For more women in politics

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#Power2Her
Online Violence Against Women in Politics

- Online platforms can be important in helping women overcome barriers to becoming politically active – but they are also a forum for **disinformation, hate speech, abuse and harassment**.
- Violence and abuse **creates a hostile online environment** by shaming, intimidating or degrading women, and the **impact of silencing them or pushing them out** of political discourse.
- Can be **anonymous, borderless, sustained** and **permanent**.
- Online VAW-P subverts democracy, and has a **chilling effect**.
The Impact of Online Violence Against Women in Elections

- Undermines their sense of safety when engaging in politics, & limits their participation in electoral processes
- Women do not feel that they can voice their opinion on political life or participate in elections
- Online violence causes self-censorship

Different Forms of Online Violence+Disinfo/Misinfo

Tools of Harassment include:
- Doxing
- Trolling
- Swatting
- Cyber-Stalking
- Revenge Porn
- Mob Attacks
- Unsolicited Sexting/Pornography
- Google Bombing/Zoom Bombing
Disinformation

• Disinformation often explicitly manipulates socio-cultural norms, social cleavages and/or ideological divisions to create desired political outcomes

• To effectively counter disinfo and its impact on democratic processes, we must understand:
  - **Which** demographics are perceived as open to manipulation through disinformation and **why**
  - **How** particular groups are differentially targeted
  - **Manner** in which social ideologies (*religious, ethnic, class, race...*) are leveraged to successfully create desired political outcomes
Gender and Disinformation

• Rising use of gendered disinformation campaigns that deliberately target politically active women

• Gender norms, gender identities and gender relations are resistant to change and shape every aspect of a country’s landscape

• Gender norms are extremely effective when manipulated towards the achievement of particular political or social outcome
Online gendered disinformation campaigns have the potential to manipulate entrenched gender norms to do one or all of three things:

1. Cause some portion of half of the population that are women to withdraw from politics or participate in ways directed by fear (VAW-P)
2. Shift popular support of both men and women away from visible politically-active women, undermining a significant leadership demographic, and manipulating political outcomes, weakening democracy
3. Influence how male and female voters view particular parties, policies or entire political orders
Solutions for Gendered Hate Speech and Disinfo

Individual:

- Establish private, country or region-based support networks of women

Institutional:

- CSOs and political parties should also maintain databases of abuse and reports against their women employees and affiliates.
- Social media platforms should invest in infrastructure and active training and outreach to CSOs, media outlets, academics, political parties, and individual women in politics.

Socio-Cultural:

- Awareness-raising tools such as Paritybot, and iHollaback
- Partners should feed into and support these movements and tools
- Avoid the “Streisand effect”