







Media Monitoring on Gender and Elections Monthly Report

February & March



Periodic Report on Media Monitoring of the 2022 Elections and Gender, issued by the joint project "Marsad VAWP" between **Maharat** and **Madanyat**".

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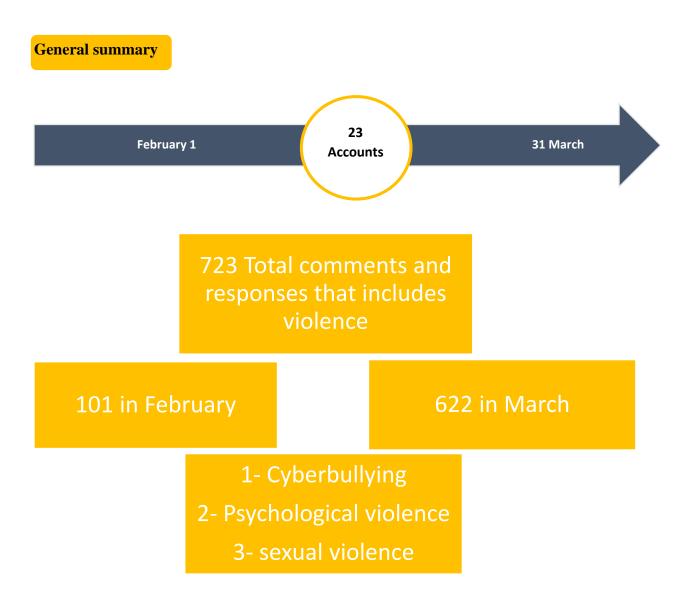
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Media Monitoring on Gender and Elections Monthly Report

Maharat Foundation and Madanyat Association work with UN Women to monitor television and social media¹ concerning violence against women in politics in the period prior to the 2022 parliamentary elections. This summary provides a quick overview of the findings during the months of February and March.



- The accounts of 23 candidates and activists in the public field were monitored on Twitter and Facebook in the time period between February 1 and March 31, 2022.
- A total of 723 comments, divided between 101 comments and responses during the month of February and 622 comments and responses during the month of March,

¹ The monitoring of social media includes the accounts of a sample of female candidates and activists in the public field on Twitter or Facebook, according to the most active and interactive account.



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- included online violence against female candidates and activists in the public field on their posts and tweets on their personal Facebook and Twitter.
- Monitoring results in March showed that 8% of the comments on the posts of the monitored candidates and activists manifested some form of violence, and the other 92% of the comments did not include violence.
- The distribution of online violence during the months of February and March was between sexual violence and psychological violence, with a greater percentage of psychological violence. Most of the violence came from regular users, with the exception of two comments that included online violence against women in politics by one of the candidates.
- Online bullying came at the forefront of forms of online violence against women in politics, followed by violence based on appearance, then harassment and threats of a sexual nature, bias against women, threats and intimidation.

Cases of violence against women on Television							
TV channel	hannel Program Target Aggressor			Type of violence			
MTV	Talk show	Women Activists	Host	Psychological violence			
Al Jadeed Talk Show		May Khreish	Media Guest	men interrupting or male boycott			
OTV	Talk show	Dima Sadek	Host	Sexual violence			

Three cases on television during March, distributed as follows:

- Two cases on television in March were represented by the host Marcel Ghanem, known for his toxic masculinity and patriarchal manner in dealing with activists who attended his program It's Time on MTV. The second case was an attempt by Charles Jabbour, the media official in the Lebanese Forces Party, to silence May Khreish, the Vice President of the Free Patriotic Movement, several times. He demanded that her voice be cut off during an interview with her on a talk show on Al-Jadeed about what is known as the phenomenon of men interrupting or male boycott behavior.
- Another case on television in March, in which Charbel Khalil, a producer and presenter of the "Mish Kalill" programs shown on OTV, attacked the journalist Dima Sadek, as the mainstream of the program that was airing on March 7. He resorted to a hypothetical scenario that made Sadek Lebanon's Foreign affairs minister and is interviewing Russia's foreign affairs minister, whispering to him that she is a "dancer" with sexual overtones. The responses with sexual content appeared on Dima Sadek's account with derogatory pictures and descriptions, and the trending hashtag #Richard-Kharrat became #Dima-Al-Watiya with her being threatened with retaliation. Thus, the political violence against her developed from psychological and sexual to physical.



