COFEM



Bytes of Resistance

Addressing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Bytes of Resistance Mini Pocketbook: Addressing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence is a four-part thematic series, or "Pocketbook," focusing on providing practical guidance on leveraging technology for joy and resistance, strengthening digital infrastructure and preparedness, and protecting female policymakers and public voices.

Overview

The Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (COFEM) is a global advocacy network composed of thought leaders, activists, practitioners, and researchers dedicated to ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG). The Act to End Violence Against Women Programme (ACT), jointly led by the European Union and UN Women, drives feminist collaboration among civil society, grassroots movements, and women's rights organizations (WROs) through a unified advocacy agenda focused on EVAWG.

COFEM's Feminist Pocketbook has been a widely used advocacy tool for supporting feminist approaches to addressing VAWG among practitioners in the field, with feedback attributing this impact to its digestible analysis of key issues and targeted messages aimed at policymakers, donors, and practitioners. Because the Feminist Pocketbook worked effectively as an advocacy tool, COFEM adapted its format to focus specifically on technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). Bytes of Resistance: Addressing Technology Facilitating Gender-Based Violence supports feminist movements, women's rights organizations (WROs), and women human rights defenders (WHRDs) to strengthen their ability to lead transformative online EVAWG advocacy by leveraging tech for joy and resistance, advocating for better digital infrastructure and safety, and enhancing the protection of women in public office. In addition, the Mini-Pocketbook highlights innovative ways feminists can nurture joy and collective care, and take concrete steps to minimize online risks. The content was informed by a series of learning dialogues with WROs hosted by COFEM through UN Women's ACT initiative, alongside key reference documents.

Introduction

For feminist movements and activists worldwide, technology has always presented both tremendous opportunity and profound risk. As more aspects of daily life move online, women human rights defenders (WHRDs), women's rights organizations (WROs), feminist activists, journalists, and women in public life navigate a rapidly evolving digital landscape. We use technology to mobilize feminist advocacy, influence policy, challenge anti-gender narratives, and hold institutions accountable. Yet we are simultaneously experiencing growing levels of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), including online harassment, cyberstalking, impersonation, gendered disinformation, deepfakes, and AI-assisted abuse.

TFGBV is a modern manifestation of long-standing structural inequalities, using digital platforms to reinforce existing power dynamics that limit who can safely occupy public spaces and who has the freedom to organize, lead, and simply exist. According to recent global evidence gathered from research across 119 countries in 2025 in Tipping Point: Online Violence, Impacts, Manifestations and Redress in the AI Age, TFGBV is one of the fastest-growing forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and poses serious threats to human rights, democratic participation, freedom of expression, and gender equality. Emerging technologies, including generative AI, create new opportunities for harassment, exclusion, exploitation, and violence.

Bytes of Resistance responds to a growing need for accessible, feminist-informed knowledge and practical tools to further strengthen WHRDs' capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to TFGBV while sustaining their own safety and collective care. Drawing on global evidence and as learning generated through COFEM and UN Women's *Knowledge as Resistance: Learning and Dialogue Labs on Ending Violence against Women and Girls* series, this Pocketbook supports feminist advocates in strengthening digital safety, advancing accountability, and harnessing technology for social change.

The Mini-Pocketbook is designed for feminist activists and WROs who need practical tools to navigate and resist TFGBV, and policymakers and institutional actors who have the authority and obligation to create the legal, regulatory, and financial conditions under which these harms can be prevented and addressed. Digital safety requires structural change that is grounded in political will and a commitment to prioritizing safety over profit.



What Is TFGBV?

TFGBV refers to acts of violence that are committed, assisted, aggravated, or amplified through information and communication technologies (ICTs) and digital platforms.[1]

TFGBV can include:

- Online harassment and abuse
- Cyberstalking and surveillance
- Gendered disinformation campaigns
- Doxxing and privacy violations
- Deepfakes and synthetic media manipulation
- Non-consensual image sharing
- Impersonation and identity theft
- AI-assisted abuse and coordinated misogynistic attacks

TFGBV is an attack on individuals and communities who organize around shared political identities, and a larger threat to gender equality, political participation, civic space, and human rights.

[1] United Nations Population Fund. (2025, November 26). *Technology-facilitated gender-based violence: A growing threat.* https://www.unfpa.org/TFGBV

Thematic Structure

Introduction

This introduction explains how to mobilise feminist-led advocacy and hold policymakers and tech companies accountable to address the challenges of online harm. It also highlights the value of the innovative ways that feminists can nurture joy and collective care in digital spaces.

