

Votes and Vitriol: Online Abuse Targeting Women Candidates in the 2024 French Legislative Elections

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Content Warning: This report contains mentions and examples of harmful language



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Overview

TikTok is struggling to tackle the persistent issue of online gender-based violence (OGBV) against women candidates in elections. This analysis explores the nature of online violence targeting women candidates on TikTok during the French legislative election campaign, held from 9 June to 7 July 2024. Our findings reveal that women candidates in France often received misogynistic slurs and gendered disinformation. Gender-based abuse also frequently intersected with references to 'race,' class, religion and other personal characteristics and traits. TikTok's inadequate moderation of OGBV appears insufficient in light of obligations under the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA) to mitigate harmful impacts on electoral processes. As TikTok becomes increasingly important to electoral campaigning and political discourse, it is crucial that the platform ensures that candidates from marginalised groups – including women, LGBTQ+ individuals and ethnic minorities – are not disproportionately targeted by hatred and disinformation.

This briefing is part of a series examining online gender-based violence (OGBV) on TikTok in English, German, French and Hungarian. It is part of a project titled 'Monitoring Online Gender Based Violence Around the European Parliament Election 2024', funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

Key Findings

- **Online gender-based violence (OGBV) and gendered disinformation were widespread during the 2024 French legislative campaign.** Women candidates faced significant online abuse, such as calls for violence, sexual harassment, misogynistic slurs and attacks on their 'race,' class, religion and other personal characteristics and traits. Gendered disinformation was particularly prevalent, targeting their appearance and perceived competence.
 - **Left-wing women candidates appeared to be disproportionately targeted by hatred, with their stances on gender-based violence and the Israel-Hamas conflict further exacerbating attacks.** As in prior reports, ISD found that left-wing candidates were often targeted for their political positions as well as ethnic and religious backgrounds; much of this hate came from supporters of far-right parties.
 - **TikTok's failure to address OGBV during the French legislative elections underscores the need for stronger platform accountability.** The platform's automated tools appear insufficient to protect women candidates from online abuse, contradicting its obligations under Articles 34 and 35 of the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA). Abuse discourages political participation and undermines democratic debate; it disproportionately impacts marginalised groups including women, LGBTQ+ individuals and ethnic minorities. Our findings highlight the urgent need for stricter moderation policies to ensure a safer and more equitable space for political discourse and campaigning.
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Definitions

For the purposes of this briefing, ISD utilises the following definitions:

Gender

Gender refers to a “system of symbolic meaning that creates social hierarchies based on perceived associations with masculine and feminine characteristics.” A person’s gender identity refers to “an individual’s internal, innate sense of their own gender.”

Gender-based violence (GBV)

This term refers to “violence directed against a person because of that person’s gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately.” Women and the LGBTQ+ community, including transgender and genderqueer persons, experience disproportionate rates of GBV.

Online gender-based violence (OGBV)

OGBV is defined here as a subset of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), which refers to any “act that is committed, assisted, aggravated, or amplified by the use of information communication technologies or other digital tools, that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, social, political, or economic harm, or other infringements of rights and freedoms.” For a more detailed review and discussions of terms and definitions please refer to ISD’s report “Misogynistic Pathways to Radicalisation.”

Gendered disinformation

Gendered disinformation is a subset of online gendered abuse that uses false or misleading gender and sex-based narratives against individuals in public life – especially women and genderqueer people; it often involves some degree of coordination among participants. It builds on sexist narratives and gender stereotypes and is specifically aimed at detering women from participating in the public sphere. Gendered disinformation frames women politicians, public office holders and candidates as inherently too untrustworthy, unintelligent, emotional or libidinous to participate in politics. The abuse drops completely once women step out of the public eye, incentivising them to not participate in politics. Gendered disinformation is particularly pronounced around elections and other democratic events including debates and party conferences. It is often intersectional, frequently overlapping with other forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, ‘race,’ religion, sexual orientation, and other characteristics.

