

Digital Violence against Women: Its Manifestations and ways of protection



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➤ **Introduction:**

The rapid change movement that the world is witnessing due to digital progress, significant openness to technology, reduced distances and barriers has created a state of intercultural collision, fascination, imitating and others. These include digital or cyber violence, which comes through the use of digital technology via the Internet, mobile smartphones, social media sites and others. These digital technologies have become a source of amusement, harassment, extortion, retaliation, trafficking and violence against different segments of society in general and women in particular.

Violence against women and abuse on the Internet have become widespread, and this type of violence and abuse has created a hostile environment on the Internet aimed at creating women's sense of self-shame, intimidation or degradation. Digital violence against women has known a growing rise, especially harassment against women, coercion of sexual relations, extortion or fraud for money, or evasion from legal entitlements in family cases.

Digital violence against women is one of the world's most widespread human rights violations and one of the most serious types of violence women have faced recently as the Internet grows. As women who use social networking sites in particular fall victim to it resulting in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women. The Internet means and tools vary over time with the world's information and technology revolution are growing, so that virtual life intersects with real life, restrictions break and privacy fades, which may pose a threat to societal stability in general.

As the phenomenon grows and changes in its form and effect from public spaces to digital spaces, solutions must be sought to minimize and confront them under the frightening numbers of verbal and racist abuse, bullying, extortion and smear campaigns in private messages. As confirmed by the official figures and the data of the human rights associations working in the field.

From the preceding data, it is necessary to control interactions within the digital space that are oriented towards violence and anti-women, relying on nurturing and value education in families and schools. Violence and negative attitudes towards women on the digital space that are broadcast and shared on social networks also result in a particularly poor image of Arab women.

Based on the foregoing, we will raise this issue through several axes:

- Definition of electronic or digital violence against women,
- Forms of digital violence against women,
- Features and types of digital violence,
- Factors have led to the spread of digital violence against women,
- Factors of the increasing prevalence of digital violence against women,

- Impacts of digital violence on women and their rights,
- Examples of some Egyptian women who were subjected to digital violence
- Some Egyptian and international efforts made to confront digital violence,
- Recommendations

1. Definition of electronic or digital violence against women:

In recent years, the concept of cyber-violence against women has been widespread in the light of the great technological openness and its forms: Blackmail, sexual harassment, threats of violence, gathering of documents, harassment messages, so it is simply the use of electronic means of communication and information and communication technology, such as email, mobile phones, personal websites, polling sites and others to support deliberate and repeated hostile behaviors by an individual or group with the aim of harming others. To date, cyber-violence does not have a uniform global definition, given the diversity of modern technologies and methods used to identify it.

Violence is generally regarded as an aggressive behavior against another party with a view to exploiting and subjecting its behavior. This definition does not differ from men to women, as women are also subject to this violence whether she is a wife, sister or daughter.

Violence is characterized by varying degrees of discrimination, oppression, and aggression resulting from unequal power relations between men and women in both the society and the family. Digital violence against women can be defined as the deliberate behavior of an individual or group of individuals through one of the various electronic social communication techniques and tools aimed at the physical or moral abuse of women. It is every act harmful to women through the use of digital and electronic means such as computers, mobile phones, telephone networks, and information transmission networks, the Internet (Social media sites) in the form of slander, insult, as well as the promotion, defamation and contempt.

It can also be described as any unethical and unauthorized behavior associated with electronic media against women and directly or indirectly harms and humiliates and creates psychological, sexual or physical suffering through deception, threat, exploitation, harassment, coercion or punishment through technological means of communication such as stalking, telephone or the Internet via social networking sites (Facebook, Tension, Messenger, Weber, YouTube) or by reducing their respect for and reluctance to play their role, rights and inferior perception, such as diminishing their mental and physical potential.

From this, **digital violence can be considered** one of the most serious types of violence, as it affects women's social and psychological life and has social, economic and legal implications, thereby threatening the security and social stability of the family.

2. Forms of digital violence against women:

Digital violence takes many forms; such as:

- **Hacking:** The use of technology to unlawfully or unauthorized access to women's systems or accounts for the purpose of obtaining personal information, altering or modifying their information, or slandering and discrediting the target victim.
- **Impersonation:** the use of technology to carry the victim's identity without her consent in order to access private information, embarrass the victim, communicate with her, or create false identity documents.
- **Harassment:** The use of technology for continuous communication, disrupting, threatening or intimidation of the victim on the understanding that such behavior is repeated and ongoing and not a single incident in a perceived intrusive manner so as to cause inconvenience or threat. This performance may be accompanied by sexual acts sometimes, by constant calls, text messages, voicemail or e-mail.
- **Employment:** Using technology to attract potential victims of violence, for example fraudulent jobs and advertisements on both social media and job opportunities sites.
- **Distribution of fake materials:** Use of technology to process and distribute defamatory and illegal material related to the victim, for example leaking intimate images or video of the victim.
- **Unauthorized access/unauthorized control:** an attack on a woman's electronic accounts or personal devices means obtaining her information and data or blocking her access to her personal accounts.
- **Control and manipulation of information:** information collected or stolen means loss of control by its owners or the possibility of altering and tampering with it.
- **Monitoring and tracking:** continuous electronic monitoring of women's activities and their daily lives.
- **Speech of racial segregation:** a speech that perpetuates the prevailing view of women, confines them to strict sexual forms and reproductive roles, and may or may not incite such speech to violence.
- **Threatening:** Violent speech or content, whether in written, image, oral, or any other form, to threaten violence or sexual assault so as to express the intentions of the threatening person to inflict harm on herself, her family, friends or property.

