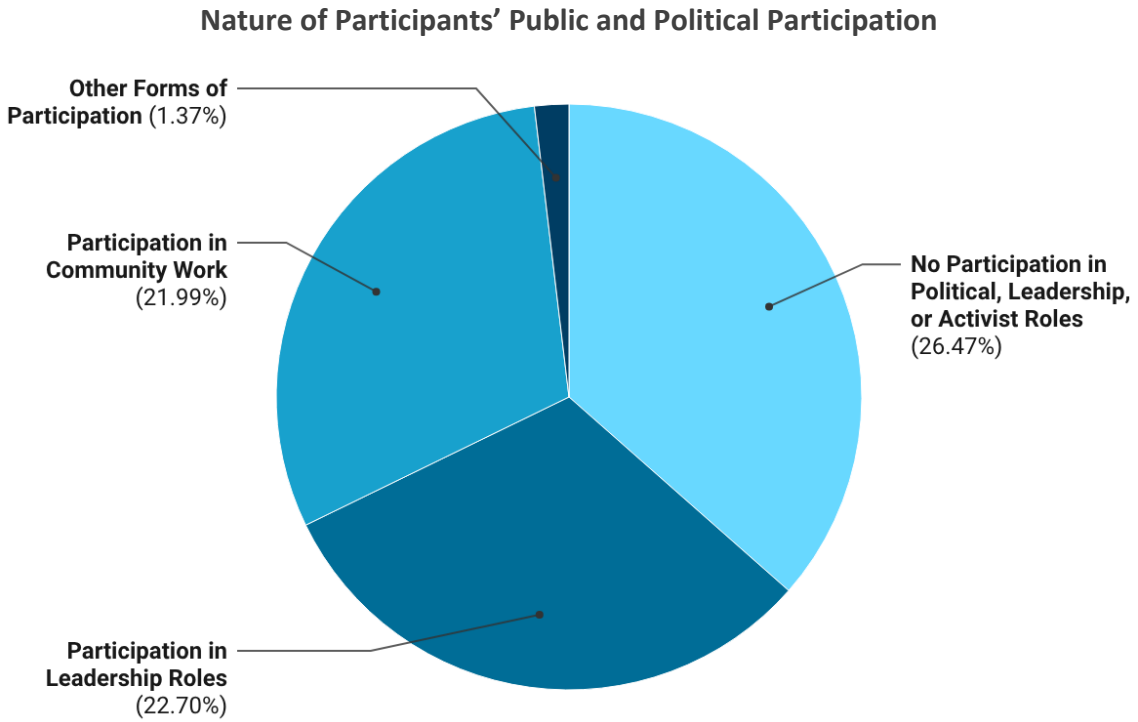
Digital Safety Realities Among Participants

This section delineates the principal descriptive findings of the assessment, offering an overview of participants' digital safety contexts and their connection to their public and digital roles. The analysis concentrates on four primary areas: the examination of digital participation patterns, the analysis of the impact of digital violence on expression and engagement, the assessment of awareness regarding digital safety and legal protection mechanisms, and the identification of capacity-building needs essential for supporting safe and effective women's political participation.

The descriptive findings are not solely intended to quantify the prevalence of various phenomena; they also aim to comprehend the broader context in which participating women engage in public and digital spheres, encompassing the challenges and opportunities linked to their presence in both arenas. This preliminary evaluation of digital safety realities establishes a basis for more in-depth comparative analyses that investigate differences in needs and challenges among diverse groups of women.

Public, Political, and Community Participation

The assessment findings indicate that the participants do not constitute a homogeneous group. Instead, they encompass a diverse range of women with differing levels of involvement in public, political, and community activities. Although over one quarter of the participants reported having no prior experience in public, political, or leadership roles, the majority expressed some form of experience or interest in public participation, whether through community work, leadership roles, or political engagement.



The findings demonstrate a significant correlation between participants' digital activities and their tangible engagement in real-world contexts. Their online presence extends beyond mere passive observation or virtual interaction, encompassing practical and leadership roles. These roles include managing community initiatives, participating in administrative bodies, and engaging in electoral processes.

The findings indicate a close association between women's digital presence and their active engagement in public life.

Simultaneously, the findings indicate that a substantial portion of women, constituting approximately one quarter of the sample, have not yet engaged directly in specific forms of political participation. However, they have expressed an interest in pursuing such experiences in the future.

This interest is notably not confined to women already engaged in traditional political or leadership roles. It has also emerged among women from various professional and community backgrounds, such as those in tailoring, beauty salons, education, and educational and psychological guidance. The importance of this observation extends beyond the diversity of professional backgrounds; it highlights the expanding avenues for public and political participation. Women's involvement in public life can originate from everyday professional roles, direct community interactions, and local networks of trust and influence, preceding any formal or recognized political engagement. In this context, Samia (a pseudonym), a participant from Mafraq employed at a beauty salon in the northern Badia region, remarked: *"I need knowledge and training in digital safety because I intend to run in the upcoming elections."*

The presence of a promising base of potential women leaders suggests that expanding women's participation necessitates more than merely supporting current leaders. It also requires empowering women who aspire to enter public life prior to their initial experiences in this domain. Consequently, early investment in capacity building and digital safety is crucial for supporting sustained participation and enhancing confidence in engaging in public life.

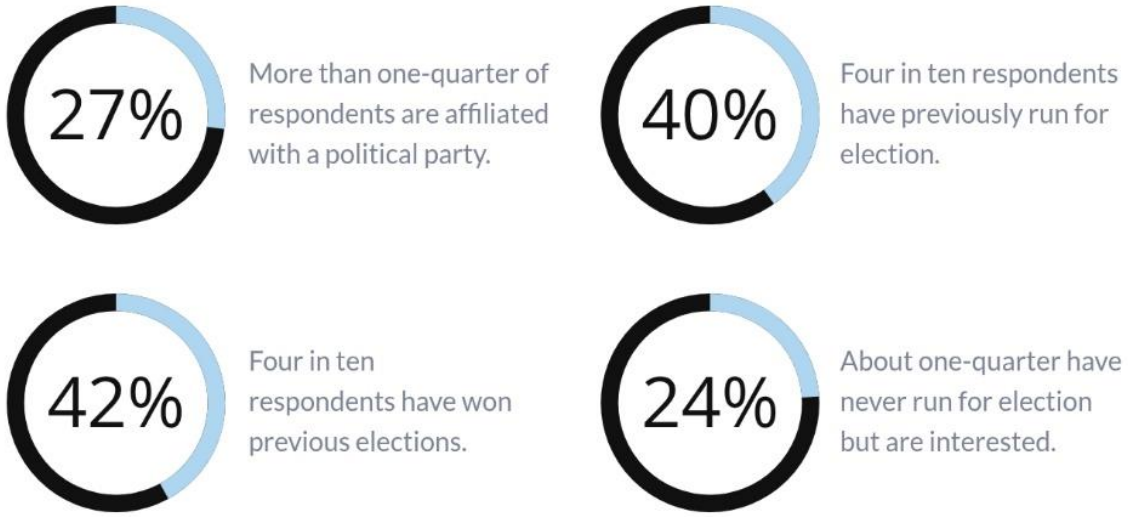
The study reveals an emerging generation of women prepared for public participation, highlighting the need for early investment in their protection and empowerment.

Variations in participants' experiences result in distinct patterns of digital challenges. Women with established public roles frequently encounter risks as direct targets in political and public arenas, while those aspiring to such roles are more prone to psychological barriers and self-censorship, influenced by observing the negative experiences of others. Enhancing digital safety necessitates tailored responses that differentiate between the preventive needs of women already active in public life and the awareness and preparedness needs of prospective participants. Early investment in digital readiness aligns with a core principle of capacity building: implementing safe digital practices from the beginning is more effective and cost-efficient than rectifying unsafe behaviours or altering practices that have become entrenched over years of digital engagement.[8] Equipping women who aim to engage in public life prior to their formal entry into these arenas will enhance their digital preparedness, mitigate

[8] OECD. (2023). Shaping digital education: Enabling factors for quality, equity and efficiency. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/bac4dc9f-en.

potential future risks, and improve their capacity to perform public roles with assurance and security from the initial stages of involvement.

This finding indicates the need to broaden the conceptualization of digital violence to encompass what can be termed the "anticipatory impact" of such violence. The repercussions of digital violence extend beyond women who suffer direct harm, influencing those who have not yet engaged in public life by shaping their perceptions of potential risks. This, in turn, reinforces self-censorship and hesitation prior to participation. Thus, digital violence not only serves as a mechanism for silencing current voices but also potentially restricts the emergence of future women leaders before their participation commences.



The findings underscore the necessity of comprehending digital safety as an issue that impacts not only women activists and current leaders but also women who aim to increase their presence in public life in the future. For numerous participants, public space, whether digital or offline, represents either a current arena for engagement or a prospective one they intend to enter in the forthcoming years. This assessment diverges from many previous studies within the Jordanian context, which have predominantly concentrated on the experiences of women already involved in political or public spheres, by broadening the analytical scope to encompass "potential participants," women who are at the preliminary stage before active engagement in public life.

The impact of digital violence extends beyond silencing existing voices; it can also intimidate voices that have not yet emerged.

This approach is notably important as it transitions the analysis of digital safety from a reactive response to existing experiences to a proactive focus on prevention and preparedness. It facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the potential challenges women might encounter prior to entering public spaces, thereby enhancing their preparedness and diminishing obstacles to future participation. Consequently, the assessment not only records current realities but also aids in creating a safer environment for women's future involvement.

This study signifies a significant analytical advancement beyond conventional frameworks that concentrate solely on women already engaged in political and public domains. By broadening the scope to encompass women who aspire to future participation, it adopts a proactive approach that redefines

digital safety from a reactive measure addressing existing harms to a preventive empowerment strategy. This strategy aims to prepare emerging women leaders prior to their entry into public life. From this vantage point, digital safety should be regarded not merely as an issue pertinent to current activists and leaders, but as a fundamental component in fostering a safer environment for women's political and public engagement more generally. Providing early access to digital safety knowledge, skills, and support mechanisms can enable women to anticipate and manage digital challenges, thereby alleviating the pressures of self-censorship and preventing premature withdrawal from public life.

Digital Space as a Platform for Public Participation

The assessment findings reveal that digital spaces have evolved into a crucial element of public and community engagement for numerous participants, extending beyond mere communication or information dissemination. The findings illustrate a broad dependence on digital platforms for executing awareness-raising and community activities, underscoring their function as a primary method for engaging groups that may be challenging to reach through conventional face-to-face interactions.



The findings indicate that participants perceive digital spaces as instrumental in enhancing public presence, engaging with audiences, and cultivating social influence. This is achieved through various means such as awareness campaigns, advocacy efforts, direct communication, and monitoring issues of public interest. These results imply that public participation is increasingly linked to the capacity to sustain visibility and interaction within digital spaces, in addition to traditional community engagement methods. Notably, women involved or interested in political and public participation were found to utilize digital spaces more extensively for public activities, campaigns, and awareness initiatives, with 85% compared to 13% of their counterparts. Furthermore, they are more likely to believe that women candidates are more susceptible to digital attacks, with 56% compared to 35%. For instance, all women who had previously contested elections reported that their work would be unfeasible without digital platforms. This sentiment was equally shared among women who had held political positions and those who had previously occupied leadership roles.

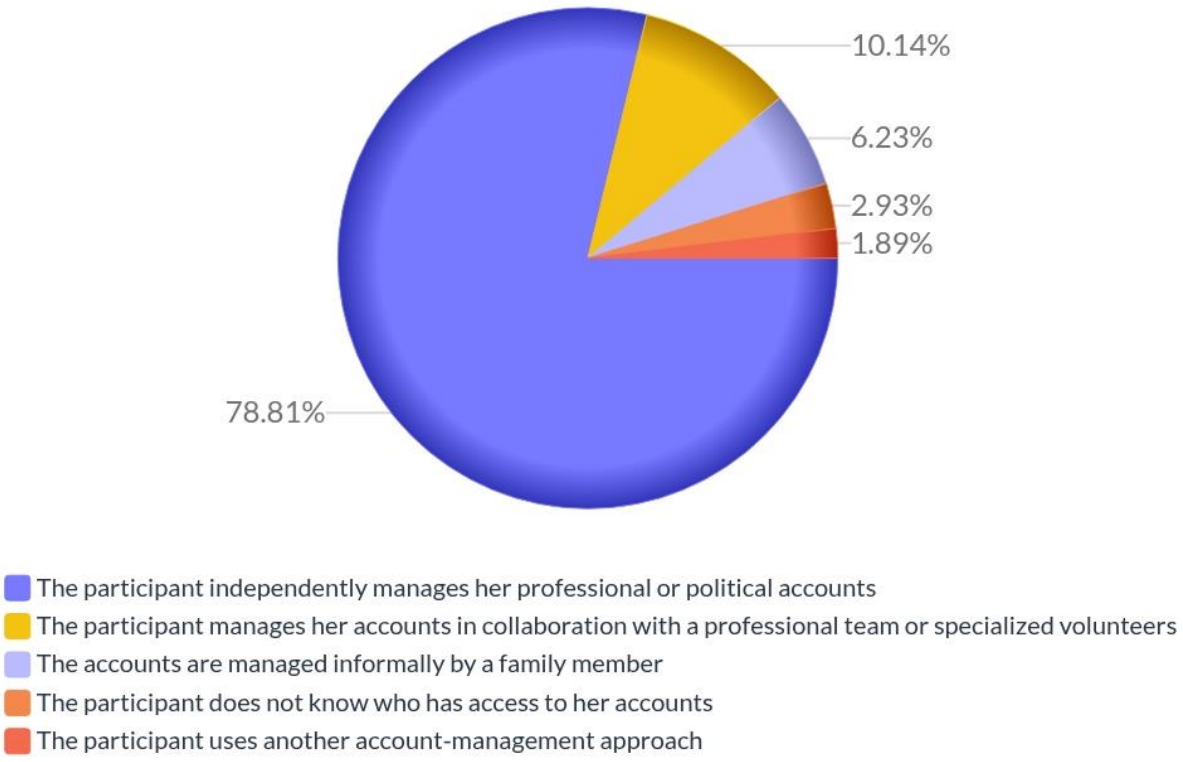
This study also highlights that certain participants choose to delineate clear boundaries regarding their digital interactions or limit their engagement with digital platforms in professional public settings. This inclination is particularly pronounced among women in roles that entail significant public exposure and scrutiny, such as those who have previously contested elections (approximately 40%) and activists involved in public and community issues (32%). For these individuals, the establishment of boundaries serves as a strategy to balance the demands of public visibility with the need to protect their personal and digital reputations from potential defamation or reputational damage in a digital context where legal safeguards may be inadequate. This approach does not signify a withdrawal from public engagement; rather, it is a method for managing risks and adapting to challenging digital environments. By setting cautious boundaries, participants aim to safeguard their digital and psychological well-being, which is crucial for maintaining their presence and influence in public domains without necessitating complete withdrawal.