Introduction: The 2024 French Parliamentary Elections

On 9 June 2024, French President Emmanuel Macron dissolved the French Parliamentary Assembly following the far right's triumph in the European Parliamentary elections. The far-right Rassemblement National (RN), led by Marine Le Pen, secured first place with 31.37 percent of the vote. By comparison, the centrist coalition Ensemble, which includes President Macron's party Renaissance (RE), secured second place, receiving only half that vote share. The unexpected dissolution of the Assembly led to a hectic four-week election campaign replete with political betrayals and so-called "party purges," the formation of the new coalition of left-wing parties and scandals involving far-right candidates. Although Le Pen's party led after the first round of voting on 30 June, voters strategically united across party lines in the second round to form a "republican blockade" and successfully prevent a far-right legislative victory.

Political tension amplifies targeted hate, with extremist and hateful groups often directing their hostility toward women and other vulnerable populations. As a result, women candidates and other marginalised groups, including LGBTQ+ communities and ethnic/religious minorities often disproportionately face a unique blend of online and offline harassment. This includes intimidation, sexual and physical violence and gender-biased scrutiny from the public and the media. Digital violence threatens political representation and democratic debate, discouraging participation and promoting self-censorship of affected individuals.

Previous research from ISD has shown an increase in death threats and targeting of political candidates during election campaigns including the 2022 French presidential and legislative races. This pattern continued in the 2024 parliamentary campaign with a surge in both offline and online violence against political figures. The findings shed light on how misogynistic abuse and disinformation campaigns are wielded to marginalise women political voices, and the urgent need for platform accountability and systemic responses to counter this escalating threat.

Methodology

To analyse OGBV directed at women candidates during the 2024 French legislative elections, ISD conducted a qualitative analysis of hateful online comments targeting nine French women candidates. This analysis focuses on specific cases rather than providing a comprehensive

assessment of the overall occurrence of OGBV. The monitoring focused on the comment sections under TikTok videos published during the official legislative campaign period which ran from 9 June, when President Macron announced the snap election, to 7 July 2024, the day of the second round.

ISD's initial phase of monitoring concentrated on the hatred directed at candidates from the parties and groups with the highest public support in the polls, which were: Rassemblement National (RN) party - far-right, Les Républicains (LR) party - right-wing, Ensemble coalition - Renaissance (RE) party – centre and Nouveau Front Populaire (NFP) coalition - left-wing to 'hard-left' (as detailed below). This latter coalition encompasses four parties: the French Green Party (EELV), the Socialist Party (PS), the Communist Party (PCF) and La France Insoumise (LFI).

For each political party, ISD selected 10 women and male candidates for analysis based on their position in their party and media coverage. Given its multi-party structure, the NFP coalition analysis included 20 candidates. In contrast, for the Ensemble coalition, only 10 candidates from the RE presidential list were chosen as smaller parties of the coalition lacked prominent women candidates.

Following the initial scoping, ISD analysts selected a total of nine women candidates for an in-depth qualitative assessment. This selection considered their prominence within their parties, the frequency and specific manifestations of hate they received, and their experiences of offline violence during the campaign. While centrist and right-wing parties had fewer women in prominent roles, the briefing focused on women candidates, as they were the only gender minority consistently comparable across all parties. Due to the limited presence of LGBTQ+ candidates in parties, a broader comparison of OGBV targeting them was not feasible.

The final selection included:

- **NFP coalition:** Five candidates were selected due to the coalition's multi-party structure, the significant presence of women on the lists and the virulent hostility they received.

- **RE:** Two candidates were selected based on the offline violence and specific nature of hate they faced.
- **LR:** There was only one prominent woman candidate representing the party in this election, who was selected for the analysis.
- **RN:** Due to her relevance within the party and her large following on TikTok, the party leader was selected for this study.

Analysts manually reviewed the comment sections under 90 videos published during the official campaign period, 10 for each candidate. These were selected by choosing the top five videos on each politician's account with the highest number of likes, and the top five results when searching for the candidate's name and the keyword "legislative 2024" filtered by a three-month timeframe. If a candidate posted fewer than five videos during the campaigning period, additional search results were used to reach 10 videos. Since the LR woman candidate did not have a TikTok account, all 10 videos analysed for her were sourced from search results.

