

Under Attack, Still We Rise!

**Women Media-Makers
vs. Technology-
Facilitated Gender-
Based Violence
(TFGBV)**



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In today's interconnected world, the digital media space should enable free expression, innovation, and community. Yet for many women journalists and media-makers, it has also become a battleground. Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) — from hate speech and cyberstalking to impersonation, rape threats, and death threats — has become an all-too-common part of their professional and personal digital lived realities. This violence doesn't just threaten individual safety; it strikes at the very heart of press freedom, silencing voices that are vital for democratic societies.

This coffee table book, supported by RNW Media, the Masarouna and Right Here Right Now 2 (RHRN2) programs, and all the women media makers who participated in it through their stories, is a tribute to the resilience, courage, and determination of women who refuse to be silenced. Across continents and cultures, women media makers are facing digital violence head-on, reclaiming their narratives, demanding accountability, and forging paths of solidarity and change.

Through powerful personal testimonies, vivid portraits, and reflections, ***Under Attack, Still We Rise!*** captures not only the online harms they endure, but also the strength they summon to continue telling the stories that matter. This is more than a documentation of violence — it is a celebration of resistance, a call to action, and a reminder that even in the face of relentless attacks, women's voices will not be erased.



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“It is **everyone's** obligation to get involved in the fight against technology facilitated gender-based violence.”

Aimee, Journalist, Burkina Faso





“In 2023 my facebook account was hacked, The hackers made my contacts believe that I had become rich and that I could help them make their money, but I was lucky that my contacts knew that I wasn't involved in these shady businesses. However, I felt bad because it could leave a lasting impression on the web. And thanks to the Anti-Crime Brigade, I was able to recover my account!


I know that you have to be mentally strong to overcome these kinds of challenges. But I also want to say that it is everyone's obligation to get involved in the fight against technology facilitated gender-based violence. Let the guilty be punished accordingly to their crime.”

Aimee, Journalist, Burkina Faso

“I experienced ***defamation*** where someone made false and damaging statements about me.”

Sahaar, Journalist, Egypt





“I use social media for my work and to publish my journalistic products and practical achievements. I received a grant in digital safety and trained journalists from more than 17 countries. The most prominent TFGVB risks I have experience are stalking, threats, theft of personal data, and defamation.

I experienced defamation where someone make false and damaging statements about me. Because of this I became more cautious and no longer shared any personal information about myself on social media.

This experience has make me reflecting back to what I have learned and try to raise awareness and educate my surrounding circles and provide them with the necessary assistance. I do believe toughening penalties and educating people can help address TFGBV”

Sahaar, Journalist, Egypt

“I wish that society would understand more about the importance of our work, and the harmful impact that TFGBV can leave on women and marginalized individuals.

Digital spaces are a mirror of society, which sadly proves that society’s acceptance of GBV in general is more common than expected.”

