



...Promoting Human Rights

Lawyers Alert Interventions in Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

INTRODUCTION

Lawyers Alert is a leading law-based human rights organisation committed to advancing justice and equality and protecting the rights of women and marginalised populations. With a strong focus on the empowerment of women and girls, we work to ensure that survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and other vulnerable groups have access to justice, legal protection, and comprehensive support services. Headquartered in Nigeria, Lawyers Alert has a growing footprint across six African countries, including Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe, and is leveraging regional partnerships to strengthen human rights advocacy, policy reform, and survivor-centred service delivery.

Our work spans legal aid, advocacy, policy engagement, community empowerment, and the establishment of sustainable justice systems, reflecting a holistic approach to addressing systemic inequality and protecting vulnerable populations.

Through innovative programs, strategic partnerships, and evidence-based interventions, Lawyers Alert continues to amplify the voices of women and marginalised communities, promote accountability, and foster lasting social change across Africa.

Vision. We envision a world where women and vulnerable groups are free from injustice.

Mission. Our mission is to empower women and vulnerable groups through knowledge of their rights and accessible means of enforcing the same.

Core Values and Principles. Steered by our core values of Integrity, Respect, Accountability, Professionalism, and Transparency, Lawyers Alert integrates gender justice into all aspects of its programming, advocacy, and organisational culture.

Thematic Areas:

1. Gender & Human Rights **2.** Security & Access to Justice **3.** Campaigns & Movement Building **4 .** Elections, Democracy & Good Governance

Our Work on SGBV:

Lawyers Alert is a leading voice in the fight against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Nigeria, operating at both federal and state levels to drive systemic, sustainable change. The organisation adopts a holistic approach that integrates high-level policy advocacy with targeted, community-based program implementation, ensuring that interventions are both responsive and transformative. Grounded in the principles of human rights, access to justice, and community systems strengthening, Lawyers Alert works to close critical gaps in prevention, protection, and response, particularly for women, girls, and key populations who face heightened vulnerability due to intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion.

Guided by a gender-transformative and intersectional framework, Lawyers Alert goes beyond addressing the symptoms of SGBV to confronting its root causes such as entrenched social norms, legal and policy gaps, weak institutional systems, and socio-economic inequalities. Through strategic engagement with government institutions, civil society actors, and community structures, the organisation strengthens legal and policy environments, expands access to survivor-centred services, and empowers communities to demand accountability. By combining evidence-based advocacy, innovative service delivery models, and movement building, Lawyers Alert is not only responding to SGBV but also actively reshaping the systems and structures that perpetuate it, ensuring more inclusive, just, and resilient communities.

Legal and Policy Reform for SGBV Prevention and Response.

Lawyers Alert plays a strategic role in advancing legal and policy reforms to strengthen enabling environments for the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Nigeria. At the federal level, the organisation actively engages in legislative review, policy advocacy, and multi-stakeholder consultations to improve the effectiveness and implementation of key legal frameworks. These efforts include driving progress on the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) (VAPP) Act and the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA).



Benue State SARC Centre

At the state level, Lawyers Alert has been instrumental in supporting the domestication, review, and strengthening of SGBV-related laws, including the VAPP Act and the Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL), across Benue, Bauchi, Kaduna, Enugu, and Osun States.

Through sustained engagement with state governments, legislatures, and justice sector actors, the organisation ensures that the

Laws are not only adopted but also effectively implemented in ways that are responsive to survivors' needs.

Additionally, Lawyers Alert contributed to the development and reform of legal and policy frameworks through evidence-based advocacy and technical support. In Benue State, sustained collaboration with justice sector stakeholders, including the Ministry of Justice, enabled the identification of critical gaps in the implementation of the VAPP



Law, leading to a structured review process in partnership with key actors and the broader movement, resulting in the redrafting of key provisions to strengthen survivor-centered, gender-responsive, and rights-based approaches to SGBV prevention and response.

Enugu State SARC Centre

Strengthening the Implementation of SGBV Laws and Justice Systems to Ensure Prompt Justice Delivery

Beyond legal reform, Lawyers Alert is at the forefront of translating laws into meaningful, survivor-centred outcomes by strengthening the implementation of GBV frameworks and service delivery systems. The organisation has played a critical role in enhancing the functionality and responsiveness of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs), ensuring that survivors receive coordinated, timely, and holistic support across health, legal, and psychosocial services.

Through its work, Lawyers Alert has identified and addressed key gaps in the implementation of SGBV laws, particularly in coordination, referral pathways, and service integration. By building stronger linkages among service providers, the organisation has contributed to more efficient and survivor-centred systems that improve access to justice and care. Lawyers Alert has also supported the establishment and strengthening of Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Implementation Monitoring Committees and SARCs across several states, creating institutional mechanisms for accountability, oversight, and sustained enforcement of SGBV laws.

