



**LAWYERS ALERT**

**HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY IN NIGERIA**

**IN**

**PARTNERSHIP WITH**

**ELTON JOHN AIDS FOUNDATION**

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## Table of Contents

Table of Figures .....	3
Preface .....	4
Background.....	6
Methodology.....	6
Limitations .....	6
Analysis of Human Rights Violations against the LGBTQ+ Community in Nigeria.....	8
States with the highest Human Rights Violations against the LGBTQ+ Community.	8
Analysis of Human Rights Violations against the LGBTQ+ Community in Project States.....	8
Analysis of States with the highest Human Rights Violations against the LGBTQ+ Community. ....	8
LGBTQ+ Violations based on Local Government Areas (LGAs) .....	9
Analysis of LGBTQ+ Violations based on Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the Project States. ....	9
Analysis of LGBTQ+ Violations based on Local Government Areas (LGAs). ....	9
Perpetrators of LGBTQ+ Violations.....	11
Analysis of Perpetrators of LGBTQ+ Violations in the Project States. ....	11
General Analysis of Perpetrators of LGBTQ+ Violations.....	11
LGBTQ+ Violations based on Age.....	12
Analysis of LGBTQ+ Violations based on Age in Project States.....	12
General Analysis of LGBTQ+ Violations based on Age.....	12
Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations .....	12
Analysis of the Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations in the Project States. ....	12
General Analysis of the Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations.....	13
Emotional and Psychological Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations .....	14
Conclusion .....	15

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: Pie Chart Analysis of LGAs in Project States with the highest LGBTQ+ Violations .....	8
Figure 2: States with the highest LGBTQ+ Violations .....	9
Figure 4: Pie Chart Analysis of LGAs in Project States with the highest LGBTQ+ Violations .....	9
Figure 5: Analysis of LGAs with the highest LGBTQ+ Violations .....	10
Figure 6: Pie Chart Analysis of Perpetrators of LGBTQ+ Violations in the Project States .....	11
Figure 7: Analysis of Perpetrators of LGBTQ+ Violations .....	11
Figure 8: Age with the highest LGBTQ+ violations in the project states. ....	12
Figure 9: Age with the highest LGBTQ+ violations in the project states. ....	12
Figure 10: Analysis of the Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations in the Project States .....	13
Figure 11: Analysis of the Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations .....	14



## Preface

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted ways in which LGBTQ+ individuals and communities in Nigeria experience rights violations. It documents cases of discrimination, violence, and the deprivation of fundamental freedoms, particularly in access to healthcare, social services, and personal security.

The data utilized in this report is derived from systematic monitoring, documentation, and analysis conducted through Lawyers Alert's online tool, "LadockT." This innovative tool facilitates the precise tracking and categorization of human rights violations across Nigeria's 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs), providing critical insights into patterns of abuse based on variables such as age, sex, and type of violation.

For this report, primary focus was placed on three project states - Benue, Plateau, and Nasarawa - while also incorporating broader national trends. The documented violations include, but are not limited to, emotional and physical abuse, verbal harassment, denial of family life, restrictions on the right to free association, denial of access to accurate SRHR information and services, breaches of medical confidentiality, forced economic dependence, blackmail, sexual exploitation, invasion of privacy, and restrictions on freedom of movement.

Findings indicate that in the project states, physical and emotional abuse emerged as the most prevalent violations, each accounting for 17% of recorded cases. These were followed by harassment, denial of freedom to express sexuality, and denial of freedom to associate (each at 9%), while verbal abuse accounted for 8%. Blackmail and denial of family life each constituted 6% of reported cases. On a national scale, emotional abuse was the most frequently reported violation (12%), followed by verbal abuse (11%) and physical abuse (10%). Blackmail and denial of freedom to express sexuality were documented at 9%, while harassment and failure to protect personal security accounted for 8%.

The data presented in this report is both verifiable and methodologically sound, ensuring the reliability of findings on human rights violations affecting the LGBTQ+ community in Nigeria. Data collection was conducted in collaboration with our project partners, including the Initiative for Community Empowerment and Vulnerable Support (I-CEVS), Olive Right to Health Initiative (ORHI), and Hope Alive Health Awareness Initiative (HAHAI), as well as various civil society organizations and grassroots partners working within affected communities. Information received was systematically input into our online tool and subjected to rigorous analysis, ensuring data integrity and reliability.

These findings serve as a critical resource for shaping evidence-based interventions and informing policy advocacy efforts aimed at protecting LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination and human rights abuses. Lawyers

Alert extends its gratitude to the Elton John AIDS Foundation for its unwavering support in advancing this work. We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of individuals and organizations that referred cases, significantly enhancing the robustness of our data.

Lawyers Alert remains committed to promoting and protecting the rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups through the systematic documentation of rights violations, provision of free legal services, literacy campaigns, and advocacy for policy and legal reforms. We envision a society where all individuals, irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity, are free from injustice and discrimination.

Dr. Rommy Mom  
President, Lawyers Alert



## Background

Nigeria has some of the most restrictive laws against LGBTQ+ individuals in the world. The Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act (SSMPA) of 2014 criminalizes same-sex relationships, marriage, and public displays of affection between LGBTQ+ individuals, with penalties of up to 14 years in prison. The law also penalizes organizations and individuals who support LGBTQ+ rights, leading to the shutdown of advocacy groups and increased stigmatization.