Chrystine, Journalist
& Podcaster, Lebanon



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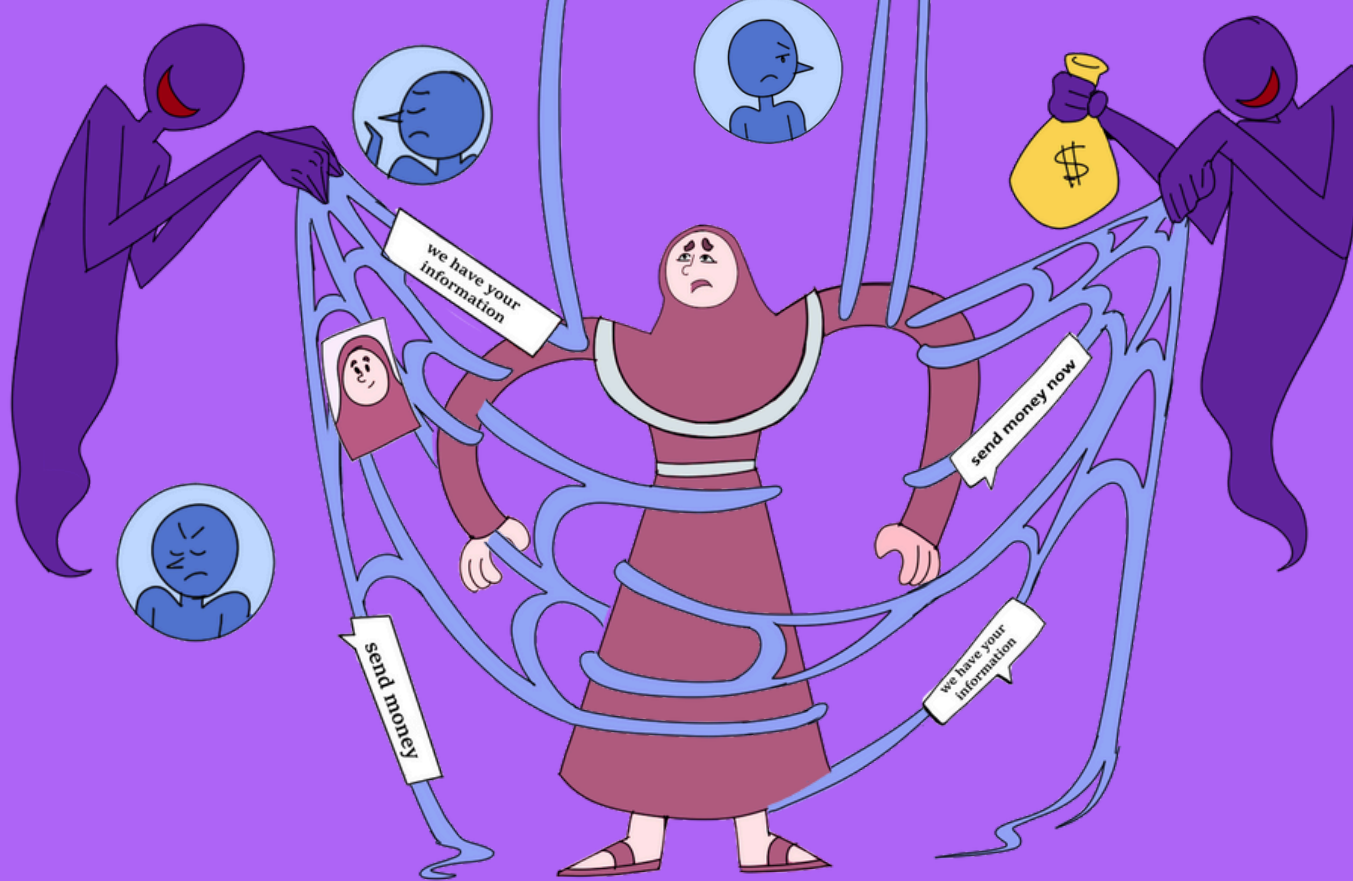
“I use digital platforms for online activism and online campaigning on human rights issues. I personally haven’t faced much but have been exposed to many cases of threats and online shaming as I work with front-liners in the field of human rights and SRHR. “

This experience hinders many women & activists from stepping forward or speaking up about their rights in the Arab region. As an enabler of editorial projects or campaigns, it makes it harder for me to ensure the safety of these activists and to provide them with safe online spaces. As a journalist and activist myself, I also tend to self-censor most of the work that I do as a preventive measure. On an emotional level, this creates a deep gap between the work that I do and how society perceives that, mostly making my work feel like a hectic job constantly.

I try to shed light on my personal experiences and the importance of mental health approaches within any project implementation or development. I also ensure that I am taking the space & necessary distance between what is being shared on personal and professional levels. I also intentionally make sure that my contributions do not provoke certain responses that can provoke such incidents— only when it makes sense and doesn’t harm the message that I’m trying to send.

