# ACHOM
## AND THE ONLINE BULLIES

A STORY BY SAFE SISTERS IN CONJUCTION WITH THE TTAALA PROGRAM UNDER DEFENDDEFENDERS

Ttaala

DEFENDDEFENDERS
East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

AFRICANDEFENDERS
Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network

SAFE SISTERS

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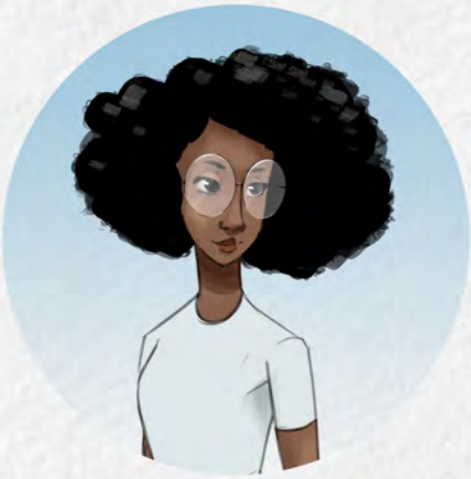
WITH FUNDING FROM THE EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF
THE NETHERLANDS TO UGANDA.

ACHOM IS A MASS COMMUNICATIONS GRADUATE WHO HAS JUST BEEN PLACED AS AN INTERN AT A HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION.

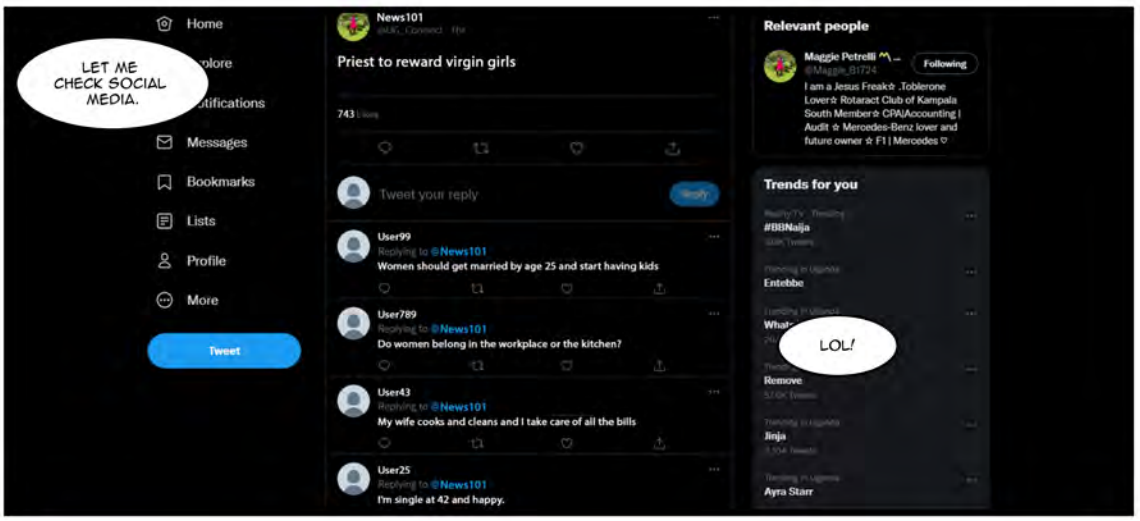
NEEMA ALSO RECENTLY JOINED THE ORGANISATION AS A FIELD RESEARCHER AFTER FINISHING HER JOURNALISM DEGREE.

FAHEEMA IS AN ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER WHO HAS BEEN AT THE ORGANISATION FOR 2 YEARS.

WAIRIMU HAS BEEN WORKING AT THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PAST YEAR AS AN IT SYSTEMS ADMIN.