The findings indicate that the management of digital presence is predominantly an individual responsibility for most participants. A significant proportion of women independently manage their professional or public accounts, without the assistance of specialized teams or institutional support. Notably, variations were observed based on political experience. Women with prior electoral participation, especially those who have won (33%), those planning to contest future elections (12%), and those affiliated with or interested in political parties (approximately 44%), are more inclined to depend on others or teams for managing their digital accounts.

The findings indicate that heightened participation in public and political spheres correlates with a shift from individually managed digital presence to a greater dependence on professional management or specialized support. Consequently, digital knowledge and skills assume increased significance for women who persist in managing their own online presence. This underscores the necessity of advancing beyond general awareness to acquiring practical skills that empower women to manage digital risks more effectively.

As engagement in public and political life increases, reliance on individual management of digital presence decreases, while reliance on specialized individuals or teams increases.

Who manages participants' professional or public accounts?



Experiences of Digital Violence and its Prevalence

The assessment findings reveal that digital violence is a substantial aspect of the reality encountered by a significant portion of participants, with variations in form and intensity. Approximately half of the participants indicated that they had not experienced any form of digital violence or online harassment. In contrast, nearly the other half (46.34%) reported direct encounters with various forms of digital violations. Nonetheless, field experiences and observations by the research team suggest that the prevalence of digital violence within the target population may be significantly higher than the survey findings indicate. This estimate appears lower than figures reported by international organizations and entities addressing violence against women, including United Nations-related sources, which suggest that digital violence against women may reach rates of up to 63%.[9]. One potential explanation for this discrepancy is the reluctance of some respondents to disclose experiences of harassment or digital violence, which may stem from stigma, privacy concerns, or fear of repercussions. Additionally, some women may not identify certain experiences as digital violence, especially if they are unfamiliar with the broader definitions and scope of digital abuse.

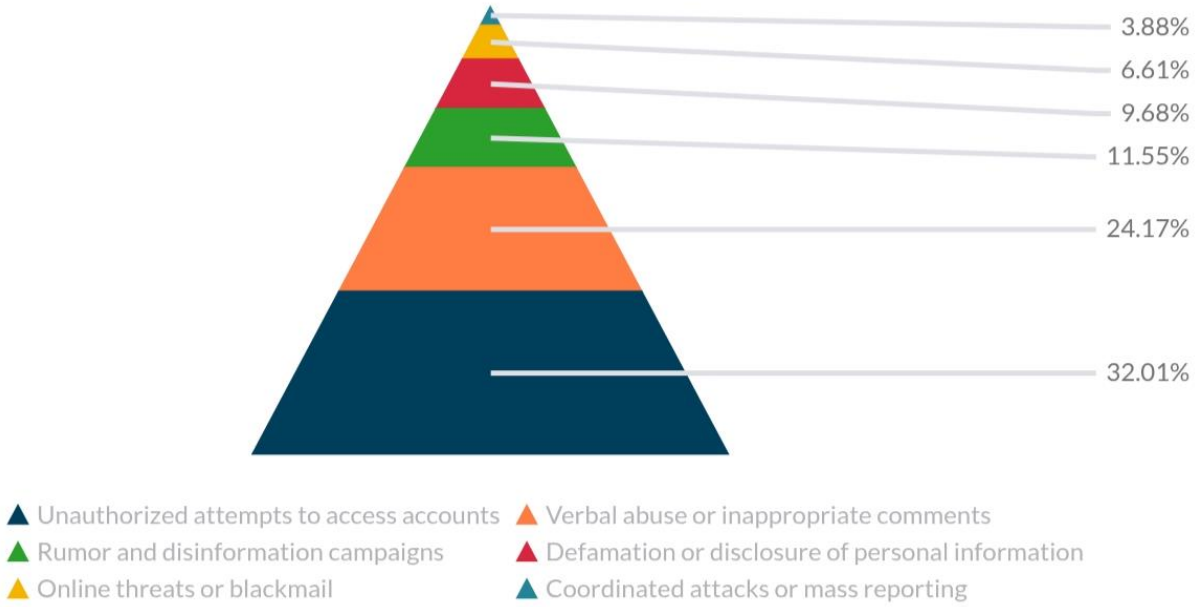
These findings emerge within a concerning global context. Reports and studies by organizations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNESCO (2021)[10] [11] indicate that digital violence against women in leadership positions ranges globally between 40% and 81.8%, with women in visible public roles experiencing severe forms of online abuse, including sexual harassment, threats, and image-based abuse. The results of this assessment, indicating that 50% of participants have encountered some form of digital violence, position the Jordanian context within the higher global spectrum of this issue. These findings underscore that digital violence constitutes a comprehensive mechanism that can undermine women's participation, credibility, and public presence, rather than being a mere aggregation of isolated incidents. Consequently, addressing this challenge necessitates a shift from individual technical protection measures to a broader collective responsibility involving governments, digital platforms, civil society organizations, and support institutions. To ensure women's safe participation in public life, it is essential to create an environment where they are not compelled to choose between pursuing their political and social aspirations and safeguarding their fundamental rights and personal safety.

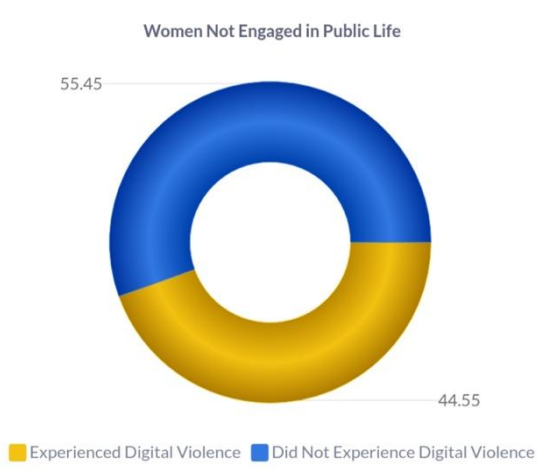
[9] Jordanian National Commission for Women. (2022). *Violence against women in the public and political spheres in Jordan*. Jordanian National Commission for Women.

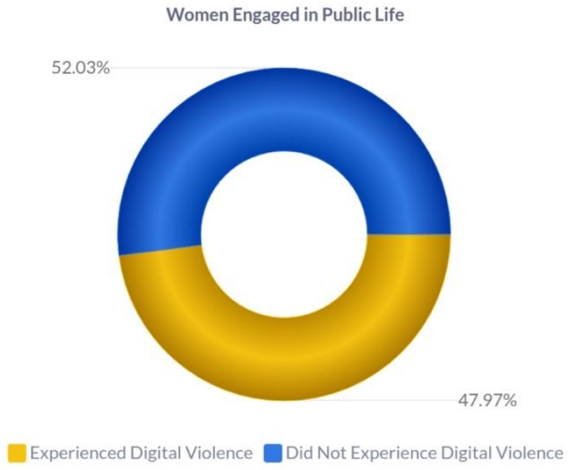
[10] Posetti, J., Aboulez, N., Bontcheva, K., Harrison, J., & Waisbord, S. (2021). The Chilling: Global trends in online violence against women journalists; Research discussion paper. UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377223

[11] Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2016). Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians. https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/issue-briefs/2016-10/sexism-harassment-and-violence-against-women-parliamentarians

Most Common Forms of Digital Violence



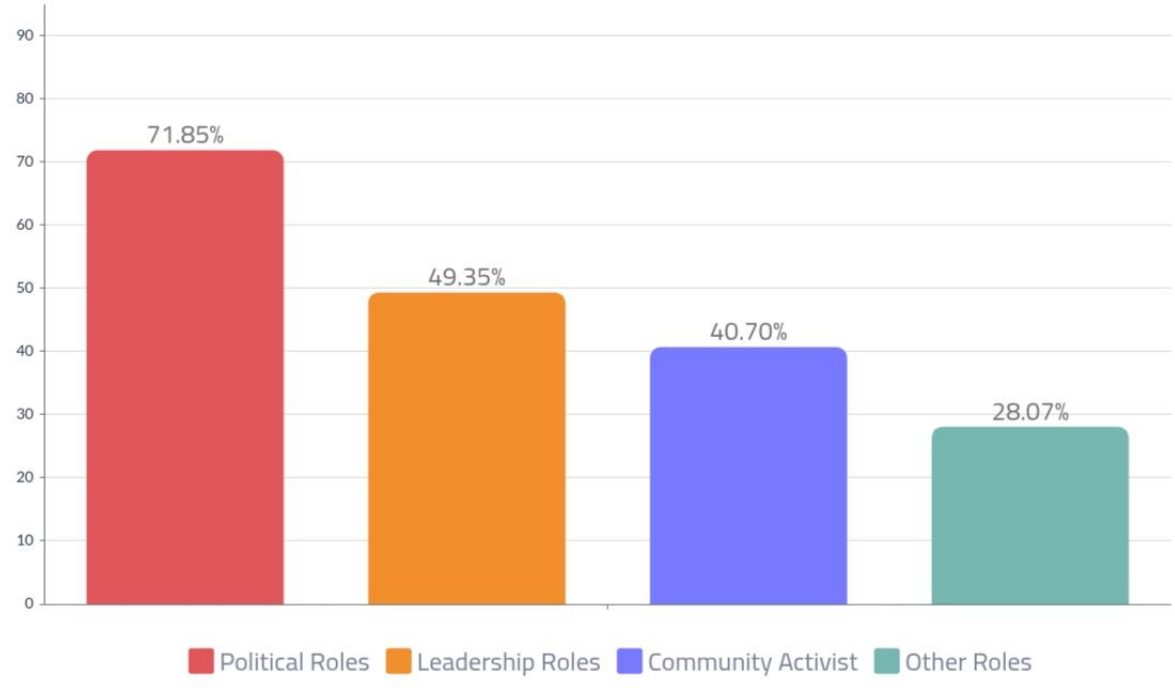




The comparative analysis of participant groups reveals that exposure to digital violence is not confined to women already involved in public or political spheres. The weighted results indicate that 46.34% of all participants encountered at least one form of digital violence. When categorizing participants based on their prior experience in public participation, it was found that 47.97% of women with some public engagement reported experiencing at least one form of digital violence, compared to 44.55% of women without such experience. This similarity suggests that digital violence is a pervasive issue affecting women more broadly in digital environments. However, the primary significance of this assessment lies not in the comparison of exposure rates between these groups, but in the detailed examination of the experiences of women engaged in public life. The subsequent findings demonstrate distinct variations in the levels and patterns of exposure, contingent on the nature of public participation. Women in political and leadership roles encounter more complex forms of digital violence, which are associated with their public visibility and responsibilities.

Digital risks affect all women in online spaces; however, the "cost of participation" becomes more pronounced when women's engagement is connected to leadership, political roles, and decision-making.

The relationship between public participation and digital violence becomes more apparent when the focus is on the type of participation rather than participation itself. The findings reveal significant differences in exposure levels across various forms of engagement. Women in political roles reported the highest exposure levels, with 71.85% experiencing at least one form of digital violence, compared to 49.35% of women in leadership roles, 40.70% of community activists, and 28.07% of women involved in other forms of public participation. These variations suggest that understanding the risks of digital violence necessitates attention not only to women's participation in public life but also to the nature of their roles and the degree of visibility and sensitivity associated with those roles. As participation becomes more closely linked to political issues, decision-making processes, or representing public interests, the likelihood of exposure to digital violence increases. Consequently, women in political roles appear to operate within a more targeted digital environment compared to other groups, underscoring the need for differentiated approaches that acknowledge varying levels of risk rather than treating women as a single homogeneous category.



These findings indicate that digital violence functions on two interconnected levels. Firstly, it constitutes a pervasive issue impacting women broadly within digital environments. Secondly, the risks associated with digital violence escalate considerably when women engage in more prominent and influential political or leadership roles. Consequently, policies and protection programs should integrate comprehensive interventions that enhance digital safety for all women, alongside specialized measures that address the specific needs of women leaders and those active in political and public spheres.

In addition to assessing direct exposure, these findings are significant for understanding participants' perceptions of digital violence within their communities. The results indicate that a majority of participants regard digital attacks on women leaders as a prevalent and recurring issue at various levels.

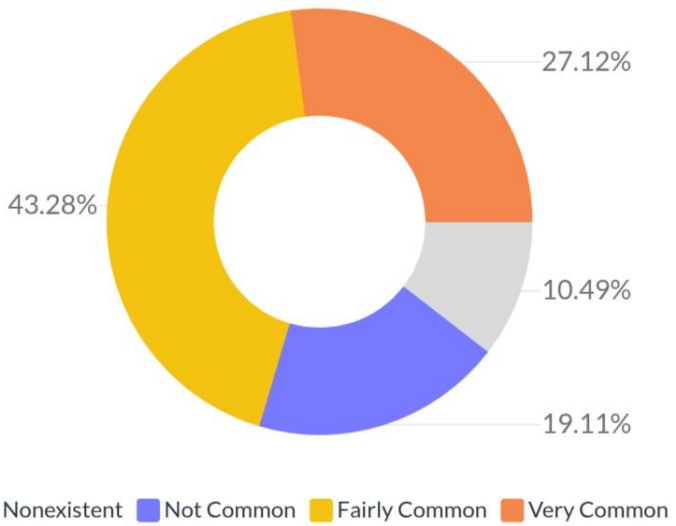
Specifically, 43.28% of participants characterized these attacks as "somewhat common," while 27.12% deemed them "very common." A small proportion perceived these practices as rare or nonexistent within their communities.