In addition to federal laws, Sharia law, which is enforced in 12 northern states, prescribes the death penalty for same-sex relationships among Muslims. Under Nigeria's Criminal and Penal Codes, acts deemed "against the order of nature" can attract a 14-year prison sentence in the south and up to death by stoning in some northern states.

Some patterns of Human Rights Violations LGBTQ+ persons in Nigeria face include: Arbitrary Arrests and Police Brutality, Violence and Mob Attacks, Blackmail and Extortion, Workplace and Social Discrimination, Family and Community Rejection, Denial of Healthcare, etc.

The hostile legal and social environment has forced many LGBTQ+ individuals into hiding, limiting their access to education, employment, and healthcare, which undermines the efforts at ending HIV by 2030. The fear of persecution has led to the internal displacement of LGBTQ+ persons within Nigeria and forced many into seeking asylum abroad.

## Methodology

Lawyers Alert conducted comprehensive training and refresher sessions for partners and stakeholders to enhance their capacity in monitoring and documenting human rights violations using the LadockT platform. These sessions aimed to ensure accuracy, consistency, and reliability in data collection and analysis.

Additionally, community members and grassroots organizations played a vital role in the documentation process by providing referrals and facilitating engagement with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). This collaborative approach strengthened the reporting framework and ensured a more comprehensive representation of violations experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals across the targeted regions.

## Limitations

This Report of Human Rights Violations associated with the LGBTQ+ community in Nigeria is subject to certain limitations. While it does not provide a fully comprehensive account, it serves as a valuable contribution to ongoing legal advocacy efforts, particularly in the push for the repeal of the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA). A key challenge remains the reluctance of LGBTQ+ individuals to report violations due to fear of legal repercussions and societal stigma. To mitigate this, Lawyers Alert continues



to strengthen legal literacy and provide free legal support to affected individuals.

Regarding geographic coverage, while reports of violations were received from across Nigeria, this study focuses on Benue, Nasarawa, and Plateau States, where data could be independently verified. As a result, violations from other states, though documented, which were not verified, were not included in the analysis to maintain the integrity of the findings.

Additionally, some reports were provided by organizations offering services rather than the direct victims of violations. While these third-party reports are crucial for mapping trends, there is a possibility of underreporting or, in some cases, exaggeration. Despite these limitations, the report remains a critical and evolving resource that contributes to broader efforts to document and address the systemic discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in Nigeria.



## Analysis of Human Rights Violations against the LGBTQ+ Community in Nigeria

States with the highest Human Rights Violations against the LGBTQ+ Community.

### Analysis of Human Rights Violations against the LGBTQ+ Community in Project States.

With the project situated in 3 states within Nigeria, i.e. Benue, Nasarawa, and Plateau, fig 1. reflects the findings within the project states from December 2023 to December 2024.

In this reporting period, **Benue** emerged first, accounting for 93% of LGBTQ+ violations reported. Following closely is **Nasarawa** State at 7%. **Plateau** State ranked third with an insignificant reportage of less than 1%.

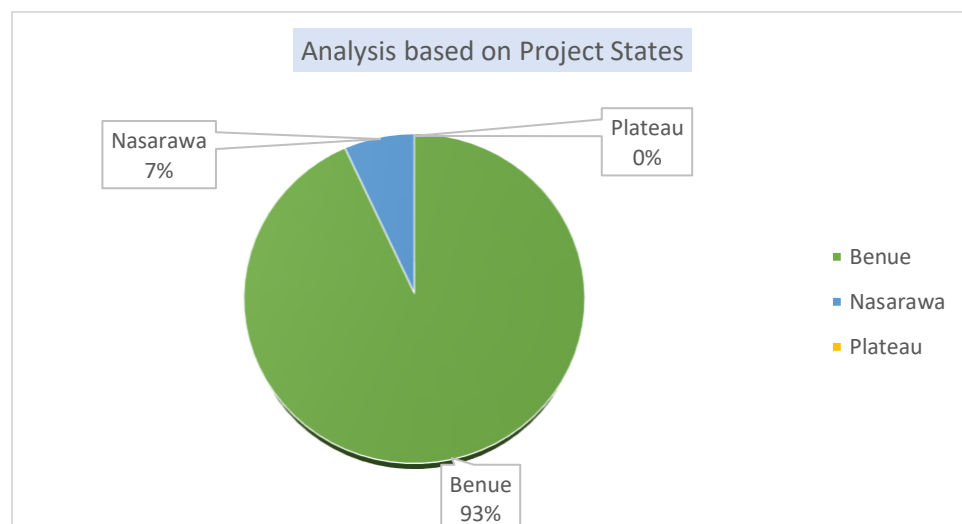


Figure 1: Pie Chart Analysis of LGAs in Project States with the highest LGBTQ+ Violations

### Analysis of States with the highest Human Rights Violations against the LGBTQ+ Community.

The below analysis in fig 2. reflects a broader national picture of data gathered from December 2020 to December 2024 beyond the project states.

**Benue** state ranked first at 41%, closely followed by **Anambra** at 24%. **Lagos** State came third at 13%, **Bauchi** was fourth at 9%, and **Abuja, FCT**, fifth at 7%. The following states – **Nasarawa, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Kaduna**, and **Delta** were at 1%, respectively. **Plateau** had the least reportage at less than 1%.