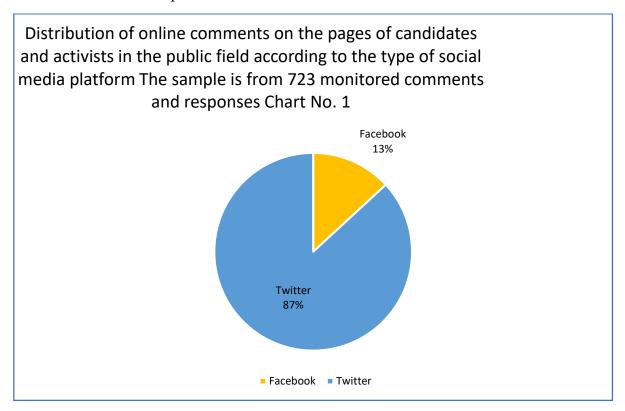
First: Social media platforms

The monitoring process included the social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) of 23 women candidates and activists in the public field during the months of February and March of the year 2022.²

Comments on their pages, positions, activities and opinions by followers or users were monitored and analyzed on social media.

101 comments and answers were monitored and analyzed during the month of February and 622 comments and answers during the month of March, a total of 723 comments that constituted a type of online violence directed at women activists in the public field on their personal pages on Facebook and Twitter.

These comments and responses were distributed between Twitter and Facebook as follows:



² - The monitoring process included the following names: Nada Boustani, Paula Yacoubian, Nada Ghorayeb Zaarour, Fadia Al-Kallab, Habouba Aoun, Afra Eid, Myriam Skaf, Gestal Semaan, Josephine Zgheib, Kholoud Watar Qassem, Chantal Sarkis, Diana Moneim, Halima Kaakour, May Khreish May Chidiac, Setrida Geagea, Laurie Hatian, Rana Tawil, Nelly Dergazarian, Maguy Aoun, Vera Yammine, Ghada Eid, Julie Daccache.



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Second: Television

A- Weak coverage of women in February

TV coverage		
Men representation	93%	
Women representation		
Voter educational material	0.05%	

Maharat Foundation's report on the analysis of TV media coverage monitoring data for the month of February 2022 shows that "male dominance in the media landscape continues and the share of women is marginal," as the appearance of women on Lebanese television stations does not exceed 7%, compared to 93% for male speakers³. As for the issue of women's political participation in the electoral debate, it ranked last in the discussion topics, with a percentage of not more than 0.05%, while the majority of the speakers coming from the categories of experts in electoral affairs, journalists and traditional political analysts, in favor of males.⁴

While women are absent from local stations as a major political player, the Lebanese LBC Foundation has dedicated the "Fifty-fifty in Politics" program on its screen to promote women candidates, which is funded by an embassy and a non-governmental organization.

The program "Fifty-Fifty in Politics" is shown in Peak Time, but it coincides with one of the most important political programs, which hosts VIPs and enjoys a high viewership on a competing channel, which weakens the audience that may watch it unless there is an interest in the guest of the episode.

In this program, the presenter hosts one of the women candidates who presents her electoral program through pre-prepared questions, while there is no dialogue with other guests or the audience. The workshop has been prepared, coordinated, and interviewees trained in advance, which makes the media environment "safer" and away from the types of violence that may affect women through the media.

A number of followers interacted, and offensive and violent comments appeared against the women candidates on the pages of the organization that sponsors the program during the promotional campaign, and thus this type of violence was classified as online violence.