ISD analysed the comments below these videos for degrading language, the use of offensive slurs, discriminatory and aggressive language targeting the candidate for their gender, 'race,' class or religion, as well as content which aimed to shame candidates for their bodies. Analysts also studied whether comments contained potential incitements to violence, intent to cause harm or efforts to spread disinformation about the candidate.

Two significant groups of commentators targeting women politicians were identified at the extremes of the political spectrum, namely supporters of far-right and 'hard-left' parties. Supporters of far-right parties were identified based on rhetoric including slogans and calls to support far-right parties and use of nationalist symbols such as the Fleur-de-Lys (representing the French monarchy). Supporters of the LFI targeting former members of the party were categorised as 'hard-left'. While the LFI is officially classified as left-wing, this designation reflects how several right-wing figures, centrist voices – including President Emmanuel Macron – and mainstream media refer to them as 'hard -left' or far-left. It also considers the LFI's strong anti-neoliberal stance, and its promotion of anti-establishment and populist proposals, as well as the party's internal divisions and shifts that took place during the legislative campaign (further detailed in the analysis section).

Findings

This section presents case studies of the nine women candidates, grouped by party affiliation.

1. Nouveau Front Populaire

The Nouveau Front Populaire (NFP) is a left-wing coalition formed in response to the dissolution of the French National Assembly by President Emmanuel Macron in June 2024. This alliance brings together four parties officially classified as left-wing: EELV, PS, PCF, and LFI. As previously mentioned, the LFI is labelled as ‘hard -left’ by centrist, right-wing and mainstream media due to their anti-establishment and populist positions. Internal divisions within the LFI escalated during the campaign, culminating in a so-called “purge” on 15 June, when several prominent members were expelled for opposing party leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon. On 12 July, LFI dissidents co-founded L’Après (the Association for an Ecological and Social Republic), a new party that continues collaborating with the NFP coalition. Its members are currently aligned with the PCF in the National Assembly.

1.1. Sandrine Rousseau

Sandrine Rousseau (EELV) is recognised for her candid perspectives on gender issues, including eco-feminism and the deconstruction of traditional masculinity. In 2016, she gained attention for denouncing sexual abuse by Denis Baupin, former Deputy Mayor of Paris. In 2022, Rousseau sparked a significant debate in the French political landscape after a controversial statement that barbecues symbolise virility. She has spoken publicly about receiving death and rape threats, which have resulted in three court convictions.

Despite her prominence, Rousseau only had 3,706 followers on TikTok as of August 2024 and published just 15 videos during the legislative campaign period. Rousseau stopped posting on 3 July, shortly after her victory in the first round of voting but four days before the campaign concluded.

Analysts found that Rousseau was the only candidate whose content received a “bullying prevention” label from TikTok. The label – which appeared in one of the videos found by searching for her name (figure 1) – is described by the platform as only for “informational purposes and educational use.” It is designed to prevent bullying and harassment by providing definitions of these issues, as well as offering advice on where to seek

Figure 1. The figure on the top portrays the “Protection contre le harcèlement” (Bullying Prevention) label found on one of Rousseau’s campaign videos. The bottom image shows the website TikTok redirects users to when clicking on the label.



Moyens de prévenir l'intimidation sur TikTok

Si tu es victime d'intimidation sur TikTok, merci de [le signaler](#) pour permettre à notre équipe de modération d'étudier la situation et de prendre les mesures qui s'imposent en cas de violation des [Consignes communautaires](#) de TikTok.

Les spectateurs, (les personnes qui sont témoins de l'intimidation) peuvent également jouer un rôle important dans l'élimination de ce comportement. Si tu as l'impression que quelqu'un est victime de harcèlement ou d'un comportement inapproprié, voici quelques ressources partenaires qui peuvent t'aider :

Sélectionne un pays ou une

assistance and guidance on reporting content that violates TikTok's guidelines. Despite TikTok's system recognising the comments as harmful and applying the label, several hateful statements remained visible under the video. This suggests that the label functions primarily as an informative tool, rather than supporting the removal of hateful content.

