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Social Media in Conflict: A Tool For or Against Sexual Violence?

Estela Morais Westphalen

Executive Summary

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) is used as a strategy during wartime to demoralize spirits and erode culture, as well as to weaken security. CRSV is defined by the UN Rome Statute as rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, amongst other acts linked to conflict. It can be both physical and psychological, and despite many UN peacekeeping missions limiting their scope to women and girls, sexual violence is experienced by all. In the 21st century, social media has been both weaponized to further sexual violence as well as instrumentalized for preventing said violence and supporting its victims. From providing a media-based justice and digital literacy training, to exacerbating trauma and inciting real-world violence, social media is powerful at its highs and lows. Platforms like Facebook, X, WhatsApp, and Instagram should be held accountable for upgrading their algorithms according to human rights-based regulations. Strategic partnerships between government, NGOs, public health ministries, and others are also recommended to protect the individuals and nations at risk of sexual violence.

Introduction

“Sexual violence has been a feature of conflict since ancient history.”¹ Social media has magnified the problem and its solutions. This brief outlines the relationship between Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) and conflict zones, highlighting key conditions for its occurrence. It will also explore both positive and negative effects of social media on the matter. This analysis is key to supplement current literature on CRSV. Despite a growing evidence-base of authors diligently studying CRSV, ultimately the evidence collected remains an underestimate. The lack of transitional justice and UN involvement in some areas, fear of continued terrorist repression, and male victim shaming, invite further research and technological innovations.

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)

CRSV is defined by the UN Rome Statute as referring to “rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict.”²

1 Stachow, Ela. 2020. “Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: A Review.” *BMJ Military Health* 166 (3). England: British Medical Journal Publishing Group: 18387. doi:10.1136/jramc-2019-001376.

2 Sandvik, Kristin Bergtora, and Kjersti Lohne. “The Struggle Against Sexual Violence in Conflict: Investigating the Digital Turn.” *International Review of the Red Cross* 102, no. 913 (2020): 95–115. <https://international-review.icrc.org/sites/default/files/reviews-pdf/2021-03/struggle-against-sexual-violence-in-conflict-investigating-digital-turn-913.pdf>.

Estela Morais Westphalen

Brown University Master of Public Affairs ‘25

B.A. International and Public Affairs, with Certificate in Data Science Fluency ‘24

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The ‘Systematic Rape, Sexual Slavery and Slavery like practices pursued during Armed Conflict’ UN report defines sexual violence more specifically as “both physical and psychological attacks directed at a person’s sexual characteristics, such as forcing a person to strip naked in public, mutilating a person’s genitals, or slicing off a woman’s breasts”²

“Sexual violence can be experienced by all.”

UN peacekeeping missions tend to limit their definition of CRSV to women and girls, as well as conflate it with sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).³ Sexual violence can be experienced by all.

CRSV is used as a strategy during wartime to:

Demoralize Spirits & Erode Culture

Perpetrators of sexual violence may aim to instill fear, humiliate, agonize, defame, displace, stigmatize, and destabilize a population.⁴ Torturers will coerce victims to perform sexual acts involving parents, children, and other relatives, resulting in extreme psychological and physical damage.⁵ Rape and sexual violence can be premeditated strategies for genocide, as demonstrated by the 1994 Rwandan genocide.⁶ Ethnically targeted sexual violence, like the creation of ‘rape camps’ for Bosnian Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s,⁷ serve to eradicate ethnic groups and cause longterm social disruption.⁸



Source: Sven Torfinn. A Portrait of 52 Year Old Faida Mbanguhe, a Victim of Sexual Violence Who Is Receiving Treatment at Panzi Hospital, with Other Women. An Estimated 250,000 Women Have Been Victims of Rape during the Democratic Republic of Congo’s Civil War. 2010. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.12146062>.