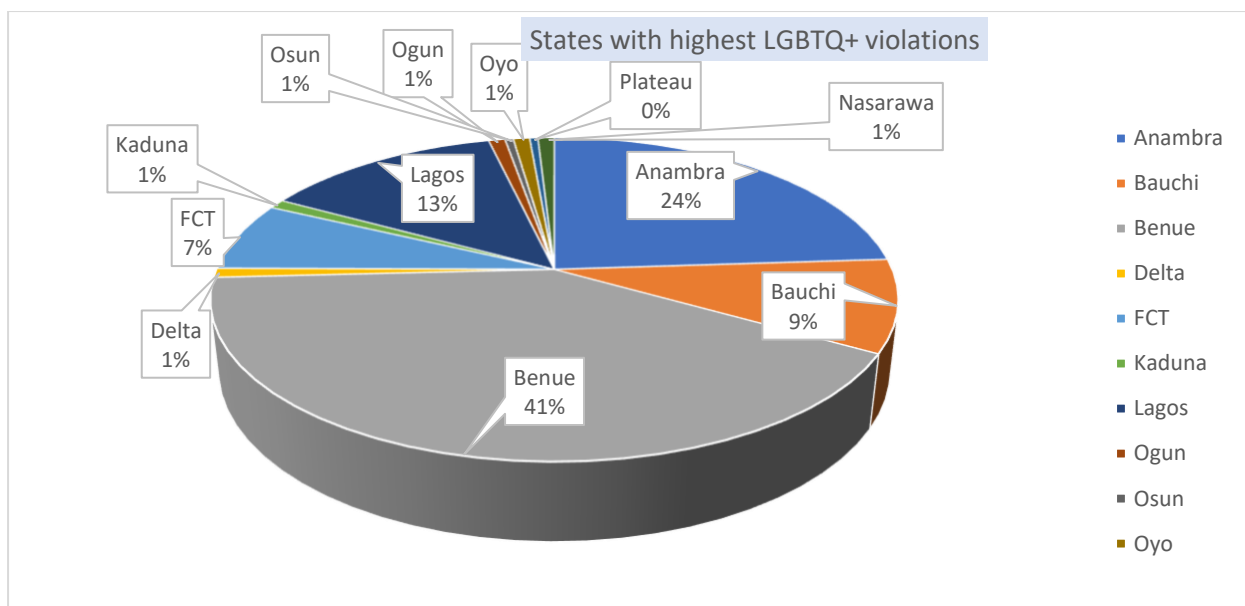


Figure 2: States with the highest LGBTQ+ Violations

### LGBTQ+ Violations based on Local Government Areas (LGAs)

#### Analysis of LGBTQ+ Violations based on Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the Project States.

In this reporting period, **Makurdi** LGA in Benue State ranked highest with 24%. **Ushongo** and **Konshisha** LGAs, both in Benue State, came second at 21%. **Gboko**, **Logo**, and **Oju** LGAs in Benue State ranked third with 7%. **Otukpo** LGA in Benue State ranked fourth at 4%. **Toto** and **Lafia** LGAs in Nasarawa State, and **Katsina-Ala** in Benue were all documented at 3% respectively.

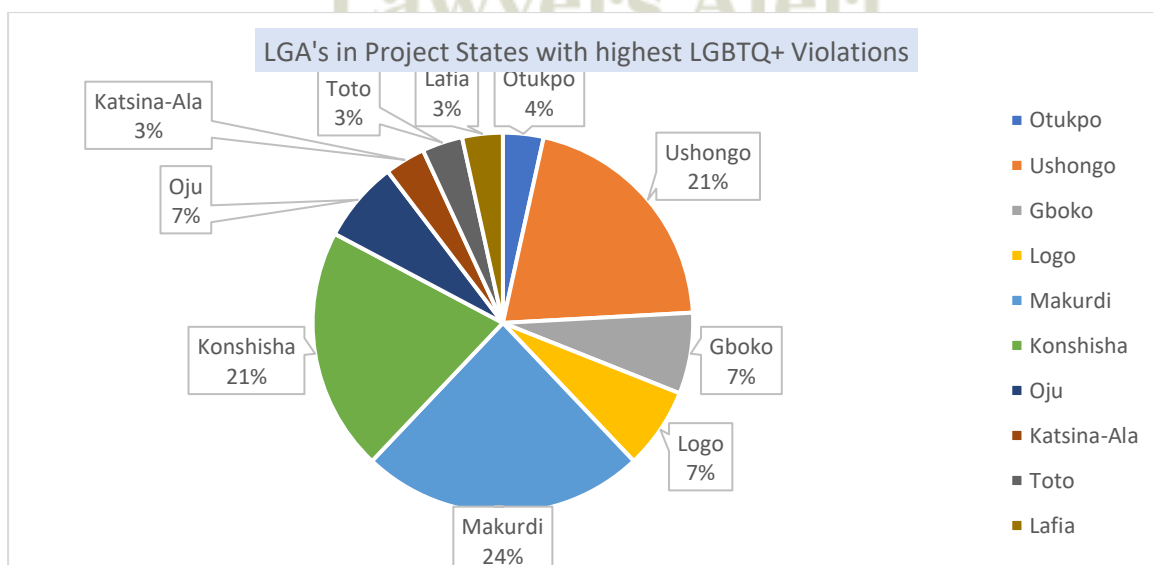


Figure 3: Pie Chart Analysis of LGAs in Project States with the highest LGBTQ+ Violations

