



## Fe-Male's Twenty-Four Hour Reactive Campaign

# NOTHING

is Funny about Promoting RAPE Culture





## Summary

On April 2, 2020 and during this critical time of the global health crisis, the Coronavirus Pandemic, a famous Lebanese comedian, **Wissam Saad**, also known as Abou Talal, criticized women and young girls who dance while using the “TikTok” application, and compared them to porn stars. In his ten-minute show, **عمشان Show**, which airs during the prime time of a well-known national Lebanese TV station AlJadeed, and prior to the daily bulletin, Abu Talal explicitly justified the rape culture and encouraged it by using an offensive and abusive language against women and girls. He blamed them for any act of rape or harassment committed against them because of the way they were expressing themselves on social media platforms, while harming no one.

It is estimated that not less than one million Lebanese people could have been watching the show.

## The 24-Hour Reactive Campaign: YES. Women and girls have the right to express themselves freely

Along the years, **Fe-Male** played an important role in monitoring and tracking the portrayal of women and their image in media, television commercials, drama, cinema, as well as online. Whenever the words media, social media and women coincide, people reach out to Fe-Male. Known for its quick response in hunting down such cases of hate, discrimination and objectification, and the trust that **Fe-Male** will devotedly pursue the case until justice prevails, a young girl immediately contacted us, after watching the episode of the show mentioned above, to take action against this harmful content and seek justice for all the women and girls whose only “guilt” was expressing themselves freely and seeking stress-releasing activities.



during the days of lock-down. On the spot, and after checking the segment, **Fe-Male**, through its feminist website Sharika wa Laken and all its social media platforms, namely Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, launched a nationwide reactive campaign to condemn the presenter and his show. Messages to either stop the show or publically apologize for the offensive content were published, while mentioning the TV station and the presenter himself. In no time, the campaign went viral, especially with people being more sensitive and aware of their rights after the revolution, and everyone was sharing and condemning this hateful episode. Human rights activists, feminist groups and NGOs, bloggers, social media influencers, journalists and websites joined the campaign and blamed not only the presenter, but also the TV channel for approving such an insensitive provocative content to be broadcasted.

*“The episode is a flawed model for media that lacks social responsibility and discipline, and it is a clear incitement and a promotion for a criminal act “RAPE”, and from here we demand Al-Jadeed channel to make an official and public apology on air from all women and girls who were abused and from the program itself, and to guarantee that similar content is not broadcasted in the future.”-  
Sharika wa Laken, official statement.*



# Media, public and influencers' reactions:





*"This is not only a shame, but also a crime. Had there been a rightful law, he shouldn't go unpunished"- Media Trainer and TV Host*

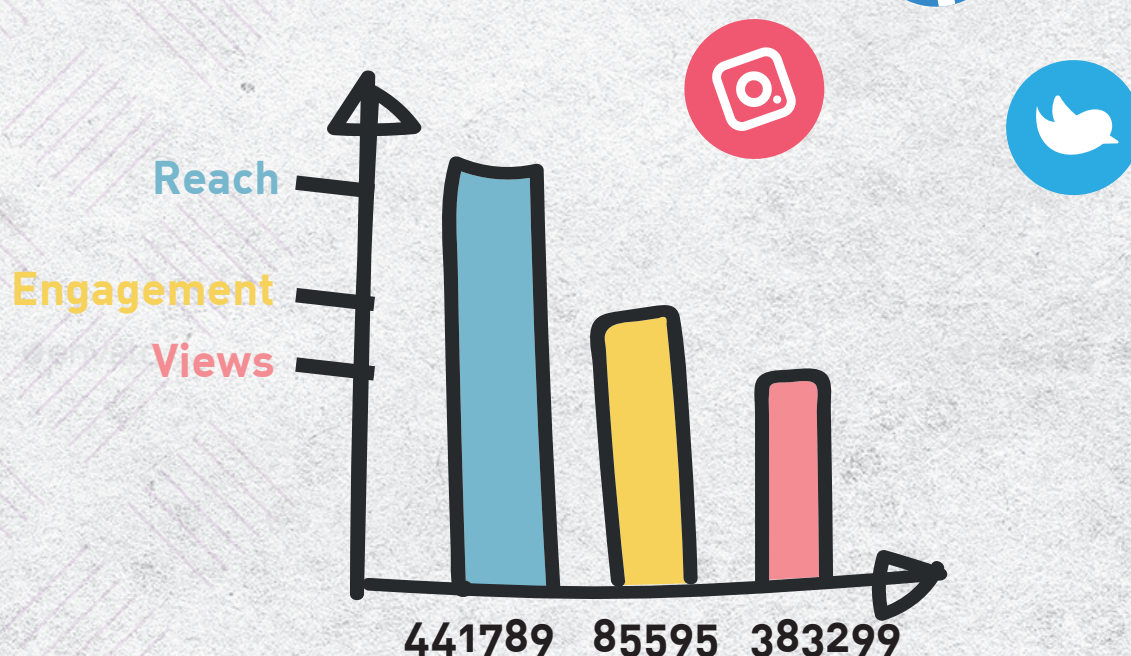
*"People like this and content like that should not be allowed on TV! This is the 21st century. Get it in your heads once and for all: Even if she walks naked in the streets, nothing will ever justify rape. Educate boys on consent instead of telling women what to wear or how to behave."- Human Rights Activist*

*"This is intellectual filth leading to behavioral filth and insinuation to adopt a filthy behavior. The Ministry of Information should take immediate and strict measures to stop such intellectual gibberish from going on air."- Researcher and Activist*

*"It is very confusing how such content went through with the channel's management without being stopped, even if it slipped the host, thinking of himself as "cute", where are the channel's content supervisors?"- Journalist and TV Host*



## The campaign in numbers:



## What have we achieved after 24 non-stop reactive campaigning?

Following **Fe-Male's** launch of the campaign, many NGOs and human rights activists and feminists jumped in for support. In less than 24 hours, mass participation, sharing, posting and reposting of the episode were recorded by activists, and both the TV channel and the host were pressured to publically apologize. The result was two official apologies right the next day: one by the TV channel at the beginning of the bulletin and one by the presenter during the show, ten minutes prior to the bulletin. Following the on-air apology, it was clear that media institutions and social media outlets are now careful and aware of any content that would be shared and might threaten the security, dignity and safety of girls.