What is remarkable is that the television media outlets did not show interest or support for the first woman to run for the legislative elections of 2022 during the month of February, in a stance that contradicts the principle of professionalism that was supposed to cover this matter, and contradicts the awareness and promotional role required of the stations about these elections and the role of women in society, and confirms the subsequent marginalization of women in the coverage done by the Lebanese media.

⁴ Previously mentioned reference



³ Report of TV coverage of the parliamentary elections, summary of analysis of media coverage monitoring data for the month of February 2022, https://maharatfoundation.org/media/2099/feb-report-elections-ar.pdf

In a follow-up to the evening news broadcasts on the Lebanese television on the day of the presentation and announcement of Josephine Zgheib's candidacy and the following day, on January 18 and 19, no media coverage or follow-up of the matter was found, despite the candidate's invitation to the media to cover the launch of her electoral campaign.⁵

Channels	18-Jan	19-Jan	Tone	note
NBN	N/A	N/A	N/A	No coverage
MTV	N/A	N/A	N/A	No coverage
MANAR	N/A	N/A	N/A	No coverage
OTV	N/A	N/A	N/A	No coverage
TL	N/A	N/A	N/A	No coverage
LBCI	N/A	N/A	N/A	No coverage
Aljadeed	N/A	N/A	N/A	No coverage

B- Three cases in May

Two cases involving men interruption behavior

Because of the low participation of women in political talk shows in a way that would be a complete absence if we exclude the "fifty-fifth in politics" program, no significant cases of violence against women in politics appeared in the visual media, with the exception of two incidents.

- 1. The problem of the media personality, Marcel Ghanem, who is known for his masculinity, arose, with activists who attended his program, "It's Time" on MTV. He did not hesitate to flirt with them several times, as he tried to silence them and not allow them to complete their proposal, in contrast to his dealings with the male presence.
- 2. Charles Jabbour, the media official in the Lebanese Forces party, tried to silence May Khreish, the deputy head of the Free Patriotic Movement, several times and demanded that her voice be cut off during her interview on a talk show on Al-Jadeed in what is known as the phenomenon of men interrupting or male boycott behavior to show his control on the talk while she tried to complete her speech and programmed her interruption by his speech in an attempt to deny her social inferiority.

The phenomenon of male boycott or men interrupting behavior is a phenomenon that women politicians and leaders suffer from globally, as they are prevented from completing their interventions through attempts to silence them in order to show their arguments as if they are of no value and to show the control of men over the course of conversation, while women are expected to listen and not participate, especially when the groups present are large and predominantly male, with the aim of demonstrating male social dominance, exclusion,

⁵ - Candidates for the 2022 elections confront huge obstacles: How can they be overcome? An-Nahar Newspaper, March 7, 2022, https://www.annahar.com/arabic/section/76-%D8%B3%DanderA%D8%A7%D8 %B3%D8%A9/16022022042043532022



marginalization and contempt for women's opinions. This behavior is classified among the types of psychological and political violence against women, because of the psychological harm inflicted on women that degrades her status and shakes her self-confidence.

A case involving sexual implications:

In the absence of accountability for the perpetrators of women in general and politicians and journalists in particular, Charbel Khalil, who is the producer and presenter of the "Mesh Kalil" programs shown on OTV, took the initiative to attack the journalist Dima Sadek.

In the mainstream of the program that was shown on March 7, he resorted to a hypothetical scenario where Dima, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon, interviewed the Russian Foreign Affairs Minister and whispered to him that she was a "dancer" with sexual overtones.

This dialogue reflects the contempt and inferiority of women in politics, and not only for Dima Sadek. If we mentioned that Mrs. Zina Adra was the former foreign affairs minister, does Khalil think that the dialogue would have taken place in this way? If we assume that there is no accountability or censorship on social media, does showing the episode mean that the station management agrees with what Charbel Khalil is presenting? Has the demeaning of women politicians, especially the opposition, become permissible?

The media has a responsibility to respect human rights and to stay away from defamation, slander and humiliation. Here, it is permissible to ask about professional standards and adherence to codes of conduct that would reject outrageous behavior that degrades women and prevents political violence against them in all its forms.