Weaken Security

Sexual violence can be deployed by states as an instrument of terror to combat dissident uprisings, as seen in Peru, Colombia, Syria, and Darfur.⁹ Individuals are punished with sexual violence for their or their relatives’ political activity, as happened in Haiti in the 1990s.¹⁰ Military groups use sexual violence to forcibly recruit and control child soldiers, as done in Uganda by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).¹¹ Contexts with high rates of CRSV are at a higher risk of conflict recurrence entering peacetime.¹² Terrorist groups and insurgents in Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Kenya, may kidnap and sexually violate individuals as a means of negotiating financial aid, intimidating the local community and government, and protecting themselves from military attacks.¹³

2 Sandvik, Kristin Bergtora, and Kjersti Lohne. “The Struggle Against Sexual Violence in Conflict: Investigating the Digital Turn.” *International Review of the Red Cross* 102, no. 913 (2020): 95–115. <https://international-review.icrc.org/sites/default/files/reviews-pdf/2021-03/struggle-against-sexual-violence-in-conflict-investigating-digital-turn-913.pdf>.

3 Abara, Francis Chinedu. 2020. *Sexual Violence in Conflict: A Threat to Global Security*. BrownWalker Press. Baldwin, Gretchen. 2022. *Expanding Conceptions of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence among Military Peacekeepers*. International Peace Institute. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep42503>.

4 Abara, Francis Chinedu. 2020. *Sexual Violence in Conflict: A Threat to Global Security*. BrownWalker Press.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Stachow, Ela. 2020. “Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: A Review.” *BMJ Military Health* 166 (3). England: British Medical Journal Publishing Group: 18387. doi:10.1136/jramc-2019-001376.

8 Stark, Lindsay, Kim Thuy Seelinger, Reine-Marcella Ibala, Yana Tovpeko, and Denis Mukwege. 2022. “Prevention of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ukraine and Globally.” *The Lancet* (British Edition) 399 (10342). England: Elsevier Ltd: 2173–75. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(22)00840-6.

9 Meger, Sara. 2016. *Rape Loot Pillage: The Political Economy of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

10 Stachow, Ela. 2020. “Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: A Review.” *BMJ Military Health* 166 (3). England: British Medical Journal Publishing Group: 18387. doi:10.1136/jramc-2019-001376.

11 Ibid.

12 Stark, Lindsay, Kim Thuy Seelinger, Reine-Marcella Ibala, Yana Tovpeko, and Denis Mukwege. 2022. “Prevention of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ukraine and Globally.” *The Lancet* (British Edition) 399 (10342). England: Elsevier Ltd: 2173–75. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(22)00840-6.

13 Abara, Francis Chinedu. 2020. *Sexual Violence in Conflict: A Threat to Global Security*. BrownWalker Press.

Rates of sexual violence will be higher under the following conditions:

1. In marginalized populations experiencing intersectionality. Intersecting factors like religion, disability, HIV positivity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, migration status, age, and more can increase victimization and serve to justify discrimination against targeted groups.¹⁴
2. When the state has authorized sexual violence as an ideological policy. This can be done to limit an ethnicity's reproduction capacity and artificially engineer a country's demographic.¹⁵
3. When the country has not adopted the Rome Statute on CRSV. They lack the infrastructure to investigate and denounce CRSV as a war crime, a crime against humanity, or an act of genocide.¹⁶
4. When transportation to police stations and health clinics are lacking. These are obstacles to reporting sexual violence. Without close to accurate reporting, policing of CRSV worsens.¹⁷
5. When police are perpetrators. In instances where police and military figures are implicated as perpetrators of sexual violence, survivors may not feel safe reporting, decreasing the data set of cases and inhibiting action against CRSV.¹⁸

Technological innovations, such as social media may mitigate indices of conflict-related sexual violence.

Social Media

Social media is a tool and information infrastructure to create and disseminate content that both includes individual value and reflects shared values. The digital form can be news, ideas, personal messages. Individuals, organizations, industries, and states are emitters and receivers of information.¹⁹ Social media platforms include Facebook, X, WhatsApp, Instagram, and more.²⁰

In the 21st century, social media has been both weaponized to further sexual violence as well as instrumentalized for preventing said violence and supporting its victims.

