



# RESCUED FROM YEARS OF ONLINE BLACKMAIL THE STORY OF A SURVIVOR

BULLYING  
ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE  
REPORTING  
ABUSER  
CYBER ATTACK  
HARRASSEMENT

When using this case study DO NOT change any of the details. If you're unsure about anything that has to do with its use, please liaise with Fatima Zeinedine (Fe-Male's Media Manager) <sup>1</sup>

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In 2017, when Rania<sup>2</sup> was only 16 her boyfriend, Hussein, who is two years older, started blackmailing her and threatening to expose pictures of her that she had sent to him during their relationship. For three years, Omar has been demanding Rania to fulfill his sexual fantasies in return of not telling her parents. “I won’t forget how I was forced to yield to his requests and how scared I was of my parents to find out. I was intimidated for three years, as if it were a nightmare. I can honestly say that the campaign saved me from succumbing into more of his twisted demands and awful threats.” Rania told us.

In January 2021, Fe-Male was approached by Rania’s aunt, who knew of Fe-Male’s interventions in fighting cyber-crimes and online GBV. Rania’s aunt came forward on behalf on Rania who was terribly afraid that her parents would find out, and because of her unfamiliarity of her right to report while maintaining privacy. “I used to unwillingly and secretly go to his place. He forced me into doing things and threatened me with the pictures, and I was very young and unaware that there is a law that can protect me. I was afraid of the stigma and what would happen if my parents knew.” Rania said.

The aunt was advised by Fe-Male to immediately report the abuser to the Internal Security Forces through<sup>3</sup>. Within a few hours, the aunt was contacted by an officer, asking her to bring her niece and file a lawsuit against the perpetrator, which would consequently allow them to issue a warrant to arrest him.<sup>4</sup>

Hussein, the abuser, was fetched on the same evening and he was to face Rania. The officers at the ISF interrogated Hussein and he signed a pledge to never come anywhere near her, nor to contact her, or else he would face imprisonment.

The procedures at the ISF went smoothly, and Rania was promised total confidentiality and maintaining of the private information that she has shared.

“You saved my niece’s life, and relieved her from a great burden that would have destroyed her life. If it wasn’t for your support and guidance, Rania wouldn’t be leading a normal life now, and for that, I am forever thankful” Rania’s Aunt.

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## About Screens Do Not protect Campaign:<sup>5</sup>

“Screens Do Not Protect” digital campaign was a massive national campaign which reached more than 9 million people locally and regionally. During the launching phase, Fe-Male was able to lobby more than 40 celebrities, influencers, and journalists to tweet about the campaign, making #الشاشة\_ما\_يتحمي the number one trending hashtag in Lebanon on the day of the launching, and earning the coverage of 60 local, regional and international media outlets and news websites. Following its release, Fe-Male received many messages on a daily basis and helped, through our social media platforms, tens of women and girls reporting online perpetrators and seeking support.

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<sup>1</sup> Fatme.zeinddine@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> We changed her name for protection and privacy

<sup>3</sup> The recent statistics released by the internal security forces showed a remarkable increase in reporting online violence after the launch of Fe-Male’s Screens Do Not Protect campaign by 409%

<sup>4</sup> After the campaign, Fe-Male established a great working relationship with the ISF that led to speeding up the procedures of the security forces to get to the cases done.

<sup>5</sup> If you would like to know more about Fe-Male’s work on cyber security please check: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-P3lzYgeH DU&t=76s>