Ending VAWG requires coordinated advocacy efforts that connect the line between digital safety to democratic participation and human rights.

Tip Sheet 1
Strengthening digital safety and infrastructure

Tip Sheet 1 describes practical strategies to identify online harms, strengthen digital safety, reduce risks, and develop collective safety approaches to respond to TFGBV.

Digital safety is strongest when it is proactive and integrated into movement-building efforts.

Tip Sheet 2
Addressing TFGBV against women politicians

Tip Sheet 2 provides insights and strategies to address online violence targeting women in public and political life, safeguard democratic participation, and strengthen accountability for gendered attacks.

Attacks against women in public life are not personal incidents — they are political challenges that require collective action.

Tip Sheet 3
Leveraging technology for rest, resistance, and joy

Tip Sheet 3 showcases how feminists are using technology for storytelling, healing, collective care, community-building, advocacy, and creative resistance. As joy and rest are essential components of sustainable feminist movements, so too can digital innovation support organizing and solidarity.

Joy, care, and creativity are essential to sustaining resistance.

What Is Feminist Advocacy In The Digital Age?

Addressing TFGBV requires more than digital security tools and practices that place the burden of protection on individuals. True responsibility rests with the institutions and technology companies that design and profit from the digital environment, as well as the systems that enable and normalize online harm against women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

Thus, feminist advocacy reframes TFGBV from a personal problem to be managed to a political and systemic problem to be solved. Addressing it requires holding technology companies accountable to the harms their platforms enable, demanding legal and regulatory policy frameworks that treat online violence seriously, challenging anti-rights actors who weaponise digital spaces to silence feminist voices, and ensuring that survivors, particularly those facing intersecting forms of discrimination, are centred in every response.

Feminist movements and WROs already lead and play a critical role in:

1. Documenting and monitoring TFGBV to build the evidence base that policymakers and regulators need[2]
2. Advocating for stronger laws, policies, and regulatory frameworks, including meaningful platform accountability and data protection[3]
3. Challenging anti-gender and misogynistic narratives online[4]
4. Building collective safety infrastructures, such as shared protocols and peer support systems[5]
5. Amplifying feminist voices and survivor-centered solutions, and demanding their integration into institutional responses[6]
6. Building solidarity across movements and regions, connecting digital rights to broader struggles for gender justice and civic freedom[7]

Drawing on priorities from the ACT Shared Advocacy Agenda, this Mini-Pocketbook recognizes that ending VAWG requires coordinated advocacy efforts that connect the line between digital safety, democratic participation, and human rights.

[2] Pollicy. (n.d.). *Violence against women in politics (VAWP)*. https://vawp.pollicy.org/

[3] Derechos Digitales. (n.d.). *Derechos Digitales*. https://www.derechosdigitales.org/en/home/

[4] GenderIT.org. (2026, March 17). *Returning to roots: Feminist technology movements organising for and responding to emerging realities*. https://www.genderit.org/edition/returning-roots-feminist-technology-movements-organising-and-responding-emerging-realities

[5] Association for Progressive Communications. (n.d.). *Feminist Tech Exchange (FTX)*. https://ftx.apc.org/

[6] Chayn. (n.d.). *Resources*. https://www.chayn.co/resources

[7] FIRN team. (2025, February). *Reimagining, broadening and expanding TFGBV and transnational solidarity*. Feminist Internet Research Network. https://firn.genderit.org/blog/reimagining-broadening-and-expanding-tfgbv-and-transnational-solidarity

How To Mobilise Feminist Advocacy And Hold Policymakers Accountable

Effective advocacy on TFGBV requires a clear understanding of where power sits and how to apply pressure at each point.