In parallel, the organisation is championing the development of specialised courts and tailored justice-delivery mechanisms to ensure that SGBV cases are handled with the urgency, sensitivity, and expertise they require. Through strategic engagement with key justice sector actors, including the judiciary, the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee (ACJMC), and relevant communities of practice, Lawyers Alert is strengthening institutions' capacity to apply the VAPP and ACJ laws effectively. Notably, in Bauchi State, these efforts have significantly improved justice delivery processes, reinforced ongoing reforms, and expanded access to justice for survivors of SGBV. By bridging

By bridging the gap between legislation and practice, Lawyers Alert is transforming the SGBV response landscape in Nigeria, turning laws into tangible protections, ensuring justice reaches those who need it most, and embedding survivor-centred approaches at every level of the system. Through these efforts, the organisation not only safeguards rights but also fosters lasting, systemic change, creating a future where every survivor can trust that the system will guarantee access to justice and exercise full agency without fear of any form of violence.

Awareness, Advocacy and Systemic Change.

Lawyers Alert implements targeted awareness and capacity-building initiatives focused on rights education and legal literacy among women's rights groups and NGOs. Through sustained advocacy and strategic engagement, Lawyers Alert and its partners have mobilized increased support from the private sector, particularly in Enugu, Osun, and Kaduna, with emerging progress in Bauchi and Benue. These efforts have translated into tangible contributions, including financial support and the provision of essential resources to enhance survivor-centered service delivery. At the public sector level, our advocacy has contributed to incremental gains in

government financing for SGBV response. Notably, the Bauchi State Ministry of Justice established a dedicated budget line to support ACJMC activities, while the Ministry of Women Affairs allocated resources to strengthen SARC operations and survivor care. These achievements reinforce the power of sustained engagement in translating policy commitments into practical, life-changing support for survivors.



Bauchi State ACJL Committee

Additionally, Lawyers Alert is ensuring integrated, trauma-informed, and survivor-centred services at Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs). Beyond service delivery, we are engaging community leaders in Akwa Ibom and Benue to address SGBV and challenge restrictive social norms that limit the autonomy of women and girls. Recognising that SGBV is driven by structural and socio-cultural factors, Lawyers Alert actively promotes gender-responsive governance and social transformation by supporting policy reforms and legislation that amplify women's voices in decision-making spaces.

We also engaged traditional, religious, and community leaders to address harmful norms, discriminatory gender roles, and stigma that exacerbate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence. At the grassroots level, Lawyers Alert strengthens community-based organisations and paralegals to deliver rights literacy, documentation, and survivor support services. Complementing this, our social norm change initiatives, which include media campaigns, radio programming, and targeted community outreach, foster awareness, accountability, and sustained cultural

transformation, ensuring that survivors are supported, voices are amplified, and communities are equipped to prevent and respond to SGBV effectively.

Capacity Building and Advancing Collective Action through Strategic Networks.

Lawyers Alert continues to play a strategic role in strengthening the capacity of women's rights groups and civil society organisations, fostering a coordinated and resilient movement for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Nigeria. By investing in capacity building, network strengthening, and the development of collaborative platforms, Lawyers Alert has supported the emergence of a robust SRHR movement that brings together over 90 small and medium-sized organisations across the six geopolitical zones.

This growing network serves as a powerful vehicle for collective advocacy, knowledge sharing, service delivery, and accountability. Now formally registered, the movement is not only amplifying the voices of women, girls, and marginalised populations but also driving coordinated, nationwide efforts to expand access to SRHR services and advance justice for rights violations. In addition, Lawyers Alert has facilitated the establishment of the SGBV Justice Network across Benue, Bauchi, Enugu, Kaduna, and Osun States. This network serves as a strategic platform for supporting policy review processes, strengthening the implementation of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) laws and policies, and enhancing coordination among stakeholders.

Both the SRHR movement and the SGBV Justice Network are community-led and rooted in inclusivity, ensuring that the voices of women, girls, and key populations are meaningfully represented in decision-making processes. These platforms play a critical role in monitoring the quality and accessibility of GBV services, advocating for survivor-centered responses, and holding duty bearers accountable for their commitments. Building on these initiatives, Lawyers Alert continues to foster sustainable systems change, empower local actors, and drive a unified, rights-based approach to addressing SGBV and advancing SRHR in Nigeria.