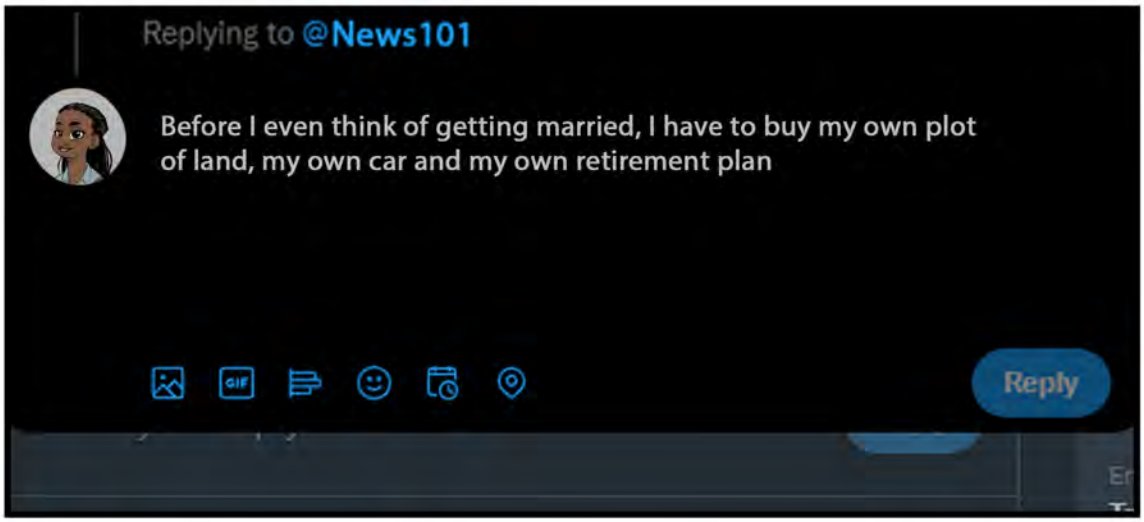


THAT IS TODAY'S WORKLOAD DONE!
NOW IT IS TIME FOR SOME CHILLING AND RELAXING.
THE HUMAN RIGHTS SHELTER


LET ME CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA.
Home
Messages
Bookmarks
Lists
Profile
More
Tweet
News101
Priest to reward virgin girls
743
Tweet your reply
Reply
User99
Replying to @News101
Women should get married by age 25 and start having kids
User789
Replying to @News101
Do women belong in the workplace or the kitchen?
User43
Replying to @News101
My wife cooks and cleans and I take care of all the bills
User25
Replying to @News101
I'm single at 42 and happy.
Relevant people
Maggie Petrelli
Following
I am a Jesus Freak✞ .Toblerone Lover☆ Rotaract Club of Kampala South Member☆ CPA|Accounting | Audit ☆ Meroedes-Benz lover and future owner ☆ F1 | Mercedes ♡
Trends for you
#BBNaija
Entebbe
What
LOL!
Remove
Jinja
Ayra Starr

HAH HAH!
PEOPLE ARE NUTS.
TWEEPS DON'T SLEEP.

WHAT IS THIS?
LET ME REPLY.

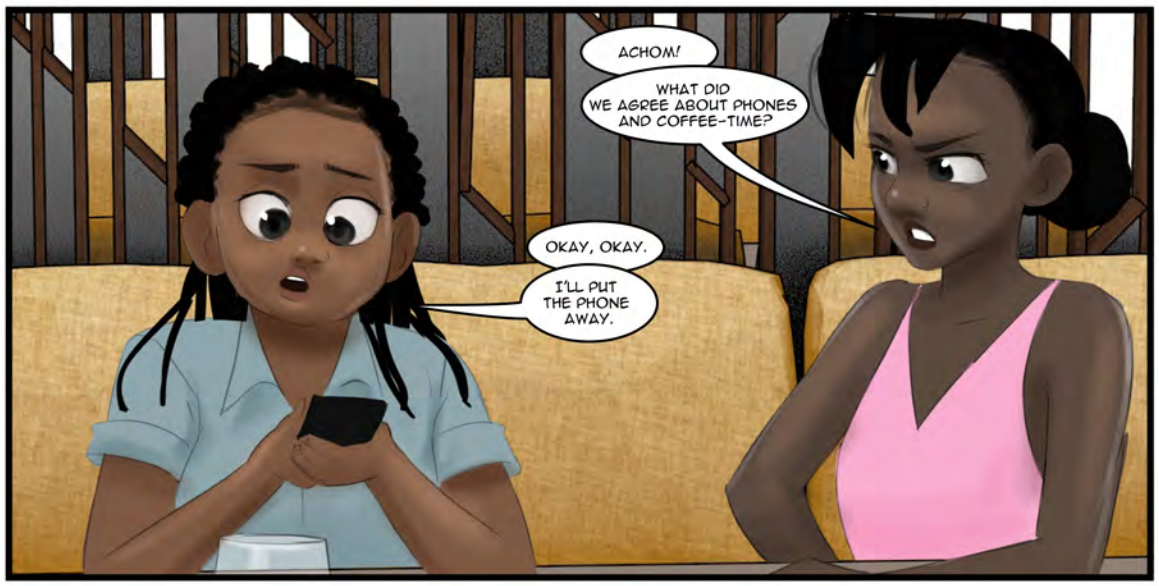

Replying to @News101
Before I even think of getting married, I have to buy my own plot of land, my own car and my own retirement plan
GIF
Reply