Policies should include clear protection when it comes to TFGBV. Likewise(all social media platforms’ guidelines should clearly be able to differentiate hate speech from freedom of speech when it comes to moderating and regulating spaces. On national levels, countries have a lot to do. Many legal frameworks in the Arab region fail to mention this component & to create modern laws that keep up with the constant digital changes in the region. TFGBV is a crime against women, and having laws that protect women from it, similarly to criminalizing offline GBV, is a game changer.”

Chrystine, Journalist & Podcaster, Lebanon



“I couldn't do anything, and *even when I reported it* to the authorities, there was *no help or support given.*”

Chum, Journalist & Digital Content Creator, Tanzania

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“Currently, online loan services in Tanzania have been infiltrated by scammers who use people's details to blackmail them into paying money or to humiliate people online.

Another problem is that people have hacked my Facebook account, where they were sending messages to people telling them that I need money. On the TikTok platform, there are many scammers who use dating sites or job networks to persuade people to connect with them, and I have already tried one account and lost 500,000 Tanzanian shillings. So, there is a lot of theft online.

Due to these incidents, I was greatly affected psychologically and professionally because someone humiliates you to the extent of sending your details to people who know you on social media, which causes those who know you to lose trust in you and refuse to offer you any job opportunities. Psychologically, I had many thoughts during that time, and I was unable to think clearly, always feeling like I had thoughts of moving forward.

I couldn't do anything, and even when I reported it to the authorities, there was no help or support given. There is a need for people to be given training and various seminars. Security agencies should try to control those who misuse social media platforms, and since technology is advancing every day, schools should continue to provide ICT education.

I request that laws and policies be developed in various countries that will protect the welfare and development, especially for women, who are the largest group being humiliated online.”

Chum, Journalist & Digital
Content Creator Tanzania


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“Several colleagues in ***Bincang Perempuan*** team have experienced various forms of technology-based violence such as cyberstalking, doxxing, and hate speech”

Betty, Journalist & founder
Bincang Perempuan, Indonesia

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“One of the cases we experienced occurred due to the content we created, especially that uploaded on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. In addition, there was also an incident experienced by one of our team members when they participated in an activity organized by another party. This participation had an impact on the content they created as part of their duties and obligations in the activity, which ultimately triggered a lot of hate speech on the Twitter platform, now known as X.

This experience deeply impacted me professionally, even though I was not directly targeted. I supported my team by allowing them to take a break from social media and access psychological services to prioritize their mental health. To protect ourselves, we strictly filtered content and assessed potential risks before publishing. We also developed a comprehensive SOP for handling gender-based violence, both online and offline, ensuring clear, structured responses to any incidents. These measures help safeguard our team’s well-being and maintain a positive, resilient work environment.

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence is a complex issue that is still poorly understood by many. It is not uncommon and is often experienced by women and other vulnerable groups every day. The forms of technology-enabled violence vary, including cyberbullying, revenge porn, doxxing, online threats, and the spread of hate speech. Awareness of these forms of violence is important so that the public can recognize and prevent them. The impact of technology-enabled violence is enormous on the mental and emotional health of victims, and can affect their social, professional, and personal safety.

In addition, the public needs to understand that social media and other digital platforms have a responsibility to create a safe environment for users. Education and prevention, including how to use technology safely and responsibly, are essential. Recognizing the signs of technology-enabled violence and knowing the steps to protect yourself are part of this education. The public also needs to understand the legal rights and policies that protect against technology-enabled violence so that they can take action if they become victims or see others become victims. This will make the public more aware, responsive, and prepared to fight technology-enabled gender-based violence.”


Betty, Journalist & founder
“Bincang Perempuan”, Indonesia

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**“I have encountered
some online
negativity, including
hate speech and
criticism”**

Raghad, Journalist, Jordan



"I primarily use digital platforms for journalism, professional networking, and advocacy. I share media content, engage in discussions on press freedom and solutions journalism, and connect with other professionals. Additionally, I use social media for storytelling, raising awareness about social issues, and amplifying youth voices. I have encountered some online negativity, including hate speech and criticism, but I have not experienced severe forms of technology-facilitated violence.