Charbel Khalil continued his campaign against Dima Sadek, using the hashtag #Ring_Dancer, describing her in the most horrific terms. He intended to defame her, insult her, and humiliate her. A number of observers interacted with him against followingthe arrest of a doctor belonging to the Free Patriotic Movement in the United Arab Emirates. Defenders of the doctor and those attacking Dima believe that she tipped him off to the authorities over a medical case related to her friend.

Dima denied, through her Twitter account, that she had slandered the doctor, despite her support for filing a medical case against him and suing him for what is claimed to be a medical error.

The responses with sexual content appear on Dima Sadik's account with derogatory pictures and descriptions, and the trending hashtag #Richard-Kharrat, became #Dima-Al-Watiya with her being threatened with retaliation. Thus, the political violence against her developed from psychological and sexual to physical.



Jay Abboud @JayAbboud7 · 2h

متنفي وحدة كتل DimaSadek، رفاصة عالربيغ، وعاملة إجربها V على على ملك متنفي المتنفية وحديثة كالمتنفية وقتها من عامل مكتب ميشال المر، و مصاحبة أحد القادة الأمنيين، ومقضاية وقتها من عامود لعامود، ما منستغرب هجوما عالعونيين وتفسيدها للغريب على إبن بلدها. #ريشار_خراط راجع قربياً بإذن الله، وديما و نيكول رح ياكلو كا



غداً ستعود الحرية إلى الدكتور #ريشار_خراط وستبقى معه إلى الأبد، أمّا النمّامات والنمّامين فسيبقى الخزي والعار يلاحقهم إلى ۱۱٠ .

Translate Tweet

8:20 PM · Apr 6, 2022 · Twitter for Android

Salim Aoun @SalimAoun

141 Retweets 23 Quote Tweets 1,051 Likes

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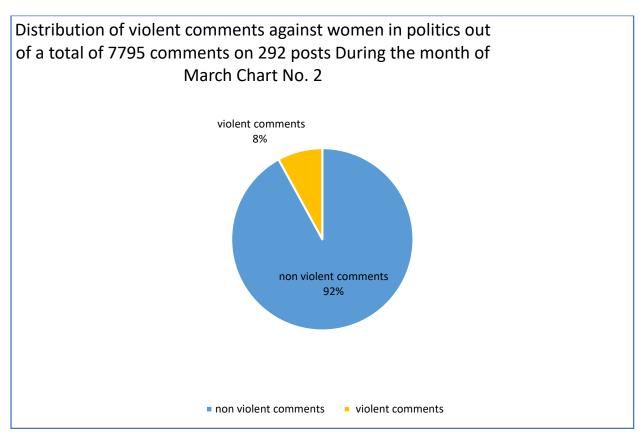






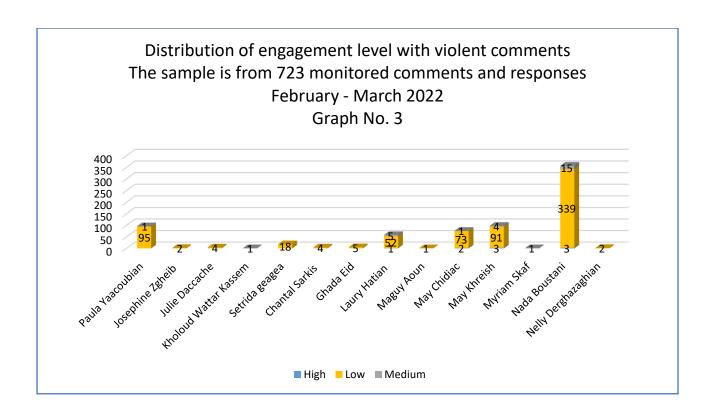
A- The percentage of the total comments that were violent during the month of March

Chart No. 2 below shows the distribution of the percentage of violent comments against women in politics on the pages and accounts of 23 women candidates and activists in the public field out of a total of 7795 comments on 292 publications during the month of March. The chart shows that 8% of the comments on the observed posts contained some form of violence, but 92% of the comments did not contain violence.

