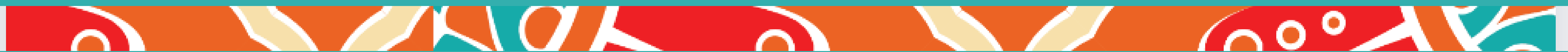


**ITS NOT JUST WORDS**

*The real-life Consequences of Online  
Violence Against Women (OVAW)*



Women @ Web



As part of the regional advocacy work that the Women At Web East Africa network undertakes, in cooperation with DW Akademie, supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in Germany; Media Convergency, Acacia Book Café (ABC), Association of Media Women In Kenya (AMWIK), bring to you a comic strip about Online Violence Against Women, for women in the East Africa region.

@2022

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It's the morning after the premiere of Samira's latest film, and she's woken up feeling good.



While scrolling through social media on her phone, Samira sees a photo of herself and her co-stars on the red carpet.





Samira is at the studio of a local radio station promoting her film.

"So Samira, before we talk about your film, let's put the rumours to rest; Are you pregnant or not?"

"I think it's good for me to keep my personal and professional life separate, so I'd rather we focus on my film."

Samira:

"It's neither a yes nor a no."

"So is that a yes?"

"Well guys, you heard it here from Samira herself. Let her personal life remain personal!"

A popular journalist posted a photo of samira on social media that got a lot of comments

"This is unbelievable. Even journalists are joining in?"







Samira, you have got to stop reading the comments. All it's doing is making you feel worse.

I know, I know. I just can't believe this many people hate me. What did I ever do to them?



I'm so sorry this is happening to you. It's so messed up! People can be so cruel when they're not speaking to you face-to-face. For your mental well-being, you have to log out for a while.




You're right. I should stop looking at social media and let it die down.

It makes me so angry that they're basically forcing you to limit yourself, but it's what's best for now.



The online bullying has escalated. Samira hasn't left her house in weeks.





Samira, I know you're in there.  
Please open the door!



Maya, I'm just so tired of all the hate. I know it's all online and no one has said anything to me in person. But when I go out I feel like anyone who looks at me is silently judging me. I imagine that they're the same people saying all those horrible things about me online. I can't go outside. I can't face people. I just can't.

Samira what is going on? I've been calling you for days now and you haven't been picking up. I was so worried, I called the girls to come with me to check on you. You look like you haven't showered in forever!




Oh Samira, I'm so sorry. We didn't know you were feeling this way. We didn't know those comments were affecting you this much. We should've checked on you sooner.

I didn't want anyone to know how I was feeling. I feel so ashamed that internet comments are bothering me so much. But ever since that journalist posted my photo, I've been getting more rape and death threats. I messaged him asking him to delete the photo and he said no.