- **Non-consensual sharing of private information:** dissemination or sharing of any type of victim's information or data without the victim's consent.
- **Extortion:** forcing the victim to act against her will through threats and intimidation.
- **Insult:** slander and defamation of the victim's credibility, professionalism, work, or public image by spreading false news about her, or manipulating facts.
- **Technological-related sexual abuse and exploitation:** It is the exercise of force on the victim based on sexual exploitation through her self-portraits against her will so that technology is the primary tool in such exploitation.
- **Attack on communication channels:** permanent attack on communication channels, so that the target victim remains out of contact circle.
- **Ignoring or omitting the violation by the regulators:** ignoring or misinforming the persons (authorities, service providers) who have the ability to organize or solve the problem and lift the violation, or punishing the violator.

3. Features and types of digital violence:

✓ At the level of Features:

Successive technological advances have imposed a number of features of digital or electronic violence that have made it more influential for women victims than other forms of violence, which can be summarized as follows:

- **Harsher in its consequences than traditional methods of violence:** perpetrators in this type of crime have the possibility of concealing their real names and identities. The extent of the impact of his crimes on the victim, which can sometimes lead to suicide for fear of stigma, discrimination or defamation to which the female or her family may be subjected, is not known.
- **Global and transboundary:** This type of violence against women is not prevented by space or time limits. Technological progress is also used to diversify the form and content of violent, aggressive and illegal practices at any time, exceeding geographical and temporal boundaries without any restrictions.
- **Constantly evolving and persistent:** Electronic violence is constantly evolving as modern technological methods that help to sustain the impact of such violence for a long time, as well as behaviors that persist in most of their situations, such as in cases of insult, slander and defamation, unless the act and technical intervention are controlled to end these crimes.
- **Ease of occurrence and speed of dissemination:** due to the rapid spread of malicious and false information, rumors and accessibility and often non-retrievable, once posted online the perpetrator cannot stop it.
- **Absence of physical interaction:** There is no physical interaction between the perpetrators (the perpetrator-victim), there is no need for considerable capacity

to confront victims such as traditional violence, and there is a reliance on mental and mental skill and competence, not physical.

- **Easy access to the victim and difficulty in defending herself:** social media has enabled perpetrators to reach the victim at anytime and anywhere, while making it extremely difficult for the victim to defend herself or avoid such violence.

✓ **At the level of Types:**

The Internet is a fertile area for e-violence in its various forms because it is close to everyone. E-violence includes all violent behaviors committed through electronic means such as blogs, web pages, mobile phones, emails and text messages in order to harm or threaten victims. E-violence through SMS and multimedia, E-mail, blogs, forums, websites and social networks include the use of mobile phones, computers and other different media.

It can be classified into:

a. **Moral electronic violence:**

However, the type that causes moral losses such as: lack of reassurance, injury to dignity and all psychological damage that may occur to the victim who has suffered cyber-violence.

- **Harassment:** It is a type of violent indirect behavior, defined as a dispute between two or more people involving the exchange of unkind text messages between these individuals, and may develop into insults and electronic intimidation.
- **Electronic disclosure:** This occurs when an individual or group of individuals deliberately publishes certain posts containing personal or sexual images, or embarrassing information about someone online, in order to cause embarrassment and emotional pain to them.
- **Reference messages:** It is sending hundreds of messages to someone's email with the aim of damaging them and disabling their network or preventing them from receiving any other messages as well as the possibility of discontinuing their service. Market owners may send unwanted large quantities of email to internet users which may cause harassment and inconvenience.
- **Cyber harassment:** It is to send repeated offensive messages to others that are similar to harassment but involve the use of threats to cause great fear in the victim especially of the sex of women. The victim can only try to stop such messages and threats, and the harassment may be directed indiscriminately and towards a specific person, i.e. may be intentional or unintentional.
- **Impersonation or disguise:** in which someone steals passwords, or pretends to be someone else by creating electronic accounts with fictitious names, and then sends material that damages that person's reputation to individuals or to conceal his or her true identity to facilitate the commission of bad behaviors and actions,

and it is often impossible to identify who disseminated such harmful information online.

b. Physical electronic violence:

This is any form of cyber-violence that causes material losses to the victim. Manifestations of this type are:

- **Cyberterrorism:** occurs through the use of the International Information Network to recruit new members, and also through placing information intended to incite national hatred and racial intolerance. Most of the extremist and terrorist sites are supported from outside the target countries, so that terrorists can broadcast, promote and even carry out their operations using computers. Women may be victims of cyberterrorism. The reality shows you through the terrorist groups of this time, such as: ISIS and al-Qa'idah were able to recruit many women into their ranks.
- **Online gambling practice:** includes construction and facilitation of residence and ownership of the management of an online adventure project. Gambling sites have increased dramatically on the Internet, with an estimated millions of sites.
- **Drug trade:** Some of the widespread sites known for drug promotion and youth excitement specialize in learning how to grow and manufacture drugs of all kinds. This does not need bad guys, but adolescents can drop in the computer room and find out.
- **Phishing:** Using fraudulent emails to disguise themselves as a legitimate and trustworthy source to obtain personal details of others, usually by requesting the entry of email passwords and inviting the forum to respond to email or clicking on a web link.