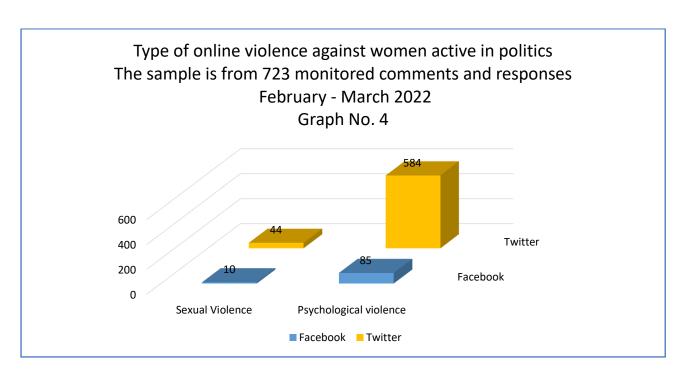


B- Distribution of the level of interaction and participation with violent comments

Graph No. 3 below shows the level of interaction with violent comments, as the largest interaction was against the candidate, Nada Al-Bustani, followed by May Khreish, Paula Yacoubian, and May Chidiac and Laurie Hatian, in an indicator that interaction with violent comments affects all female candidates regardless of the political party they belong to.



C- Types of monitored violence



Graph No. 4 above shows that the type of online violence observed during the months of February and March was distributed between sexual violence and psychological violence with a greater percentage for psychological violence, especially on Twitter than on Facebook, where 584 comments containing psychological violence were monitored on Twitter compared to 85

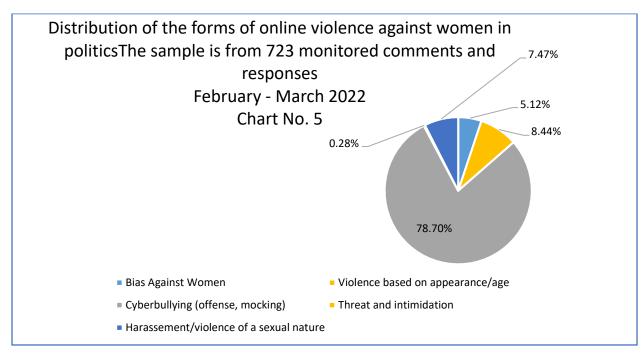


on Facebook, while 10 Facebook comments and 44 Twitter comments containing sexual violence

Table No. 4 above shows that the type of online violence observed during the months of February and March was distributed between sexual violence and psychological violence with a greater percentage of psychological violence, especially on Twitter than on Facebook, where 584 comments containing psychological violence were monitored on Twitter compared to 85 on Facebook, while 10 Facebook comments and 44 Twitter comments containing sexual violence were monitored.

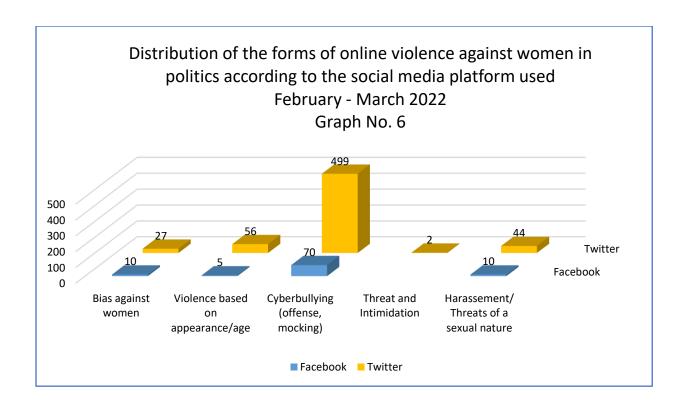
The distribution of online violence during February and March according to its form, as shown in chart No. 5 below, included cyberbullying with the largest percentage (78.7%), followed by violence based on appearance and age by 8.44%, then harassment and threats of a sexual nature by 7.47%, Prejudice against women 5.12%, threats and intimidation 0.28%.