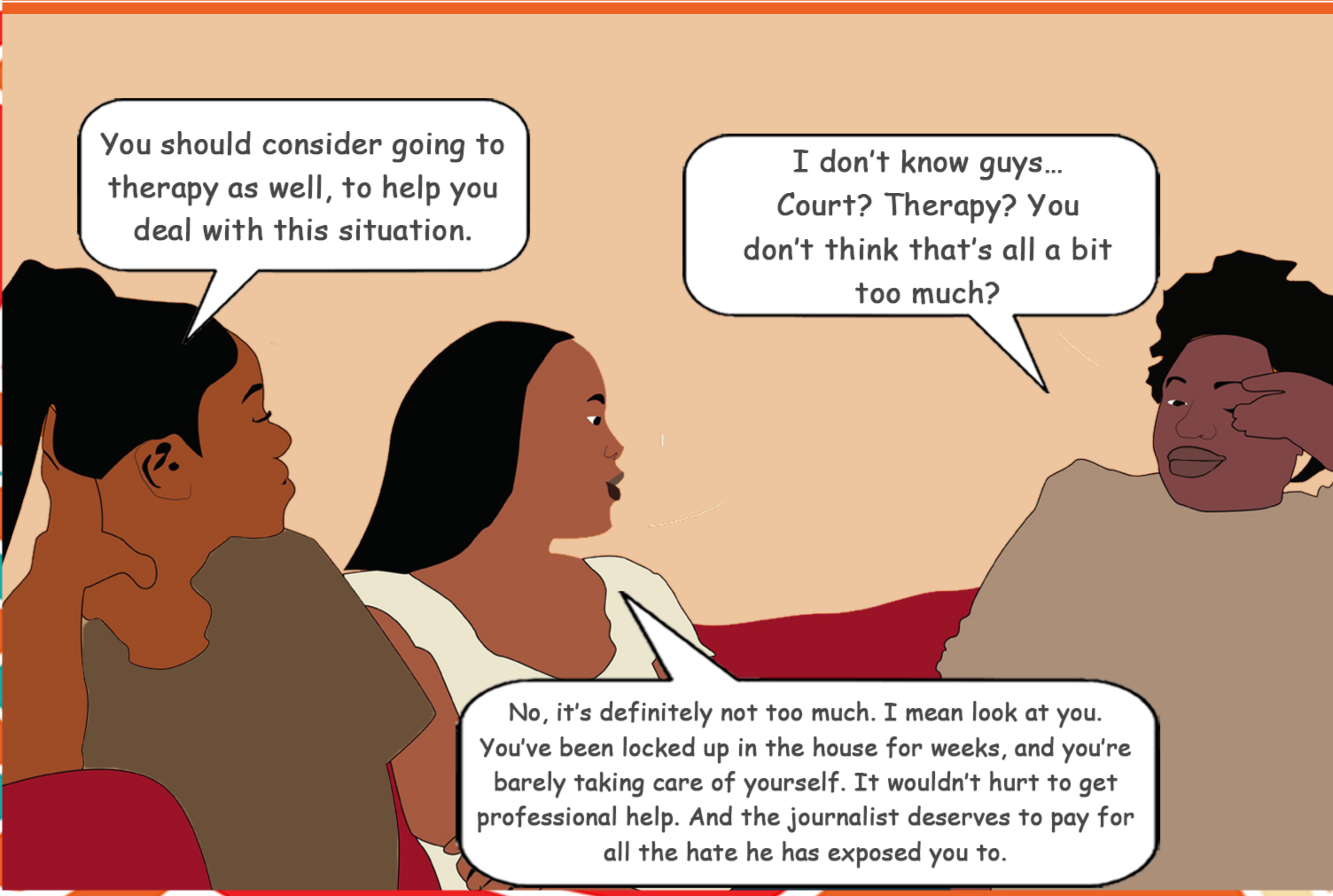


You have nothing to be ashamed about. It's the people abusing you who should be ashamed. In fact, you need to report the journalist and make an example of him. People need to know that there are consequences to their actions,

I just feel like I should be strong enough to take it. I chose my career in film after all. I knew I would be in the spotlight.




No one should have to accept bullying. I think you should seriously consider taking the journalist to court.



You should consider going to therapy as well, to help you deal with this situation.

I don't know guys... Court? Therapy? You don't think that's all a bit too much?

No, it's definitely not too much. I mean look at you. You've been locked up in the house for weeks, and you're barely taking care of yourself. It wouldn't hurt to get professional help. And the journalist deserves to pay for all the hate he has exposed you to.




Okay I guess there's no harm in trying both.





Excellent! Let's see if we can find you a therapist right now.

And I know a good lawyer. Let me call her.



Thank you so much, girls. You're truly great friends, and I'm lucky to have you all.

Maya:

Oh don't mention it. We know you would do the same for us.

Samira's friends help her find a therapist and a lawyer

It's the first day of Samira's court case against the journalist.



COURT OF JUSTICE.

I'm so nervous, girls.  
I feel like throwing up.

Don't worry, everything will be okay.  
We'll be here for you every step of the way.

Alright let's go inside.



# *Epilogue*

Online Violence against women (OVAW) has affected not one country not one continent but the world. This is a story of hope, for women who feel threatened of their safety online; "You are not alone". We call to action for all stakeholders to be ambassadors of advocating towards the fight of OVAW



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