The abuse Rousseau faces online is multifaceted, including misogynistic comments that verge on calls for sexual violence and target her physical appearance. Most comments fall under gendered disinformation, portraying Rousseau as "crazy" or "hysterical" and questioning her mental abilities.

1.2. Clementine Autain

Clementine Autain (L'Après) has been a French deputy since 2017, and a significant political figure particularly on issues of gender justice. Autain, a former member of the LFI, initially remained in the group after the expulsion of senior members outlined above. Nonetheless, after facing scrutiny for supporting colleagues no longer officially endorsed by the party, Autain and other LFI dissidents co-founded L'Après.

Autain has a significant number of followers compared to other French candidates (65K as of August 2024) and shared 17 posts during the legislative campaign. Analysts identified hateful comments labelling her as a "traitor". These presumably came from 'hard-left' supporters of the LFI following Autain's departure from the party. Supporters of far-right parties were another significant source of hateful content towards the candidate. They frequently referenced the role of Autain's grandfather as founder of a French far-right party to discredit and mock her.

Autain has made GBV a central focus of her political platform and has openly shared her experiences as a survivor of sexual violence. Hostile users have frequently targeted her because of this, revealing a strong opposition to open discussions and a tendency to trivialise this form of violence. In a video discussing Autain's fight against GBV, analysts observed numerous offensive comments dismissing or mocking both her and her mother's survival stories. Users suggested Autain was mentally unstable, had "faked" her abuse or deserved it (figure 2), and even suggested that she was a product of abuse (figure 3).

Other comments mocked Autain's discussion of sexual violence with emojis and comments intended to silence her. Notably, as highlighted in previous reports in this series, some users strategically employed algospeak

Figure 2. "Crocodile tears from that leftist scum".



Figure 3. "No wonder she's not right in the head, her father might be Jacques Doillon". The text alludes to recent #MeToo allegations against Doillon, a film director that worked closely with Autain's mother.

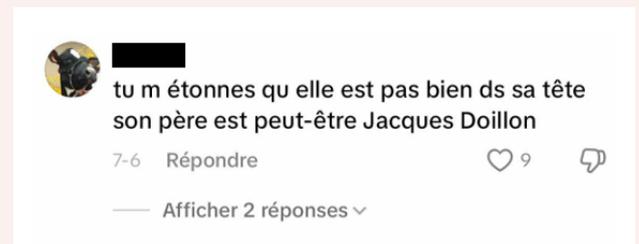


Figure 4. "In any case it's not the far-right that's likely to rape you 🤔"



to bypass moderation. This included altered spellings, the use of acronyms and leaving slurs incomplete – e.g. "poor idio..."; "good! This imbe... deserved it." In the video mentioned above, one commenter also stated that far-right men were not likely to sexually abuse Autain (figure 4), most likely implying that non-nationals pose a greater risk to women than French nationals. As found in prior reports, portraying non-nationals – particularly those from the Global South – as a threat to women is a common far-right trope used to weaponise and exploit women's rights struggles to push a racist and xenophobic agenda.

Notably, comments were disabled on one of Autain's videos which involved her participation in a feminist protest. Given the persistent harassment which Autain faces, it is likely that the decision was made in response to high levels of hostility.

1.3. Rachel Keke

Rachel Keke's unique background makes her a distinctive figure in French politics but also a particular target for gendered hate. Born in Côte d'Ivoire, Keke worked as a chambermaid for many years before becoming a deputy

for the LFI. As highlighted in our 2022 [report](#) on the French presidential elections, Keke has previously been a major target for hatred, a pattern which persisted during the 2024 legislative election.

Despite being active on the platform during her parliamentary term (2022-2024), Keke significantly reduced her activity during the latest campaign. She published only 3 videos on her account during this period, compared to the 29 shared in the previous six months. In the videos analysed, she was subjected to intense online abuse; ISD analysts concluded that much of this came from supporters of far-right parties based on their rhetoric and the use of nationalist symbols identified above.