Morale & Culture

Social media is used advantageously to uplift spirits & preserve culture:

- Media Based Justice: Survivors often prefer using social media over formal legal channels, as these platforms provide a more supportive and accessible avenue for justice.²¹
- Support for Women and Girls: Online counterpublics can offer crucial validation and support to women and girls, who may be excluded from traditional offline spaces.²²
- Spotlight Initiative: The UN's Spotlight Initiative uses social media tools to raise awareness, educate communities, and provide direct support to survivors of violence.²³
- Bystander Intervention: Social media promotes bystander intervention, encouraging individuals to take action against sexual violence, helping to reduce rape culture.²⁴

14 Rubini, Elena, Martina Valente, Monica Trentin, Giulia Facci, Luca Ragazzoni, and Sarah Gino. 2023. "Negative Consequences of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence on Survivors: A Systematic Review of Qualitative Evidence." *International Journal for Equity in Health* 22 (1). London: BioMed Central Ltd: 1–227. doi:10.1186/s12939-023-02038-7.

15 Ajoja, Mofoluke Ibidunni, and Abimifoluwa Glory Anjorin. 2020. "Social Media and Women's Culture of Silence on Sexual Violence: Perception of Babcock University's Female Undergraduates." *Communication Cultures in Africa* 2 (1). doi:10.21039/cca.32.

16 Ibid.

17 Anyeko, Ketty. 2022. Improving Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Africa. US Institute of Peace. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20174>.

18 Ibid.

19 Peuchaud, Sheila. 2014. "Social Media Activism and Egyptians' Use of Social Media to Combat Sexual Violence: An HiAP Case Study." *Health Promotion International* 29 (suppl 1). England: Oxford University Press: i113–20. doi:10.1093/heapro/dau046.

20 Little, Nicolette. 2023. "Social Media 'Ghosts': How Facebook (Meta) Memories Complicates Healing for Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence." *Feminist Media Studies* 23 (8). Abingdon: Routledge: 3901–23. doi:10.1080/14680777.2022.2149593.

21 Nadav-Carmel, Hila, and Azi Lev-On. 2024. "A Cognitive Map of Sexual Violence Victims' Decision-Making: Understanding the Preference for Social Media over Formal Legal Avenues—Insights from Media Consultants." *Social Sciences (Basel)* 13 (9). Basel: MDPI AG: 480–. doi:10.3390/socsci13090480.

22 Salter, Michael. 2013. "Justice and Revenge in Online Counter-Publics: Emerging Responses to Sexual Violence in the Age of Social Media." *Crime, Media, Culture* 9 (3). London, England: SAGE Publications: 225–42. doi:10.1177/1741659013493918.

23 Stop Rape Now. 2025. "Technology X CRSV." Accessed March 17, 2025. https://www.stoprapenow.org/our_projects/technology-x-crsv/#:~:text=In%20conflict%20and%20post%20conflict%20situations%2C%20online%20harassment%2C%20doxing,physical%20attacks%2C%20including%20sexual%20violence.

24 Armstrong, Cory L, and Jessica Mahone. 2023. "Metoo in Practice: Revisiting Social Media's Influence in Individual Willingness to Mobilize against Sexual Assault." *Feminist Media Studies* 23 (1). Abingdon: Routledge: 185–98. doi:10.1080/14680777.2021.1944258.

- Empathetic Disclosure: Social media provides a platform for survivors to share their experiences, offering a sense of justice and emotional healing that may be lacking in institutional channels.²⁵
- Technology-empowered Art: artists like Delphine Diallo and Sasha Stiles use social media to broadcast art that lifts the voices and healing narratives of women and victims.²⁶
- Amplifying Activism: Social media amplifies the voices of activists, enabling them to advocate for CRSV issues on a global scale, garnering widespread attention.²⁷
- Exacerbates Trauma: The persistent online presence of harmful content, like non-consensual intimate images, exacerbates trauma for survivors. Victims often struggle to have content removed, delaying recovery and causing further harm.³⁰
- Cultural Stigma: The cultural and social consequences, especially for women in conservative societies, can lead to stigma, violence, and even honor killings.³¹