Facing online negativity was challenging at times, but I have learned to navigate it without letting it affect me deeply. It has made me more aware of digital safety and the importance of supporting women in media. Professionally, it reinforced my commitment to journalism and advocacy, pushing me to create more impactful content. To protect myself online, I prioritize digital security by using strong passwords, enabling two-factor authentication, and being cautious about sharing personal information. I also moderate my social media interactions, limit engagement with harmful comments, and utilize platform settings to control privacy. Additionally, I rely on supportive networks of journalists and professionals to navigate challenges and stay informed about online safety strategies.


I wish society recognized the serious impact of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) on women in media and beyond. It's not just "online negativity" but a real threat that affects mental health, professional opportunities, and freedom of expression. More awareness, accountability for perpetrators, and stronger protections are needed to create a safer digital space for everyone.

In Jordan, I would like to see stronger policies and legal frameworks that specifically address TFGBV, including clear penalties for online harassment and cyberbullying. Social media platforms should implement more robust reporting systems and take immediate action against harmful content. Additionally, there should be more awareness campaigns to educate the public about the dangers of TFGBV and support services for victims."

“In my work as a journalist, I have encountered various forms of online violence, including hate speech, threats, and online shaming. *I have also experienced impersonation,* where individuals pretend to be me, and the spread of false information aimed at damaging my reputation.”

Winfrida, Journalist, Writer &
Broadcaster, Tanzania





“ This experience of TFGBV has affected me in various ways. Emotionally and mentally, it has caused stress and anxiety, especially when receiving threats or hate speech. Professionally, it has made me more cautious in my work, but at times it has also made me feel like there are limits to freedom of expression. Socially, I have become more careful about how I interact with people online, avoiding certain discussions out of fear of online harassment.

To protect myself from TFGBV, I take several precautions in my digital environment. I ensure my social media accounts are private and use strong passwords to secure my devices. I avoid engaging in online discussions that could attract negative attention or hostility. Additionally, I report and block individuals who engage in harassment or impersonation. Professionally, I am selective about the information I share online, especially when it comes to my personal details. I also stay connected with support networks and fellow journalists who help me navigate these challenges.

I wish society understood that TFGBV is not just a personal issue, but a systemic problem that affects many individuals, especially women in the media. It is not just about isolated incidents but a persistent pattern of harassment, threats, and discrimination that can have lasting emotional and professional consequences. There needs to be more awareness about how these acts of violence can limit freedom of expression, create fear, and silence voices. It’s important to recognize the deep emotional and mental toll it takes on individuals, and for society to create more supportive environments where victims can speak out and seek help without fear of further victimization.


I would like to see stronger policies and legal frameworks that specifically address TFGBV, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable and that there are clear, accessible avenues for victims to report abuse. Social media platforms should have more robust reporting systems and take quicker actions against those who engage in harassment, hate speech, or impersonation. I also believe that laws should protect journalists and media workers from online threats and harassment, recognizing the impact it has on their work and personal lives.”

Winfrida, Journalist, Writer
& Broadcaster, Tanzania

“I was deeply concerned about the potential misuse of my account. The idea that a hacker could **exploit my platform, misrepresent my identity, or compromise my professional integrity** weighed heavily on me. The uncertainty of how my name and reputation could be affected added another layer of distress.”

Lucy Afia, Journalist, Ghana





“Social media has become a vital tool in my work as a journalist, keeping me informed on current events, emerging trends, and diverse perspectives that strengthen my reporting. It also serves as a powerful platform for building professional networks, fostering collaborations, and promoting my work to broader audiences. Through strategic engagement, I have been able to amplify important messages and contribute meaningfully to discussions that shape the media landscape.