These figures extend beyond mere perceptions of risk, illustrating the growing recognition that digital violence constitutes a structural element of the political and digital landscape affecting women in Jordan. The observation that nearly 70% of participants regard digital attacks as common or very common suggests that digital violence is increasingly perceived not as a series of random or isolated events, but as an expected "cost of visibility" linked to engagement in public life.

This expectation poses a considerable challenge by encouraging preventive self-censorship. Women might feel obligated to temper their opinions, decrease their engagement, or avoid sensitive topics to reduce the risk of being targeted. The concern is that these negative expectations could become psychological barriers, limiting the aspirations of future generations. Consequently, digital spaces may shift from being platforms for participation to environments that deter emerging women leaders who are unwilling to endure this social and emotional burden.

For many women, digital violence has become an expected "cost of visibility" in public spaces, creating pressures of self-censorship and limiting freedom of participation and expression.

Perceived Prevalence of Digital Attacks Against Women Leaders



The findings further substantiate the conclusion concerning self-censorship and women's efforts to remain within socially accepted boundaries of public discourse. The participants' responses offer clear insights into the groups they perceive as most susceptible to digital targeting. Notably, exposure to digital attacks is particularly associated with women who challenge prevailing social norms or advocate for social and legal change. These findings indicate that digital violence is not perceived solely as a consequence of digital presence; rather, it is also linked to the nature of the positions, views, and public roles that women assume in public spaces.

The risk of digital targeting increases when women's public presence is associated with challenging social norms or advocating for change.

These findings extend beyond mere technical explanations of digital violence, uncovering its intricate political, psychological, and social dimensions. Participants acknowledge that digital attacks are not arbitrary; instead, they are frequently perceived as direct repercussions of adopting stances that challenge prevailing norms or advocate for legal and social reforms perceived as threatening by certain groups. This awareness among participants illustrates that digital violence operates as a mechanism of self-regulation, delineating the boundaries of what women perceive as safe to express in public spaces. Consequently, digital spaces serve not only as platforms for dialogue and participation but also as arenas of tension between traditional expectations of women's roles and their aspirations to exercise public roles and civic rights. This pattern of selective targeting imparts a distinctly political dimension to digital violence, wherein threats, harassment, and reputational attacks constitute an additional cost imposed on women who assume leadership roles in advocating for rights and social change.

Women Most at Risk of Digital Violence, According to Respondents

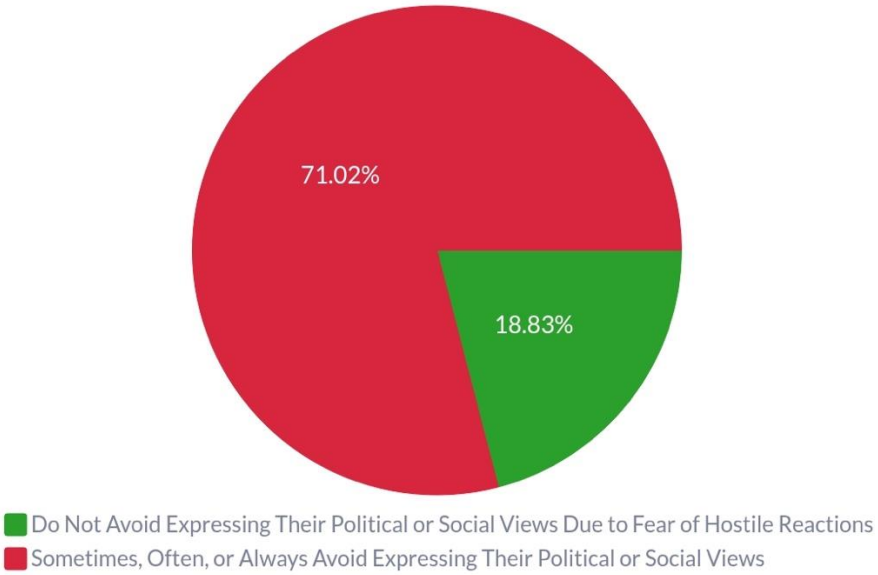


These findings suggest that participants view digital violence not as isolated incidents but as a structural issue linked to women's engagement in public roles and their opportunities for expression, participation, and influence in both digital and public domains. This collective perception recognizes digital violence as a mechanism to limit influence and redefine the boundaries of public participation, rather than solely as a privacy violation or personal harm. Consequently, safeguarding women from digital violence necessitates more than addressing individual cases; it requires the establishment of a safer digital environment that upholds women's rights to participate, express themselves, and engage in decision-making without fear, intimidation, or undue personal costs.

Digital Violence Impact on Public Participation and Expression

The ramifications of digital violence extend beyond isolated incidents or direct assaults, affecting the nature of women's participation and engagement with public issues in digital spaces, as previously discussed. Digital violence should not be perceived solely as a quantifiable phenomenon represented by statistics; rather, it constitutes a coercive environment that imposes varying degrees of self-censorship on many participants when they express their opinions or positions on political and social issues, whether consistently or sporadically. The potential for encountering hostile reactions or digital

attacks has become a consideration for women when deciding whether to publish content, engage with others, or participate in online public discussions. This hostile environment can contribute to the marginalization of women's voices and diminish their presence in public dialogue, ultimately restricting the diversity of perspectives and experiences represented in broader societal conversations.



The findings reveal that over two-thirds of participants (71%) occasionally or frequently refrain from expressing their views on political or social issues due to apprehension about hostile reactions. This indicates that the anticipation of digital violence has become a significant factor influencing women's decisions regarding participation and expression. Furthermore, the findings illustrate that the impact of digital violence extends beyond actual incidents; it influences women's behavior prior to such incidents by reinforcing self-censorship and discouraging engagement with topics or discussions perceived as sensitive or controversial. These findings underscore that the repercussions of digital violence extend beyond individual experiences, affecting the broader context of public participation. When the potential for being attacked becomes a consideration in the decision to post and engage online, the diversity of opinions and experiences expressed in public spaces may be constrained, particularly concerning issues related to women's rights, reform, and public participation. This underscores the necessity of moving beyond responses focused solely on individual incidents towards establishing a safer and more trusted digital environment, one that alleviates the pressures leading to self-censorship and supports women's unrestricted participation in public discussions.

The greatest barrier to addressing digital violence is not technical; rather, it is the fear of the social consequences associated with reporting or confronting abuse.

Comparative analysis indicates a nuanced relationship between public participation and self-censorship. Women involved in public and political spheres experienced greater exposure to digital violence than those not engaged in such activities. However, this increased exposure did not correspond to elevated levels of avoidance or self-censorship.

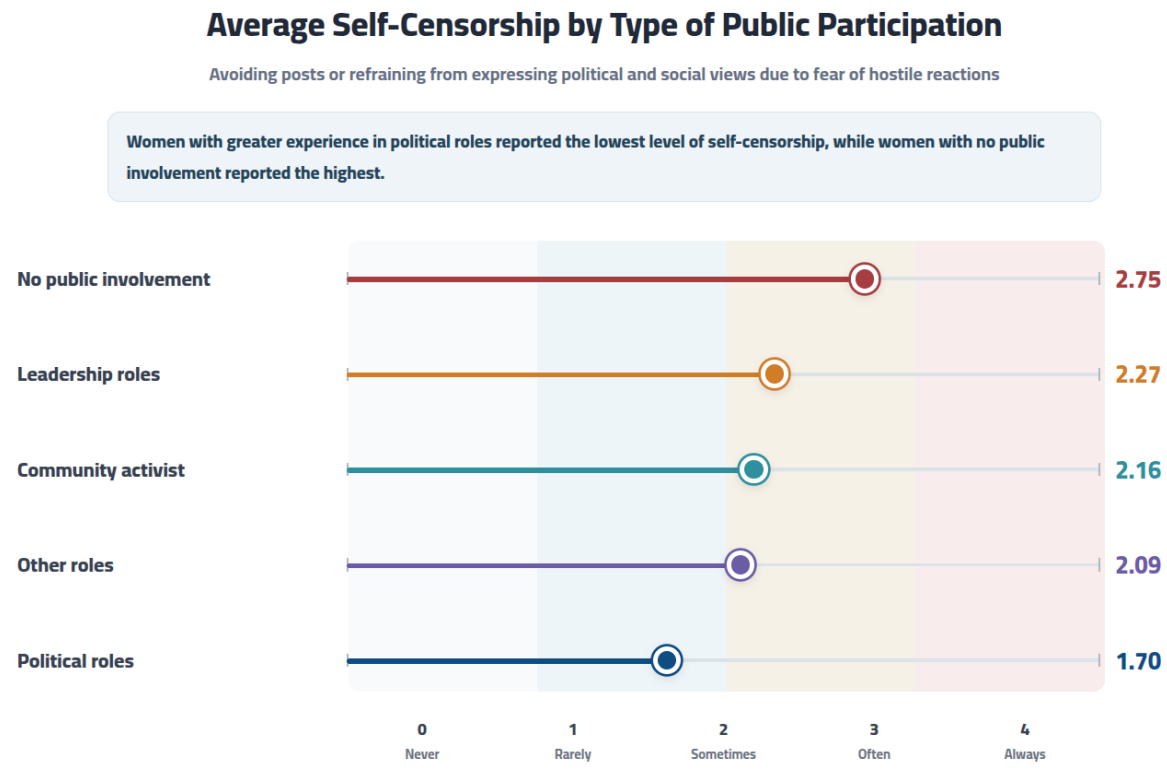
In this analysis, self-censorship was assessed using a scale from 0 ("Never") to 4 ("Always"). This scale was applied to questions regarding the avoidance of publishing content or expressing political and social opinions due to apprehension about hostile reactions. Within the context of this study, self-censorship

is defined as the voluntary limitation by women of their expression or digital participation, motivated by concerns about potential attacks, harassment, abuse, or other adverse reactions.

Women lacking prior experience in public or leadership roles exhibited the highest average level of self-censorship, scoring 2.75 out of 4, which falls between "sometimes" and "often." Conversely, women with experience in public, leadership, or community roles demonstrated comparatively lower levels of self-censorship.

Among the groups analyzed, women who had engaged in political roles exhibited the lowest degree of self-censorship, with a score of 1.70 out of 4, indicating a frequency between "rarely" and "sometimes." This result is notably significant, as this group also encountered the highest levels of digital violence.

Women most exposed to digital violence were not the most silent; rather, they recorded the lowest levels of self-censorship and continued to participate in public life despite increased risks.

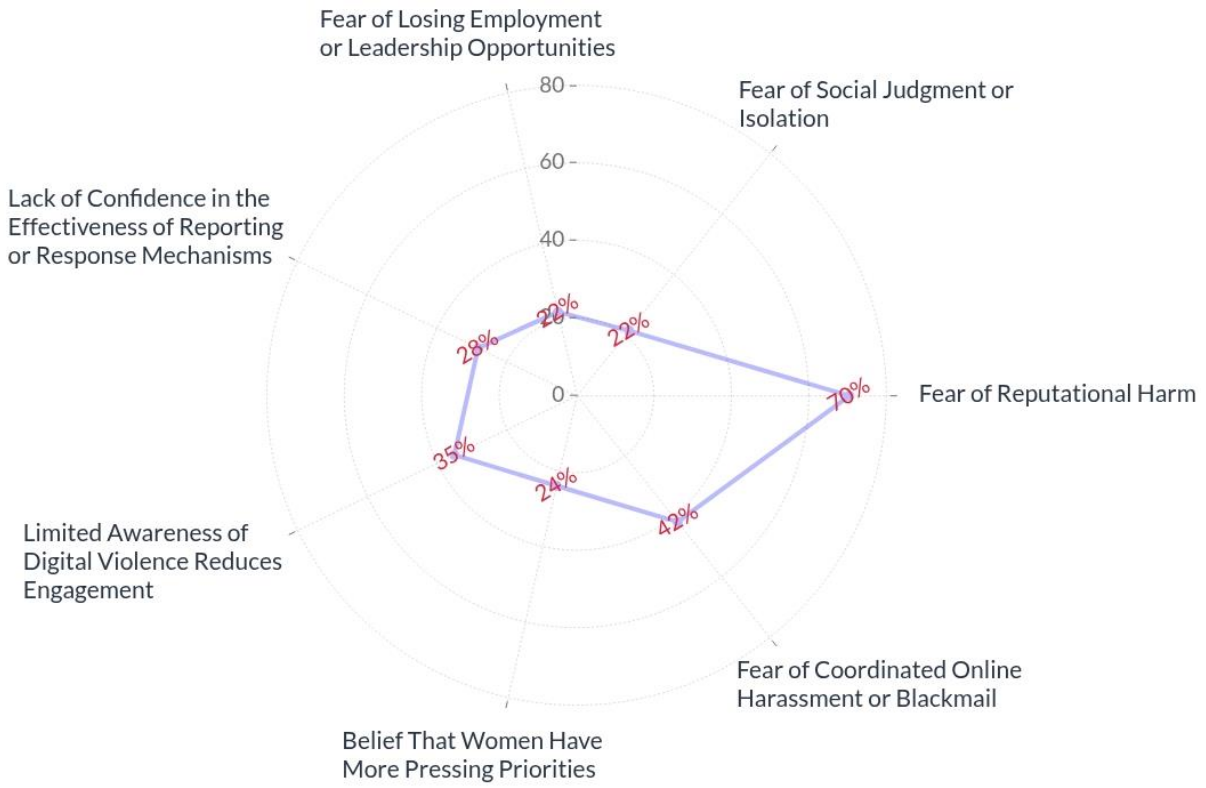


These findings indicate that exposure to digital violence does not inherently result in withdrawal from public discourse or the avoidance of opinion expression. Instead, experience in public and political spheres may correlate with increased confidence or enhanced abilities to manage the risks associated with digital visibility. Conversely, women with less engagement in public life may encounter psychological or social obstacles that heighten the propensity for self-censorship, even when their exposure to digital violence is relatively lower. However, as this evaluation is based on cross-sectional analysis of survey responses, it cannot ascertain the causal relationship between public experience and levels of self-censorship. These patterns may also suggest a selection effect, wherein women with greater resilience or capacity to persist remain active despite experiencing digital violence, while others may have withdrawn from public arenas prior to reaching these stages.