Case Study: Deepfake Pornography of India's Youngest Parliamentarian

India's youngest female parliamentarian, Chandrani Murmu, has "deepfake" pornographic videos of her circulating the web. This is in the context of the online sexual harassment and "trolling" of India's female politicians. This rise of image-based sexual violence has had numerous negative effects in India. For one, rumors about rapes and child killings have triggered acts of revenge. Moreover, visual depictions of such crimes incite violence, irregardless of them being true or doctored. Deepfake technology that generates and publicizes nude images also aggravates user vulnerability. Ultimately, this disenfranchises namely female politicians and propagates CRSV online.

Source: Sandvik, Kristin Bergtora, and Kjersti Lohne. "The Struggle Against Sexual Violence in Conflict: Investigating the Digital Turn." *International Review of the Red Cross* 102, no. 913 (2020): 95–115. <https://international-review.icrc.org/sites/default/files/reviews-pdf/2021-03/struggle-against-sexual-violence-in-conflict-investigating-digital-turn-913.pdf>.

However, social media has its limitations and negative effects on CRSV:

- Deters reporting: Image-based sexual violence can deter survivors of CRSV from reporting due to fear of reprisals, stigma, and social norms.²⁸
- False Information: Social media algorithms prioritize engagement and profits, amplifying
- Excludes Men: Gender bias and inequality in the design of digital technologies exclude men from vital support services.³²
- Reduces Female Participation in Politics: Women in politics face severe online harassment, which reduces their participation and undermines their credibility.³³

25 Nadav-Carmel, Hila, and Azi Lev-On. 2024. "A Cognitive Map of Sexual Violence Victims' Decision-Making: Understanding the Preference for Social Media over Formal Legal Avenues—Insights from Media Consultants." *Social Sciences* (Basel) 13 (9). Basel: MDPI AG: 480-. doi:10.3390/socsci13090480.

26 Spotlight Initiative. "'Technology Is a Way of Lifting Up Our Voices'—Celebrating Women Digital Artists on the Sidelines of the Sixty-Ninth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women." Spotlight Initiative, March 4, 2025. <https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/news/technology-way-lifting-our-voices-celebrating-women-digital-artists-sidelines-sixty-ninth>.

27 Peuchaud, Sheila. 2014. "Social Media Activism and Egyptians' Use of Social Media to Combat Sexual Violence: An HiAP Case Study." *Health Promotion International* 29 (suppl 1). England: Oxford University Press: i113–20. doi:10.1093/heapro/dau046.

28 Stop Rape Now. 2025. "Technology X CRSV." Accessed March 17, 2025. https://www.stoprapenow.org/our_projects/technology-x-crsv/#:~:text=In%20conflict%20and%20post%2Dconflict%20situations%2C%20online%20harassment%2C%20doxxing,physical%20attacks%2C%20including%20sexual%20violence.

29 Kharroub, Tamara. 2023. "Disinformation and Hate Speech on Social Media Contribute to Inciting War Crimes Against Gaza." Arab Center Washington DC, October 13, 2023. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/disinformation-and-hate-speech-on-social-media-contribute-to-inciting-war-crimes-against-gaza/>.

30 Stop Rape Now. 2025. "Technology X CRSV." Accessed March 17, 2025. https://www.stoprapenow.org/our_projects/technology-x-crsv/#:~:text=In%20conflict%20and%20post%2Dconflict%20situations%2C%20online%20harassment%2C%20doxxing,physical%20attacks%2C%20including%20sexual%20violence.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 UN Women. 2023. "Online Harassment Risks Pushing Kenyan Women out of Politics." UN Women, September 2023. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2023/09/online-harassment-risks-pushing-kenyan-women-out-of-politics>.