4. Factors have led to the spread of digital violence against women

Digital violence against women and girls takes place in almost every region, country and context, and the root causes are not any culture, tradition or custom, but broader structural problems, social norms, deep-rooted beliefs, gender and power behavior that we review in the following factors and reasons:

a) Social Factors:

Social norms shape traditionally concentrated power in males and adults that includes teaching eligibility, discipline and control along with the use of violence to maintain power. These norms support teachers and teachers' authority over children, and often use some kind of violence to maintain that authority and promote gender-based social norms.

All forms of violence, including digital violence against women, have also been reflected in patriarchal power. In addition to the role of poverty in violence against women, which is an important issue that has been discussed within research and academic centers for example, a study has shown that poor women recognize

violence as an essential factor and linked to the poverty in which they live, even by going out to work, she is more vulnerable to male abuse and harassment. Achievement of the goal of eradicating poverty depends heavily on ending discrimination against women.

Discrimination against women in all its forms reduces women's ability to obtain equal employment and wages, In addition, this discrimination is an obstacle to women's enterprises because of the difficulty in obtaining financial resources to enable them to set up such enterprises. (5 - 10%) while women's poverty rate in Europe and North America was 0.25%. In the same vein, Arab women participate more in the public sector than in the private sector, whether women are in either sector, the wage gap between men and women continues to widen. Women's lower wages in the sectors, for example the wage gap in Egypt is about 22%. In terms of entrepreneurship, 19% of men have their own projects, compared to only 9% of women.

At another level, illiteracy is a manifestation of inequality and discrimination against women in developing and poor societies. It can be argued that women's subordination to men and the women's roles attributed to them often play a role in excluding girls and women from attending education, especially in its advanced stages. Girls are one of the most disadvantaged groups in education. Thus, illiteracy rates among girls reached 30.8% in 2017, resulting in Egypt's status falling to the rank 102 globally in terms of female education in general, and the rank 140 globally in terms of economic opportunities for participation in the workforce of the public and private sectors, highlighting the gap between educational levels and the labor market.

b) Technological factors:

The latest place to be harassed and intimidated is the digital public space through social media and other online platforms and applications. Ensuring the safety and empowerment of this space for girls is a new challenge, as women are 27 times more likely than men to be exposed to cyber violence, which hampers their digital integration and prevents them from enjoying digital gains. Although technology can lead to communication and empowerment, it can also promote traditional gender roles and stereotypes that reflect a culture of misogyny and marginalization. Actually, security and harassment are among the top five barriers to women's owning mobile phones where online harassment and abusive comments can lead to women losing technology and moving away from its use.

Here, gender-based digital violence against women creates a digital divide resulting in the loss of half of the world's human resources, especially in the Arab region,

where the world has the largest gap, and the world may need more than 100 years to bridge the digital divide and achieve gender equality. Based on the above, there are a range of different ways of thinking about digital spaces as sexist, five of which we will briefly review:

- Weak gender balance in the ICT workforce.
- Qualitative distinction in the design of devices, spaces and applications of ICT.
- Images of inconvenience due to sex and discrimination in Internet environments.
- Gender representation in Internet media and digital games.
- Use of electronic spaces and digital devices in achieving gender equity.

Thus, digital violence has spread widely, and the results of one study show that 80% of e-game practitioners believe that sexism prevails in online gaming communities. Female players, for example, receive three times as much expletive as males, regardless of the language skill level that they use, but most of which is formulated in a sexual way. Likewise, sexual comments are common in game chat, and anonymity unleashes a firestorm of misogynistic comments.

c) Media factors:

The theory of learning through observation is based on the fact that man has the ability to acquire the symbolic representation of external facts and that observing these facts is as a source of learning. And that's because an individual's mind records what they see and store, whether consciously or unconsciously, from 30 months of age. Children are neither afraid of the amount of violence the media exposes nor of the physical seriousness followed by such violence to the extent that they are intimidated by the stereotype in which violence occurs nor the way it is delivered through the media.

In the view of one scientist, if scenes of cruelty and abnormal behavior were publicly presented to audiences, it would be a reason to stir up a desire for violent behavior in people. A study also confirmed that violent behavior is acquired by the individual through the media, and violence is not limited to films and series, but in news and publications.

d) Cultural factors:

Abuse against girls occurs in every region, country and almost every context as mentioned above and the root causes are not any culture, tradition or custom but social norms, deep-rooted beliefs and behaviors that increase men's dominance, women's subordination and the right to maintain such dominance through violence, It exists in some way in almost every culture, and exerts strong pressure to comply with these dominant gender-based norms. The decline in cultural causes is one of the most important factors causing gender-based violence, including ignorance, lack of knowledge of how to deal with one another and lack of respect for the rights and

duties of the individual, the rights and obligations of both parties, women and those who are subjected to violence. Women's ignorance of their rights and duties on the part of one side, and the other's ignorance of these rights on the part of another, may lead to transgression and infringement.

Cultural factors play a significant role in the occurrence of violence against women a culture that considers men better than women and gives them the right to opinion and authority is a culture that supports the practice of abuse towards women as a beating of manhood. And in some places, a man may feel ashamed if he knows that his wife does not fear him and is called a convict or weak.

In the view of gender equality advocates, men abuse women with a view to demonstrating power or dominance and using physical power to impose control over women. Culture determines gender roles, while cultural ideologies increasingly call for the promotion and defense of women's human rights. There are customs, traditions and religious values in many societies that are used to justify violence against women and exercise control over women in different societies through different strategies but by standards of honor and shame there is unjust discrimination between males and females within the same family, as females always come second to males according to cultures inherited across generations.