Addressing Digital Violence Challenges

The implications of this reality extend beyond individual women's experiences in digital spaces, intersecting with broader cultural norms and social barriers that complicate responses to digital violence. Digital violence, in addition to its personal and professional consequences, is influenced by social constraints that restrict women's ability to report abuse or seek support. This shifts digital violence from being solely a technical or security issue to a social problem that directly impacts women's participation in public life. Over 70% of participants identified fear of social embarrassment or harm to family reputation as the most significant deterrent to women addressing digital violence publicly, ranking it significantly higher than other factors. This gap suggests that the primary challenge is not merely the availability of technical or legal tools but rather the high social costs women may incur when confronting or reporting digital violence. Other concerns identified by participants included fear of coordinated attacks or blackmail campaigns (42%), limited public awareness of digital violence (35%), lack of confidence in the effectiveness of available procedures or their outcomes (28%), and concerns about potential impacts on professional and leadership opportunities (22%). The decision not to confront certain incidents of digital violence or to delay reporting should not necessarily be interpreted as an indication that women perceive these experiences as insignificant. Instead, it may reflect the accumulation of competing priorities and pressures. Many women navigate multiple responsibilities, including family and social expectations, professional demands that often require additional efforts to demonstrate competence, and challenges associated with public participation that may include harassment or threats beyond digital spaces. Under conditions of limited time and resources, addressing digital violations may be perceived as an additional burden that can be postponed, not because such violations are less important, but because women must weigh them against other immediate personal, professional, and social demands.

Factors and barriers to reporting digital violence



The comparative analysis indicates distinct variations in self-censorship levels among women, contingent upon their prior experiences with digital violence. Women who had encountered at least one form of digital violence reported a higher average level of online expression avoidance or restriction in sharing political and social opinions due to apprehension of hostile reactions, with a mean score of 2.39 out of 4. In contrast, women without any experience of digital violence reported a lower average score of 2.06 out of 4.

These findings indicate that exposure to digital violence correlates with heightened caution and self-censorship among women participating in online public discussions. Although this does not inherently imply a withdrawal from digital spaces, it demonstrates a persistent effect of digital violence on women's exercise of their right to expression, as evidenced by increased hesitation and caution in sharing opinions or engaging with public issues.

The results suggest that experiences of digital violence are typically linked to heightened self-censorship. Nevertheless, this trend is not uniformly observed among all participant groups, as evidenced by the subsequent analysis, which explores variations based on the type of public participation.

The importance of these findings is rooted in the observation that the effects of digital violence extend beyond the immediate incident, potentially altering participation patterns in digital environments. When self-censorship is employed as a strategy to manage perceived risks, the issue transcends the mere protection of accounts or personal data; it encompasses safeguarding women's capacity to express themselves and engage confidently. Consequently, protection strategies should integrate technical security measures with initiatives aimed at fostering digital and social environments that promote safe participation, rather than concentrating solely on risk management post-incident.

The analysis indicates that the effect of digital violence on self-censorship is contingent upon the specific type of violation encountered. Women who experienced threats or digital blackmail reported the highest levels of self-censorship, with a mean score of 2.71 out of 4. This was followed by those subjected to verbal abuse or offensive comments, who reported a mean score of 2.57 out of 4. Conversely, women who faced unauthorized access attempts to their accounts or were targeted by digital defamation and misinformation campaigns exhibited comparatively lower levels of self-censorship.

Not all forms of digital violence have the same impact; violations that threaten women's dignity and personal safety generate the highest levels of self-censorship.

The findings suggest that specific types of digital violence exert a more significant impact on women's willingness to express themselves and engage in public discourse, especially when such violations involve direct threats or enhance a sense of personal vulnerability. The results overall substantiate the argument that digital violence transcends the immediate harm of an incident, contributing to the constriction of public expression and participation by reinforcing self-censorship among women.

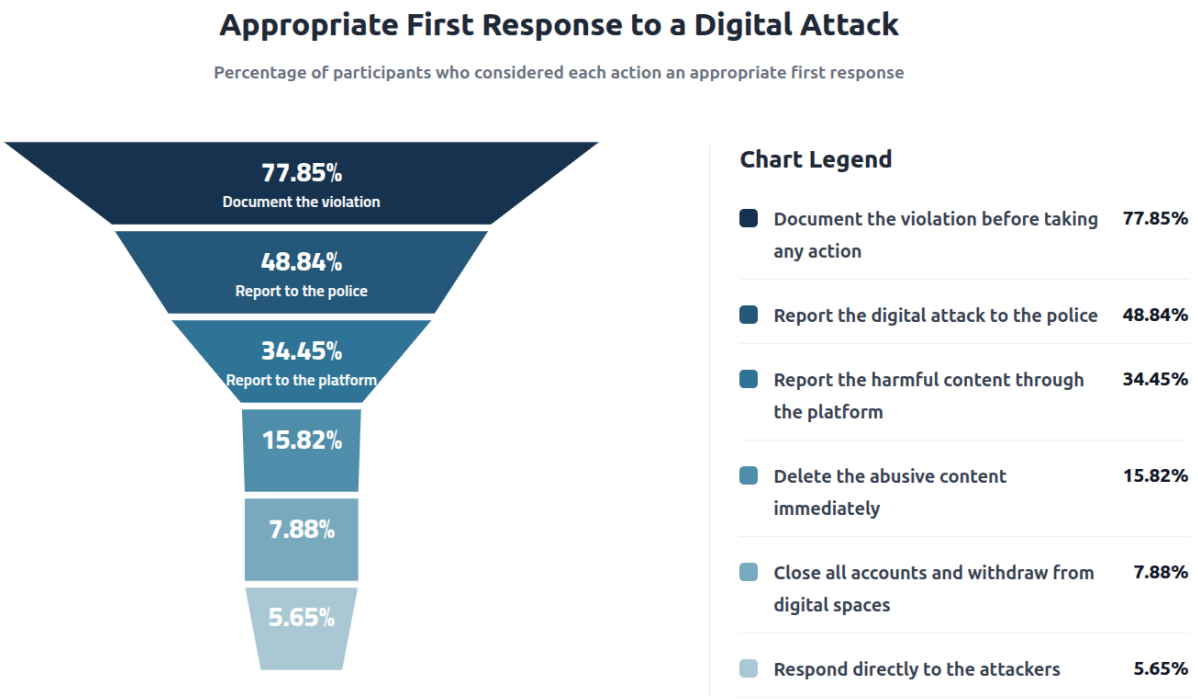
Form of digital violence	Average self-control	Level of self-control
Threats or blackmail	2.71	
Verbal abuse or abusive comments	2.57	
Unauthorized account access attempts	2.30	
Defamation or disclosure of private info	2.18	
Rumours or disinformation campaigns	2.17	
Organized digital attacks or reporting	1.45	

These findings delineate a crucial distinction for the formulation of protection strategies: digital violence is not a monolithic phenomenon but comprises varying levels of harm and impact. The results indicate the presence of a hierarchy of digital harm, wherein threats and blackmail are positioned at the apex due to their direct implications for personal dignity and safety, thereby serving as the most potent catalysts for self-censorship. Conversely, violations with predominantly technical or political aspects may be perceived by some women as part of the broader challenges inherent in public engagement, and thus as manageable risks. This distinction underscores the necessity of transitioning from generalized protection strategies to more specialized responses. Cases involving blackmail and direct threats necessitate prioritized access to psychological, legal, and protection services, whereas incidents such as account compromise or misinformation campaigns demand enhanced technical preparedness and response mechanisms. This approach ensures that women are equipped to manage digital risks without allowing attacks intended to intimidate or silence them to compromise their ability to participate and express themselves in public life.

The findings also indicate that women do not perceive withdrawal from digital spaces as an appropriate response to digital violence. A mere 7.88% of participants regarded the closure of all social media accounts and departure from digital spaces as the primary response to online attacks. Instead, many women formulate intentional strategies to manage their digital presence and mitigate exposure to risks. These strategies encompass the separation of personal and professional identities, restriction of personal information sharing, utilization of privacy tools, blocking of unknown accounts, documentation of violations, and reporting of incidents. Such practices demonstrate a sophisticated level of digital awareness and adaptive capacity. For instance, 43.71% of participants reported refraining from sharing personal or family photographs, while 49.15% indicated a focus on public service issues in their online presence, avoiding socially controversial topics. Additionally, 48.97% reported blocking unknown or unfamiliar accounts. Moreover, 77.85% considered documenting violations as the initial appropriate step when encountering digital violence, whereas 48.84% identified reporting incidents to the police or relevant authorities as the primary response. These patterns suggest that many women do not abandon digital spaces in response to violence; rather, they reconfigure their presence within these spaces by adopting more cautious and protective practices, enabling them to maintain their public roles while managing risks more effectively.

Rather than withdrawing, many women respond to digital risks proactively by reorganizing their online presence and using available protection and privacy measures.

These findings indicate that a substantial portion of the responsibility for managing digital risks remains with women. Although the individual strategies devised by participants are crucial for enhancing digital safety, the dependence on these strategies alone underscores the necessity for a more comprehensive institutional framework that distributes responsibility for prevention, protection, and response. Enhancing women's digital resilience is a vital aspect of addressing digital violence; however, it cannot replace the creation of a safer digital environment that diminishes the need for women to perpetually adapt to and manage risks independently.



Digital Resilience

This section investigates the extent of digital resilience among participants as they interact with digital environments. Digital resilience is defined as the ability to maintain public engagement, manage digital risks, and respond effectively to harm. It encompasses more than digital readiness, which refers to the technical skills necessary for securing accounts and protecting personal data. Digital resilience also includes legal awareness, risk assessment and management capabilities, psychological resilience, the ability to counter defamation campaigns and hate speech, and access to support and referral mechanisms when required. Thus, while digital readiness is a crucial aspect of digital resilience, it does not fully capture the entire concept.

Not all forms of digital violence can be prevented; while some require technical preparedness, many require broader digital resilience that enables women to continue participating despite being targeted.

The findings suggest that while many participants have acquired practical experience in digital safety through their use of online platforms and participation in public life, this experience does not necessarily equate to comprehensive digital resilience. Such resilience is essential for addressing various forms of digital violence and for maintaining confidence and effectiveness in their public roles. The gap is particularly pronounced in skills related to responding to digital crises and violations, such as managing defamation campaigns and online harassment, understanding complaint procedures and cybercrime mechanisms, and sustaining psychological resilience under the pressures of digital violence. Consequently, the challenge extends beyond enhancing theoretical or technical knowledge; it necessitates the development of practical skills, confidence, and applied preparedness that empower women to effectively respond to real-world digital threats.

The assessment results indicate that a majority of participants (70.10%) exhibit a moderate or higher level of awareness regarding digital safety concepts. However, the proportion of women who rate their knowledge as high is relatively limited. These findings imply the presence of a foundational knowledge base that enables many participants to identify common digital risks. Nonetheless, this does not necessarily reflect advanced knowledge or specialized readiness to tackle more complex digital threats.

Digital violence is predominantly linked to the degree of public visibility and engagement within digital spaces, rather than merely a lack of digital knowledge or skills. Women who actively engage on digital platforms for public, social, or political purposes are more susceptible to targeting due to their heightened visibility, even if they possess substantial digital knowledge or confidence in their abilities. This indicates that while digital readiness can mitigate certain technical risks, it is inadequate for addressing all forms of digital violence. Although risks associated with account security and privacy protection can often be reduced through preventive measures, other forms of violence, such as defamation campaigns, hate speech, and coordinated targeting, are intrinsically connected to public visibility. Addressing these issues necessitates broader digital resilience, including specialized response and crisis management skills.

The findings further substantiate this distinction. Women who had encountered at least one form of digital violence reported confidence levels in their digital abilities comparable to, and occasionally exceeding, those of women who had not experienced such violence. Although women exposed to digital violence exhibited superior performance in many technical skills assessed in this study, as elaborated later, this advantage did not extend to skills directly related to managing digital violence itself. Their confidence in professionally addressing defamation campaigns or online harassment remained relatively modest and was slightly lower than that of women who had not experienced digital violence. This suggests that exposure to digital violence may contribute to the development of certain skills associated with managing a public digital presence, but it does not necessarily equip individuals with the specialized expertise required to handle defamation campaigns or online harassment. These competencies extend beyond technical knowledge to encompass crisis management, strategic communication, reputation management, and the ability to access institutional support.

The value of digital readiness does not lie in preventing all forms of digital violence, but rather in strengthening women's ability to manage risks and reduce their impacts through preventive practices and more diverse strategies for managing digital presence.

The findings suggest that enhanced digital knowledge correlates with both increased risk awareness and the implementation of a broader array of strategies for managing digital presence and addressing potential threats. The data reveal a progressive increase in the average number of strategies employed by participants as their self-assessed digital knowledge level rises, from 4.82 strategies among women uncertain about their knowledge level to 6.05 strategies among those who rated their knowledge as high. These strategies encompass actions such as blocking unknown accounts, reviewing content prior to publication, restricting comments, refraining from sharing personal or family photographs, and other measures designed to mitigate risk exposure and manage online presence more securely.

These strategies should not be uniformly interpreted as indicators of enhanced digital protection. Instead, they represent varied approaches to risk management, contingent upon the nature of threats and the specific contexts in which women interact with digital spaces. Certain strategies focus on bolstering technical protection and minimizing opportunities for targeting, whereas others involve adaptive behaviors that enable women to manage perceived risks and sustain their engagement in environments deemed potentially hostile.