Despite these benefits, my experience with hacking exposed the vulnerabilities of relying heavily on digital platforms. After losing a meticulously built account due to security breaches and recovery challenges, I faced the painful reality of years of work disappearing overnight. The fear of identity misuse and damage to my professional reputation was equally difficult to endure. Accepting the loss, I committed to rebuilding from scratch, a process that demanded resilience, patience, and a renewed emphasis on digital security in safeguarding my work and reputation.

TFGBV is a serious and often underestimated issue that occurs in digital spaces, where victims may never encounter their perpetrators face-to-face. This anonymity makes it harder to respond, seek recourse, or defend oneself, amplifying feelings of powerlessness. The harm inflicted extends beyond psychological distress to reputational, professional, and even physical consequences when online threats spill into real life. Victims often struggle long after the attacks, facing emotional distress without closure, which highlights the urgent need for stronger digital safety measures, systemic protections, and a shift in societal understanding of TFGBV’s real-world impacts.


Society must recognize that TFGBV is just as harmful as offline violence, leading to lasting psychological, emotional, and professional damage—and sometimes even physical harm or social isolation. Victims are often left powerless against anonymous perpetrators and are unfairly advised to "ignore it" or "log off," which is not a viable solution, especially for those whose work and lives are deeply connected to digital platforms. TFGBV disproportionately targets women and marginalized groups, reinforcing existing inequalities. The internet should be a space for freedom and expression, not fear and intimidation, making stronger policies, digital safety tools, and collective responsibility more critical than ever.”

Lucy Afia, Journalist, Ghana

“I have been a victim of hate speech, **cyberstalking**, **impersonation**, and **rape/death threats online**. *I thought it was ‘normal’* for a journalist to receive those harmful messages. Talking with other women journalists, I realized. I am already deeply affected by this violence.”

Jacque, Journalist & Digital Content Creator, Philippines





“I use digital media for my independent journalistic works, promote digital media literacy, advocate women empowerment, and network. I have been a victim of hate speech, cyberstalking, impersonation, and rape/death threats online. I thought it was ‘normal’ for a journalist to receive those harmful messages. Talking with other women journalists, I realized I am already deeply affected by this violence. I questioned my ability to write in-depth stories and almost deactivated all my online platforms and quit journalism.


To overcome this, I joined a women journalism club, WeMove for support. I also read about how to protect ourselves online. I quit the traditional media, went on a more than a month of social media detox, and talked to therapists. I hope social media platforms take accountability. Put more measures on protecting women and children subjected to TFGBV. I wish the society understand more about the long impact of TFGBV to women. An apology, a take down or deletion of a comment, will not take away the long impact of trauma.”

“I have experienced online shaming, hate speech, and threats. *I have faced direct insults and name-calling* in response to some of the content I create. Additionally, some individuals have *threatened to report my work, labeling it as unacceptable* in an attempt to silence my advocacy efforts.”

Belinda, Digital content creator & Online influencer, Kenya



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"I primarily use digital platforms for advocacy, awareness, and community engagement. Through my Instagram page, Nadera Talks, I create and share accurate, reliable information on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), fostering meaningful conversations with my audience. This platform allows me to engage directly with young people, providing them with knowledge and resources to make informed decisions. Additionally, I leverage Twitter to run impactful campaigns that have gained significant media attention, reaching a broad audience and sparking critical discussions. Beyond advocacy, I use digital platforms for professional networking, connecting with like-minded individuals, organizations, and stakeholders to collaborate on initiatives that drive positive change.

I have experienced technology-facilitated violence in the form of online shaming, hate speech, and threats. I have faced direct insults and name-calling in response to some of the content I create. Additionally, some individuals have threatened to report my work, labeling it as unacceptable in an attempt to silence my advocacy efforts. These forms of digital harassment have aimed to discredit my work and discourage me from using online platforms for activism.

I took a break from my online work because the attacks were very intentional and meant to harm me. They went beyond my advocacy, targeting my upbringing and dragging my family into the fiasco. It was mentally draining and took a significant toll on my well-being. This allows me to focus on what is truly important and meaningful. However, professionally, the impact was minimal because I had strong allies who supported me and stood by my work.

