

Groups and Organisations Standing with Survivors of Sexual Violence of a TV Presenter

Throughout the past week, credible allegations of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct were made against an Egyptian Television presenter, who worked for German TV Channel Deutsche Welle (DW). The latter confirmed in a statement that the allegations are credible and the accused presenter no longer works for DW. The below signatories declare their full support and solidarity with the survivors of violence who made the accusations, and while we acknowledge that DW has already taken measures to ensure accountability, we encourage them to take further steps to guarantee the survivors' safety and well-being.

In a context where women remain discriminated against, and where power dynamics are clearly in favor of men, especially when they possess privileges such as fame and wide professional acclaim, it is an extremely difficult process for survivors to come forward with crimes of violence they were subjected to. It is the right of survivors to choose whichever tools they wish to claim their rights and combat the violations they endure, since they are the ones to pay the hefty price of speaking up against violence, as there is still a stigma associated with it, even in the most developed countries and contexts. At many instances, survivors of violence choose to use social media and other online platforms to talk and write about incidents of violence, as it is often one of the few tools they possess to express themselves and galvanize support around their cases, especially as legal and official channels often make it complicated for survivors to prove crimes of violence. There is a long history of state and society's compliance with crimes of violence against women, which makes the survivors' right to speak one of the few ways to guarantee their narratives and stories are being told and heard. It is also the survivors' right to ensure their privacy and anonymity if they wish, given the consequences they have to bear, such as defamation, bullying, and even more violence.

Accordingly, we reiterate our support to the survivors whether they choose to use legal/institutional means or other informal tools such as online platforms. We also demand from DW to continue to uphold its social responsibility in supporting and protecting survivors who came forward. Moreover, we believe it is the responsibility of feminist organizations around the world, and particularly in Germany, to show solidarity with survivors and provide them with the needed assistance if they decide to use the legal paths.

The battle against sexual violence can only be won through hearing women's accounts, as well as protecting them and responding to their needs, and punishing perpetrators not survivors.

Signatories

1. Nazra for Feminist Studies - Egypt
2. AKOUN for Rights and Freedoms - Yemen
3. Ganoubia Horra - Egypt
4. Palestinian Women Development Society (Al-najdah) - Palestine
5. SEEMA center for Training and Protection of Women and Child's Rights
6. Tamazight Women Movement - Libya
7. The Regional Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders in the Middle East and North Africa