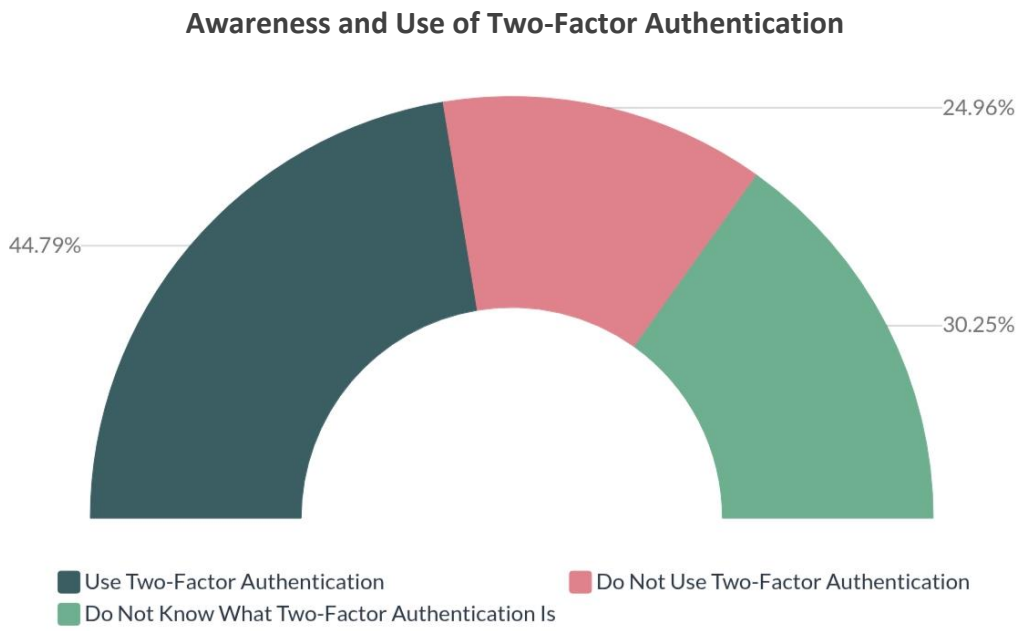
Average Self-Assessment of Digital Capacities by Exposure to Digital Violence
(Assessment scale: 1–5, where higher values indicate greater confidence in digital capacities)

Digital capacity	Exposed to digital violence	Not exposed to digital violence
Digital communication and campaign management skills	3.18	2.81
Public speaking and live-stream communication skills	3.32	3.17
Building leadership image and influence online	3.18	3.08
Integrating digital safety into advocacy and public engagement	3.08	2.78
Digital resilience and stress management	2.99	2.89
Ability to report harmful content to digital platforms	3.04	2.86
Knowledge of formal complaint procedures	2.96	2.86
Ability to professionally handle defamation campaigns or online harassment	2.70	2.78

Technical Knowledge and Digital Readiness

The findings indicate variability in participants' comprehension of fundamental concepts pertaining to digital security. A substantial portion of participants lack familiarity with certain essential protection tools or are unable to accurately evaluate specific digital practices. This knowledge deficit has significant implications, as limited awareness of technical protection measures may heighten women's susceptibility to account compromise and digital targeting. Consequently, women may be compelled to continuously respond to threats or adopt improvised strategies to safeguard their privacy, ultimately constraining their capacity to sustain an effective and secure digital presence.

The majority of participants possess awareness of basic digital protection principles; however, this knowledge does not always translate into effective preventive practices.



The findings suggest that while participants generally have a positive perception of their digital skills and can identify various risky digital behaviors, there exists a notable discrepancy between their theoretical awareness and the implementation of fundamental protective practices. For instance, although security measures like two-factor authentication are readily accessible, they are not consistently utilized by all participants. Additionally, the findings highlight some uncertainty concerning password management practices and account protection measures.

These findings indicate that awareness of digital risks does not inherently result in the adoption of effective protective behaviors. This highlights a prevalent issue in digital capacity-building initiatives: merely increasing awareness is inadequate unless it is coupled with the development of practical skills and the cultivation of safer digital habits. Consequently, the primary challenge lies not only in informing women about digital risks but also in enabling them to convert this knowledge into everyday practices that enhance protection and improve risk management. The failure to implement basic technical safeguards may exacerbate a sense of digital vulnerability, potentially prompting women to adopt broader defensive strategies, such as voluntarily reducing their public engagement, to mitigate exposure to risks like hacking, phishing, or unauthorized access. In environments where effective technical protection mechanisms are lacking or inconsistently applied, women may view reducing their visibility or limiting their participation as the most feasible approach to minimizing potential harm. Therefore, enhancing digital readiness necessitates progressing beyond awareness-raising to practical empowerment, ensuring that women possess both the knowledge and the tools required to engage confidently and safely in digital and public spaces.

Most participants demonstrate knowledge of fundamental digital security principles; however, this knowledge does not consistently translate into effective preventive practices.

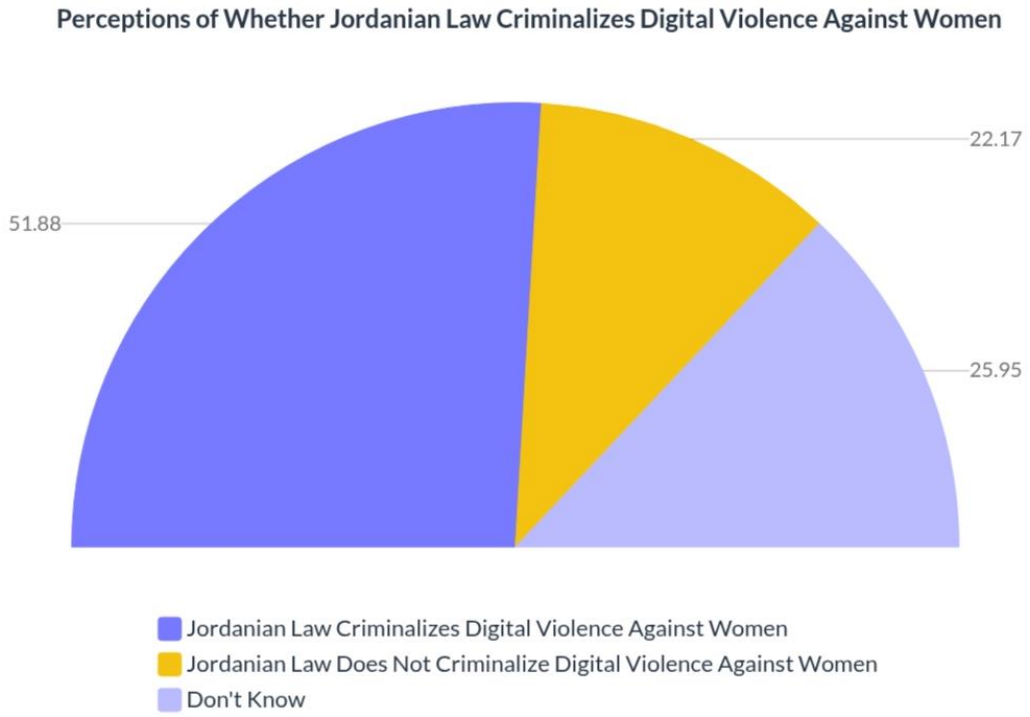


Legal Awareness and Institutional Protection Mechanisms

Addressing digital violence against women in public and political spheres necessitates more than just technical proficiency and digital safety measures. It also demands an understanding of the pertinent legal framework, encompassing knowledge of criminalized acts, available reporting mechanisms, and protection pathways. Assessing women's awareness of these aspects is crucial for identifying gaps that need to be addressed in future interventions. This section, therefore, analyzes the findings concerning participants' legal awareness and their familiarity with reporting and response mechanisms.

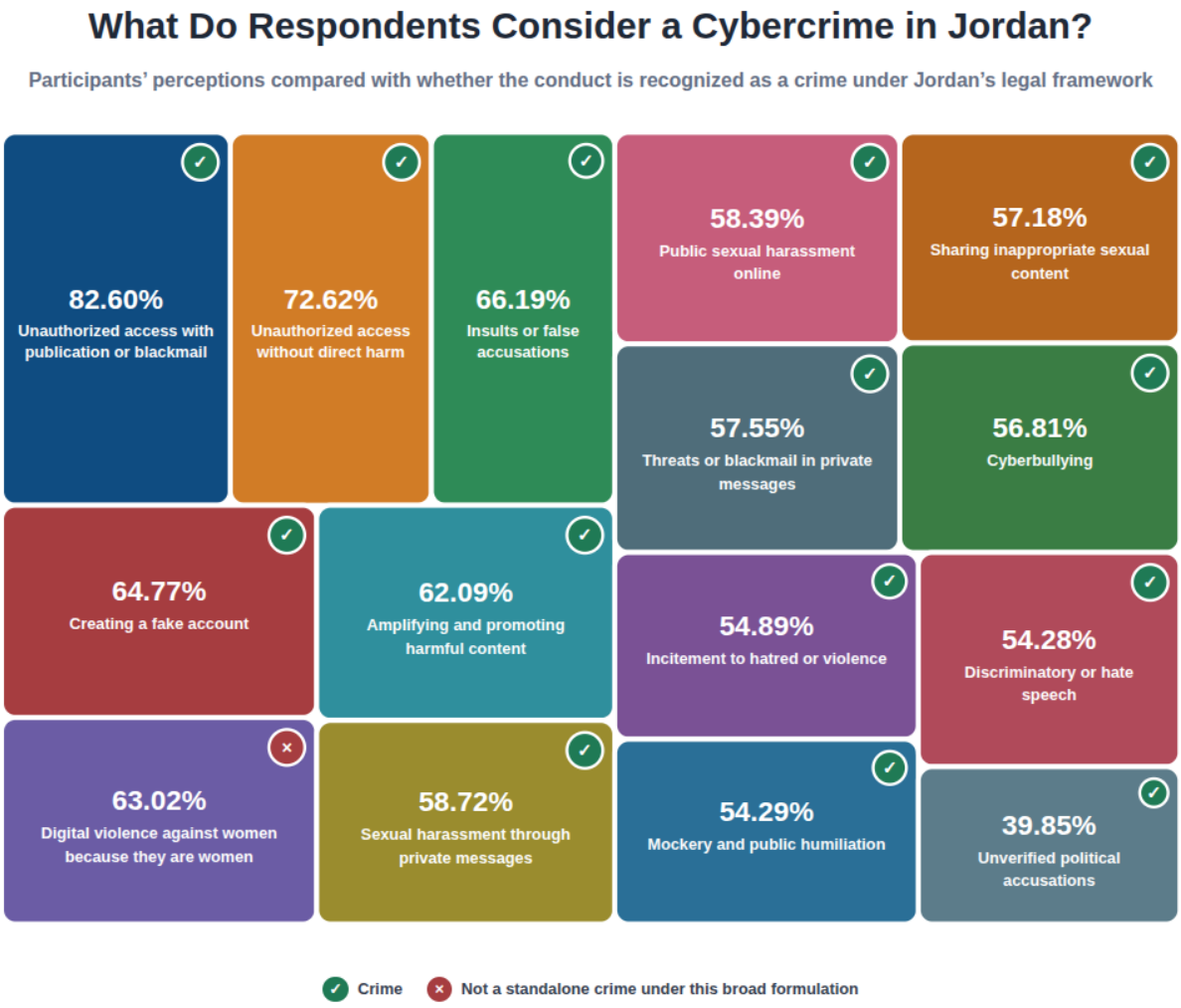
The findings indicate substantial deficiencies in participants' comprehension of the legal protections available against digital violence. Notably, only 52% of participants acknowledged that Jordanian legal frameworks criminalize digital violence[12], while the remaining participants were categorized into two groups: those who believed that the law does not protect women from digital violence (22%) and those who were uncertain (26%).

[12] The Cybercrime Law and the Penal Code contain numerous provisions that criminalize various forms of digital violence, albeit indirectly. For a detailed analysis of the legal framework and the treatment of cybercrimes related to violence against women in Jordan, readers may refer to the analytical study on the existing legal provisions and their application to cybercrime cases involving violence against women in Jordan.



The study reveals that participants who believed in the existence of legal protections against digital violence generally exhibited a comprehensive understanding of various forms of digital violence and cybercrime. A significant number accurately identified unauthorized access to personal data, digital identity theft, online threats and blackmail, and online harassment and gender-based violence as manifestations of digital violence or cybercrime. Nevertheless, the findings also identified deficiencies in recognizing less overt forms of digital violence, particularly those aimed at undermining women's public presence or restricting their participation in public life without direct threats or blackmail. Examples include questioning a woman's suitability for public roles, mocking her appearance or attire, or employing coordinated mass-reporting campaigns to silence her online presence. These findings indicate that, for many participants, the concept of digital violence is predominantly associated with direct and explicit forms of abuse, while awareness of more subtle forms remains limited, despite their potentially significant impact on women's digital presence, public participation, and ability to respond effectively when targeted. This underscores the necessity of enhancing legal awareness of digital violence, particularly among women involved in public life and those aspiring to run for elected office.

The findings indicated a degree of confusion concerning the legal boundaries of specific practices. For instance, over half of the participants perceived mockery or ridicule as constituting a cybercrime. Additionally, nearly 60% believed that all forms of digital violence against women are automatically classified as cybercrimes. However, according to Jordanian law, criminalization is contingent upon the nature of the act and the fulfillment of its legal elements, rather than a general description or characterization of the behavior.



The findings indicate not only variations in understanding the scope of legal protection but also a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of official responses to digital violence. This includes both the clarity of legal pathways and the efficacy of judicial and redress mechanisms. Specifically, 39.42% of participants reported avoiding legal channels due to perceptions of legal procedures as lengthy or ineffective. Additionally, nearly one-quarter of participants cited the requirement to appear in person at security centers and the associated potential social implications as further barriers to filing complaints. These findings suggest that the limited reliance on legal mechanisms is not merely due to insufficient knowledge of rights and procedures. Instead, it also reflects a lack of trust in the effectiveness of available remedies, as well as procedural and social barriers that diminish women's willingness to file complaints and pursue legal action against perpetrators. This conclusion is further supported by indicators of participants' practical readiness. The average self-assessed knowledge of procedures for submitting official complaints in cybercrime cases was 2.89 out of 5, while the average perceived ability to report abusive content through digital platforms was 2.93 out of 5. These results suggest that, although participants recognize the importance of reporting, their confidence in their ability to navigate formal or digital reporting mechanisms remains moderate, highlighting a gap between awareness of the importance of reporting and practical readiness to do so.