#### Analysis of LGBTQ+ Violations based on Local Government Areas (LGAs).

Violations across LGAs were not restricted to LGAs of project states but covered the entire 774 LGAs of Nigeria. In this report, Dunukofia LGA in

Anambra State ranked highest with 23%. **Makurdi** LGA in Benue State came second at 16%. **Abuja Municipal (AMAC)** in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and **Lagos Island** in Lagos State ranked third with 6%. Gboko in Benue State was fourth at 5%, closely followed by **Ikeja** LGA in Lagos State, **Bwari** LGA in the FCT, and **Konshisha** LGA in Benue State with 4% respectively. **Kwande** and **Ushongo** LGAs in Benue State and **Lagos Mainland** in Lagos State were next at 3%. **Otukpo** and **Logo** LGAs in Benue State were captured at 2% each, with **Obi**, **Oju**, **Ibadan North**, **Surulere**, **Kaduna North**, and **Warri North** LGAs all at 1%. **Agatu**, **Lafia**, **Apapa**, **Akwa North**, **Idemili North**, **Katsina-Ala**, **Odogbolu**, **Okpokuwu**, **Oshogbo**, **Pankshin**, **Shagamu**, **Toro**, and **Toto** LGAs were all recorded at an insignificant value of less than 1%.

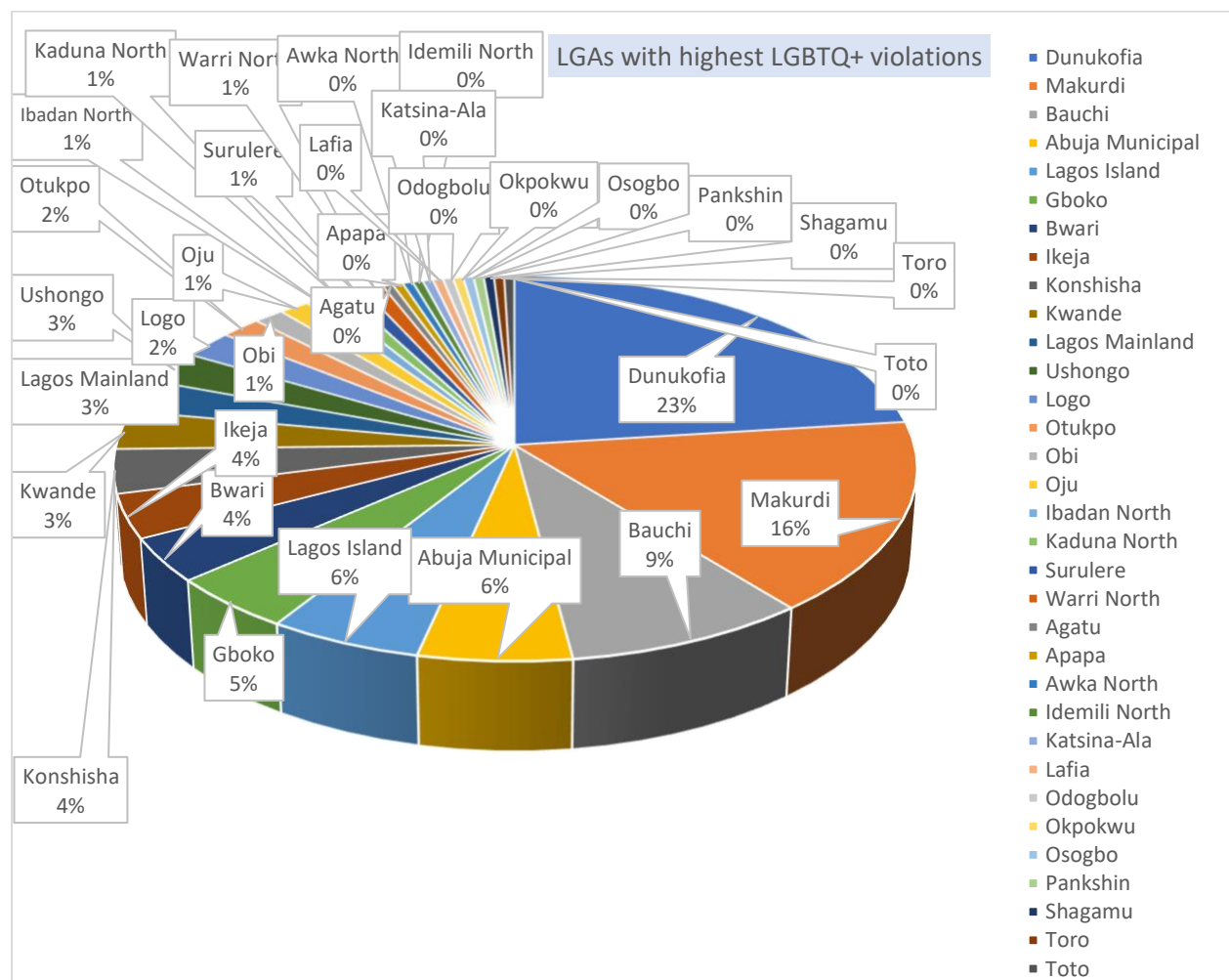


Figure 4: Analysis of LGAs with the highest LGBTQ+ Violations

## Perpetrators of LGBTQ+ Violations

### Analysis of Perpetrators of LGBTQ+ Violations in the Project States.

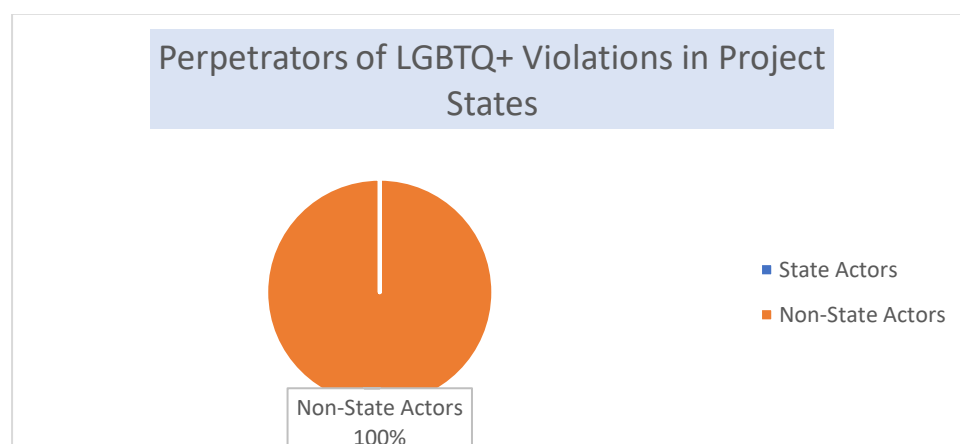


Figure 5: Pie Chart Analysis of Perpetrators of LGBTQ+ Violations in the Project States