According to a study, 22% of women subjected to online violence were directly sexually extorted. The majority of women exposed to online violence reported experiencing it on Facebook (43%), Instagram (16%) and WhatsApp (11%). Among women subjected to violence, 44% reported that the incident went beyond virtual space.

5. Factors of the increasing prevalence of digital violence against women:

The phenomenon of violence against women in the digital space overlaps a range of objective and structural factors that contribute to its aggravation:

- a. Review the social values system entrenched in the depths of Egyptian society and the emergence of a new value system brought about by rapid social change in this society, which established new standards completely different from the traditional standards of the Egyptian family.
- b. Diminishing the elements of coexistence and the hardening of social representations as well as the incursion of the phobia of gender equality in society and the lack of accommodation of equal citizenship paths. Women are perceived by many members of Arab society as a body and not as a social being with a body. Therefore, according to that view, harassment and violence are normal as the system of inherent values associated with the need to protect and defend women against any assault reverses.

From this angle, violence against women must be addressed in social media sites and brought to the same degree of seriousness as violence against women in the real world, as the digital space is a common public space in a number of states, so that virtual world leaders are held accountable before the law if they are issued a form of verbal violence such as insult, slander, defamation and lying to women or any other member of society.

- c. Misunderstanding of freedom and expression of opinion by users of websites and networks and ease of anonymity (digital mask).
- d. Family control over children, people's feelings of lack and frustration, deprivation, lack of self-confidence and lack of emotional satisfaction has decreased, exacerbating problems of cyber-addiction and increasing incitement to violence.
- e. The aggravation of bullying, authoritarianism, the policy of exclusivity, exclusion and repression from society. Some studies on people using cyber harassment as a means of disturbing their victims have indicated, that they suffer from low esteem, and have no face-to-face ability, and that they have a degree of personality disorder that reduces their ability to estimate the results of their actions. They commit acts that have no limit to how bad they may lead to, as long as they serve their lust for revenge.

6. Impacts of digital violence on women and their rights,

a) Psychological and physical effects:

Cyber violence against women has psychological, social, material and economic implications, but the most widespread ones are the psychological ones felt by most women who experienced e-violence due to the scale and frequency of these acts. One of the most common psychological effects is anxiety and self-image distortion, sometimes the psychological effects reach a more extreme point where victims of such violence become suicidal in some cases or engage in self-harm behavior. One in five people have thoughts of suicide or self-harm or injury, which is a frequent behavior among people who feel humiliated by rejection.

The effects of cyber violence on women are also insomnia, panic attacks, and extreme fear of leaving the home, humiliation, lack of confidence and lack of psychological confidence, which may have effects on the family and on social life. It is doubtless true that cyber-violence through modern electronic means, whether from Facebook, Twitter or other social media sites, is an offence against women's reputation and a serious illness beyond all segments of society.

These effects also consist of women living in a state of psychological stress, fear and anxiety about the use of these sites. Online violence forces women away from the network, and research indicates that 28 per cent of women who have experienced

ICT-based violence have deliberately underrepresented their presence on the Internet. Another consequence of such violence is social isolation, where victims or survivors withdraw from public life. They become vulnerable to psychiatric disorders, such as anxiety, stress, fear, paranoia of suspicion and persecution. Some victims turn to deviant behavior and indifference to societal and moral values in retaliation against themselves and society as a whole, as a result of extreme pressure, fear of scandal and the threat to which the victim falls prey, especially since the majority of victims are adolescents.

Verbal harassment on the Internet leaves a huge impact on the soul of many women. Such words, or others, may make a girl depressed and scared for a long time. She may sometimes be suicidal, especially if no one believes her story and helps her skip this stage.

The problem of harassment is a form of violence directed against women, and the woman's image and status is linked to the social imagination. The family blames the woman, regardless of her status in society, whether she is a student, daughter, worker, wife, etc. Some of those families deprive women of their computer and phone. There are those who are prevented from pursuing the study, but in fact they are, in most cases, victims whose accounts have been hacked. This dysfunction at the level of the family and its functions can be attributed to a change in the relationship between parents and children, which was previously based on submission, control and respect. Where the aforementioned aspects were somewhat absent, and leniency in dealing with children and submitting to their requests were common and replaced by a modern new institution of the Internet and its intermediaries, resulting in these deviant practices. This makes many harassers isolate themselves from their surroundings and flee society because of this.

The major complications of the phenomenon of cyber-harassment are that the psychological effects may be extended for years as a study shows that victims of such practices become more likely than others to develop anxiety, depression, phobia and panic. This is confirmed by a study conducted to study the risks of cyberbullying. And the study found that cyber harassment threatens adolescents and leaves them with long-term negative psychological effects. A study also found that one in 10 women under the age of 30 were victims of intimate information extortion and forced to pay money and these are not the only effects that harassment in all its forms may have, whether in the virtual world or in the real world, since things probably get worse as the victim turns a future into a hostile person led by a great desire for revenge.

In some cases, the threat of bodily harm becomes real when images or videos are posted on propaganda sites specializing in prostitution with special information such as the victim's home address. More than half of the stories end disastrously, as most of the women who decide to seek the help of their families are subjected to one form of family and social violence, which included ostracism, physical assault, mutilation, divorce, deprivation of education and work, and restriction of freedom, due to crimes of electronic extortion that they were subjected to and were not guilty of. Some endings are heartbreaking and cruel, as the victim is killed by her family to erase the shame, and this is what victims of electronic extortion fear the worst, as a scandal leaking private photos of a girl may lead to her death.