The main barrier to reporting is not only a lack of legal knowledge but also limited confidence in the effectiveness of protection and redress mechanisms, alongside social and institutional barriers.

In the analysis of legal procedures, the findings indicate that the challenges associated with addressing digital violence extend beyond mere legal knowledge or trust in the judicial system. These challenges also encompass various social and institutional factors that may deter women from seeking formal support or engaging in official procedures. Concerns regarding family and social privacy, limited confidence in procedural effectiveness, and fear of stigma or social repercussions have emerged as potential reasons for some women's reluctance to report incidents or pursue legal action. For instance, 70% of respondents cited fear of reputational damage as a primary deterrent to reporting digital violence, while 40% expressed hesitation due to fear of coordinated attacks or escalation by perpetrators. Yasmin (a pseudonym), a journalist from Tafileh Governorate, articulated: *"As a journalist, I am fully aware of the barriers, challenges, and prevailing social perceptions toward women who advocate for their rights."*

As previously mentioned, women's responses to online violence are influenced by their practical experience, social background, and institutional culture. Notably, the comparative analysis across the study groups revealed that the relationship between legal knowledge and the willingness to report is neither linear nor direct. Although no significant differences were found between women who believed that the Jordanian legal framework criminalizes digital violence against women and those who lacked clear knowledge on this issue, distinct differences were observed among women who believed that the legal framework does not criminalize digital violence against women.

These findings suggest that the willingness to report is not solely determined by the level of legal knowledge. Instead, it may also be influenced by confidence in the existence of effective legal protection and the likelihood of obtaining redress through formal channels. Women who perceived that digital violence against women is not clearly criminalized exhibited higher levels of hesitation or perceived barriers to accessing formal reporting mechanisms. For instance, only 32% of women who believed that digital violence against women is not criminalized in Jordan considered reporting to the police or the Public Prosecutor as the most appropriate initial response when experiencing digital violence. In contrast, 63.9% of their counterparts, who believed that Jordanian laws criminalize digital violence against women, considered these formal channels as the most suitable first response.

These findings demonstrate that the reluctance to pursue legal remedies is influenced by a combination of interconnected social and institutional factors, rather than a single cause. Specifically, 45.17% of participants identified the protection of family privacy or social reputation as a barrier to filing an official complaint, while 31.76% perceived legal procedures as ineffective or excessively time-consuming. Consequently, women's decisions to report are based on a comprehensive assessment of risks and benefits, encompassing not only legal knowledge but also the evaluation of procedural effectiveness and the potential social and personal repercussions of reporting. This implies that traditional legal awareness campaigns, which focus solely on informing women about legal provisions, are unlikely to effect the desired change unless they are accompanied by concrete measures to enhance the effectiveness of redress mechanisms, build trust in these systems, and address the social concerns associated with reporting. This conclusion aligns with local literature on digital violence against women, which suggests that reporting decisions are influenced not only by women's awareness of available laws and procedures but also by their confidence in the effectiveness of these mechanisms to provide

protection or achieve justice. Therefore, merely providing legal information may be insufficient to increase reporting unless it is part of broader efforts to strengthen trust in complaint mechanisms and legal procedures, while clarifying the protection and redress pathways available to women.

Awareness of Psychosocial Support Resources

The findings demonstrate a limited awareness of available psychosocial support services, with a significant proportion of participants initially unaware of their existence. The results highlight a distinct gap in access to these services, beginning with limited awareness and extending to additional barriers related to access and use. Over half of the participants reported unawareness of such services, although 20% of those unaware expressed a strong need for this support. This indicates deficiencies in communicating the availability of these services and effectively reaching the intended beneficiaries. Conversely, only 16.19% of women reported prior use of psychosocial support services, a relatively small proportion compared to the potential need. Additionally, 29.92% of participants were aware of these services but did not use them, opting instead for alternative social support networks, while cost was a direct barrier for a smaller proportion (3.14%).

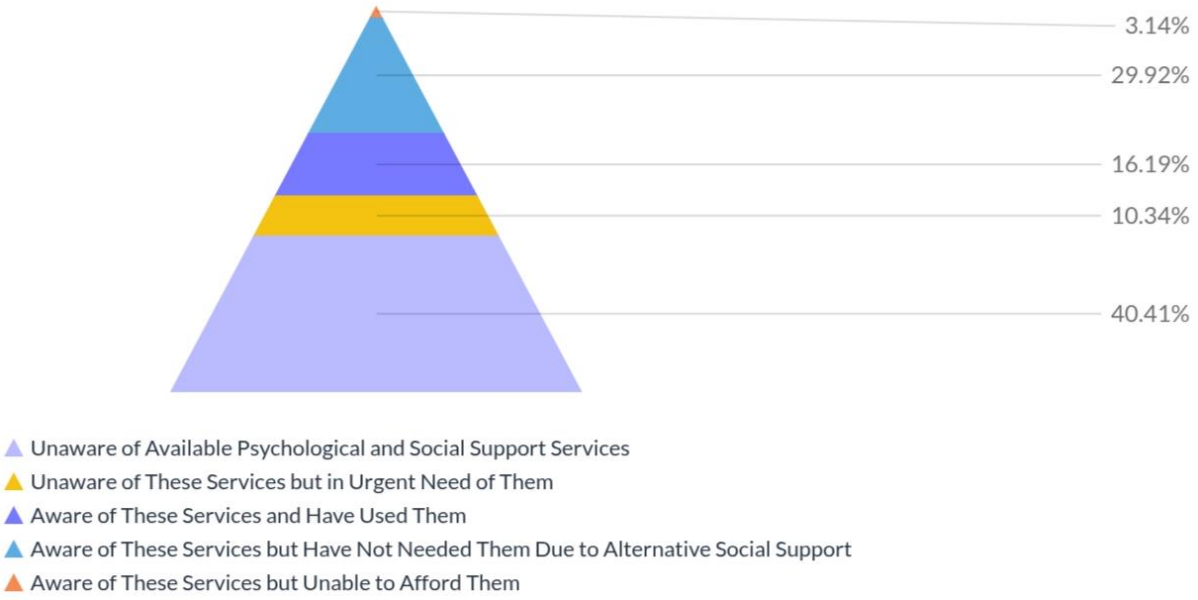
More than half of the participants are unaware of available psychosocial support services, while awareness is higher among women with greater involvement and experience in public and political life.

Women with prior experience in utilizing these services were predominantly those engaged in public and political spheres, comprising 90% of the group. This cohort included women with substantial political experience, such as those who had previously contested elections, secured elected positions, or were affiliated with political parties. The data indicate a correlation between heightened public engagement and increased awareness and use of available support services. This trend may be attributed to the extensive professional and institutional networks accessible to these women, as well as their greater exposure to awareness-raising programs and support initiatives compared to other women.

The findings suggest that the primary challenge extends beyond the mere availability of services. It is crucial to ensure that women are informed about these services, are connected to them at the appropriate time, and possess the confidence to access them when necessary. This necessitates the integration of psychosocial support as a fundamental component of the response system to digital violence, rather than treating it as a peripheral option accessible to only a limited number of women.

To effectively strengthen responses to digital violence, it is essential to address gaps in awareness and access, rather than solely focusing on the development of psychosocial support services. An effective response system necessitates investment in both the enhancement of services and the mechanisms for communicating their availability, activating referral pathways, and ensuring early access to support for women, prior to the occurrence of harm. From this perspective, strengthening the response system entails not only the improvement of services and institutions but also the reinforcement of networks that provide guidance and connection among women. Experienced leaders and established actors are crucial in disseminating knowledge about available support services, referral mechanisms, and digital safety practices to less experienced women, thereby enhancing early preparedness and expanding access to protection mechanisms.

Awareness of Available Psychological and Social Support Services



What Distinguishes Women Planning to Run in Future Elections?

The comparative analysis identifies distinct differences between women who are politically engaged or interested in political participation and those women leaders who are not. The findings suggest that while politically engaged women do not significantly differ from others in their fundamental understanding of digital resilience concepts, they navigate a more intricate digital environment and encounter greater challenges due to their public visibility. Notably, nearly half (49%) of politically engaged women or those interested in political participation reported experiencing at least one form of digital violence, in contrast to only 25% of women leaders who are not politically engaged.

Women who are politically engaged exhibit greater digital capabilities and confidence in addressing challenges related to public engagement. Their average digital capability index is 3.00, in contrast to 2.64 for women not involved in politics. Additionally, a higher percentage of politically engaged women reported no barriers to using formal reporting mechanisms in cases of digital violence (46% compared to 17%).

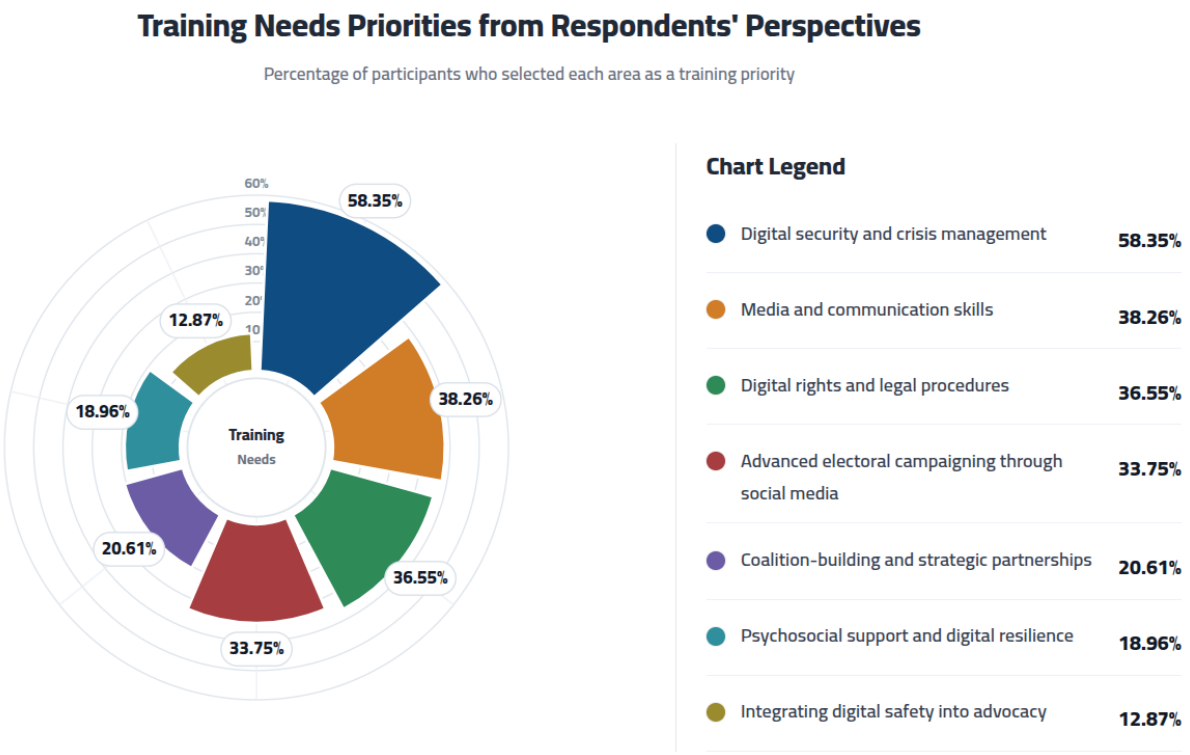
Minimal differences were observed between the two groups regarding certain fundamental digital security practices. The self-assessed digital safety awareness scores were comparable between the groups, with values of 2.82 and 2.80, respectively. Additionally, the use of two-factor authentication was similar, at 45% and 46%. These findings indicate that political or public engagement does not inherently lead to the adoption of more advanced digital protection practices, even with heightened exposure to digital risks.

The observation that politically engaged respondents were the most inclined to seek digital security training suggests that their interest in such training is not primarily due to a deficiency in fundamental knowledge or skills. Instead, it signifies a heightened awareness of the risks linked to public engagement and an acknowledgment of the necessity for more sophisticated tools and strategies to effectively manage these risks.

These findings challenge the conventional assumption that women aspiring to enter public life, particularly those lacking prior experience in political or public affairs, primarily require increased awareness or foundational knowledge. The distinction for this group lies not in a fundamentally different set of training needs but in the timing at which these needs should be addressed. As these women have not yet fully assumed public roles, they present a significant opportunity for early capacity building before encountering public-facing risks, rather than restricting interventions to post-harm responses. Consequently, their training requirements include, similar to other participants, the development of advanced skills in digital protection, crisis management, and responding to digital attacks. The timing of imparting these skills offers an additional advantage, as it allows them to be better prepared for public participation from the initial stages of their engagement.

Capacity-Building Priorities and Training Needs

The assessment findings reveal that the capacity-building priorities identified by participants are closely aligned with the knowledge and skills gaps outlined in the preceding sections of the study. This alignment enhances the overall validity of the findings and confirms that the training needs expressed are grounded in the actual challenges women encounter in their public and digital engagement. Digital security and digital crisis management have emerged as the primary training priorities, encompassing the prevention of digital violations, responses to smear campaigns and online harassment, and the enhancement of knowledge regarding digital rights, reporting mechanisms, and procedures for addressing cybercrime. Notably, women engaged in or interested in political and leadership participation demonstrated the highest demand for training in these areas, with 61% identifying them as priorities, compared to 39% among other survey respondents. Additionally, participants expressed interest in developing skills in communication, media, and digital campaign management, reflecting an increasing recognition that building public presence and influence in digital spaces is intrinsically linked to the ability to manage such engagement safely and professionally.

