

When isolating gender violence is called freedom of expression

escrito por Rosa Valls | noviembre 17, 2021



A man who forces minors to whom he gives private lessons is stopped by a group that dares to support its victims who cannot bring him to trial because the aggression they suffered has prescribed. To maintain the impunity with his abuses, he must ensure that no one will dare to support its victims. The most effective thing for his purpose is to

anonymously launch in the networks all sorts of slanders against its victims and those who have dared to show solidarity with them.

Afterwards, he offers these slanders to some institution or entity permissive to the harassment that also wants to silence those who stand in solidarity with their victims. This entity collects the lies as a complaint against the solidarity group and takes it to the prosecutor's office. The child molestor and those who join him warn journalists eager for scandals that increase their audiences and offer to be interviewed anonymously. These journalists publish them in their media.

If some of the victims of the abuser or members of the solidarity group bring those media to justice, what can they find? Even if they provide conclusive evidence showing that the lies are totally false, the media will argue that the principle of freedom of expression did not oblige them to verify the veracity of the facts denounced but only the veracity of whether they had denounced it or not. That is, it does not matter that it is very clear that everything the abuser says is a lie, the journalist only has to verify that he has indeed said it. Also the «freedom of expression», allows them not to eliminate those lies since it is true that the abuser said them. The articles of these media will give more credibility to the slanders of the social networks, thus exercising an isolating gender violence that thus becomes a lynching against the victims and the people who stand in solidarity with them. In this way, a public example will be given of what is done with those who dare to show solidarity, what leads to very few women and men daring to do so.

And what can we – survivors and those of us who stand in solidarity with survivors- do and actually do?

- Work to develop legislation that prevents calling freedom of expression to what is isolating gender violence, in the same way that racism or hatred are also not called this way.

- Meanwhile, preventing that this isolating gender violence spread by some journalists, achieves the effect of «if you throw enough mud, some sticks”, leaving in us or in our environments the slightest shadow around the few truly brave people who stand in solidarity with the victims and survivors.

- Clarify and report that, with the current legislation, the media do not have the obligation to report true facts but only the facts that the informants they choose say anonymously. That there are excellent journalists who will never choose abusive informants but that there are others who choose those who can give more morbid curiosity and audience, even if they are reoffending abusers who can thus continue to abuse other minors with impunity.