Security

Social media can improve security of civilians in conflict zones:

- **Real-time Safety Notifications:** Social media apps, like ‘I’m Getting Arrested’ and ‘Byt2ebed 3alia,’ send real-time alerts with GPS coordinates during arrests, helping protect individuals in conflict zones.³⁴
- **Documenting Human Rights Abuses:** Social media platforms enable survivors to report and document CRSV, enhancing visibility and accountability.³⁵
- **Crowdsourcing for Transparency:** Platforms like Ushahidi allow eyewitnesses to report violence, which is then mapped for increased transparency and accountability.³⁶
- **Awareness of Digital Security:** Social media campaigns raise awareness about digital security, empowering women to protect themselves from online targeting and harassment.³⁷
- **HarassMap and Support:** Platforms like HarassMap offer resources to victims of sexual harassment, connecting them to counseling, self-defense classes, legal assistance, and support networks.³⁸
- **Avenue for Justice:** Survivors often prefer using social media over formal legal channels, as these platforms provide a more supportive and accessible avenue for justice.³⁹
- **Supporting Policy Research:** Social media activism informs research on sexual violence, helping policy organizations validate and refine their efforts to address CRSV.⁴⁰

Social media can also weaken national, party, and individual security:

- **Low Digital Literacy and Higher CSRV risks:** Increased access to information and communication technologies for women and girls also increases exposure to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), exacerbating risks.⁴¹ High levels of digital illiteracy among women and girls, driven by lack of education and societal restrictions, also increase the risk of exploitation.⁴²
- **No Accountability for the Anonymous:** The anonymity provided by cyberspace and lack of accountability in TFGBV cases allow perpetrators to operate without consequence.⁴³
- **Discourages Digital Activism:** Digital security threats, such as hacking and blackmail, discourage digital activism and threaten women’s safety.⁴⁴

Case Study: Sex Slave Auctions on Telegram

ISIS fighters in Kurdistan used Telegram to conduct sex slave auctions. They circulated photos of captured Yazidi women and girls, including details of their age, marital status, location, and price. Telegram was instrumentalized to magnify the demand and operations of their sex slave auction. Yazidis and advocacy organizations urged social media platforms like Meta, X, and Youtube to be held accountable.

Source: Stop Rape Now. 2025. “Technology X CRSV.” Accessed March 17, 2025. https://www.storapenow.org/our_projects/technology-x-crsv/#:~:text=In%20conflict%20and%20post%2Dconflict%20situations%2C%20online%20harassment%2C%20doxxing,physical%20attacks%2C%20including%20sexual%20violence.

34 Peuchaud, Sheila. 2014. “Social Media Activism and Egyptians’ Use of Social Media to Combat Sexual Violence: An HiAP Case Study.” Health Promotion International 29 (suppl 1). England: Oxford University Press: i113–20. doi:10.1093/heapro/dau046.

35 Kharroub, Tamara. 2023. “Disinformation and Hate Speech on Social Media Contribute to Inciting War Crimes Against Gaza.” Arab Center Washington DC, October 13, 2023. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/disinformation-and-hate-speech-on-social-media-contribute-to-inciting-war-crimes-against-gaza/>.

36 Peuchaud 2014.

37 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). 2023. “Combating Hate Speech and Disinformation Online: A Policy Framework for the OSCE Region.” Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/9/f/513784.pdf>.

38 Peuchaud, Sheila. 2014. “Social Media Activism and Egyptians’ Use of Social Media to Combat Sexual Violence: An HiAP Case Study.” Health Promotion International 29 (suppl 1). England: Oxford University Press: i113–20. doi:10.1093/heapro/dau046.

39 Nadav-Carmel, Hila, and Azi Lev-On. 2024. “A Cognitive Map of Sexual Violence Victims’ Decision-Making: Understanding the Preference for Social Media over Formal Legal Avenues—Insights from Media Consultants.” Social Sciences (Basel) 13 (9). Basel: MDPI AG: 480–. doi:10.3390/socsci13090480.