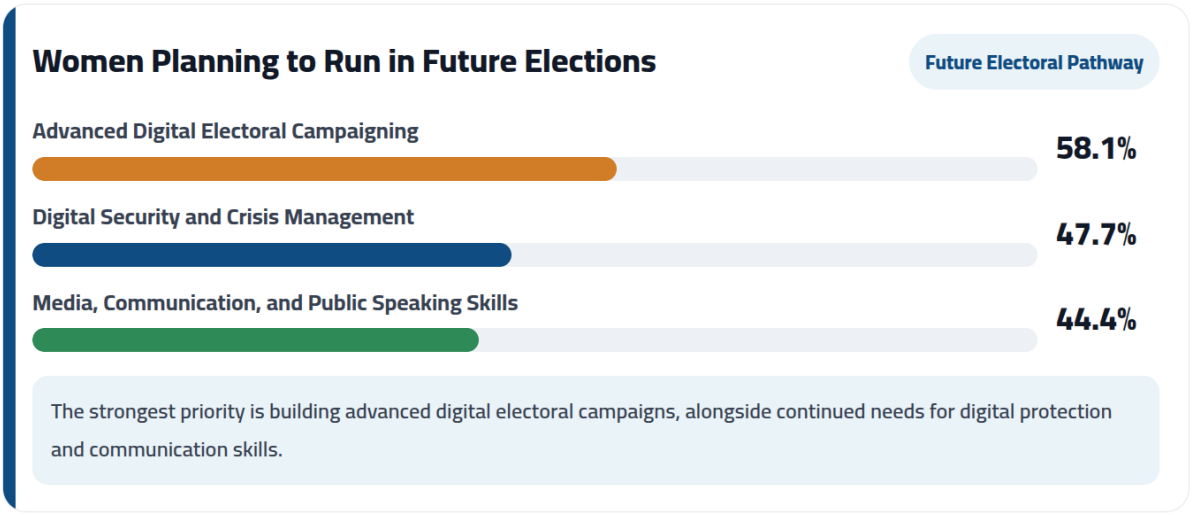


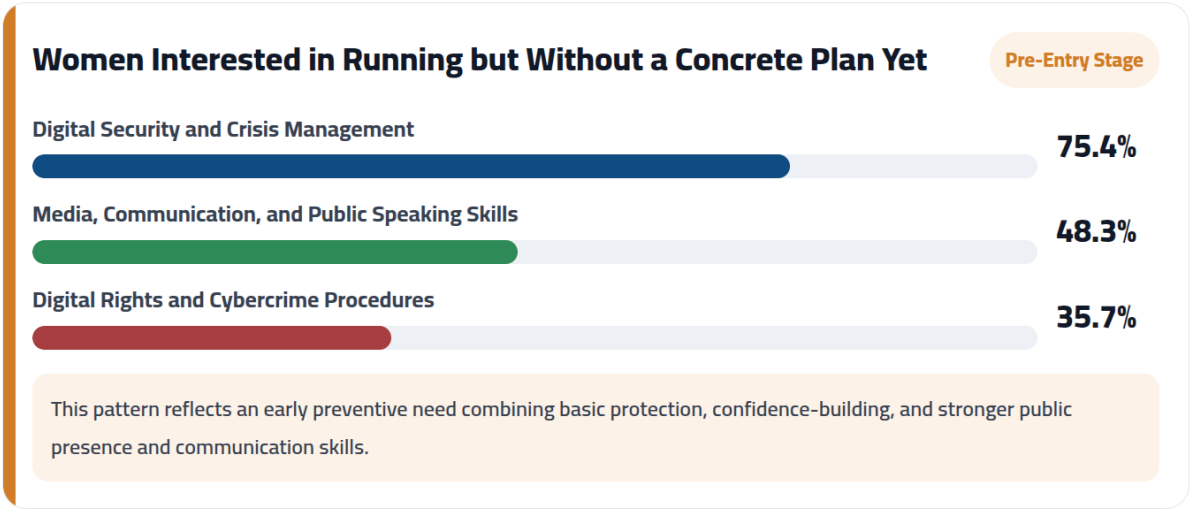
The identification of training not only highlights the most requested topics but also reveals participants' conceptualization of digital resilience requirements. Digital security and crisis management were ranked highest, followed by awareness of digital rights and legal procedures, indicating a clear focus on acquiring skills that offer direct protection and facilitate immediate responses to risks. Conversely, topics such as building strategic alliances and partnerships, integrating digital safety into advocacy efforts, and psychological resilience were ranked lower. This does not imply that these areas are less important; rather, it suggests that participants currently prioritize addressing immediate needs related to managing direct risks before progressing to longer-term strategic dimensions.

This prioritization demonstrates a practical understanding of digital resilience, emphasizing that safety and preparedness skills are fundamental for maintaining public participation, rather than being considered an isolated area of knowledge.

> ***Women prioritize protection first, followed by legal awareness and influence-building, while advocacy, partnerships, and psychological resilience receive lower priority—indicating that the digital environment is still experienced primarily as a space for risk management before it is perceived as a space for influence and leadership.***

The subsequent figure illustrates the outcomes of a comparative analysis concerning the weighted percentages of essential training needs among specific participant groups.





Women Affiliated with a Political Party or Movement

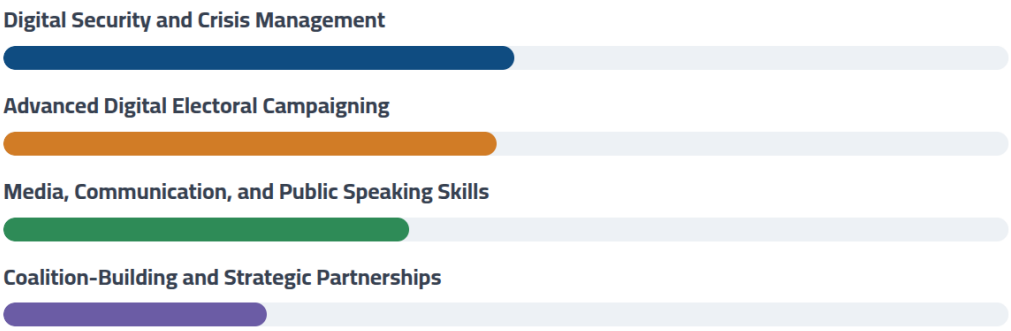
Active Party Engagement



This group shows a clearer need for coalition-building and for integrating digital safety into political work and advocacy.

Women with Previous Electoral Experience

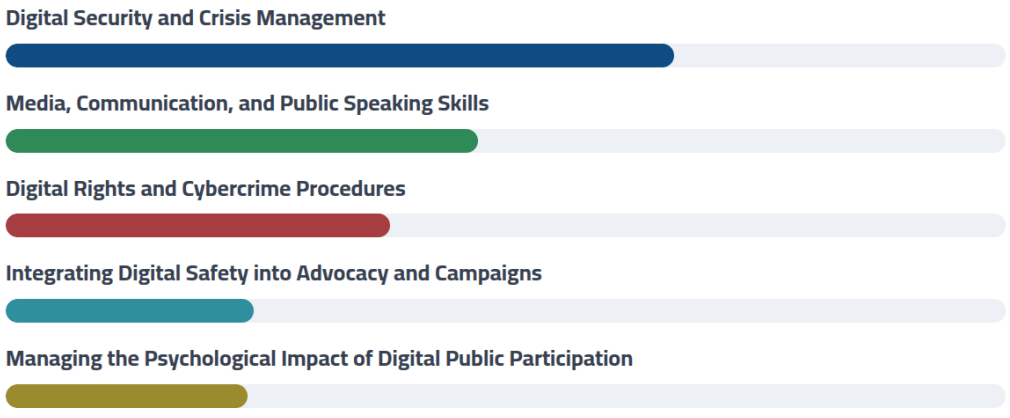
Previous Electoral Experience



The need for risk management closely aligns with the need to develop advanced campaigns, reflecting a shift from general awareness to practical response.

Women Exposed to Two or More Forms of Digital Violence

Repeated Digital Exposure



Needs are higher for crisis management, communication, and legal response, alongside additional demand for preventive integration and psychosocial support.

The increasing demand for a diverse skill set signifies a broader shift in the conceptualization of digital resilience. This resilience is now understood not merely as the ability to utilize technical tools, but as an institutional capacity to endure and respond to digital threats. The challenges faced by women in managing coordinated targeting campaigns extend beyond individual self-protection capabilities and necessitate support networks that concurrently offer legal, technical, and psychological assistance. This indicates that the gap identified by the study is not primarily due to a deficiency in individual skills, but rather a lack of specialized support systems that should be developed and maintained by pertinent institutions. Such systems are essential to reframe responses to digital violence from an individual burden on women to a collective responsibility, thereby fostering a safer environment for public engagement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this assessment indicate that digital safety has transcended its traditional role as a technical concern related to account protection or awareness initiatives; it now constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for women's participation in public and political spheres. The study reveals that the digital realm is no longer a separate entity from public engagement but rather an integral extension of it. As women's visibility in public domains increases, so does their susceptibility to digital targeting, particularly for those involved in political and leadership positions. However, the findings do not suggest that women retreat from public life; instead, they highlight that women frequently manage these risks through personal coping mechanisms, self-censorship, and strategic management of their digital presence, due to the lack of adequately developed institutional support systems.

The study further illustrates that the primary challenge is not a deficiency in basic awareness of digital safety concepts. Instead, it lies in the disparity between theoretical knowledge and practical application, alongside the necessity for advanced skills to manage digital crises, respond to defamation campaigns and targeted attacks, and foster confidence in legal and institutional mechanisms. This challenge becomes increasingly significant with the advent of new digital threats, particularly manipulated content and generative artificial intelligence technologies. Participants identified these as among the most destabilizing forms of digital threats, while preparedness and response mechanisms remain limited.

The study underscores a broader strategic aspect: the repercussions of digital violence extend beyond women who directly experience such attacks, influencing women who aspire to engage in public life by shaping their perceptions of the potential costs associated with participation. Consequently, digital violence not only restricts current voices but may also hinder the emergence of future female leaders. Therefore, investing in early digital preparedness constitutes an investment in enhancing women's future participation in public life.

In light of these findings, the report advocates for a reorientation of digital safety policies and programs. This reorientation should move beyond a limited emphasis on general awareness-raising to the establishment of a comprehensive system encompassing prevention, protection, response, and support. Such a system should incorporate specialized capacity-building initiatives, bolster digital resilience in conjunction with technical preparedness, and establish more effective pathways for reporting, referral, legal, and psychosocial support. Additionally, it should enhance institutional readiness to address emerging digital threats and develop risk assessment tools that consider varying levels of exposure, particularly in relation to the nature of women's public and political engagement.

These findings confirm that the future of women's public participation will be influenced not only by technological progress but also by the capacity of institutions to establish a safer and more equitable digital environment. Digital safety should not be regarded as an individual responsibility for women alone; instead, it constitutes a collective institutional and societal obligation. This shared responsibility facilitates women's confidence and sustainable engagement in public and political roles, ensuring that the right to participate is inherently linked with the right to protection.

Future Gaps and Emerging Challenges

While this paper evaluates the present context, Jordan's digital landscape is experiencing swift changes that necessitate addressing several emerging gaps:

- Artificial intelligence constitutes a dual-use technology. While it enhances digital engagement and communication for women leaders, it simultaneously introduces new risks, including sophisticated manipulation techniques such as deepfakes, which can be employed for extortion or to damage reputations. The degree to which women leaders are equipped, both technically and legally, to address these risks has not been sufficiently evaluated.
- A disparity exists between the rapid advancement of digital abuse tools and the slower pace of legislative development. Further research is necessary to investigate how national legal frameworks, including cybercrime legislation, can effectively address emerging digital violations, particularly those targeting public figures and involving cross-border online harms.
- There is an urgent requirement for longitudinal studies to explore the long-term effects of digital violence on the psychological well-being and "emotional exhaustion" of women leaders. Additionally, it is crucial to assess the extent to which sustained exposure leads to the gradual withdrawal of women's expertise and participation from public life.

Recommendations

Based on the assessment's findings, this study offers a series of interrelated practical recommendations. These recommendations aim to shift the responsibility for protection from being solely on women to establishing a comprehensive institutional framework for prevention, protection, response, and support. They acknowledge the varying risk levels and needs among women currently active in public and political spheres, prominent leaders, and those aspiring to enter the public domain in the future.

1. Develop Specialized Digital Resilience Pathways for Women Engaged in and Aspiring to Public and Political Participation



Stakeholders: **The Independent Election Commission, the Ministry of Local Administration, municipalities, political parties, the Jordanian National Commission for Women, civil society organizations, donor agencies, and academic institutions.**

The assessment findings reveal that the primary challenge lies not in a lack of general awareness regarding digital safety concepts, but in the necessity for practical and specialized skills tailored to women's public roles, visibility levels, and diverse risk environments. Consequently, this study advocates for a shift from short-term, general training workshops to structured and sustainable learning pathways. These pathways should be designed in accordance with women's levels of participation, experience, and exposure to risks. Implementation should occur in collaboration with institutions that have direct access to these groups, such as the Independent Election Commission, municipalities, political parties, and civil society organizations focused on political participation and women's empowerment. Digital resilience components should be incorporated into existing leadership development and political preparation programs, rather than being offered as standalone trainings. These pathways should differentiate between:

- Technical preparedness encompasses account and data protection, the implementation of two-factor authentication, effective password management, awareness of phishing threats, and strategies for responding to account breaches.

- Legal knowledge involves a comprehensive understanding of legal provisions concerning digital violence against women, as well as the utilization of legal mechanisms for protection and accountability.
- Digital resilience includes the management of defamation campaigns and hate speech, crisis communication, digital reputation management, legal documentation of violations, psychological resilience, and access to referral and support mechanisms.

These programs should employ practical scenarios and simulations in addition to theoretical knowledge. Participants ought to be trained to respond to realistic situations, including hacking, extortion, organized defamation, coordinated reporting attacks, data leaks, and deepfakes. This training will enable them to manage the risks associated with public and political participation with increased confidence and effectiveness.