From the above analysis, violations from **Non-State Actors** were documented at 100%. This encompassed family members, landlords, private employers of labour, friends, religious leaders, neighbours, etc. The stigma of the LGBTQ+ community within the domestic space calls for further enlightenment and literacy.

### General Analysis of Perpetrators of LGBTQ+ Violations

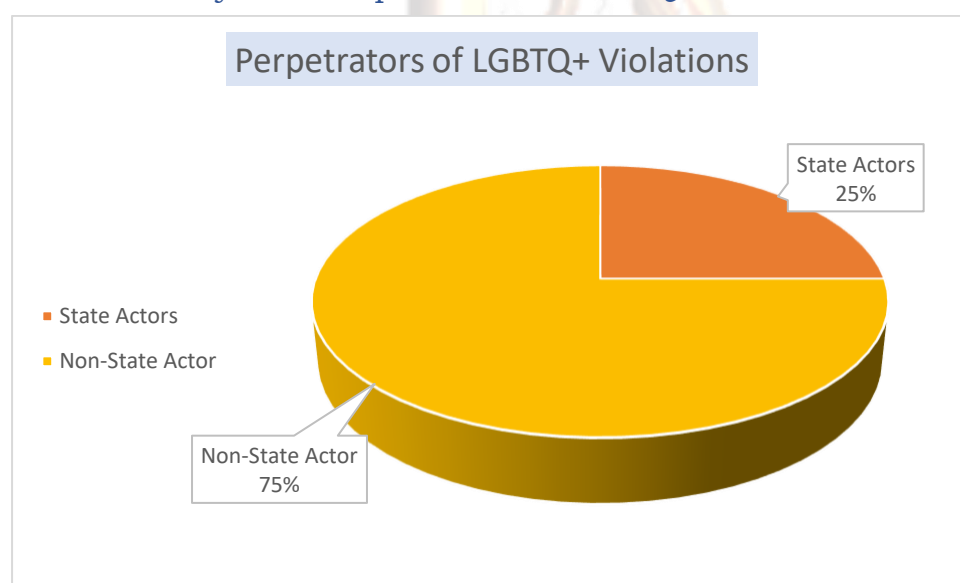


Figure 6: Analysis of Perpetrators of LGBTQ+ Violations

From the above analysis, **Non-State Actors** also ranked first at 75%. Just like in the project states, this includes family members, landlords, private employers of labour, friends, religious leaders, neighbours, etc. **State Actors**, which include the Police, Vigilantes, Medical Care Givers, Nurses, etc., ranked second at 25%. There is also a need to further enhance the knowledge of State Actors on the rights of the LGBTQ+ community in Nigeria.

## LGBTQ+ Violations based on Age

### Analysis of LGBTQ+ Violations based on Age in Project States.

The pie chart below provides a breakdown by age, illustrating that the highest incidents of LGBTQ+ violations in the project states occur in the 20-24 years age group, accounting for 62%. The 25 – 40 years age bracket follows closely behind at 31%, while the age bracket of 10 – 19 years comes in third at 7%. The 0-5- and 6-9-years groups had an insignificant reportage at less than 1%.