The distribution of online violence during February and March according to its form, as shown in chart No. 5 below, included cyberbullying with the largest percentage (78.7%), followed by violence based on form and age by 8.44%, then harassment and threats of a sexual nature by 7.47%, Prejudice against women 5.12%, threats and intimidation 0.28%.

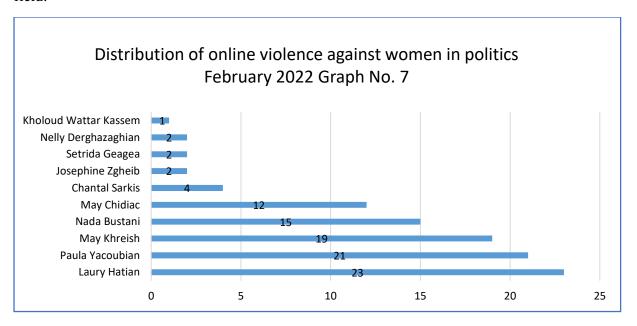


And Graph No. 6 shows the distribution of the different types of violence according to the social media platform used.



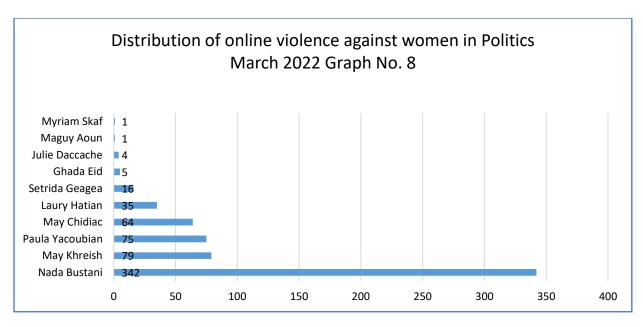


Graph No. 7 below shows the distribution of online violence against women in politics during the month of February for the monitored sample of women candidates or activists in public field.



In comparison with February, Graph No. 8 for the month of March shows a change in the distribution between female candidates and activists, and Nada Al-Bustani received the largest percentage of comments that contain violence.





D- Source of violence

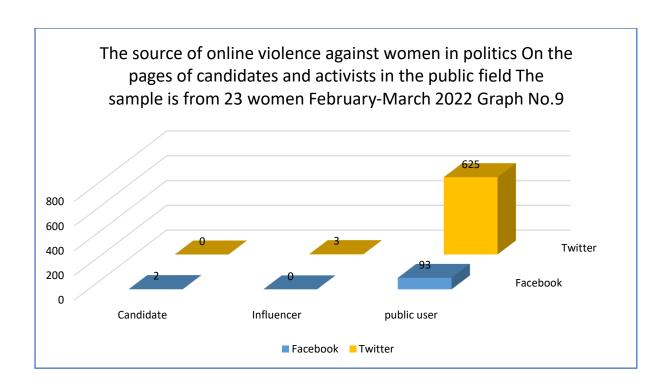
As for the source of these comments, according to Graph No. 9, most of them came from ordinary users, with the exception of two comments that included online violence against women in politics by one of the candidates, Milad Abu Melhab.

Content of the two comments:

Your mother took off the monastic dress And you took off the dress of dignity And you became rudder than Nabih Berri

Damn from you to her Her mother left monasticism for love And she is the one from doomed to owner, she became the graves of souls And you, Yuri, what's the difference?





Four: Case studies

A- Dalia Ahmad and Josephine Zgheib

The case of Dalia Ahmad

On February 24, 2022, Dalia Ahmad said in her satirical program "Fashhat Khalq", which she presents on Al-Jadeed TV, addressing the Shiite sect, that God guides them, like Christians, with two "grandizers", referring to Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Nabih Berri, "The first one and his favorite weapon is space thunder, leaving the wicked." They are destroying the country because they have six other planets that they want to free them before. But don't be afraid, they will come back soon and we will pray to a Flided planet." And the second: "He quit fighting and went out to collect money and his favorite weapon was the magnetic waves to mislead the good guys from the incubators."