That's why so many women who are being blackmailed are afraid to expose their families to the problem and to avoid the possibility of harm on their hands, because of the negative stereotype painted towards them and the blame they may get for being subjected to such violence even if they are innocent. And this also because of the sensitivity of the situation of women in Egyptian society, known as being conservative and based on a heavy inheritance of customs that consider women to be shameful. So her blood would be permissible if she was exposed to a sexual scandal in front of the public. Also her relatives kill her in victory of the honor of her family. In general, any threat affects a woman's reputation and is centered on exposing her activities is considered to be a deadly weapon, making a woman seek a way out of it that preserves her reputation and may be either by giving in to the extortion's request or even by putting an end to her life by suicide. All forms of online violence generate a permanent digital record that can be distributed worldwide and cannot be easily deleted, which can cause further harm to the victim.

b) Economic effects:

The economic impact of e-violence on women is also serious, with women's unemployment increasing as a result of the loss of their jobs; as a result of being subjected to social cultural stigma due to defamation or the publication of revenge pornographic images, in addition to the violator's request for large amounts of money in exchange for the non-publication of photos and information about them.

Economic damage can occur when a clear picture of the victim appears on several pages of search engine results, which makes it difficult for the victim to find work, or even prevents her from trying to look for work due to shame and fear that potential employers will discover published images. Electronic verbal harassment has also taken place against working women who were the subject of sexual harassment in the workplace, street and public places. These practices have moved from the factual context to the virtual context and these practices have tarnished the reputation of those women who have been subjected to cyber harassment. Thus, the cases of those

who are subjected to this act and find support from the husband are affected by their position at the professional level, especially those who work in the field of higher education, where the professor's social and professional image, especially her scientific giving, is affected.

c) Hack into women's personal privacy:

The penetration of privacy and safe space begins when women accept the ad of people without prior knowledge or through means of account penetration, so that the violator begins to enter into women's lives and learn about their opinions and perspectives and their preferences and what they do not prefer by sharing these details from their own lives, or through direct communication of some apps such as side chats with so-called "Chat Apps" to easily access the Friends List, then he followed this step by the threat. Most women do not have a conscious understanding of how to deal with violence and prevent it from penetrating their privacy.

7. Examples of some Egyptian women who were subjected to digital violence

✓ **In 2022:**

- a. The manor of Al-Hajj Ali, affiliated with the Al-Saqr Boys' Centre in East, witnessed the suicide of Heidi Shehata 14 years old, a first-year commercial secondary school student, taking a tablet of toxic yield pills by which she got rid of her life after suffering from severe depression after blackmailing her with fake and shameful pictures. And after receiving threats to post photos of her that were falsified on Facebook social media with the aim of forcing her to apologize to the defendants and kissing the main accused lady's foot and her 15-year-old daughter, who are the victim's neighbors. Detective inquiries found that the girl took her own life after posting photos on Facebook, which the girl did not endure due to social and rural consequences, leading her to get rid of her life using a poisonous grain of yield.
- b. (D-A) Girl in her spring studying at a private university. She got to know a colleague, and together they were just classmates and in a few months. The relationship evolved until he declared his love for her and convinced her that he would marry her after they graduated. Their relationship lasted for several months, during which she sent him her own photos, a few days later, his treatment changed and he began extorting it, then asked her for money in exchange for not posting her own photos on social media. She tried to get away from him, but he kept asking and putting her under extreme psychological stress, until she became afraid that those photos would reach her older brother, so she turned to one of her friends to try to help her, and indeed her friend intervened and ended the problem by hiring a police officer. She lived through very difficult times, and mixed feelings of fear and anxiety were the most controlled until it was over.
- c. (M. N) lived in one of the popular areas, at the age of 22, was also subjected to electronic extortion by the owner of a mobile phone repair shop where she once went to repair her phone and had to leave it until the owner finished repairing it. Two days

later, the girl received a call from the owner of the center telling her that he reached all her photos when he was repairing her phone so he asked for a sum of money in order not to publish her photos on all social media platforms, he even asked her to go to him but she refused and resorted to one of her neighbors who had a close relationship with him.

- d. Basant Khaled took her life 17 years old from Gharbya Governorate after taking a poisonous grain of yarn, because she was also sexually blackmailed by two young men who hacked her mobile phone, obtained photos of her, cracked and installed them, and reposted them in a scandalous and disgraceful manner. Her parents were surprised to release nude photographs of their daughter, and after examining the photos, it was found that the girl's body was not in circulation and that his daughter's face was correct, which shocked the girl and changed her life and made her feel aggrieved and psychologically oppressed, causing her psychological depression that caused her suicide. The victim's sister also found a handwritten letter containing a farewell letter to the family members, the words of which read: "Mama, please understand me, I am not that girl in photos and these are fake photos. Mama, I am a young girl that does not deserve all of what is happening to me..... I am suffering from depression..... I am really tired". And she concluded the message saying: "It is not me, I have raised by the best way".
- e. The residents of Mutamadya village of Mahalla al-Gharbiyah were surprised by a young wife throwing herself from her balcony, who also tried to commit suicide after being subjected to electronic blackmail by her husband, after attempting to force her to sign trust receipts under duress, in exchange for waiving her entire list of transfers and her legitimate rights if he wanted to divorce her, threatening her by videos he filmed her in case he is arrested by the authorities.
- f. A 19-year-old girl uploaded an e-gaming app, which was a big door for electronic blackmail she had never expected. She got to know a young man who played with her in some games on the app, and then asked her to get to know her more by chatting over the WhatsApp, and the girl did so, then they talk together for a month and a half. The girl who refused to give her name because of the sensitivity of the story says: "The young man offered me dating, but I am still young, and I asked him not to talk to me again, and I sent him two pictures to know what I looked like. These pictures were not Disgraceful, they were ordinary images with my hijab, but that did not lessen my fear after the blackmail threatened me to post my photos online if I left him." The young man asked for 2,000 pounds for the girl's photos not to be released, but she told a friend of hers, who confronted this young man and refused to give him any money, and the girl blocked his number. But a few days later, she was surprised that there was an unknown number for her, the owners of which confirmed that her photographs were with them and that they would post them on all the groups of the area in which she lived, but she made no secret this time,