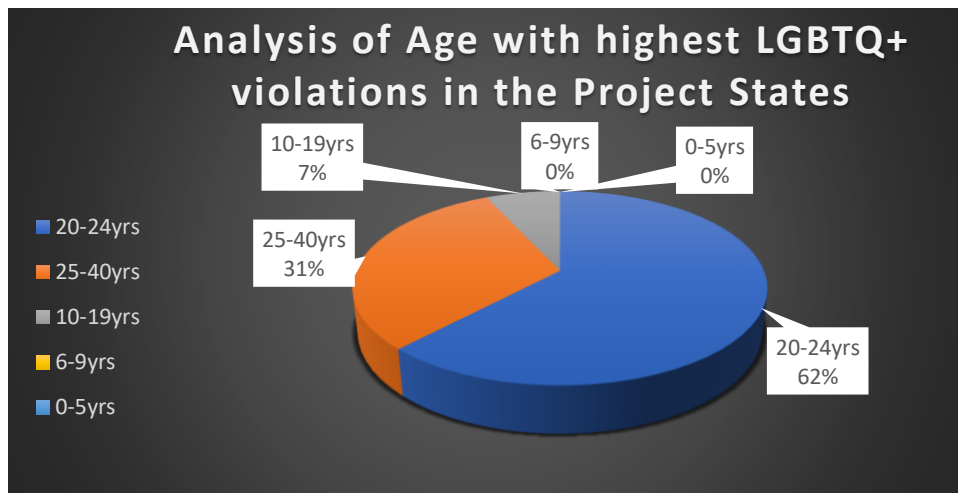


Figure 7: Age with the highest LGBTQ+ violations in the project states.

### General Analysis of LGBTQ+ Violations based on Age.

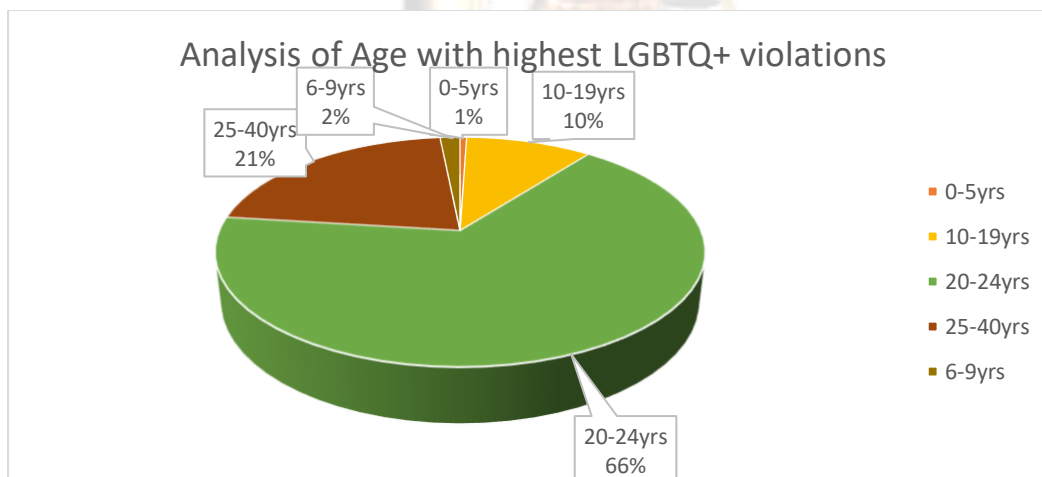


Figure 8: Age with the highest LGBTQ+ violations in the project states.

In the pie chart above, the 20–24 year age group had the highest violation at 66%. This is closely followed by the 25 – 40 years age bracket at 21%, with the age bracket of 10 – 19 years in third position at 10%. The 6-9-year group was documented at 2%, and the 0-5 age bracket was reported at 1%.

## Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations

### Analysis of the Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations in the Project States.

The chart below provides an overview of the impact of violations related to the LGBTQ+ community as captured in the project states. **Physical Abuse** and

**Emotional Abuse** ranked highest at 17%, respectively, closely followed by **Harassment**, **Denial of Freedom to Express Sexuality**, and **Denial of Freedom to Associate** at 9%. **Verbal Abuse** ranks third at 8%, while **Blackmailing** and **Denial of Family Life** follow at 6%. **Sexual Exploitation** and **Limited Access to SRH Services** ranked fifth at 4%, with **Forced Financial Dependence/ Economic Abuse**, **Denial of Accurate SRH Information**, and **Failure to Protect Personal Security** at 2%. **Unlawful denial of Freedom of Movement**, **Invasion of Privacy**, **Denial of Quality Health Care**, **Denial of Quality SRH Services**, **Confidentiality Breach**, and **Denial of Affordable SRH** are recorded at 1%.

