Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee 

Topic: Weaponization of Data and Cyber Security

Country: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Today, misinformation is a long-standing problem in Jordan. The use of social media platforms such as Facebook, increases the problem of the spreading of false news. The latest incidents of massive spread of false news started with the first case of COVID-19.

On 1 February 2020, the Royal Jordanian aircraft led by Carol Rabadi landed at Queen Alia International Airport in Amman. The aircraft was carrying 71 Jordanians and other Arab nationals who were evacuated from the city of Wuhan because of COVID-19. After this event, Jordan’s first COVID-19 case was announced on 2 March 2020. Soon after, the Jordan government announced a strict lockdown and the Defense Law. These announcements brought most of the country to a standstill. And yet, despite of the lockdown, the flow of false information didn’t stopped, it envolved.

A report according to a Jordanian media organization, there were 67 false stories spread during March, which were more than double what had been recorded in previous months.

The main sources of misinformation were social media platforms like Facebook and Whatsapp. A claim such as “Drinking warm water every 15 minutes can prevent the infection of COVID-19.” was one of the false news that spread.

Currently, there’s no data protection law in Jordan. Jordan’s parliament is now, discussing for passing a new data protection law. But the draft of this law surely needs more work to meet the global standards. There have been many policiy breifs that prepared by people for how to strenghten Joran’s data protection law. The reason why these policy breifs are prepared, is to guide lawmakers and to ensure the law protects Jordanians’ fundamental human rights. As the events of misinformation and the potential threat of weaponized data in Jordan is dangerous, a solution must be found immediately. For that, the new data protection law should be brought to global standards and pass from the parliaments approval.

References:

In crisis: Jordan battles COVID-19 and misinformation

<https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/crisis-jordan-battles-covid-19-and-misinformation>

Policy brief: What’s wrong with Jordan’s data protection law and how to fix it

<https://www.accessnow.org/jordan-data-protection-law/>