

A vibrant rainbow flag serves as the background, with its colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple) flowing diagonally from the top left to the bottom right. In the lower half of the image, a dark silhouette of a person's hands is visible, forming a heart shape. The person's head and shoulders are also partially visible in silhouette. The overall mood is one of pride and solidarity.

LGBTI 2024 VIOLATIONS REPORT

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First and foremost, we acknowledge the courageous LGBTI individuals and survivors who shared their experiences, often at great personal risk. Their testimonies form the backbone of this report, shedding light on the injustices faced by the community and reinforcing the urgent need for systemic change.

We are profoundly grateful to our partner organisations, both local and international, who have provided technical expertise, resources and advocacy platforms to amplify our findings. Your commitment to human rights and social justice has been indispensable in strengthening our documentation efforts. We also recognise the legal and advocacy groups who have worked tirelessly to challenge discriminatory laws, offer pro bono services and lobby for inclusive laws. Your expertise has been invaluable in contextualising these violations within national and international human rights frameworks.

We also extend our appreciation to the health professionals and social workers who have contributed data, insights and support to survivors of violence and discrimination. Your efforts in addressing the physical, mental, and emotional toll of these violations have been a lifeline for many in the community.

To our funding partners, we express our sincere thanks for your support, which has enabled GALZ to sustain its documentation initiatives, advocacy campaigns, and community outreach programmes. Your belief in our mission has been instrumental in driving this work forward. Additionally, we acknowledge the journalists and media practitioners who have responsibly reported on LGBTI issues, helping to counter misinformation and raise public awareness. Equally, we appreciate the diplomatic missions and international bodies that have lent their voices to condemn these violations and advocate for accountability.

Finally, we recognise the broader network of allies, volunteers, and activists who may not be named here but whose contributions, whether through grassroots mobilisation, awareness-raising, or silent solidarity, have fortified the movement for equality. Every act of support, no matter how small, brings us closer to our vision; A just society where LGBTI people are treated as equal citizens in Zimbabwe



About GALZ

GALZ's operational framework is organised around four interconnected strategic pillars: Membership and Community Development; Knowledge, Documentation and Ideas; Policy, Law, Human Rights and Access to Justice; and Governance, Institutional Innovation, Systems Adaptation and Resources. The organisation regards the advancement of equality - including the requisite capacity development for effective advocacy promoting tolerance, acceptance and inclusivity of LGBTI individuals within broader society - as a continuous process of social transformation. By strengthening communities' ability to articulate demands for social justice and undertake meaningful advocacy, GALZ systematically pursues the realisation of equity and fundamental rights for all LGBTI individuals in Zimbabwe.

The violations report serves as a fundamental instrument that intersects with and reinforces all four strategic pillars. In relation to Membership and Community Development, it provides indispensable data that identifies the precise needs and systemic challenges experienced by LGBTI individuals, thereby facilitating targeted community engagement strategies. Within the Knowledge, Documentation and Ideas pillar, the report establishes an authoritative evidence base that both informs advocacy efforts and enhances understanding of the human rights violations affecting the community. The report's findings make significant contributions to the Policy, Law, Human Rights and Access to Justice pillar by revealing critical gaps in legal protections and building compelling cases for necessary legislative and policy reforms. Furthermore, within the Governance, Institutional Innovation, Systems Adaptation and Resources pillar, the report's analytical insights support improved organisational decision-making processes and more effective resource allocation strategies.

Through its comprehensive programme of work encompassing legal advocacy initiatives, counselling services, community outreach interventions, and strategic collaborations with stakeholders across the legal and health sectors, GALZ pursues three principal objectives: improving access to essential services, challenging discriminatory legislation and social practices, and fostering greater societal understanding and acceptance of LGBTI rights. GALZ maintains an unwavering commitment to its vision of establishing a safer, more equitable and genuinely inclusive society for all LGBTIQ individuals in Zimbabwe, recognising this as both an urgent contemporary necessity and a long-term process of societal transformation.



Executive Summary

The 2024 Violations Report presents a rigorous examination of systemic discrimination, violence and marginalisation experienced by LGBTI individuals in Zimbabwe. Analysing thirty documented cases, the report categorises violations by typology, demographic characteristics and outcomes. Blackmail and extortion emerge as the most prevalent category (27% of cases), disproportionately affecting gay men through perpetrators' exploitation of societal stigma and discriminatory legislation to threaten disclosure of sexual orientation or intimate details. Physical assault and violent acts (23%) demonstrate concerning frequency, with perpetrators ranging from intimate partners to family members and strangers, while police harassment and unlawful detention (17%) reveal institutional failings within law enforcement structures.