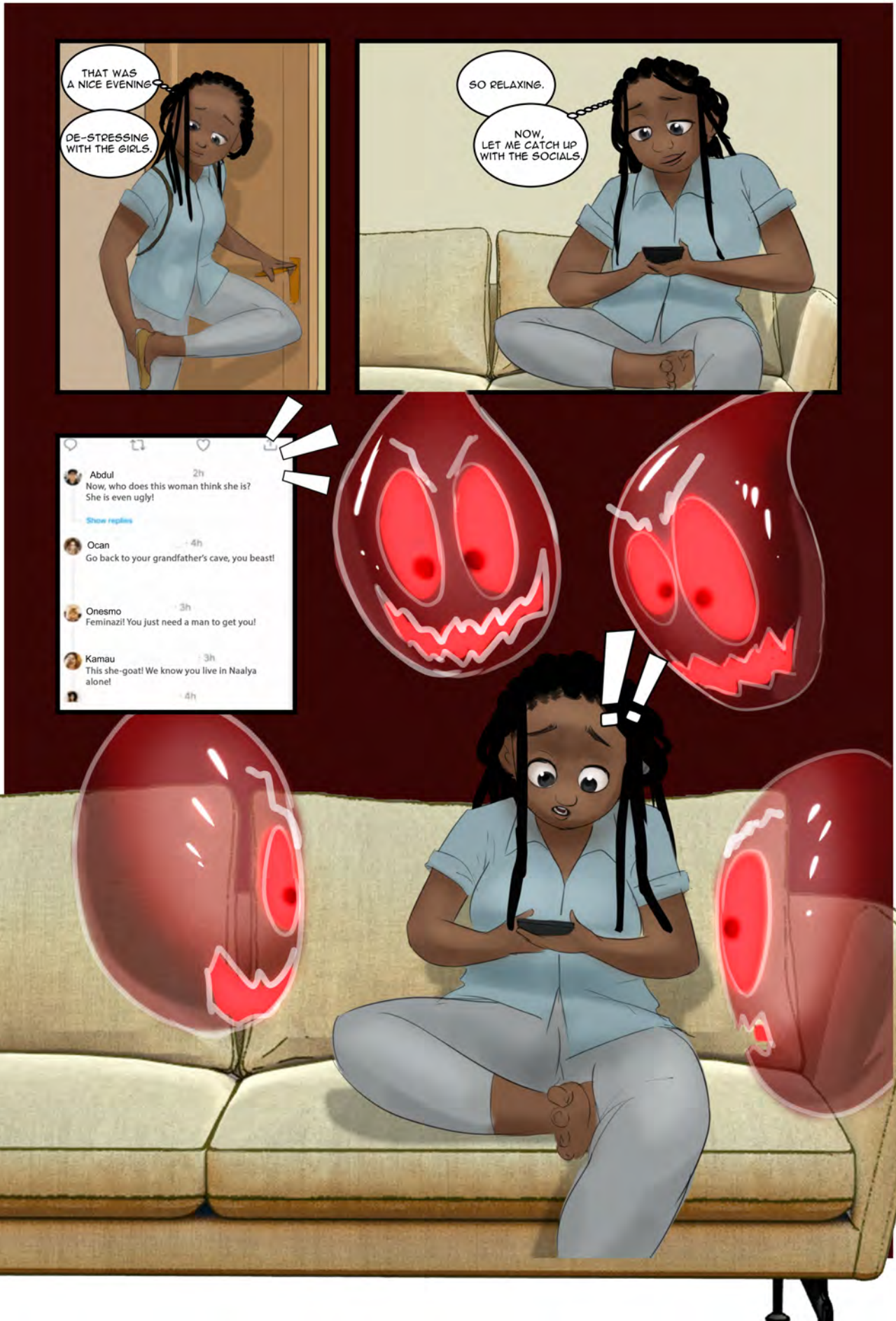
GIRL!
WHY ARE YOU STILL ON THE COMPUTER?
LET ME POST THIS