The hostility directed at Keke included misogyny, racism, xenophobia and classism, as well as gendered disinformation aimed at discrediting and attacking her. Comments mocked her for her work as a chambermaid, questioned her mental abilities and proficiency in French, and even her identity as a French citizen due to her migrant background (figure 5).

One significant example of harassment referenced Dominique Strauss-Kahn (figure 6), a French politician commonly referred to as 'DSK', who faced multiple allegations of sexual assault including allegations that he [sexually abused a hotel maid in New York](#). Strauss-Kahn was acquitted of criminal charges but later settled a civil lawsuit with the maid by paying an undisclosed amount. By referencing DSK, the comment presumably seeks to compare Keke to the hotel maid in New York, simultaneously imagining her as a victim of sexual abuse and mocking her work as a chambermaid.

1.4. Alma Dufour

Alma Dufour is a politician and environmental activist affiliated with LFI. Her campaign focused on strengthening environmental protections and social justice issues. Recently, she also openly expressed support for Palestine, calling for diplomatic and economic sanctions against Israel.

As of August 2024, Dufour has more than 139K followers on TikTok, making her one of the most prominent women figures in her party. Some of her videos addressing Israel and Palestine sparked hate, with certain comments portraying Dufour as antisemitic. A group of comments trivialised the Holocaust by playing on her surname, "Dufour," which phonetically resembles the phrase "from the oven" in French (figure 7). Some comments sarcastically referred to her family as operating a crematorium business.

Figure 5. "An illiterate, a communitarian in the Assembly, that's enough"



Figure 6. "DSK is interested"



Figure 7. "Alma Dufour, crematory, you are burned"

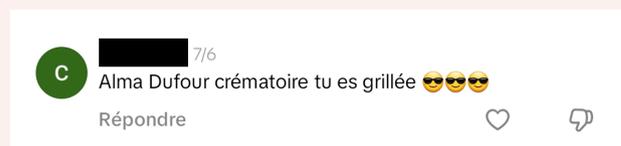
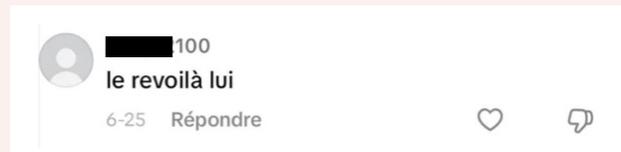
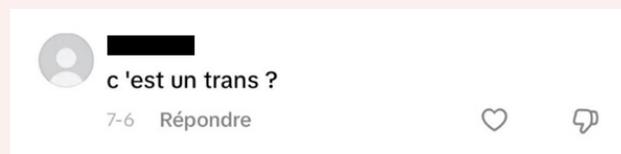


Figure 8. Transphobic comments targeting Dufour. Top image reads: "Is it a trans?". Below image translates to: "Here he is again."



Despite Dufour receiving significant support, analysts found a substantial number of comments and slurs directed at the candidate, many of which were both misogynistic and transphobic. Many comments referred to her as "trans" or "travesti" and used masculine pronouns as a way to delegitimise her gender identity (figure 8). Other comments sought to dehumanise Dufour, comparing her to animals and monsters (figure 9).

1.5. Raquel Garrido

Raquel Garrido (LFI) is a leftist French politician and a lawyer. Born in Chile, Garrido arrived in France as a refugee after Pinochet's coup d'état in 1975. As documented in [previous media reports](#), Garrido has

been targeted with OGBV and cyber harassment in the past. During this campaign, Garrido was part of the “political purge” within the LFI due to her criticism of the party leader. She ran as an LFI dissident without an official party label, although she was still endorsed by the broader NFP coalition. This situation led to her receiving significant hate from users which ISD analysts believe came from both the far-right and ‘hard-left,’ with the latter labelling her as a traitor (figure 10).

Another source of hatred stemmed from a popular TikTok video featuring a tense TV debate between Garrido and far-right candidate Laure Lavalette (RN), who accused Garrido of preferring Hamas over France. Garrido’s strong rebuttal to these allegations prompted a wave of attacks from supporters of far-right parties, who labelled her as hysterical, mentally unstable and a supporter of Hamas. Many users also made fatphobic remarks, comparing her to fictional characters like “Peggy the Pig” or “Chewbacca”, or used animal emojis that contributed to her dehumanisation (figures 11, 12 and 13).