replying: "My folks know, post the pictures. She said, "When he found me ignorant to what he did, and insistent on not giving him money, he stopped calling me and he even apologized to me. What incentivized him also to do so, is that I published my problem on anti-extortion groups."

- g. The girl of this story is only 16 years old, and one of the young men blackmailed her by posting her photos online for money, but due to the deterioration of the economic situation the girl refused to pay any money to the young man. The blackmail of the young man did not stop only when threatening the girl, knowing that her father was of special abilities. The blackmailer sent him pictures of his daughter and threatened to post them online if he did not give him the money he was asking for. The father found in front of him only the sale of his motorcycle, which is all he owns, to obtain the money needed to protect his daughter from the evil of the blackmailer.
- h. One of the husbands created a fake account for his ex-wife, posted personal photos of her on it, and blackmailed her, asking her to leave their daughter permanently in his custody, so that he would not continue to expose her, assuring her that he would not delete her photos and would not cancel the account until after he received the girl from her, as he told her that he did not care destroying her reputation as it would further help him get custody of his daughter.
- i. A minor girl, who is only 13 years old, contacted one of the sheikhs on the Internet to bring her lover, then he asked her to photograph her body in order to help her determine the treatment and what she would do in the future, but then he blackmailed her with these pictures until she had to do sexual practices with him so that she would not be exposed to her family.
- j. Nada al-Shahat, a 20-year-old who had experienced blackmail on the social media site Instagram anonymously from an unknown person who fabricated inappropriate pictures of her and threatened her not to expose them in exchange for 10 thousand pounds. She said: "I don't know him till now and the account by which he talked to me was new. In the first place, he asked me for 10 thousands of pounds in order not to expose me, and when I got him to speak, he knew that I was not willing to pay then he did not answer me nor threat me again". She continued: "I told him to do it. Everyone knows it's not me in the pictures, and my family would not believe you..... When he saw me confident in my speech and threatening him by reporting to Internet detectives, and telling him that: "Your blackmail comes with the time of the suicide of a teenager because of a similar incident, imagine if I report you also what will happen to you". She was afraid at first, because she was surprised with her face mounted on the body of a naked girl, especially because she was veiled, but she trusted herself and her family, who knew her upbringing well, and that she would not perform such behaviors.

As for her intention to pay the money he wants, she said, "There is no way to give him anything or to make him feel that he succeeded when threatening me. Besides that,

I am raised in a family that reciprocate trust between each other, and even if I cried for my father or mother they would support me and report him. And when I found that he is serious in his request, I told him that I myself will report him and then I send him my post. That is why he feared and blocked me immediately”. She continued: “I have witnessed so many girls that were also blackmailed and I encouraged them to take their rights”.

- k. Zainab Ibrahim was subjected to an attempt to blackmail by her close friend. After 5 years of working friendship and personal friendship, they had problems because of different views of the work. She was then surprised by a phone call asking her for a substantial amount of money or exposing her personal secrets, as well as her photographs, which he appalled on Photoshop, including photographs of them. Zainab collapsed nervously, psychologically, closed all her social media pages, entered a psychological depression, and did not approach her phone for months, until one of her friends knew about it, then helped her to overcome the crisis, and from that day she was no longer browsing social media sites again.

✓ **In 2021:**

Sara Hani, aged 26, was harassed on social media and told her story with cyber harassment from one of the bad guys, saying: "The beginning of the story from my girlfriend.... A young man was sending her sexual messages and she did not know how to deal with him. She asked me to intervene, so I found the page of this man and tried to convince him that what he is doing is something wrong, but unfortunately he started to threaten me of publishing her photos that she published in her page in suspected pages if she did not do what he is asking her to do”. The girl added that all the ways she resorted to did not work with him, and she reported him in the Internet Investigation, in addition to closing her account so that no messages or threats would reach her, and after several months she opened a new account for fear of opening the old account and he would still be in it.

✓ **In 2020:**

- a) (N. F) the veiled girl who worked for a production company narrated that it started when she found that she could not access her email after a change in the password, so she put in a new password. And she didn't pay attention to the seriousness of it until 3 days later when she found that the same thing repeated with her Facebook account, so the password was changed. Whenever she creates a new password for the account, the hacker cancels it and creates another one. He kept doing so for hours until she went into meltdown and didn't know what she had to do, and she said, "He started changing the image of Facebook and the E-mail by another photos of me with my hair". Then she realized that she was in front of a hacker of her account, and with all the attempts to retrieve her account seemed difficult, she decided to stop her Facebook account activity, and via her sister sent warnings to the surroundings that there was a hack of the account. But the hacker did not stop his attempts, he worked

to create a new account in her own name and photos, tried to communicate and message all of her acquaintances. And then she decided to go to the Internet detective, and restored her Facebook account, as well as her e-mail, after the Internet investigators made a series of protective and security measures for her accounts.