Championing Justice for Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

Lawyers Alert is a leading legal advocacy organisation dedicated to providing free and comprehensive legal aid to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) across Nigeria, including marginalised and key populations. Recognising the critical need for accessible justice, our nationwide services ensure that survivors receive timely, professional, and survivor-centred legal support. To strengthen the delivery of these services, we established the *Coalition of Lawyers for Human Rights (COLaHR)*, a

strategic network of committed legal professionals nationwide. COLaHR enhances our capacity to provide high-quality legal representation, facilitate case management, and advocate for survivors' rights in courts, communities, and at the policy level.

Over the years, Lawyers Alert has partnered with and received referrals from key national and international organisations, including the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), UNAIDS Nigeria Office, Centre for Integrated Health Programs (CIHP), AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), and numerous civil society organisations in Nigeria. These collaborations have been very instrumental in expanding our reach, enabling us to provide legal services to survivors in both urban and hard-to-reach rural communities.

With a steadfast commitment to defending survivors' rights nationwide, Lawyers Alert remains unwavering in its justice-driven agenda, closing gaps in legal protections, amplifying survivors' voices, strengthening community resilience, and shaping policies that safeguard the rights of women, girls, and vulnerable populations in Nigeria. In addition to our nationwide legal services, Lawyers Alert has established dedicated legal clinics within internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, bringing justice directly to some of the most vulnerable populations. These clinics provide timely and accessible legal aid, ensuring that displaced individuals, particularly women, children, and other marginalised groups, can understand, assert, and protect their rights even in the most challenging circumstances.

Beyond individual case support, the clinics serve as hubs for legal education, awareness-raising, and capacity-building, equipping IDPs with the knowledge and tools to navigate legal processes independently. Through these interventions, Lawyers Alert not only strengthens access to justice but also fosters resilience, empowerment, and protection for communities affected by conflict and displacement.

Monitoring and Documenting SGBV-Related Rights Violations.

For over a decade, Lawyers Alert has been at the forefront of monitoring and documenting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) violations through our innovative web-based tool, **LadockT**. This platform systematically captures detailed data on violations, including location, age, sex, and the different manifestations of abuse, providing a scientifically grounded and accurate presentation of SRHR and SGBV trends in Nigeria. These insights guide evidence-based advocacy, gender-responsive programming, strategic resource allocation, and policy reforms, ensuring that interventions are targeted, effective, and survivor-

centred. To further expand access to justice and support, we launched the USSD code *7006*24#, a mobile platform that enables SGBV survivors and individuals at risk to connect with critical services. Operational in Bauchi, Benue, Enugu, Kano, and Osun, this system links users to 104 service centres offering comprehensive psychosocial support, health care, educational resources, shelter, protection, and legal assistance.

By leveraging technology, this initiative overcomes barriers such as stigma, mobility constraints, and limited information access, particularly for women and marginalised populations in rural, hard-to-reach communities. Lawyers Alert is using these groundbreaking innovations to transform the SGBV landscape in Nigeria, while strengthening the national response, amplifying the voices of survivors, and providing timely, accessible, and holistic support by putting survivors at the center of every intervention, and ensuring that justice is achieved, dignity is restored, and protection reaches those who need it most, thereby building a system where every survivor can reclaim their life with confidence and hope.

Our Theory of Change

Lawyers Alert envisions a society in which women, girls, and marginalised populations live free from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, have equitable access to justice, and can fully exercise their rights and agency. We recognize that Systemic barriers, including weak legal frameworks, limited access to survivor-centred services, harmful social norms, and exclusion from decision-making, perpetuate inequality and hinder the protection of rights across Nigeria.

Our approach assumes that **IF** we provide free legal aid to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), strengthen Sexual Assault Referral Centers (SARCs), and support internally displaced persons (IDP) communities; engage with the judiciary, ministries, and specialized monitoring committees to improve the implementation of GBV-related laws, establish specialized courts, and create functional accountability mechanisms; mobilize national and state-level coalitions, including the SRHR Movement and the SGBV Justice Network, to amplify the voices of women, girls, and key populations, challenge harmful social norms, and promote inclusive governance and policy reform; engage with traditional, religious, and community leaders, grassroots organizations, and paralegals to transform attitudes toward gender, rights, and violence; and implement robust monitoring and documentation systems to track violations, identify gaps in service delivery, and generate evidence for advocacy and policy change

THEN survivors will have timely, holistic, and trauma-informed access to justice and essential services; legal frameworks will be enforced, institutions will be more accountable, and survivors' rights will be better protected; communities and decision-makers will adopt equitable policies, reject violence, and create enabling environments for survivors and be empowered to prevent abuse, support survivors, and challenge harmful norms; and interventions will be data-driven, targeted, and effective in turning laws into tangible protections for survivors.