This was a reason for launching a second campaign on Twitter following the first campaign on January 13, 2022, after she described the politicians in the same program as "crocodiles", and among the pictures of the politicians she addressed with this description, the image of Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah.

The second campaign against her began on February 24 at 9:42 pm by a tweeter who wrote: "The black-bitch #Dalia_Ahmad is brazenly insisting on insulting our symbols."

The campaign took the following forms of violence against women:

Racist and psychological violence: based on appearance and skin color





• **Sexual violence**: son of a bitch, prostitution address



The group of violent expressions and images used were as follows:

- Abyssinian black,
- Dalia_Ahmad is a prostitute,
- She passed by a pimp and a thug, and she works at kissing ass...,
- Damn bitch

However, this second campaign against Dalia Ahmed did not take the same dimension as the first campaign, and the response to it was ignored by the media, the channel, and other media outlets that supported Dalia in the first campaign.



The case of Josephine Zgheib



Josephine Zgheib announced her official candidacy on January 18 on her official Facebook page. The post received 287 likes, 3 shares, and 112 positive comments without any offense. In fact, she received messages of support and success.

The news pages on Facebook did not follow up the announcement of Josephine Zgheib's candidacy in a very remarkable way, but a few local pages in Keserwan published this news on January 18, the date of the candidacy, and we mention some of them as they included negative comments.

Among these pages:

Keserwan Daily News

On the Kesrouwan Daily page, the post received 39 likes and 6 negative interactions about her candidacy. The number of negative comments on her candidacy reached 5 out of 11 comments, and included misinformation such as: "Was she not the one who ran for Hezbollah's list in the last round?", and a case of bullying: "More beautiful than Gilbert Zwain." And a case of doubt: "who is she? What does she do? Where is her CV?"



Keserwan online

Kesrouwan Online's page, published on January 18, the post announcing Josephine Zugheib's candidacy, and the post received 197 likes and 16 negative interactions. Out of 31 comments, the majority were supportive of her candidacy. Some negative comments came in the context of bullying and ignorance, such as: "The one went to Rome and did not see the Pope", "Who is she? What does she do? Who does she specialize in?" One of them urged not to vote for her and commented: "Hey, she is one affiliated with the revolution that ruined the country. The revolution is an enemy that must not be voted for."

"Lubnan Yantafed"

The post announcing Josephine Zughaib's candidacy on the "Lubnan yantafed" page, affiliated with the forces of change, received a shy interaction: 13 comments, as well as 286 likes and 5 shares.

Chabeb Kesserwen

On the "Kesserwen Chabeb" page, the publication of Josephine Zughaib's candidacy announcement received negative, abusive and sarcastic comments of a misogynistic and biased nature against women active in the public field, such as: "Who is the young man", "There is something wrong, male or female in the picture" and others.



Comments on public pages, and not on the candidate's pages, show that she is being bullied on the basis of her appearance and ignored out of doubt, contempt, and shaken up self-confidence, knowing that she is an active member of the municipal council.

It is known that the followers of the public pages belong to several parties and political orientations and therefore do not follow a particular candidate, and they bully, even individually, sometimes to express their mockery and opposition to those who do not belong to their political line. Therefore, the probability of being bullied or receive a "violent response" is higher on these pages than on private pages if the candidate is not a prominent or a controversial figure with a large number of followers.





B- The Case of Nahida el Khalil

On March 27, 2022, candidate Nahida Khalil announced on her Facebook page that she was subjected to a pressure campaign due to her daughter's homosexual identity, with the aim of excluding her from joining the Beirut 2 list for the Shiite seat. She mentioned the need to adopt standards of transparency and efficiency. Then she gave a speech in which she said:

"This is me and this is my family and this is my history... Hold me accountable for my electoral program and my promises...."

Nahida was subjected to psychological violence in an attempt to blackmail and pressure her in an attempt to stigmatize her by blaming her for her daughter's homosexuality, which is still considered taboo in conservative circles.