- b) At the time of her studies at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Monica Sedqi sometimes worked as a model and had an Instagram account through which she posted her photos, but she found her impersonator using her selfies, making an account named Salma Hijazi, It didn't stop there, but it went into one of the girls' Facebook groups and it was called How to Catch a Male. He published her photos and wrote inappropriate comments, suggesting that getting a man requires wearing short clothes. Of course, the photos and the accompanying comments went viral, and many began to reproduce them with cynical comments and angry, deplorable comments, and Monica's relatives began to reach out to her to ask what she had posted. Monica then appeared in a tearful video and addressed everyone who helped to post the photos and her comments to stop doing so, and she said, "For what my life is going to be destroyed? I do not know". Monica then found support from many social media celebrities, media professionals and journalists, and the account impersonating her was suspended.

✓ **In 2019:**

(Iman. M.) had an experience of blackmail by (Islam. A) 27 years old. He hacked her phone with all its private photos, data, phone numbers, and personal conversations, and threatened her to send them to the friends list if she did not pay a sum of money, and this prompted her to submit a report to the Abu Hammad Police Station Department, and she learned after his arrest that he had done so with many, as he was accused of hacking the personal accounts of a group of girls and young men through the social networking site Facebook and blackmailing them financially and sexually.

8. Some Egyptian and international efforts made to confront digital violence,

✓ **The Egyptian Efforts:**

The Egyptian legislator, in Law No. 141 of 2021, promulgated by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, was confronted with amending certain provisions of the Penal Code promulgated by Law No. 58 of 1937 to combat the crime of harassment by increasing the penalty of "exposure to others" stipulated in article (306 bis), and to intensify the penalty of "sexual harassment" provided for in article 306 bis, turning it into a felony, rather than a misdemeanor, in view of its extreme danger to society and its psychological repercussions on the victim.

Article 306 bis (a) of the Penal Code provides that the offender shall be punished by a term of up to two years' imprisonment and not more than four years' imprisonment. and a fine of not less than 100,000 pounds and not more than 200 thousand pounds

or one of these penalties shall be imposed on anyone who is subjected to other persons in a public or private place or who is liable to sexual or pornographic objects, suggestions or insinuations, whether by reference, words or by any means, including telecommunications, or electronic means, or any other technical means.

The penalty shall be a term of imprisonment of not less than three years and not more than five years and a fine of not less than LE 200 thousand and not more than LE 300 thousand or one of these penalties if the offender repeats the offender's act through the prosecution and tracing of the victim. In the case of recidivism, the minimum and maximum penalty shall be doubled.

Article 306 bis (b) states: "Sexual harassment shall be considered if the offence provided for in article 306 bis is committed." (a) Of this Act for the purpose of the offender obtaining a benefit of a sexual nature, the offender shall be punished by a term of imprisonment of not less than five years, if the offender is a person provided for in article 267, paragraph 2, of this Act. "The perpetrator is an ascendant of the victim or a person involved in her upbringing or observation, or who has authority over her, or has been a wage servant thereof, or at the time of the foregoing, or multiple perpetrators of the crime." imprisonment for a term of not less than seven years ", or had functional, family or study authority over the victim or exerted any pressure on him that the circumstances permit him to exert on him or who committed the offence from two or more persons or at least one of whom carried a weapon.

Accordingly, all measures must be taken in accordance with the law to confront the phenomenon of cyber harassment due to its serious danger to society and its psychological consequences for the victim. The punishment of cyber and direct harassment in Egyptian law was boiled down by Law No. 141 of 2021 promulgated by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in August 2021. (306 bis I a) of the Penal Code in accordance with these amendments provide the following: -

- Including Facebook, WhatsApp and Telegram apps as means of harassment.
- A penalty of not less than two years' imprisonment or a fine shall be imposed on anyone who has been subjected to another.
- The fine shall not be less than one hundred thousand pounds and shall not exceed two hundred thousand pounds.
- Exposure shall be by sexual or pornographic objects, suggestions or insinuations, whether by reference, word or deed by any means.
- The penalty shall be a term of imprisonment of not less than three years and not more than five years if the offender's act is repeated through prosecution and tracking of the victim.

- The penalty shall be a term of imprisonment of not less than 7 years, harassed by a person with functional, family or educational authority over the victim, exerted any pressure that the circumstances permit him to exert on him or her, or committed the offence from two or more persons or at least one of whom was carrying a weapon.
- Launching the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women 2015-2020 to meet society's needs in addressing violence against women in all its forms and manifestations through four main axes: prevention, protection, and legal interventions and prosecution.
- The Ministry of the Interior has worked to resolutely address violence against women in general and in particular digital practices, in several respects:
 - Allocating special units to police departments to address violence against women, where women police officers have been appointed to examine their facts.
 - Increasing number of rapid intervention patrols in response to emergency contacts related to violence against women.
 - Organizing courses at the Police Academy on combating violence against women with a review of international best practices on coping mechanisms, cooperation and support to reduce such crimes.
 - Allocating an operating room to receive harassment complaints - including electronic harassment - through designated hotlines.
- The establishment by the National Women's Council of units to combat violence against girls in Egyptian universities, in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education and UNFPA, in order to support basic concepts of equality and equal opportunities for women's empowerment and psychosocial support. 23 units have already been established and supported at the level of public universities and 3 units of private universities.
- Establishment of the Egyptian Women's Observatory to follow up on the implementation of the targets for the status of women from 2015 to 2030 through:
 - Preparation of a series of periodic reports on the status of Egyptian women and the gender gap
 - Inventory and presentation of women's laws.
 - Measuring progress in all areas related to women's empowerment and protection by following up on the values of the follow-up indicators to the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 and the indicators for sustainable development related to women.
- Launch a number of campaigns through which violence, especially digital violence, can be addressed, most notably:
 - "Mateskotesh campaign"/ “Don’t shut up”, designed and broadcast audio and video advertisements to encourage the reporting of harassment cases.

