



Unite to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls (TFGBV.)

In today's digital age, technology and the internet have opened new spaces for connection, learning and self-expression, but this has created new channels for Gender Based Violence often referred to as **Tech-Facilitated GBV (TFGBV)**

TFGBV affects everyone, women and men, girls, boys and other vulnerable groups, but not in the same way. With growing smart phones and social media use Tech Facilitated GBV(TFGBV) has become a cause for concern.

The research done by **Emthonjeni Women's Forum (2023)** demonstrates that TFGBV mostly affects females compared to males and these are 94% young women who are active on social media platforms

The fact that 86% of the Zimbabwean population has access to the internet explains the growing concern of cyberbullying, unsolicited sexual messages, sextortion, non consensual sharing of images and impersonation. (Emthonjeni Women's Forum 2023).

Amongst all the above extortion seems to be the most common and people still do not find it easy to report because of stigma, fear of blame and also lack of knowledge on how to report .

This is not happening to women and girls only but men and boys also experience TFGBV. Men and boys experience cyberbullying and extortion linked to masculinity or sexuality. Men's sexuality is usually posted to embarrass or insult them and this has lasting effects on confidants and mental health. Much as data usually highlights women there is evidence that male students for instance may also face non consensual image sharing and online blackmail especially In dating context.

TFGBV can affect anyone anytime and has lasting impact on those targeted and their families too, it might target an individual or group of people but has a far reaching consequence. TFGBV can lead to serious mental health issues that can even lead to substance and drug abuse. There is a rise in TFGBV related suicide cases in Zimbabwe and many Zimbabweans are not aware of laws that respond to this menace or have lack of trust in the system to report so they just exit platforms completely .

There is need for continuous awareness raising on how digital spaces can be utilised and the safety associated with it.

There is increasing usage without considerations of the implications and most people only know when they experience TFGBV and have no knowledge on how to protect themselves from It. Policies and laws around digital use if available and spaces need to be more elaborate and targeting and there is need for popularisation of these laws and policies.

Zimbabwe has an opportunity through the 2025 theme to relook existing policies and laws , have realistic conversations that mirror the increasing access and usage of the digital spaces versus the existing laws and policies ,to come up with more suitable and protective laws for users of these spaces and critically look at the financing process as having laws and policies without adequate budget considerations leads to non implimentation.

Dr. Thando Makubaza
CiZC Gender Committee Chairperson

THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW.

LETS UNITE AND SAY NO TO TFGBV!!!