I wish the society know that this can be very draining to an individual and many people bully us in the reason of having fu, Some of us have invested in this mode of advocacy that is it fails u]it makes us very very sad, SOCIETY SHOULD NOT BE PART OF THE BULLYING. I really hope there will be more policy that give protection of us users and strong punishments to cyber bullies, the government should stop flagging off some our content this also aids bullies to get at me."

Belinda, Digital content creator &
Online influencer, Kenya

“Like many other women in digital spaces for the same reasons, I have experienced online harassment, including *hate speech, cyber bullying, and misogynistic attack*. I have also experienced targeted online shaming conversations about topics relating to *SRHR issues*, particularly contraception and sexual health.”

Marlyne , Digital content creator & mental health champion, Kenya



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 "I use digital platforms for entertainment and new trends, to gather and verify information (wazzii chatbot); advocacy and awareness campaigns; and community engagement on SRHR, gender equality and youth empowerment. I develop content via social media, podcasting and storytelling that helps counter harmful norms while sharing accurate health information. I also use my platforms as safe spaces to discuss matters of sensitivity for young people, particularly in marginalized communities. I use snapchat ai to chat and just have open conversations whenever I feel overwhelmed (It actually works). I use Linked in to gain opportunities and work to also learn what is going on across the globe."

Like many other women in digital spaces for the same reasons, I have experienced online harassment, including hate speech, cyber bullying, and misogynistic attack. I have also experienced targeted online shaming conversations about topics relating to SRHR issues, particularly contraception and sexual health. In this case, the hostility often stems from cultural stigmas regarding the topics and misinformation creating an important yet challenging undertaking

It affected my mental and emotional abilities, and sometimes, I was even apprehensive about putting my advocacy online. In my profession, it has created barriers to conversations because online hostility makes it difficult to engage. From a social standpoint, it continues the fight women have to face when advocating for gender rights in online spaces. Still, it has made me stronger and more dedicated to using media as a mean of agency and empowerment. It also was a positive thing in realizing that the gap still exists and that there needs to be work done in calling out factual things.

People need to know the fact that the risk of online violence is more than simply an "online issue" - it has ramifications in real-life, including mental health and safety among women in digital spaces, as well as professional options. We need to view online violence in relation to other forms of gender-based discrimination that women experience. Society must stop blaming the victim and hold ourselves accountable as a collective social body to counter misuse online. Meaningful investment in digital and online safety education, regarding young women in particular, and navigating digital spaces. Platforms should proactively raise up women's voices as advocates rather than permitting hateful messages to maltreat their involvement."

Marlyne , Digital content creator
& mental health champion, Kenya

The stories shared in this book are not isolated experiences — they are part of a larger, global pattern of violence that demands urgent attention. Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence is an attack on individual dignity, press freedom, and the right to participate fully in digital life. But amid the threats, harassment, and attempts at silencing, women journalists and media-makers around the world continue to rise, speak, and resist with extraordinary courage.

Change is possible, but it cannot rest on the shoulders of the survivors alone. We must work together — media organizations, tech companies, policymakers, civil society, and individuals — to build safer, more just digital media spaces. **We invite you to stand in solidarity** with these women media-makers, to advocate for stronger anti-TFGBV laws, and to challenge the culture of impunity that allows online violence to thrive. Together, we can reclaim the internet as a space for truth, creativity, and freedom for all.

To join our campaign go to : **itisrealviolence.rnw.media**

To join our petition go to : **[RNW Media - International Women's Day](#)**

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Additional resources:

To learn more about TFGBV, please refer
to the following reports:

**RUTGERS REPORT - DECODING
TECHNOLOGY - FACILITATED GENDER-
BASED VIOLENCE AREALITY CHECK
FROM SEVEN COUNTRIES**

**REPOSITORY OF UN WOMEN'S WORK ON
TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE**

Illustration by : Hadeel Ahmed



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