- The campaign "Speak Up, Protect Yourself and Others" to raise awareness of cyber risks and ways to report digital violence.
- Launch of the "El-Sekka Aman"/ "The way is safe" campaign at railway stations to raise awareness of forms of violence against women.
- The media has established social media platforms to eradicate digital illiteracy and raise awareness of the seriousness of cybercrime and digital violence to which women may be exposed and how to protect digital devices from hacking and theft of personal information.

✓ **The International Efforts:**

In the past decade, there have been significant developments in international law with regard to understanding and recognizing gender-based violence on the Internet within the international human rights framework on women's rights and violence against women.

Thus, for the first time, the Secretary-General addressed the issue of gender-based violence on the Internet in 2006 in his study on all forms of violence against women, in which he noted the need for further investigation of the use of ICT in order to better identify and respond to emerging forms of violence.

In its resolution 20/8, the Human Rights Council decided that the same rights as offline persons must also be protected on the Internet.

In 2013, in its agreed conclusions, the Commission on the Status of Women called on States to establish mechanisms to combat violence against women.

In 2016, the General Assembly, in its resolution 71/199, recognized that women were particularly affected by violations of the right to privacy in the digital age, and called on all States to further develop preventive measures and remedies.

At another level, international and regional human rights instruments set out States' obligations to combat all forms of discrimination against women, including online violence against women and to protect women's human rights, including the right of every woman to live free from violence.

Women's basic human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, had been adopted before the development of the Internet and information and communications technology and therefore before emerging forms of violence against women appeared on the Internet. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has addressed the issue of ICT violence against women in several general recommendations and concluding observations, and has

clarified in its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) On gender-based violence against women, the Convention applies fully to environments that use technology such as the Internet and digital spaces as places where new forms of violence against women are perpetrated.

Thus, States have an obligation in the field of human rights to ensure that any act of violence against women is prevented and combated:

- **Prevention:**

Prevention includes measures to raise awareness of the phenomenon of violence against women through ICT as a form of violence against women, as well as the development and provision of information on legal services and protection available to stop and prevent the recurrence of violations.

- **Protection:**

The obligation to protect victims of violence against women on the Internet includes the adoption of procedures for the immediate removal of gender-disadvantaged content by deleting or eliminating the distribution of original material. Protection also requires immediate judicial action by national courts and intervention by internet intermediaries, and in some cases may also require extraterritorial cooperation. Protection also includes accessible services for survivors such as legal aid services.

➤ **Conclusion**

The tremendous advances in communication technology have led to the production of new means of communication that have changed people's social relationships and interactions with each other, so that the individual dispenses with face-to-face encounters and succumbs to communication screens, spending considerable time in virtual interaction that will reduce the time allocated to people in their lives. Through this report, we have sought to address the issue of cyber violence against women. They try to detect this violence and its forms across the virtual world, as well as the effects it has on women from social connotations that have shown the great role that media communication has played in the lives of individuals, especially women, and cyber violence is one of the perverse practices that has emerged through the passive use of modern means of communication. Cyber-violence has become a complex problem, given its increasing prevalence, multilateralism and the gravity of its repercussions.

Therefore, it was necessary to stop at the phenomenon of digital violence and reveal its nature, forms and impact, with the aim of providing stakeholders with the knowledge that enables them to confront this phenomenon that can ruin the lives and future of women and violate their rights. Therefore, it has become urgent to control interactions within the digital space that tend towards violence and hostility to women, by relying on upbringing and value education in the family and school,

especially since in all projects to reform the education system, reform was linked to the labor market, and the market of values was neglected and absent. Violence and negative things committed against women in the digital space, which are broadcast and shared on social networks, result in bad image towards women, society and the country as a whole.

➤ **Recommendations:**

- a. The need for full confidentiality towards girls who have been extorted by dealing with them with the principle of confidentiality in order to preserve their reputation. This will lead to encouraging victims not to obscure extortion methods, to resort to the security agencies responsible for arresting the extortion and to bring it to justice.
- b. Acting websites and social media pages as awareness-raising and mediator in the event of violence, bullying and blackmail to communicate the situation with the competent authority or protection institutions to communicate with specialists on forms of cyber-violence.
- c. Operationalizing existing laws to rise to the extent that they can be used as prevention and deterrence to deal with such crimes, and limit their gravity and deter perpetrators.
- d. Formal and social institutions should be responsible for directing and sensitizing girls about the dangers and negatives of networking networks and crimes through which they are conducted and for warning of behaviors and practices that may enable some to extort.
- e. The implementation of counselling programs in schools for the personal protection of female students aimed at the security use of the Internet as well as their awareness of how to protect themselves from the kinds of extortion that can occur to them.
- f. Raising awareness in society and organizing awareness-raising activities on women's human rights and violence against women by media institutions with support and funding from the Government.
- g. Conduct detailed reports on statistics and cases of cyber-violence and what laws and controls may prevent or limit the phenomenon.
- h. Awareness tweeting campaigns through Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, whether by organizations or individuals who tweet with intense content and time.
- i. The establishment of specialized courts for women's information offences in general.
- j. Work documentary to simulate the phenomenon on the ground due to the prevalence and importance of short video.