2. Renaissance

Renaissance (RE), initially founded by Macron as ‘En Marche!’ in 2016, is a political party that aimed to transcend the traditional divide between conservatism and social democracy. Before the Parliament dissolution, the party held a relative majority of seats in the French Parliament. During the 2024 legislative election, the party was part of the “Ensemble” coalition, which included minor centrist parties such as the Democratic Movement (Modem), the Union of Democrats and Independents (UDI) and Horizons.

2.1. Prisca Thevenot

Prisca Thevenot (RE) was the Government spokesperson at the time of the legislative election and has been a member of the National Assembly since 2022. During the campaign period, she only uploaded one video to her TikTok account, which featured an endorsement from former Prime Minister Edouard Phillipe. More importantly, she was the only candidate to report being a victim of offline violence during the 2024 election. On 3 July, while putting up campaign posters with her team, Thevenot was attacked by multiple individuals; one member of her team was injured in the attack.

While Thevenot was primarily subject to political criticism, analysts still found personalized hateful and misogynistic slurs directed at her. Many comments accused her of lying or staging the attack she endured, spreading misinformation about the incident. Other commenters suggested that the attack was deserved,

Figure 9. “She is truly a monster, this monkey.” The term ‘guenon’ (monkey) is frequently used as a racist slur against Black women. However, as Dufour is a white French woman, rather than being racially motivated, this dehumanising comment likely targets her for her appearance.



Figure 10. Comments targeting Garrido for leaving the LFI. The top comment reads: “The traitor, long live LFI (La France Insoumise).” The comment below reads: “Traitor”.

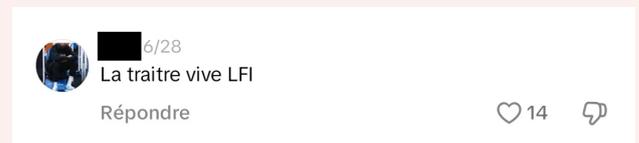


Figure 11. “THEThe [Sic] fat Garrido in shipwreck..🤡”

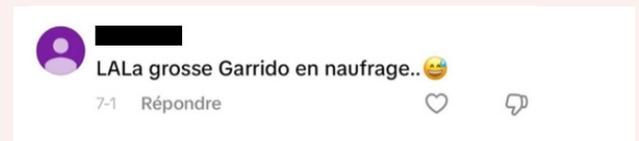


Figure 12. “Chewbacca is losing his temper??🤡🤡”

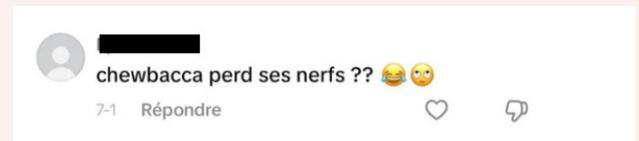
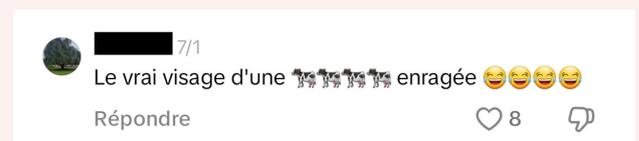


Figure 13. “The true face of an 🦍🦍🦍 enraged 🤡🤡🤡”.



describing it as “karma” and even warning that this was “only the beginning.” Supporters of far-right parties also implied the violence was perpetrated by youths from immigrant backgrounds (figure 14), using coded language and rhetorical questions about the nationalities and ethnicities of the perpetrators. This is part of a known strategy to racialise crime, framing it as inherently tied to non-white populations without making explicit statements that would trigger content moderation.

These comments were not isolated but part of a broader pattern that included references to xenophobic trends, such as the anti-immigrant song “Je partira pas”, widely shared by far-right users and key political figures in 2024. The song explicitly targets immigrants with racist rhetorics and promotes opposition to immigration to preserve a white, Western French national identity.