40 Peuchaud 2014.

41 Social Development Direct. 2023. “Global Partnership for Tackling Gender-Based Violence: Preliminary Landscape Analysis.” Social Development Direct. <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/Global%20Partnership%20TFGBV%20Preliminary%20Landscape%20Analysis.pdf>.

42 al-Aghbary, Ismail. 2023. “Yemen: Women and Female Activists Targeted through Cybercrimes and Online Blackmail Campaigns.” Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/yemen-women-and-female-activists-targeted-through-cybercrimes-and-online-blackmail-campaigns/>.

43 Social Development Direct. 2023. “Global Partnership for Tackling Gender-Based Violence: Preliminary Landscape Analysis.” Social Development Direct. <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/Global%20Partnership%20TFGBV%20Preliminary%20Landscape%20Analysis.pdf>.

44 al-Aghbary, Ismail. 2023. “Yemen: Women and Female Activists Targeted through Cybercrimes and Online Blackmail Campaigns.” Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/yemen-women-and-female-activists-targeted-through-cybercrimes-and-online-blackmail-campaigns/>.

- **Real-World Violence:** Social media algorithms contributed to violence against the Rohingya by amplifying hateful rhetoric, which escalated into real-world violence.⁴⁵
 - **Cyberviolence:** Algorithms on platforms like X often magnify extreme content and interactions, like hate speech, misinformation, harassment, cyberbullying, cybermobbing, and impersonation. In Myanmar, online abuse has led to violence against women protesting the military junta.⁴⁶
 - **Fake Accounts Complicate Geopolitics:** analysts estimate that 20% of accounts in online conversations in conflict zones are fake, often operating on platforms like X and TikTok, further complicating the situation.⁴⁷
 - **Tool for terrorists:** Social media platforms like Telegram are used by groups such as ISIS to conduct online sex slave auctions, exploiting vulnerable populations like Yazidi women. These platforms often fail to adequately prevent such abuses. Social media can be weaponized by terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab to recruit members and coordinate attacks, exacerbating CRSV.⁴⁸
1. **Encourage private sector and civil society collaboration** to develop counter-narratives and technological solutions for digital literacy, as outlined in UN Security Council Resolution 2396 (2017).⁴⁹
 - Platforms should collaborate with NGOs and public health ministries to provide tools for content removal, and create safe online spaces for survivors.⁵⁰
 - Develop victim and witness support and protection programs.⁵¹
 - Law enforcement can use coordinated online actions to target criminal networks, as seen in EMPACT's 2022 joint action day to combat online exploitation experienced by Ukrainian refugees.⁵²
 - Adopt human rights-based regulatory approaches to ensure accountability.⁵³
 - Create social media training initiatives to help women in politics engage effectively and counter online harassment, as demonstrated by UN Women's successful cases like Jennifer Mbatiany's rise to deputy governor.⁵⁴
 - Promote digital inclusion for women and girls through initiatives like International Girls in ICT Day and the Equals Partnership, as recommended by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 77/150 (2022). Extend digital literacy programs and services to boys and men to address gender-based violence inclusively.⁵⁵

Recommendations

Social media can continue to support individuals involved in CRSV, however, stronger policies, partnerships, and regulations are necessary.

Strategic partnerships between government, NGOs, public health ministries, and others will be key. Specific suggestions and next steps include:

45 Amnesty International. 2022. "Myanmar: Facebook's Systems Promoted Violence Against Rohingya, Meta Owes Reparations, New Report." Amnesty International, September 29, 2022. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/09/myanmar-facebook-systems-promoted-violence-against-rohingya-meta-owes-reparations-new-report/>.

46 Kharroub, Tamara. 2023. "Disinformation and Hate Speech on Social Media Contribute to Inciting War Crimes Against Gaza." Arab Center Washington DC, October 13, 2023. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/disinformation-and-hate-speech-on-social-media-contribute-to-inciting-war-crimes-against-gaza/>.