LEAVE SOCIAL MEDIA ALONE.
SHUT DOWN
AND WE GO GET OUR SUNDOWNERS.
THE HUMAN RIGHTS
CLOSE OF BUSINESS IS CLOSE OF BUSINESS, ACHOM.
YOU NEED TO LEARN THAT.
OKAY, OKAY.
LET'S GO GET THOSE DRINKS.
I'VE SHUT DOWN.
THE HUMAN RIGHTS

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU THINK I COULD MAKE UP SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

HAH HAH HAH!
TING! TING! TING!
THAT IS WHAT THE MAN TOLD ME!


ACHOM!
WHAT DID WE AGREE ABOUT PHONES AND COFFEE-TIME?
OKAY, OKAY.
I'LL PUT THE PHONE AWAY.


THAT WAS A NICE EVENING.
DE-STRESSING WITH THE GIRLS.
SO RELAXING.
NOW, LET ME CATCH UP WITH THE SOCIALS.
Abdul 2h
Now, who does this woman think she is? She is even ugly!
Show replies
Ocan 4h
Go back to your grandfather's cave, you beast!
Onesmo 3h
Feminazi! You just need a man to get you!
Kamau 3h
This she-goat! We know you live in Naalya alone!
4h

ABDUL PERSISTS WITH HIS INSULTS, IN FACT, HE TOO GATHERS A GROUP OF 7 "TROLLS" TO EXPAND THIS ATTACK ON ACHOM. AFTER 2 WEEKS OF CONSTANT ABUSE, ACHOM IS FORCED TO GO OFFLINE.
A DAY AFTER SHE MADE THE DECISION TO SELF-SENSOR, SHE WAS WALKING INTO HER DRIVEWAY CORRIDOR AND FOUND A BOX MARKED WITH HER NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER.
U'RE NEXT
U!!

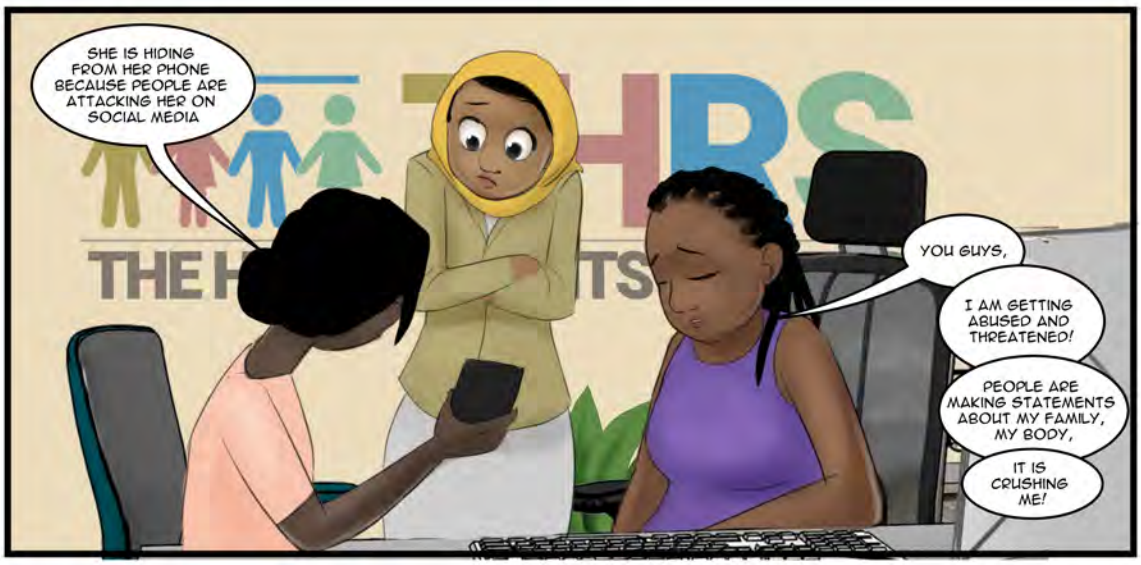
FOR THE NEXT TWO DAYS SHE WAS CONFINED AT HOME AND WAS VERY AFRAID TO GO TO THE NEARBY SHOPS OR SAY HELLO TO HER NEIGHBORS.
AM I BEING FOLLOWED?
COULD THESE MEN ACTUALLY MAKE A MOVE ON MY LIFE?

