

Digital Misogyny in Egypt

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FRONTLINE UPDATE

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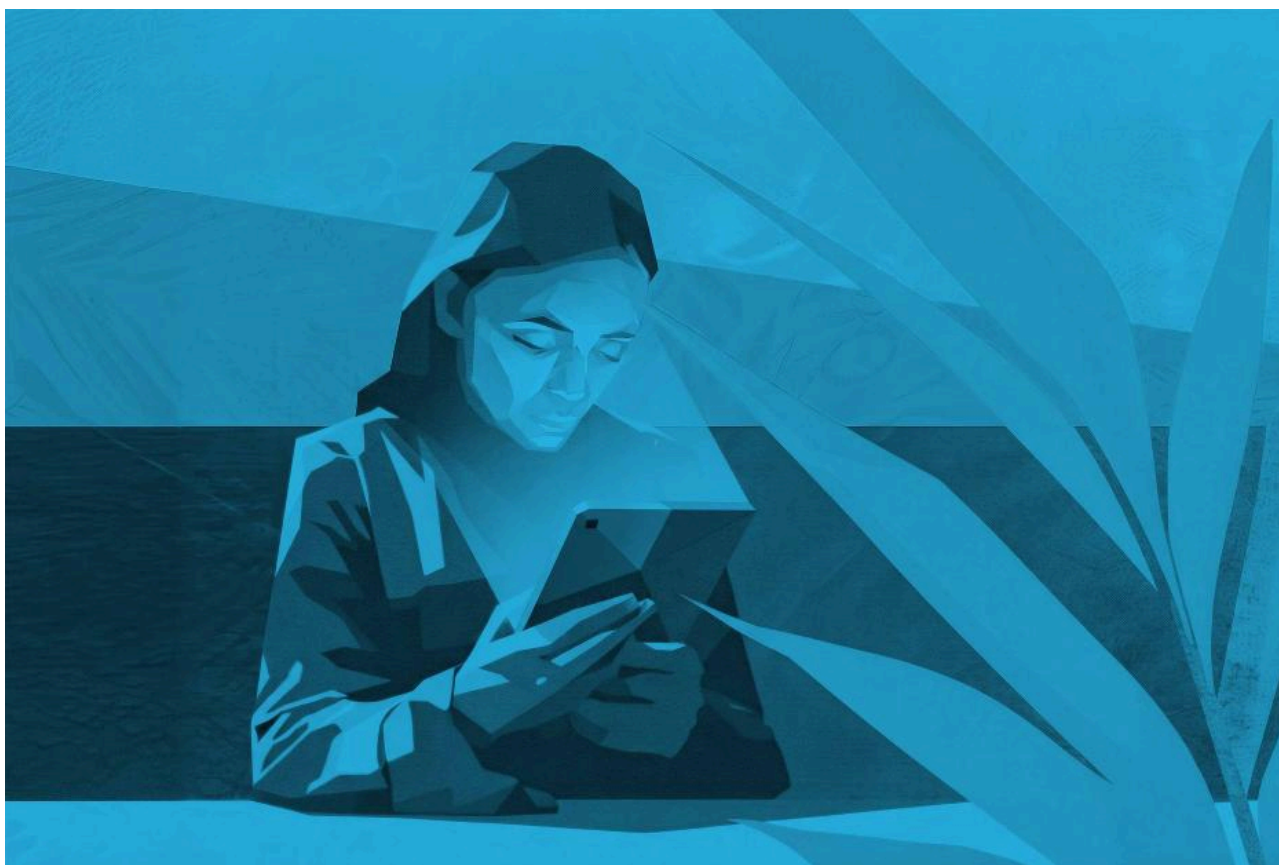


Illustration made with Magnific/Al.

THE BIG PICTURE

Online abuse is increasingly threatening women's safety, privacy and participation in public life in Egypt.

Digital platforms that have become essential spaces for work, education, activism and public debate can also expose women to harassment, cyberstalking, blackmail and fear.

VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINE

"They threatened to kill me and launched a campaign to shut down my Facebook account," said Egyptian journalist Mariam Sami, who was subjected to online intimidation after reporting on controversial issues such as Islamic State extremism.

Describing how she felt ***"incredibly pressured and scared,"*** she added, ***"I couldn't imagine that people could be this violent... They try to intimidate their victims because they have no other recourse but to hurl insults and abuse."***

Journalist Viola Fahmy, who covers human rights and religious freedoms, argued that digital violence was a "natural extension" of the wider misogyny women and girls faced daily in streets, workplaces and on public transport in Egypt.

The aim was to intimidate and instil self-doubt into women online, she continued.

"Should I write or not? Should I express my opinion or not?" Fahmy said. ***"Every instance of doubt, suspicion, and fear leads them to impose very significant restrictions on themselves."***

Egyptian journalist Iman Adel deactivated her Facebook profile earlier this year after experiencing a torrent of online abuse.

“My biggest shock was that among the attackers were fellow journalists who are supposed to be aware of hate campaigns and digital violence and should help seek the truth,” Adel said.

WHY IT MATTERS

Women reporting online abuse can encounter stigma, fear of retaliation and uncertainty about where to seek support.

And legal protection does not always translate into safety.

Egypt’s Cybercrime Law criminalises online violence, mandating a penalty of imprisonment of at least six months and a fine of between 50,000 and 100,000 Egyptian pounds (1,000–2,000 US dollars).

In reality, little action is taken to deter or pursue perpetrators.

THE BOTTOM LINE

For women in Egypt as elsewhere around the world, online harassment and threats can discourage women from speaking out, undermining their ability to participate equally in public and political life.

“Technology has become more a crucial, integral part of our daily life,” IWPR MENA country director Nadia Samet-Warren [wrote last year](#). ***“It has also become a tool that’s been weaponised to harm women and children in many alarming ways.”***

IWPR continues to work to ensure women’s free participation in digital spaces. Recent examples include an [AI-assisted tool](#) developed by an IWPR partner to identify online misogyny in Armenia and our [Gender Disinformation Handbook](#), published in multiple languages including Turkish and Russian.

Tackling digital violence requires more than telling women to be careful online; legal action, education and civil society activism all play a part.