2. Invest Early in Protecting Women Aspiring to Enter Public and Political Life



Stakeholders: **The Jordanian National Commission for Women, Independent Election Commission, political parties, municipalities, civil society organizations, universities, donor agencies, and women's leadership development programs.**

This study identifies a substantial cohort of women who are interested in pursuing public life or candidacy for office in the future. It further illustrates that the impact of digital violence may commence prior to direct exposure, as individuals form expectations regarding the costs of participation and develop tendencies towards self-censorship or hesitation. Consequently, the study advocates for the incorporation of digital safety and resilience, encompassing technical, legal, and psychological aspects, into the initial phases of leadership development and candidate preparation programs, rather than deferring until women encounter actual instances of digital violence.

Mentorship programs that connect aspiring female leaders with experienced counterparts, along with realistic awareness sessions on digital risks and available response mechanisms, can facilitate this objective. Additionally, personalized digital safety plans should be developed prior to women entering elections or assuming public roles. The primary aim of these initiatives is to enhance confidence and preparedness, rather than to instill fear or depict digital violence as an inevitable consequence of participation.

3. Establish a National Unified Referral, Response, and Support Platform for Cases of Digital Violence Against Women



Stakeholders: **The National Council for Family Affairs, Cybercrime Unit, Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, civil society organizations, and providers of legal, psychological, and social support services.**

The assessment findings suggest that numerous women encounter challenges in identifying the appropriate entities to contact when experiencing digital violence. Additionally, the results highlight a lack of awareness regarding available legal procedures and support services, as well as the fragmentation of services across various institutions. Consequently, the primary issue appears to be not the complete absence of services, but rather the difficulties in accessing them and comprehending how to effectively utilize available support mechanisms.

This study advocates for the creation of a coordinated national system that integrates a unified information and access platform with an efficient referral and case-management mechanism. Such a system would provide a definitive entry point for women experiencing digital violence, thereby minimizing the necessity to engage with multiple institutions and services without explicit guidance on the appropriate entity for each specific case.

The platform must offer interactive tools to assist women in identifying the specific nature of the issues they encounter and in directing them to the most suitable service providers. Additionally, it should provide accessible information regarding various forms of digital violations, documentation and reporting procedures, relevant authorities, and available legal, psychological, social, and technical support services. Furthermore, the platform should incorporate an initial assessment tool to guide cases towards appropriate services, alongside a secure referral-tracking system that delineates responsibilities among service providers and ensures cases are not lost during transitions between institutions.

This recommendation does not mandate the development of entirely new services; instead, it advocates for the coordination and integration of existing services into a coherent and comprehensive framework that safeguards privacy and alleviates the burden on women seeking support.

4. Strengthen Trust and Effectiveness in Reporting and Response Mechanisms for Digital Violence



Stakeholders: **The Cybercrime Unit, National Council for Family Affairs, Jordanian National Commission for Women, civil society organizations, providers of legal, psychological, and social support services, and media institutions.**

The findings indicate that the reluctance to report digital violence is influenced not only by a lack of knowledge regarding procedures but also by a limited trust in the efficacy of formal mechanisms. Additional factors include lengthy procedures, the necessity for in-person attendance, concerns about reputation and privacy, and fears of escalation by perpetrators. Consequently, responses should extend beyond awareness campaigns about legal provisions and instead prioritize enhancing women's experiences when reporting and bolstering confidence in the available mechanisms.

Achieving this objective involves several key strategies:

- Establishing secure, confidential, and streamlined reporting mechanisms, with an emphasis on minimizing the necessity for in-person attendance whenever feasible.
- Providing training for security and judicial personnel on the distinct characteristics of digital violence against women, with a focus on the sensitive management of issues pertaining to reputation, privacy, and social stigma.
- Creating accessible, scenario-based guidance materials that elucidate the types of incidents eligible for reporting, the appropriate channels for reporting, the requisite evidence, and the procedural expectations for women post-complaint submission.
- Disseminating periodic information on resolved cases and their outcomes, while ensuring the anonymity of victims, to enhance credibility and illustrate that reporting can result in substantive protection and accountability, particularly in terms of legal and institutional responses.
- Developing metrics to evaluate the response speed, the quality of institutional handling, complainant satisfaction, and the outcomes of cases.

5. Integrate Psychological and Social Support into the Digital Violence Response System

Stakeholders: **The Ministry of Social Development, National Council for Family Affairs, Jordanian National Commission for Women, mental health and social support service providers, civil society organizations, and donor agencies.**

The findings indicate that over half of the participants lack awareness of available psychological and social support services, including women who have expressed a need for such support. Awareness of these services is notably higher among women with extensive experience and involvement in public life. This suggests that merely providing services is inadequate unless they are well-known, accessible, and integrated into broader response mechanisms.

This study advocates for the incorporation of psychological and social support as an essential element of digital violence response systems, rather than considering it an optional or separate service. This integration should encompass:

- Integrating initial psychological assessments into referral mechanisms.
- Offering specialized support that acknowledges the interconnection between digital violence, reputation, and public visibility.
- Enhancing awareness of available services via political parties, municipalities, universities, and women's leadership development programs.
- Offering individual and group counseling, establishing peer-support networks, and implementing rapid response mechanisms for women subjected to large-scale attacks, extortion, or defamation campaigns.
- Recognizing that psychological, social, and professional impacts may persist beyond the immediate digital crisis, it is essential to ensure continuity of support even after the incident has concluded.

6. Develop a practical and simplified national framework for assessing digital risks associated with women's public and political participation

Stakeholders: **Ministerial Committee for Women's Empowerment, Jordanian National Commission for Women, National Council for Family Affairs, Independent Election Commission, civil society organizations, and donors.**

Digital risks are contingent upon the nature of public roles, levels of visibility, and degrees of political or media engagement. Increased exposure does not inherently suggest diminished skills; instead, it may signify a more substantial public presence and influence. Consequently, this study advocates for the development of a practical national framework or standardized checklist to assess digital risks prior to the design of programs, the launch of campaigns, or the assumption of public positions.

The framework ought to encompass indicators pertaining to candidacy, party membership, media visibility, campaign management, topics addressed by women, prior exposure to violence, legal knowledge, audience size, account management practices, and the availability of institutional support. Risk assessment should culminate in a response plan that integrates technical, legal, psychological, and communication measures, rather than solely categorizing women based on risk levels.

7. Promote safe practices for managing and protecting digital accounts linked to political and public participation



Stakeholders: **Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Independent Election Commission, political parties, municipalities, civil society organizations, and donors.**

This study determined that the majority of women independently manage their professional or public accounts. However, as their experience and involvement in public and political work increase, there is a growing reliance on specialized individuals or teams. Consequently, it is advisable to facilitate a gradual transition towards safer and more professional models of digital presence management through the following measures:

- Developing practical programs that integrate account protection, reputation management, and digital presence strategy.
- Developing comprehensive national guidelines for the protection and management of official and electoral accounts.
- Establishing explicit internal policies delineating access permissions, publishing responsibilities, and procedures for response and monitoring is essential.
- Providing training for support teams in the areas of digital security, data protection, crisis management, and defamation response.
- Formulating of continuity plans for accounts in the event of hacking incidents or access loss.
- Providing rapid technical and communication support during crises.
- Establishing advisory services or shared support units is proposed for women who do not possess the resources to employ independent teams.

This transition aims to maintain women's roles as decision-makers in managing their digital presence, while providing specialized support as their public responsibilities and exposure to risks increase.

8. Adopt Continuous Learning and Follow-Up Models Beyond Short-Term Training



Stakeholders: **Jordanian National Commission for Women, National Council for Family Affairs, Independent Election Commission, political parties, civil society organizations, donors, organizations implementing capacity-building and women's empowerment programs, and academic institutions.**

In light of the swift advancements in digital platforms, targeting strategies, and protective technologies, short-term, one-time training programs prove inadequate. This study advocates for the implementation of continuous learning models. These models should encompass periodic follow-up sessions, concise updates on new threats, communities of practice that facilitate the exchange of experiences and solutions among women, and avenues for obtaining technical advice post-training program completion.

Universities, especially those with departments in cybersecurity, computer science, law, and media, are crucial in updating resources, developing training materials, analyzing emerging trends, and organizing joint simulation exercises. These models should be incorporated into existing programs focused on women's empowerment, leadership development, and political participation, rather than being executed as separate, short-term initiatives.

9. Develop Practical Resources and Tools to Address Fabricated Content and AI-Related Threats

Stakeholders: **Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Government Communication, Cybercrime Unit, Independent Election Commission, media institutions, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and donors.**

Participants recognized fabricated content and deepfakes as significant digital threats; however, practical preparedness to address these issues is currently inadequate. Consequently, the study advocates for the development of explicit rapid-response protocols. These protocols should encompass content verification, evidence preservation, communication with platforms, management of public messaging, media correction strategies, and provision of legal and psychological support for affected women.

This study advocates for the creation of Arabic-language resources and guidance materials concerning deepfakes, voice and image impersonation, and AI-generated content. It is essential to test detection and verification tools prior to their adoption. Additionally, the implementation of specialized training programs is recommended. These programs should target women involved in public life, as well as security and judicial personnel, reporting authorities, journalists, and government communication professionals. The objective is to enhance their capacity to verify fabricated content, respond professionally, and prevent its further dissemination or amplification.

It is advisable to periodically test these protocols through joint simulation exercises, especially prior to elections or significant public campaigns, to ensure that relevant institutions are adequately prepared to respond effectively to this category of threats.

10. Strengthen Structured Cooperation with Digital Platforms to Protect Women Engaged in Public and Political Life

Stakeholders: **Technology companies and digital platforms, Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Cybercrime Unit, and civil society organizations.**

A substantial number of women participating in public and political spheres utilize digital platforms as their main venues for audience communication, campaign management, and the execution of social and professional tasks. Concurrently, these platforms serve as arenas where various forms of digital violence and online targeting manifest, such as hacking, impersonation, defamation campaigns, coordinated harassment, and malicious reporting campaigns.

This study advocates for the establishment of explicit cooperation and escalation mechanisms with major digital platforms to effectively address high-risk cases. These cases encompass identity impersonation, the distribution of intimate or fabricated materials, threats, coordinated harassment, and the organized targeting of female candidates and leaders.

Such cooperation should include:

- Establishing designated points of contact for urgent cases.
- Formulating escalation procedures that consider the sensitivity inherent in electoral processes and contexts involving public participation.
- Improving Arabic-language reporting resources and tools.
- Disseminating information, while adhering to relevant legal and rights-based protections, regarding coordinated and emerging patterns of abuse.

- Conducting regular training sessions for national institutions and civil society organizations on the effective utilization of platform reporting and safety tools.
- Promoting the publication of more transparent data by platforms regarding their responses to reports of digital violence against women.

11. Integrate Digital Violence and Digital Resilience Indicators into Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Women's Empowerment and Public Participation Programs



Stakeholders: **Jordanian National Commission for Women, Ministerial Committee for Women's Empowerment, Independent Election Commission, donors, and civil society organizations.**

The assessment findings underscore the necessity of systematically collecting data on the patterns of digital violence encountered by women involved in public and political spheres, their levels of digital resilience, and the obstacles that hinder access to protection and support. Although there is increasing attention to digital violence against women, the data available on this issue remain limited and fragmented. This limitation complicates efforts to track emerging trends and evaluate the impact of existing programs and initiatives.

This study advocates for the adoption of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework within women's empowerment and public participation programs. This framework should incorporate periodic indicators that assess exposure to digital violence, its effects on participation, levels of self-censorship, awareness of reporting mechanisms, trust in legal avenues, access to support services, and degrees of digital resilience. Implementing such a framework would facilitate the monitoring of emerging trends, the evaluation of interventions, and the evidence-based allocation of resources and programs.

To achieve this objective, monitoring indicators should encompass more than merely measuring exposure to digital violence. They should also evaluate women's capacity to maintain participation in public life. This evaluation includes aspects such as technical preparedness, digital crisis management, confidence in legal mechanisms, access to support services, and other elements of digital resilience.

12. Develop More Comprehensive Tools to Measure Digital Resilience and Women's Training Needs Beyond Self-Assessment



Stakeholders: **Donors, research institutions, civil society organizations, and organizations implementing capacity-building programs.**

The assessment partially relied on participants' self-reported evaluations of their knowledge and confidence in their abilities. Although this serves as a significant indicator, it does not comprehensively measure actual performance. Consequently, the study recommends the development of practical assessment tools that incorporate scenarios, exercises, and applied tests to evaluate women's ability to protect accounts, assess risks, preserve evidence, respond to defamation, and select appropriate reporting pathways.

These tools should be employed both prior to and following training programs, in conjunction with self-assessment indicators. This approach facilitates the measurement of actual changes in skills, behaviors, and confidence, rather than merely evaluating participants' satisfaction with the training.

13. Adopt an Integrated Institutional Approach to Ensure the Sustainability of Women's Participation in Public Life



Stakeholders: **Cybercrime Unit, National Council for Family Affairs, Jordanian National Commission for Women, civil society organizations, providers of legal and psychological support services, media institutions, and donors.**

The findings of the study indicate that the sustainability of women's participation in public life is contingent not only on their individual preparedness but also on the presence of an institutional system equipped to prevent, respond, and provide support. Consequently, the study advocates for the adoption of a national coordination framework among relevant stakeholders. This framework should integrate technical protection, legal pathways, psychological and social support, media engagement, and capacity-building, ensuring these components function as a cohesive system rather than as isolated interventions.

To achieve this, the study recommends:

- Incorporating digital safety and resilience into national policies concerning women's empowerment and political participation.
- Establishing a coordination framework and shared referral mechanisms is essential for delineating the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders.
- Developing standardized response protocols for high-risk cases, along with mechanisms for information sharing among relevant institutions, is essential.
- Enhancing the function of media institutions in mitigating the perpetuation of hate speech and digital violence, while implementing gender-sensitive editorial policies.
- Periodic monitoring of the implementation of recommendations and evaluation of their impact are essential to ensure the ongoing development of protection and response systems.

This recommendation constitutes the foundational framework for the other recommendations outlined in the report. It aims to transition the responsibility for addressing digital violence from isolated individual responses to a comprehensive institutional system. This system is designed to enable women to engage in their public and political roles safely and sustainably.