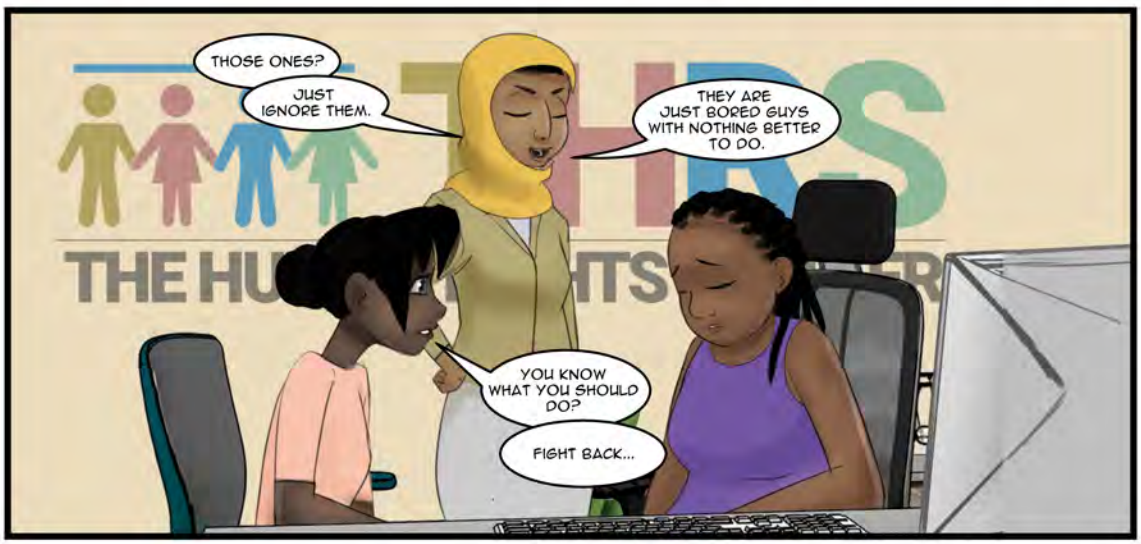
SHE REMEMBERED THE TIME WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD AND FACED BULLYING FROM HER CLASSMATES ABOUT HER WEIGHT AND APPEARANCE. IT HAD BEEN A LONG STRUGGLE TO REGAIN HER CONFIDENCE AND SELF ESTEEM BUT EVEN THAT SEEMED BETTER THAN THIS.
AT LEAST THEN SHE KNEW WHO HER ATTACKERS WERE AND HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH THEM FACE TO FACE.

THIS WAS DIFFERENT. FINDING A DEAD CAT ON HER DOORWAY ON TOP OF WEEKS AND WEEKS OF ONLINE ABUSE WAS TOO MUCH. SHE FELT HOPELESS AND ALONE.
SHE THOUGHT AS SHE CRIED HERSELF TO SLEEP THAT NIGHT

TWO WEEKS LATER...
I AM ACTUALLY AFRAID OF GOING ONLINE TODAY.
THAT WAS TRAUMATIZING!
ACHOM!
I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO CALL YOU ALL DAY!
YOUR PHONE IS OFF!
NEEMA,
I AM EVEN AFRAID OF SWITCHING IT ON.
YOU DON'T KNOW THE HELL I HAVE BEEN THROUGH!
WHAT IS GOING ON?
THAT TWEET I POSTED TWO WEEKS AGO!
IT FEELS LIKE THE WHOLE WORLD IS COMING AFTER ME EVERY MINUTE FOR IT,
SOMEONE HAS JUST HARASSED ME A FEW MINUTES BACK.

WHERE IS THIS ACHOM?
YOU, WHY IS YOUR PHONE OFF?
DO WE HAVE TO COME AND LOOK FOR YOU IN YOUR OFFICE?

