Principles: Proportionality and do no harm, Safety and security, Fairness and non-discrimination, Privacy, Awareness and literacy
Values: Human Rights , Ensuring diversity and inclusiveness, Living in harmony and peace

Freedom threatened by online dating platform selling users personal information

A woman signs in on an online dating platform.

As to complete her profile, she fills in her sexual preferences - indicating she is attracted to other women - gives personal information and allows the application to have access to her geolocation as to find the closest matches. What she doesn't know is that the platform she signed up on sells the personal information of its users on markets.

Though homosexuality itself is not illegal in her country, public homosexual acts are. For this reason, the woman's government decides to buy a part of the information from this platform and analyzes the content as to locate and track down homosexual civilians. The woman is then arrested and incarcerated for homosexuality without him publicly expressing it.

Associations warn the LGBTQ+ community to avoid travelling to places under surveillance or using technology that can be monitored by the authorities. The media gets ahold of the abuse and under the pressure of the international community, the country frees the woman.

When signing up on a platform, one has to bear in mind that the information given becomes accessible to a large panel of actors. This includes governments or companies that will use that information for their personal interest.

How could this situation have been avoided in the first place?

Here are our recommendations per stakeholder:

- The company should reform its policies as to not sell any information that could put at risk its users.

- Regional and international organizations are encouraged to pressure the country to stop this kind of behaviors towards their population. Sanctions should be set up as to punish such abuses. Furthermore, policies on the access and security of personal information should be created as to guarantee the protection of those using technologies. Awareness campaigns on the potential risks that disclosing personal information can represent should be done.

- Associations should continue warning target communities to avoid travelling to places under

surveillance or using technology that can be monitored by the authorities.

- Media should make the users aware of the risks and encourage to read carefully the terms and conditions of social media platforms.

Privacy & Human Rights & Fairness and non-discrimination & Responsibility and accountability & Safety and security

Know more about this case:

- “Egypt's police 'using social media and apps like Grindr to trap gay people”, The Independent, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/egypt-s-police-using-social-media-and-apps-grindr-trap-gay-people-9738515.html
- “Egyptian Police Using Social Media to Trap and Rape Suspected LGBTQ People”, Newsweek, https://www.newsweek.com/egyptian-police-using-social-media-trap-rape-suspected-lgbtq-people-1536493
- “Jailed for using Grindr: homosexuality in Egypt”, The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/apr/03/jailed-for-using-grindr-homosexuality-in-egypt

Related work:

- The Cambridge Analytica Scandal, https://www.theguardian.com/news/series/cambridge-analytica-files
- Facebook–Cambridge Analytica data scandal, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook–Cambridge_Analytica_data_scandal
- “This Pride Month, Shame on You: Exposing Anti-LGBT Government Strategies in MENA”, Human Rights Watch, https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/08/pride-month-shame-you-exposing-anti-lgbt-government-strategies-mena

- “A police raid, viral videos and the broken lives of Nigerian gay law suspects”, Reuters, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-lgbt-widerimage-idUSKCN20I105

- “Yemeni blogger jailed in Saudi Arabia for LGBT social media post”, Jurist, https://www.jurist.org/news/2020/07/yemeni-blogger-jailed-in-saudi-arabia-for-lgbt-social-media-post/