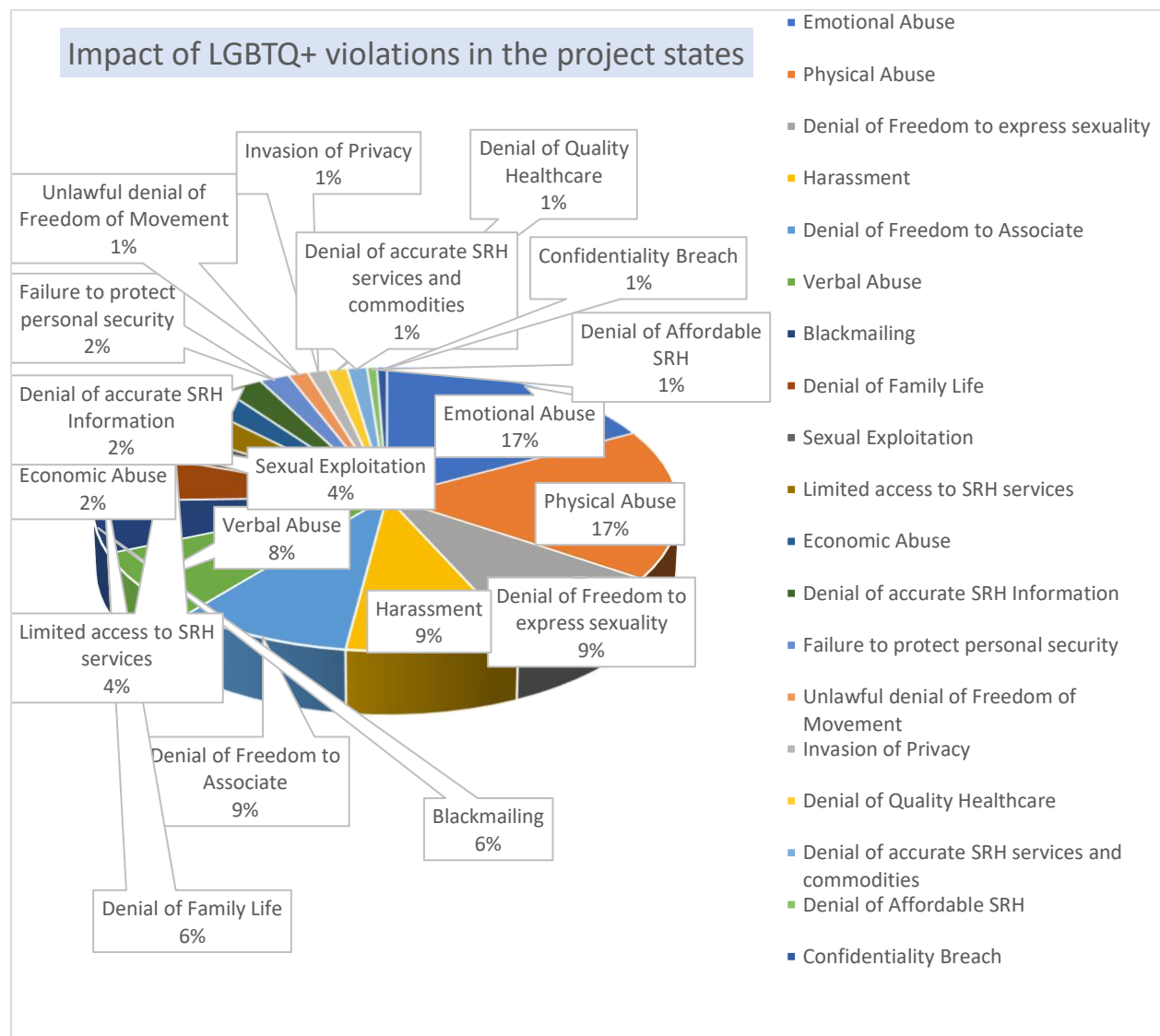


Figure 9: Analysis of the Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations in the Project States

### General Analysis of the Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations

In the chart below, **Emotional Abuse** ranked highest at 12%, closely followed by **Verbal Abuse** at 11%, and **Physical Abuse** at 10%. **Blackmailing** and **Denial of Freedom to Express Sexuality** were at 9%, with **Harassment** and

**Failure to Protect Personal Security** documented at 8%. **Denial of Freedom to Associate** was at 7%, **Unlawful Forced Detention** and **Unlawful Denial of Freedom of Movement** at 6%, with **Invasion of Privacy** at 5%. **Limited access to SRH services**, **Sexual Exploitation**, **Denial of Family Life**, **Forced Financial Dependence/Economic Abuse**, **Rape**, and **Denial of Accurate SRH** were at 1% respectively. **Denial of Quality Health Care**, **Confidentiality Breach**, **Denial of Affordable SRH**, **Denial of accurate SRH services & commodities**, and **Denial of housing or eviction on grounds of sexual orientation**, all had an insignificant amount of less than 1%.

