



WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST TOOLKIT

8 March: It's time to #PressforProgress on International Women's Day

Since 1975, 8 March has been a rallying point for people worldwide to celebrate women's achievements and also highlight serious issues that see women's rights restricted, violated or taken away altogether.

Over the last 40 years women and girls have achieved incredible strides in politics, science, arts, sports and business but the fight for their basic human rights is ongoing. Nowhere is this plainer than in women's struggle for their sexual and reproductive rights, and the right to live free from violence and harassment.

With the #TimesUp and #MeToo campaigns leading a turning point in history to stop violence and abuse of women, International Women's Day is more important than ever as a symbol of people standing together to demand gender equality.

[Register your interest](#) to attend International Women's Day rallies, marches and events and we'll let you know what's happening in your region once we have all the event details. Remember to invite your friends, family and colleagues to join you to stand up for women's rights and make this the biggest IWD ever! Together, let's #pressforprogress and celebrate #girlpower across the globe.



Amnesty women's rights campaign focus

Amnesty has chosen to focus on targeting online abuse of women in 2018.

Although the internet, and social media platforms in particular, have become a critical space for women and other marginalised groups to express themselves and make their voices heard, it has also become a space where women are easily targeted for expressing their views. The widespread inequality and discrimination against women that is embedded in our society does not disappear when you click open your internet browser or tap open your Twitter mobile app. It simply manifests from the physical world to the digital world and acts of abuse and violence against women online are a continuum of gender-based violence against women offline.

For many women, the internet is not a safe space. Prominent women bloggers, journalists and politicians, but also 'everyday women' who use social media platforms for personal use, are regularly subjected to targeted online violence and abuse. Online violence and abuse denies women the right to use social media platforms equally, freely and without fear.

Women who experience violence or abuse online can face multiple hurdles when attempting to report these acts to social media platforms or law enforcement. In addition to the negative psychological impact of experiencing online abuse, the inadequate response to online violence and abuse by social media platforms means women often end up self-censoring their views online or sometimes leave social media platforms altogether. While abuse is an issue across all social media, Twitter has consistently failed to address the toxic levels of abuse and violence women face on its platform so Amnesty has chosen Twitter as our target.

It's important to recognise that women around the world are fighting to take back control of the internet by demanding greater accountability for violence against women and abuse online and standing up to existing discrimination against women as it extends into misogyny and sexism online. Amnesty's campaign aims to bolster and support these voices by highlighting Twitter's responsibility to address violence and abuse against women online in an adequate and timely manner, and urging prompt implementation of their own safety policies.

The research

Online abuse and harassment on social media is having an alarming impact on women

In 2017 Amnesty International commissioned an Ipsos MORI online poll which looked at the experiences of 502 women between the ages of 18 and 55 in Australia.

Three in 10 women (30%) surveyed said that they had experienced online abuse or harassment. And for young women aged 18-24, that figure jumps to almost half (47%).

Alarmingly, 37% of women who had experienced online abuse or harassment said that on at least one occasion, these online experiences made them feel that their physical safety was threatened.

42% of women responding to the survey who had experienced online abuse or harassment said it was misogynistic or sexist in nature and a fifth (20%) said it had included threats of physical or sexual violence.



Nearly half (48%) of survey participants who had experienced online abuse or harassment said it had included racism, sexism, homophobia or transphobia.

The psychological impact of online abuse can be devastating

More than 3 in 5 (62%) of those who said they had experienced online abuse or harassment said they had experienced lower self-esteem or loss of self-confidence as a result.

A similar proportion (59%) said they had experienced stress, anxiety or panic attacks after experiencing online abuse or harassment.

Women are being silenced

Online abuse and harassment is fuelling gender-based discrimination and violence. It is pressuring women into censoring themselves on social media, encroaching on their right to freedom of expression and limiting their participation in public spaces.

40% of women who said they had experienced abuse or harassment on a social media platform either ceased or decreased their use of the platforms.

27% of those with an experience of online abuse or harassment said they had stopped posting content that expressed their opinion on certain issues.

Social media companies not doing enough

All social media platforms have rules – terms of use rules, participation guidelines that state that they do not tolerate targeted abuse on the basis of a person's gender or other forms of identity. Now they need to enforce their own community standards. They should also enable users to utilise security and privacy measures such as blocking, muting and content filtering.

This will allow women, and everyone who uses social media, to have a less toxic and harmful online experience. Social media companies, like everyone else - have a responsibility to respect human rights.

#TimesUp for Toxic Twitter - TAKE ACTION NOW

THE ISSUE: Online abuse and violence against women is escalating on Twitter with little accountability, stifling women's right to freedom of expression.

WHY TARGET TWITTER NOW: While abuse is an issue across all social media, Twitter has consistently failed to address the toxic levels of abuse and violence that women are facing on its platform.

THE GOAL: We want Twitter to become a platform where women are able to express themselves freely, equally and without fear.

THE HOW: We are building huge global pressure calling on Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey to provide a safe space on social media to help stop online violence against women by enforcing Twitter's own policies around hateful conduct and abuse, and promoting safety features so users have a less toxic experience.

YOUR ROLE: You can help put pressure on Twitter by raising awareness about the issue in your local community, growing support for women's rights and engaging in Amnesty actions that target Twitter like collecting petition signatures. Your actions will join a global wave of pressure from Amnesty supporters.



Together, we will hold Twitter to account until they make sure women on their platform can be free to express themselves without suffering harassment and abuse.

WHAT YOU'LL BE ASKING OTHERS: Tell Twitter to enforce their own policies to stop online abuse!

THE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO GROW THE MOVEMENT & PRESSURE TWITTER



Print your [Twitter bird action cards](#) or pick some up in person from your region's action centre.

Host a stall or event for women's rights in your region and get others to sign the action too! Activists are encouraged to make their stall fun and creative with a giant social-media photo frame and hand-held emojis for photos! You can download them here.

www.amnesty.org.au/womens-rights-resources

Post signed Twitter bird actions to [your local action centre](#) by mid April so we can fly them over to Twitter's HQ.

[Stand up for women on International Women's Day](#) March 8 at events, marches and rallies near you or host your own and collect petition signatures.

Stay tuned for more actions coming soon...

FAQ

- Got questions? Diana Sayed, Amnesty International's Crisis Response Campaign Coordinator has answers. Check out some of the questions you might get and some great responses in our [Activist Q & A](#).

