

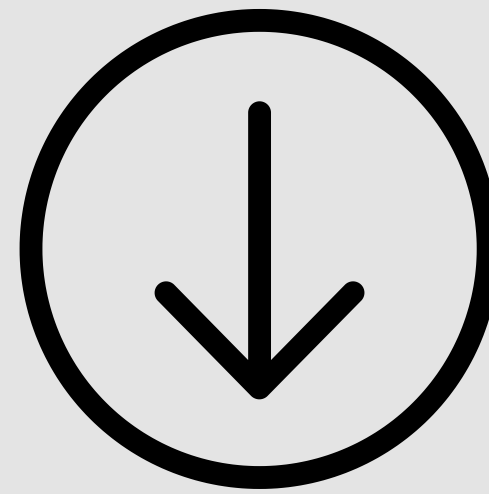


Psychosocial Impacts of Surveillance and Spyware-Based Digital Attacks

Research and Guidance for Digital Accompaniment

**These materials were developed with the ongoing
collaboration of The Engine Room.**

**STUDY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACTS AND COPING
STRATEGIES IN RESPONSE TO DIGITAL ATTACKS
(SPECIFICALLY SPY OR SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES OR
SPYWARE)**



**An in-depth resource for those offering digital security
support to people and groups impacted by digital
surveillance and spyware.**



Methodology

Approach:

- Qualitative methodology
- Two types of interviews using a semi-structured guide
- Conducted virtually (1–2 hours per interview)

Participants:

- Five digital defenders who shared personal experiences
- Two experts who provided technical insights
- All participants gave informed consent prior to the interviews
- Participants are from Central American countries
- The journalists involved engage in human rights advocacy



Findings

- 1 Surveillance and spyware attacks serve to exert control, cultivate vulnerability, instill fear, and suppress individuals' professional activities.
- 2 These attacks often materialize through physical surveillance, arbitrary detention, online harassment, forced displacement, and exile.
- 3 They lead to significant changes in personal, family, and social life.
- 4 Psychological consequences include the aggravation of preexisting anxiety or depression, along with initial shock, intense fear, panic, and persistent anxiety.
- 5 Affected individuals frequently experience hypervigilance, difficulty concentrating, and fear of expressing public opinions.
- 6 There is a notable impact on life plans, family dynamics, and economic stability.
- 7 The toll extends to professional capacities, with deterioration of work tools, emotional exhaustion, and increased psychological stress.

Recommendations

Efforts toward prevention and prompt care

Support Networks

Training in emotional support for individuals delivering digital security services.

Establish a network with fellow professionals who offer legal assistance in instances of criminalization.

Psychological and psychosocial support

Foster social connections and enhance the establishment of funds.

Formulate action protocols

Assistance with relocation procedures

Establish a network with fellow professionals who offer legal assistance in instances of criminalization.



What actions did we take based on these findings?

- Disseminate the findings across various ecosystems, especially to those engaged in offering assistance in digital protection.
- Develop a collaborative guide that offers strategies for comprehensive support.



A practical guide for those who support people and groups facing digital threats from spyware and surveillance tools.



Collective Building



Coordinating the processes from their inception



Emotional Dimensions and Non-Conventional Approaches

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Bringing Closure through Psychosocial Approaches

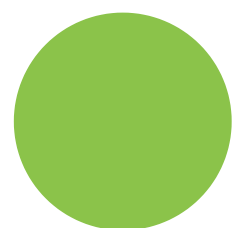


Strengthen networks

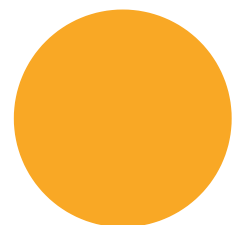
PRACTICAL INSTRUMENTS FOR THE DIGITAL SUPPORTER LISTENING, CONTAINMENT AND ACTION



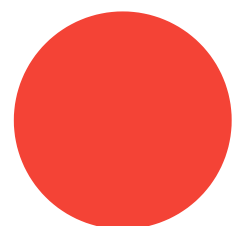
Care for Caregivers



Individual



Teams



Organizational Levels





THANK YOU FOR JOIN US