Entry point	Opportunities for Feminist Advocacy	Responsibilities of Policymakers	Responsibilities of Tech Companies
LAW AND POLICY	Advocate for TFGBV-specific legislation and ensure that technology platforms, AI systems, and data practices have gender-responsive regulation.[8]	Enact and enforce laws that treat online violence seriously by regulating platforms, requiring transparency, and mandating survivor-centred solutions.	Comply with laws that treat online violence seriously by regulating platforms, requiring transparency, and mandating survivor-centred solutions.
PLATFORM ACCOUNTABILITY	Document platform failures, file complaints, and use regulatory and legal mechanisms to demand change from technology companies.	Require platforms to implement gender-responsive safety policies, transparent content moderation, and accessible reporting and redress mechanisms.	Uphold gender-responsive safety policies, transparent content moderation, safety by design, and accessible reporting and redress mechanisms.
COUNTER-NARRATIVES	Build coordinated feminist communication strategies to challenge anti-gender disinformation and reclaim digital space. Advocate for funding for independent media and feminist digital initiatives that build public understanding of TFGBV as a structural issue.	Establish clear legal standards and oversight mechanisms requiring digital platforms to detect and transparently report on gendered hate speech and online harassment, consistent with international human rights standards.	Ban harmful anti-gender rhetoric by monitoring, detecting, and removing gendered hate speech and online harassment.
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	Produce shadow reports, conduct independent research, and build the evidence base that makes the scale and impact of TFGBV visible.	Commission and publish disaggregated data on TFGBV. Integrate this evidence into national action plans, budgets, and institutional accountability frameworks.	Use evidence to strengthen platform policies, product design, safety investments, and corporate accountability.
CIVIC SPACES	Protect the digital operating environment for feminist organising, including secure platforms and collective safety protocols that show solidarity.	Restrict surveillance overreach and ensure that laws designed to address harm are not misused to silence dissent.	Prevent the misuse of surveillance technologies and platform enforcement mechanisms by implementing strong human rights safeguards, increasing transparency, and protecting users who engage in lawful activism and organising.

[8] UN Women. (2025, November 25). *Model framework for legislation on technology-facilitated violence against women and girls*. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/11/brief-model-framework-for-legislation-on-technology-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls

COLLECTIVE CARE

Sustainable responses require communities, organizations, and movements that prioritize wellbeing, solidarity, and mutual support.





JOY AS RESISTANCE

Storytelling, connection, and collective care are powerful political practices that can help sustain movements that are convening in digital spaces.

What are feminist principles for digital safety?[9]



SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

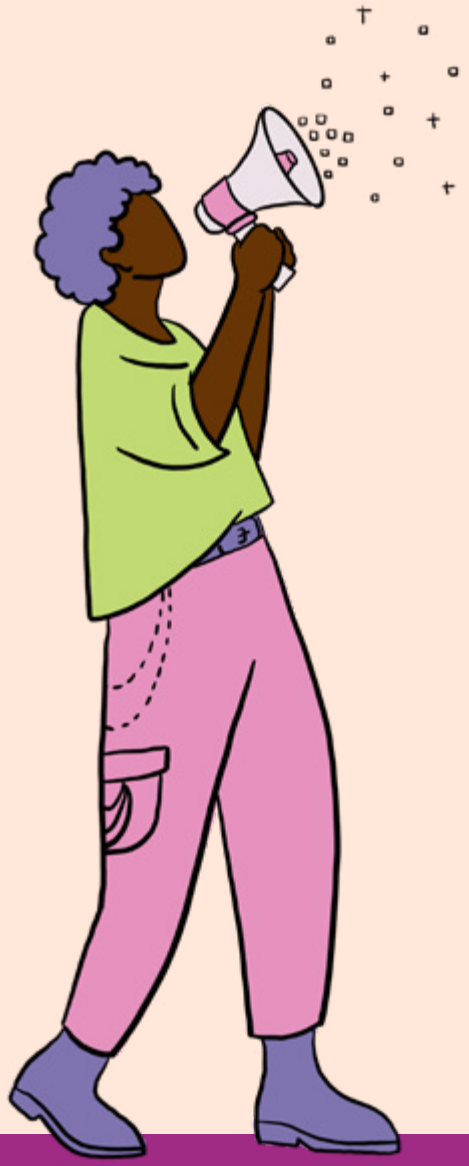
Governments, technology companies, media institutions, and international actors must all take responsibility for preventing and addressing online harms.



DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Women and gender-diverse people have the right to participate safely and fully in civic, political, and public life both online and offline.

[9] These are COFEM's principles, and a more expansive understanding of feminist principles for digital safety can be seen in work of the Association for Progressive Communications: https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/feminist-principles-internet-version-20



Call To Action: Building The Digital Future We Deserve

Feminist movements know that resistance is not only about confronting and pushing back against violence, but about building the conditions for dignity, accountability, participation, collective care, and joy.

This Mini-Pocketbook is both a practical resource and an invitation to action. It encourages us to move beyond responding to online harm and toward building online environments where women and gender-diverse people can participate safely, exercise leadership, shape public discourse, and thrive.

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