1.2. Yaël Braun Pivet

Yaël Braun Pivet (RE) has been the President of the National Assembly since 2022. Throughout the campaign, she faced significant levels of hate, ranging from slurs to dehumanising attacks. While misogynistic slurs were present in her comments, she was primarily targeted with antisemitic content including emojis depicting pigs. Drawing on antisemitic “Judensau” caricatures of the Middle Ages, pig symbols are offensive and dehumanising tropes used to mock and associate Jewish individuals with impurity and undesirability.

The antisemitic comments were linked to her Jewish background, her condemnation of the 7 October 2023 attacks on Israel and her continued support for the Israeli government. Some comments used more implicit antisemitic tropes, including accusations that Braun Pivet is an “Israeli mole” (figure 15). Some remarks on her videos, often framed as humour, came close to explicitly inciting violence, suggesting that she should be murdered.

Comments under one of Braun Pivet’s videos highlighted how displays of emotion and vulnerability by women public figures attract hatred. It showcases a radio show where she appears alongside a Black woman who is visibly in tears as she shares her fears about the rise of the far-right and growing hate in France. Comments responding to the video include xenophobic and other discriminatory remarks targeting both Braun Pivet and the other women interviewed. Many comments trivialised both women’s suffering by labelling them as “actresses,” accusing them of exaggerating or faking their distress, and even dehumanising them by describing them as pigs (figure 16).

Figure 14. “The million-dollar question..... what are the origins of the attackers? 😊”.



Figure 15. “The Zionist who does not hide her preference for Israel 🇮🇱 and who certainly does not work for France”.



Figure 16. “But between her and the other fat pig who’s putting on an act... we’ve got some real talent 😊”



This pattern exemplifies a key aspect of OGBV: vulnerability is often belittled and women’s experiences are invalidated, reinforcing a culture that downplays women’s pain and dismisses their emotional expressions.

3. Les Républicains

Les Républicains (LR) is a conservative party in France, whose influence has declined since the 2017 presidential election, when Macron’s victory from the centre reshaped the traditional left-right political divide in France.

3.1. Annie Genevard

Annie Genevard (LR), who became Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty after the 2024 election, is the only woman candidate from Les Républicains included in this study, as there were no other significant women political figures from her party during this campaign. Genevard does not have a TikTok account, so the analysis of videos was based solely on search results using her name and the keywords “legislative 2024.” Many of the top

videos retrieved were irrelevant, featuring approximate homonyms or content related to the legislative campaign rather than the candidate herself. Analysts also did not find any instances of hate specifically targeting her in the comments of videos mentioning Genevard.

4. Rassemblement National

The Rassemblement National (RN), formerly known as the Front National (FN), is a far-right party founded in 1972 with support from controversial neo-Nazi figures and those nostalgic for the French colonial era in Algeria. Despite its contentious history, the party – now led by Marine Le Pen, the founder’s daughter – has rebranded and emerged as a leading force in French politics.

4.1. Marine Le Pen

Marine Le Pen (RN) has the largest TikTok following among the selected candidates in this briefing, with more than 1.2 million followers as of August 2024. Across the posts and comments analysed on her account, no hateful or degrading content was found. Instead, Le Pen enjoys substantial support from her followers, with many praising her beauty, elegance and competence. Similar patterns were observed with other far-right women candidates, such as Laure Lavalette (RN) and Edwige Diaz (RN), who were examined during the initial scoping phase.

Overall, far-right women candidates on TikTok appeared to experience less OGBV than those of other parties, benefiting from the support of their political communities. However, it is worth noting that during the campaign, Le Pen became the subject of the rap music video “[No Pasarán.](#)” This song, a statement against the RN’s victory, included lyrics that hinted at violence and death threats. It also contains misogynistic slurs directed at both Le Pen and her niece, Marion Maréchal (RN), a member of the European Parliament since 2024.