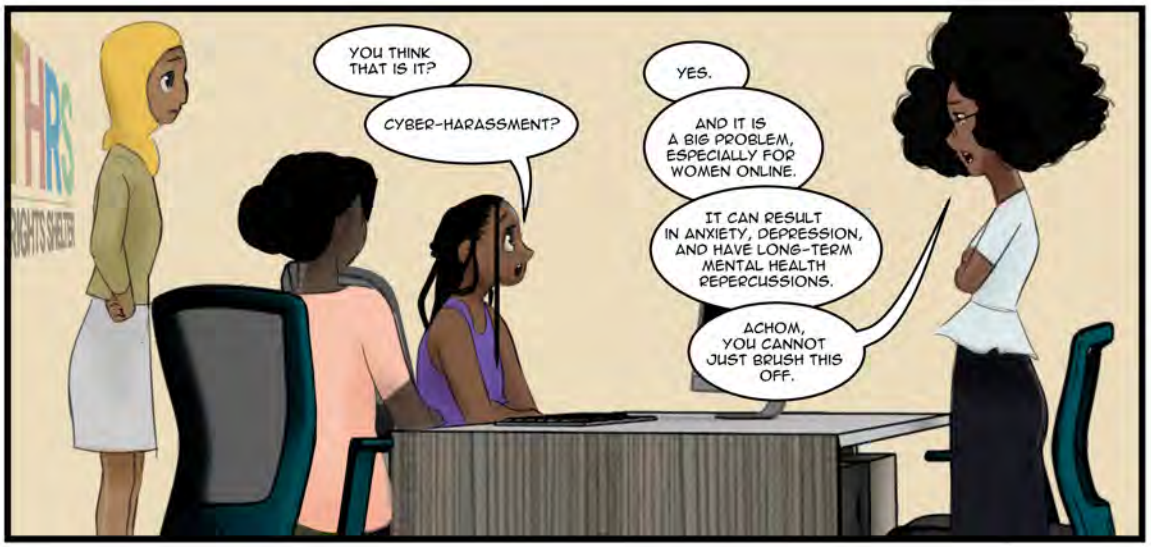

SHE IS HIDING FROM HER PHONE BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE ATTACKING HER ON SOCIAL MEDIA
YOU GUYS,
I AM GETTING ABUSED AND THREATENED!
PEOPLE ARE MAKING STATEMENTS ABOUT MY FAMILY, MY BODY,
IT IS CRUSHING ME!


THOSE ONES?
JUST IGNORE THEM.
THEY ARE JUST BORED GUYS WITH NOTHING BETTER TO DO.
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU SHOULD DO?
FIGHT BACK...

I CAN'T!
IT'S OVERWHELMING!
I AM DROWNING IN ALL THE NOISE!

YOU GUYS,
I COULD NOT HELP BUT OVERHEAR.
SO THAT IS WHY YOU HAVE NOT BEEN YOUR USUAL CHEERFUL SELF, ACHOM.
BECAUSE SHE IS OVERREACTING.

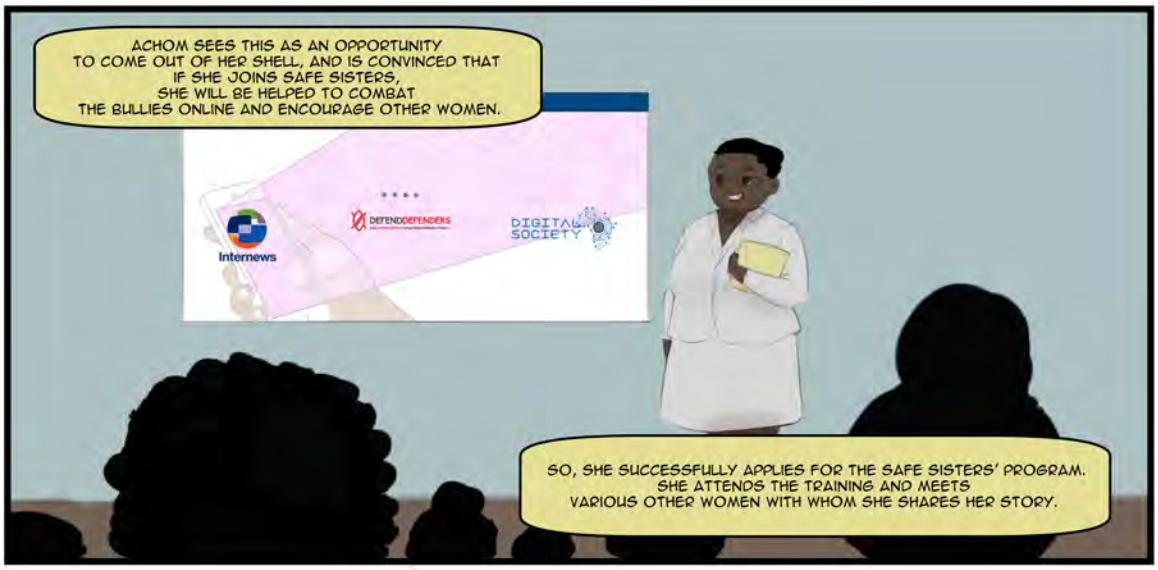
I DON'T THINK YOU ARE OVERREACTING.
CYBER-HARASSMENT CAN TAKE A MASSIVE TOLL ON A PERSON.
WAIRIMU, DECIDES TO OFFER HER FRIEND SOME ADVICE AND SHARES WITH HER A POST ABOUT SAFE SISTERS. IN 2018 WAIRIMU HAD APPLIED AND ENROLLED INTO THE SAFE SISTER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM WHERE SHE GAINED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ONLINE GBV AND OTHER ASPECTS TO DO WITH ONLINE AND OFFLINE SECURITY.