Those concerned tried to exclude it for fear that this would harm the list by withholding votes from it.

A number of activists have sympathized with her, and thus, thanks to a pressure campaign within the opposition and through online campaigns, she was able to continue to run and force those who tried to exclude her to apologize.

⁶ https://daraj.com/89086/



Nahida confirmed that she did not back down from the electoral battle, and that she actually joined the Beirut Madinati list.

The targeting of Nahida Khalil as an activist from one of the largest sects in Lebanon, but which witnessed the smallest number of female candidates, shows double standards in terms of women and men in politics.

How many presidents, ministers and representatives have known about their sexual orientation and the sexual tendencies of their sons/daughters⁷ and have gained popular support and praise for their boldness and justification for what they may see as "far from the person concerned", for example:

One of the commentators wrote: "I am not with homosexuality, but I respect freedom and honesty... Bravo. Dalia Jumblatt is respectful of her condition and convinced of her choices."

Others considered that what I wrote was just a misspelling or a misunderstanding of the English language, and the readers' understanding was not what Dalia wanted.

This disparity shows how women are discriminated against and stigmatized while the politician and their family find who praises them while the woman and her family are libeled.

Five: Demands of the "Women's Civil Society in Lebanon" platform

It is worth noting that the "Women's Civil Society in Lebanon" platform hosted by UN Women, which is composed of 52 organizations and institutions that work to promote women's rights, launched a list of 10 basic demands that constitute a road map for future female representatives to transcend laws from gender-based discrimination and achieve gender equality, in a press conference on February 28, 2022.

Among the most prominent demands are "the commitment not to include in the speeches of male and female candidates any discrimination against women, or stereotyping or masculine, patriarchal or misogynistic references," as a basic demand, and "the adoption of a law that protects women from political violence, including any measure aimed at depriving women from participating in activities, political, partisan, or organizational."

Six: Conclusions and recommendations

In addition to being marginalized in political life, Lebanese women become victims of various social violence as soon as they step into public affairs, or when they take public positions

⁸ Feminist Platform



⁷ https://arabic.rt.com/middle_east/919478-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B7-%D8%AA%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7/

related to political affairs, as if society still considers political affairs to be the preserve of males.

The marginalization of women in politics begins with their marginalization in the media in terms of preventing their presence on screens and blurring their positions and demands. Numerous studies have confirmed the continued marginalization of women on television and in various media. This study confirms once again this trend through the deliberate neglect on the part of television stations to nominate the first woman to run for the parliamentary elections in 2022, Mrs. Josephine Zgheib, whose candidacy was absent from all stations' news bulletins during the small space available for women.

In the public sphere, women are also subjected to various campaigns of violence, following a patriarchal background. Violence against women in politics includes all forms of hostility, harassment, intimidation, and extortion that seek to silence and exclude them from political work simply because they are a woman.

Attacks on women use hateful language, rumors and stereotypes. The cyberspace, through the Internet and communication platforms, has become a wide field in which women are exposed to various types of violence, in organized or spontaneous campaigns, some of which have a known source and others whose source is unknown.

Such campaigns undermine women and their role in society and obstruct them in their quest to play their role in managing public affairs and participating in political decisions. It was noticeable that most of the online violent comments are made by ordinary users, which means that society is not yet sensitive to the seriousness of this type of violence, which requires awareness campaigns to show the extent of its seriousness and its repercussions.

Therefore, it must be emphasized on:

- The necessity of involving women in public and political life and emphasizing their equal role with men,
- Rejection of any violence against women, especially on the basis of gender and male domination over them,
- Acknowledging the positive role that the media, especially television, can play by
 consolidating professional standards and adhering to codes of conduct that would
 renounce the outrageous behavior that degrades women and their status, and prevents
 political violence against them in all its forms.
- Protecting women from any campaigns in the cyberspace and activating the role of elites and associations to confront this,
- Work to make the cyberspace a space for dialogue and meeting.