Our analysis also revealed that RN candidate Julien Odoul, previously [a target of homophobic violence](#), used his TikTok channel to spread gendered disinformation and hatred against women critical towards the far-right including political opponents and public figures. While this falls outside the initial scope of our investigation, this trend aligns with findings in [prior reports](#) suggesting the need for further examination to assessing the extent and implications of far-right political figures such as Odoul and their supporters in spreading OGBV.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This analysis found significant examples of OGBV and gendered disinformation targeting women politicians during the 2024 French legislative campaign. The analysed content showed a range of abusive comments including calls for violence as well as misogynistic hate. Gendered disinformation was particularly prevalent, with users attempting to harm and delegitimise women candidates by mocking their political opinions, appearance, mental capabilities, ethnicity, 'race,' nationality, socioeconomic background and other personal traits. This underscores how online hate often targets women candidates' identities rather than engaging with their policies or beliefs.

Hostility against women candidates significantly increased when candidates engaged in gender activism or called out against gender-based violence. Similarly, the debate around the Israel-Hamas conflict exacerbated attacks on candidates. However, in videos addressing these contentious topics, users targeted women candidates not only for their political stances but also for their ethnic and religious backgrounds, as well as capabilities and appearance; in some cases resorting to dehumanising them. In France, these issues appear to deepen the divide between far-right and "hard-left" users.

As found in [prior reports](#), both the initial scoping and subsequent case studies found that women candidates from left-wing parties were disproportionately targeted by OGBV compared to their far-right counterparts. Supporters of far-right parties were significant contributors to the hate directed at left-wing women candidates. Further research is needed to assess the scope and impact of this harassment, as well as to understand whether these actions are organic or coordinated.

Five of the nine candidates analysed reduced their engagement or ceased activity on TikTok during and/or after the campaigning period, but online violence persisted on their profiles. Their reduced online activity may reflect the lasting impact of the intimidation and harassment faced by women candidates on online platforms, which can [compel them to limit or avoid certain forms of campaigning to escape abuse](#).

The cases analysed demonstrate that TikTok's current automated tools for moderation remain insufficient to

protect women and genderqueer candidates from online abuse and harassment. A prime example of this is Sandrine Rousseau: despite her prominence and the high levels of hate against her, TikTok's response was limited to a "bullying prevention" label on one of the videos targeting her. This label provided information about harassment, including guidance on where to seek assistance and reporting content on TikTok. However, the platform did not effectively remove the harmful comments directed at Rousseau.

While TikTok has shown itself capable of identifying some forms of harassment, it still lacks the necessary mechanisms to properly moderate OGBV and gendered disinformation targeting women candidates. Our findings underscore the urgent need for enhanced moderation policies that can better protect women and gender minority candidates from online violence and hatred, ensuring a safer and more equitable space for their digital campaigning activities.

TikTok's failure to effectively moderate hateful content during the 2024 French legislative campaign contradicts the platform's obligations under [Articles 34 and 35 of the DSA](#), which require platforms to mitigate systemic risks during election periods and tackle OGBV and other forms of violence. This makes TikTok an unsafe space for women candidates and genderqueer candidates and undermines democratic debate and equal representation in both digital and political spheres.

To effectively address moderation gaps and the persistence of OGBV, the platform should:

- improve context-aware human moderation, ensuring that reviewers are trained not only in language nuances but also in the political and social landscape of the relevant region,
- improve transparency and enforcement by expanding protections for targeted public figures and allowing users to report patterns of harassment rather than just isolated incidents of hate.

Policymakers should:

- assess the platform's compliance, ensuring stronger enforcement to effectively moderate OGBV and election risks,

- strengthen support mechanisms for women and gender minority candidates and politicians, including legal resources, digital security training and emergency response frameworks.

Civil society and media organisations play a key role in exposing gendered disinformation, holding platforms accountable for enforcement failures and advocating for stronger (digital) protections for women and genderqueer people in politics. The work of journalists, experts, and fact-checkers is crucial not only for monitoring and documenting OGBV, but also for integrating fact-based counter-narratives and preventive strategies. These efforts are essential to safeguarding democratic participation and creating a more equitable and secure digital space for women and other gender minorities engaged in politics.



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