YOU THINK THAT IS IT?
CYBER-HARASSMENT?
YES.
AND IT IS A BIG PROBLEM, ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN ONLINE.
IT CAN RESULT IN ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND HAVE LONG-TERM MENTAL HEALTH REPERCUSSIONS.
ACHOM, YOU CANNOT JUST BRUSH THIS OFF.

THE NOTIFICATIONS ARE STILL COMING!
OH MY GOD,ACHOM, THE STUFF THESE PEOPLE ARE SAYING IS DISGUSTING!
YEAH WAIRIMU IS RIGHT.
THIS IS TOO MUCH. WE MUST DO SOMETHING.
BUT WHAT CAN I DO?

I KNOW OF AN ORGANIZATION CALLED DEFENDDEFENDERS, THEY RUN A PROGRAM ON SAFE SISTERS.
SAFE SISTERS IS A FELLOWSHIP THAT TRAINS WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, JOURNALISTS, MEDIA WORKERS, AND ACTIVISTS, TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO DIGITAL SECURITY CHALLENGES THEY FACE IN THEIR WORK AND DAILY LIFE.
THROUGH A COMBINATION OF SELF-STUDY, TOOL PRACTICE, MENTORSHIP, WORKSHOPS, PEER SHARING, AND SMALL GRANTS, THE PROGRAM SUPPORTS WOMEN TO JOIN FORCES TO TAKE ON THE MOST PRESSING DIGITAL CHALLENGES THAT ORDINARILY WOULD BAR THEM FROM BEING ABLE TO LIVE AND BE SAFE ONLINE.

THIS IS GOOD NEWS.
YES. FORGET WHAT I SAID ABOUT OVERREACTING.
LET US LOOK IT UP
IN FACT, ACHOM, WE ARE HERE WITH YOU.
THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A SERIOUS PROBLEM AND WE HAVE TO STAND TOGETHER TO PROTECT EACH OTHER.
THANKS GIRLS.
LET'S VISIT HTTPS://DEFENDDEFENDERS.ORG/OUR-WORK/TECHNOLOGY-AND-DIGITAL-SAFETY-3/SAFESISTERS/ AND APPLY TO JOIN THE PROGRAM


ACHOM SEES THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO COME OUT OF HER SHELL, AND IS CONVINCED THAT IF SHE JOINS SAFE SISTERS, SHE WILL BE HELPED TO COMBAT THE BULLIES ONLINE AND ENCOURAGE OTHER WOMEN.
Internews
DEFENDDEFENDERS
DIGITAL SOCIETY
SO, SHE SUCCESSFULLY APPLIES FOR THE SAFE SISTERS' PROGRAM. SHE ATTENDS THE TRAINING AND MEETS VARIOUS OTHER WOMEN WITH WHOM SHE SHARES HER STORY.

THROUGH THEIR SHARED EXPERIENCES AND INTERACTIONS, ACHOM EMERGES RE-ENERGIZED AND MORE RESILIENT TO START A CAREER IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONTINUE HER HUMAN RIGHTS WORK, READY TO CONFRONT BULLIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSERS HEAD-ON.