Although, **Fe-Male** considered the presenter's apology unprofessional and far from being serious opposed to the channel's one, the reactions to the campaign and the anger from people on the presenter's attitude and mentality made it clear that it is not anymore acceptable to joke about women's struggles and shape their behaviors the way a patriarchal society sees them. Reactions from women and men, young and adults taught the media lesson about respecting women and girls, and to thoroughly revise any statement or the wording of the content before sharing it with the public. This campaign showed that accountability matters when it comes to protecting women and girls, and that every media outlet- be it on or offline- should abide by a Code of Conduct that obliges all the staff to ethically and gender-sensitively tackle any topic related to women and girls.

*"Wissam Saad's 'joke' about sexualizing and raping young girls is simply disgusting because there is absolutely NOTHING funny about promoting rape culture on TV. Fe-Male will never allow such abusive content to be aired on Lebanese TVs, in a pathetic attempt to pass it off as comedy"- Hayat Mirshad, Fe-Male's Co-Director*





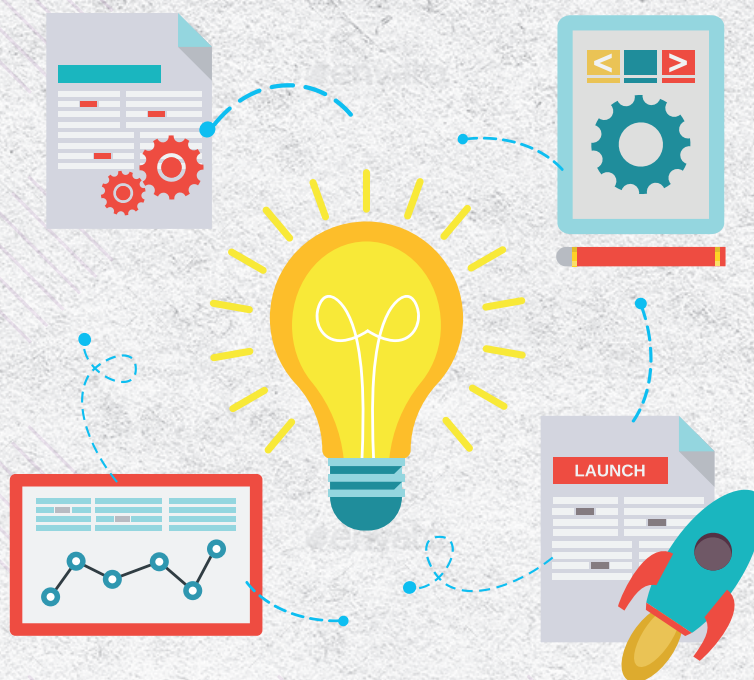
## About Fe-Male monitoring and reactive campaigning history

**Fe-Male** has always been one of the most credible and most sought-after reference when it comes to hunting down actions of hate and agitation to practice violence against women in media and ads. This women-led feminist collective has been tracking all sorts of abuse against women online and offline since its establishment in 2013, making it the fastest most responsive NGO in such cases. The beginning in addressing the issue was with the launching of “**Towards Changing Women’s Image in Media and Ads**” advocacy campaign which brought to the surface the different ugly faces of discrimination against women, followed by “**Sell You Products, Not Her Body**” campaign in Summer of 2015. These campaigns, in addition to launching “Towards a Balanced Image of Women in Media and Ads” study and “**Image Upon Request**” documentary, paved the way for **Fe-Male** to be the community’s monitoring machine to hunt down and correct women’s negative and stereotypical portrayal in media and ads. During those years, Fe-Male was able to stop several abusive online and offline ads and events through smart campaigning techniques preceded by careful monitoring and assessment of the situations revolving around them.

In October 2016 for example, **Fe-Male** was able to campaign against the well-meant, but ill-thought advertisement made by ABC Mall, a famous shopping mall in Lebanon, to raise awareness on breast cancer, through which the gaffe was quickly called out by **Fe-Male**, and in less than three hours after the first call was made to take it down, the advertisement disappeared from the streets and an apology was issued. Another event blown away by **Fe-Male’s** monitoring and



quick response to abusive ads and promotions was the Lebanese Underground artist Zaid Hamdan's announcement to his concert, where minutes after he published the poster of his upcoming concert in April 2013, at Radio Beirut (Mar Mikhael), a tornado of condemning posts were unleashed against it. The poster at that time showed topless protesters from the global "Femen" Movement, on which the caption said: "Show your breasts and get a free entrance." Sharika wa Laken's editorial team back then stated that this announcement is "a blatant exploitation of women's bodies, just to sell more tickets", calling for "all women to boycott the party and to stand against similar future objectification of their bodies." Zeid was forced to apologize and to change the poster, admitting that this was a mistake and that it was only meant to be a joke.



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