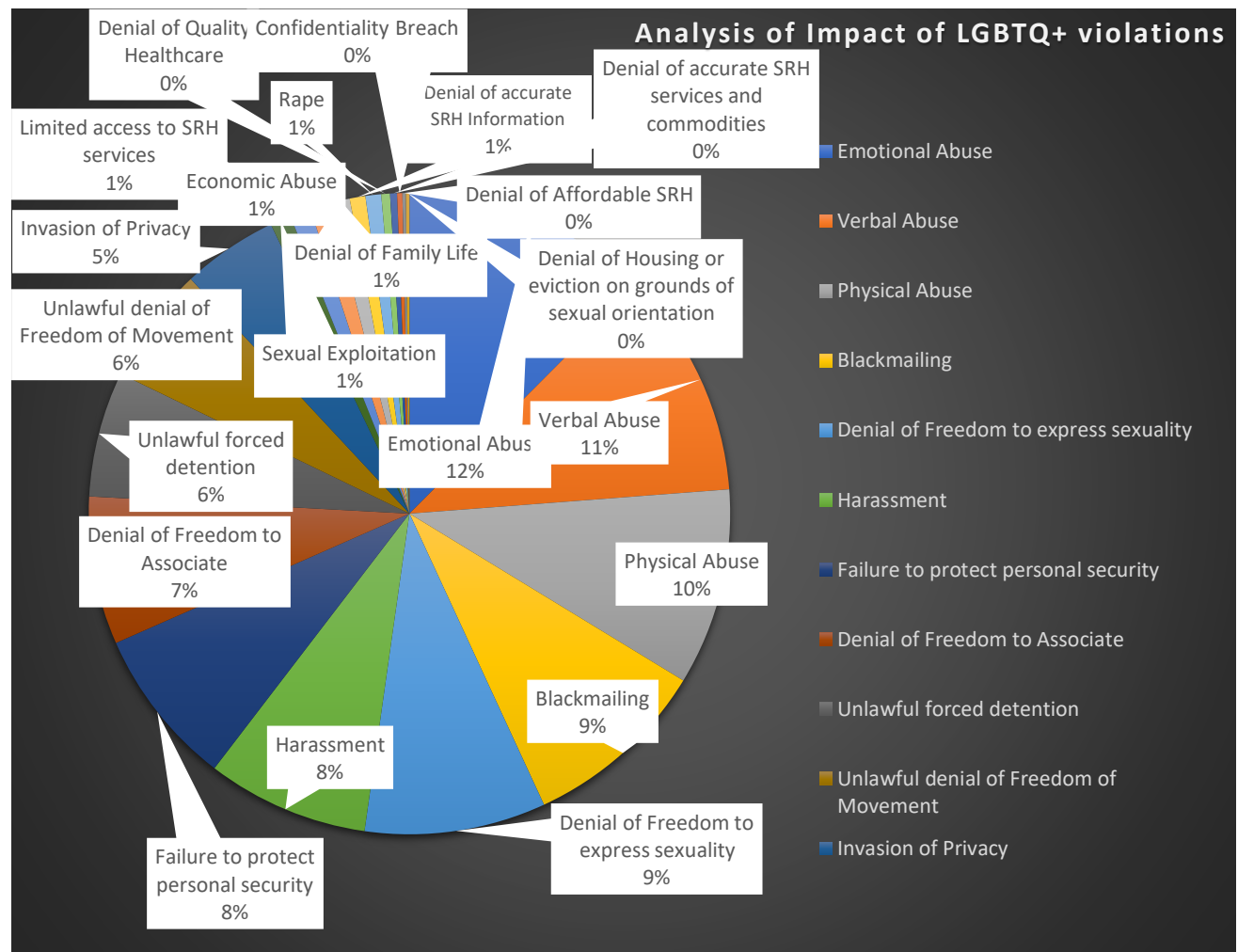


Figure 10: Analysis of the Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations

### Emotional and Psychological Impact of LGBTQ+ Violations

The systematic discrimination and human rights violations faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in Nigeria have profound emotional and psychological consequences. The legal and social hostility, compounded by the enforcement of the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA), has created an environment of fear, isolation, and psychological distress among sexual minorities.

One of the most significant emotional impacts is chronic anxiety and stress. LGBTQ+ individuals live in constant fear of exposure, arrest, or violence,



leading to heightened levels of anxiety that affect daily functioning. This persistent fear can manifest in physical symptoms such as insomnia, headaches, and high blood pressure, significantly diminishing overall well-being.

Depression is another prevalent consequence, as individuals experience social rejection from families, friends, and communities. Many face expulsion from their homes, economic hardship, and loss of support systems, leading to feelings of hopelessness and despair. The lack of safe spaces for self-expression exacerbates these struggles, increasing the risk of self-harm and suicidal ideation.

Emotional abuse, which was reported as one of the most frequent violations in this study, further compounds psychological distress. Verbal harassment, threats, and degrading treatment erode self-esteem and contribute to internalized homophobia, where individuals begin to see themselves as unworthy of love and respect. This internal conflict can result in identity suppression, where individuals feel compelled to conceal their true selves, leading to severe emotional turmoil.

The mental health impact is also linked to limited access to psychological and medical support. Many LGBTQ+ individuals avoid seeking professional help due to fear of discrimination from healthcare providers, breaches of confidentiality, and a lack of culturally competent mental health services. Without adequate support, trauma from physical and sexual abuse remains unaddressed, leading to long-term psychological scars.

The hostile legal and societal environment also fosters a sense of loneliness and exclusion. The denial of freedom to associate and express sexuality further isolates individuals, leaving them without peer support networks. This social isolation not only affects mental health but also hinders access to critical resources, including legal aid and healthcare services.

Addressing the emotional and psychological impact of these violations requires urgent intervention. Increased awareness, legal protections, and accessible mental health services tailored to LGBTQ+ individuals are essential to mitigating the long-term consequences of discrimination. Without these interventions, the cycle of emotional distress, stigma, and marginalization will persist, perpetuating harm against an already vulnerable community.

## Conclusion

The violation analysis, as captured above, is the representation of documented incidents from the period of December 2023 to December 2024. While it may not be entirely inclusive of the entire Country, it is certainly accurate, credible, and a valid representation of the state of human rights violations associated with LGBTQ+ in Nigeria. It is also important to note that the data presented in this report is exclusively based on data obtained from the online portal (Lawyers Alert Documentation Tool "LadockT"). By uncovering these violations, Lawyers Alert firmly believes that these scientific findings will serve as a huge resource for evidence-based advocacy efforts to

end stigma and discrimination for the LGBTQ+ community in Nigeria. It is also hoped that this data will pave the way towards a more inclusive society and ultimately towards the repeal of the SSMPA in Nigeria.