47 Ibid.

48 Stop Rape Now 2025.

49 Ibid.

50 Peuchaud 2014.

51 Nadia's Initiative. 2023. "Nadia's Initiative Condemns Recent Hate Speech and False Accusations Targeting the Yazidi Community in Sinjar." Nadia's Initiative, May 4, 2023. <https://www.nadiasinitiative.org/news/nadias-initiative-condemns-recent-hate-speech-and-false-accusations-targeting-the-yazidi-community-in-sinjar>.

52 Europol. 2023. "Human Traffickers Luring Ukrainian Refugees on the Web: Targeted in EU-Wide Hackathon." Europol, December 7, 2023. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/human-traffickers-luring-ukrainian-refugees-web-targeted-in-eu-wide-hackathon#empact>.

53 Jurasz, Olga, Mohamed Elmessiry, and Marwa Mohamed. 2021. "We Will Not Be Silenced: Online Violence Against Women in Libya Key Facts." Love Frankie & Justice.

54 UN Women. 2023. "Online Harassment Risks Pushing Kenyan Women Out of Politics." UN Women, September 2023. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2023/09/online-harassment-risks-pushing-kenyan-women-out-of-politics>.

55 Stop Rape Now 2025.

2. Social media platforms must be held accountable for adopting stricter misinformation policies, improving fake account detection and enhancing content moderation that limits harmful narratives.

- Implement urgent reforms to algorithmic systems, ensuring more transparency and preventing future abuses.⁵⁶
- Develop clear community guidelines, effective enforcement, and strong policies to protect users.⁵⁷
- Prioritize human rights protections, investing in human oversight of AI-driven content moderation to ensure equal rights for all users.⁵⁸ Notably, sexual violence survivors currently use “algospeak” on platforms like TikTok to bypass restrictions and political intimidation tactics, sharing their narratives.⁵⁹
- Adopt stricter misinformation policies and improve content moderation to limit harmful narratives. 76.07% of Libyan women believe platforms should be responsible for such abuses.⁶⁰
- Hold companies like Meta accountable for their role in spreading harmful content, including providing reparations to affected communities and taking more responsibility for hate speech enforcement.⁶¹



Source: Sven Torfinn. A Portrait of 70 Year Old Cecilia Wabukwa, a Victim of Sexual Violence Who Is Receiving Treatment at Panzi Hospital. An Estimated 250,000 Women Have Been Victims of Rape during the Democratic Republic of Congo's Civil War. Cecilia Wears a Jumper Which Has a Moto on It Reading "I Want You to Leave Me Alone." 2010. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.12137714>.

“Social media platforms must be held accountable”

56 Amnesty International. 2023. “Global Social Media Companies Must Step Up Crisis Response on Israel-Palestine as Online Hate and Censorship Proliferate.” Amnesty International, October 27, 2023.

57 Social Development Direct. 2023. “Global Partnership for Tackling Gender-Based Violence: Preliminary Landscape Analysis.” Social Development Direct. <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/Global%20Partnership%20TFGBV%20Preliminary%20Landscape%20Analysis.pdf>.

58 Amnesty International. 2023. “Global Social Media Companies Must Step Up Crisis Response on Israel-Palestine as Online Hate and Censorship Proliferate.” Amnesty International, October 27, 2023.

59 Tillewein, Heather, Keely Mohon-Doyle, and Destiny Cox. 2024. “A Critical Discourse Analysis of Sexual Violence Survivors and Censorship on the Social Media Platform TikTok.” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 53 (10). New York: Springer US: 3785–94. doi:10.1007/s10508-024-02987-2.

60 Jurasz, Olga, Mohamed Elmessiry, and Marwa Mohamed. 2021. “‘We Will Not Be Silenced’: Online Violence Against Women in Libya Key Facts.” Love Frankie & Justice

61 Amnesty International. 2022. “Myanmar: Facebook’s Systems Promoted Violence Against Rohingya, Meta Owes Reparations, New Report.” Amnesty International, September 29, 2022. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/09/myanmar-facebooks-systems-promoted-violence-against-rohingya-meta-owes-reparations-new-report/>.