The report identifies disownment and consequent homelessness (13%) as manifestations of profound familial and societal rejection, frequently resulting in precarious living situations. Parallel cases of privacy violations (13%) typically involve non-consensual dissemination of intimate materials, often precipitating blackmail or public humiliation. Additional documented violations include intimate partner violence (10%), institutional harassment (7%), abduction and sexual violence (3%), and robbery (3%), collectively illustrating the community's multifaceted vulnerabilities.

Demographic analysis reveals significant intersectionality between age and socio-economic factors in violation patterns. Young adults (18-30 years) exhibit particular susceptibility to familial rejection and institutional discrimination, frequently compounded by economic dependence and social stigma. Middle-aged individuals (31-50 years) face elevated risks of blackmail and physical violence, intensified by financial instability and deep-seated prejudice. Older community members (51+ years) experience pronounced isolation and economic precarity, increasing their exposure to exploitation and abuse.

The report notes that low-income individuals bear disproportionate burdens of homelessness, physical violence and familial rejection, while middle- and high-income individuals, despite relatively greater resources, remain vulnerable to rights violations due to persistent stigma and discriminatory legal frameworks.

Current response mechanisms, including legal mediation, psychosocial interventions and temporary housing provisions, offer limited relief but prove inadequate against structural inequities. Judicial systems consistently fail to provide meaningful protection for marginalised groups, while psychosocial support, though valuable, lacks sustainable frameworks. Temporary housing initiatives address immediate needs but cannot resolve systemic challenges of homelessness and economic exclusion. This analysis underscores the imperative for comprehensive legal reforms and societal transformation to achieve meaningful protection for Zimbabwe's LGBTI community.



Overview

GALZ implemented a rigorous monitoring and documentation framework to evaluate societal acceptance and tolerance towards Zimbabwe's LGBTI community. This systematic approach reveals persistent patterns of discrimination, stigma and human rights violations targeting individuals based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics (SOGIE). The evidence demonstrates that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals routinely endure multifaceted abuses including familial rejection, financial extortion, violent threats, physical assault, torture, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, and systemic discrimination in employment and healthcare access.

The documentation process served a dual purpose: establishing an evidential foundation while identifying strategic intervention points. Mere data collection proved insufficient without subsequent transformation into targeted advocacy initiatives across multiple spheres. Effective responses required tailored approaches addressing distinct challenges at national, regional and international levels, encompassing legal reform, policy development, and societal attitude transformation.

The complexity of SOGIE-based discrimination necessitates sophisticated analytical frameworks. In practice, prejudice rarely operates along singular axes; rather, it intersects with other marginalised identities including gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, HIV status, economic position and migration background. This intersectionality creates compounded vulnerabilities that demand equally nuanced responses. For instance, an LGBTI individual facing discrimination may simultaneously experience oppression as a woman, as HIV-positive, and as economically disadvantaged.

Consequently, GALZ's advocacy adopts an intersectional lens, recognising how overlapping identity markers create unique experiences of discrimination. This approach acknowledges that effective protection of LGBTI rights requires addressing both SOGIE-specific violations and the intersecting systems of oppression that exacerbate them. The documentation process therefore captures not only overt SOGIE-based violations but also their interplay with other forms of structural inequality.

This methodological sophistication strengthens the organisation's capacity to develop comprehensive protection strategies. By mapping how various forms of discrimination converge, GALZ can advocate for legal and policy reforms that address the full spectrum of vulnerabilities faced by Zimbabwe's LGBTI community, while challenging the intersecting systems of prejudice that sustain them.



Handling Procedure

GALZ employs a carefully structured approach to addressing human rights violations based on sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), operating firmly within Zimbabwe's legal and constitutional framework to pursue both amicable resolutions and formal legal remedies where necessary. When violations such as sexual or physical assault occur, the established protocol requires reporting the incident to the nearest Zimbabwe Republic Police station, where authorities open an official case file (known as a docket) with a unique reference number to initiate investigations. Survivors presenting physical injuries are immediately referred to healthcare facilities for medical assessment and treatment, with forensic examinations conducted when evidentiary documentation is required.

The organisation has cultivated strategic partnerships with human rights organisations including Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) to facilitate three critical support pillars: expedited case processing through legal channels, professional legal representation throughout judicial proceedings, and comprehensive psychosocial support services. These psychosocial interventions form a cornerstone of GALZ's response, offering survivors sustained counselling to address trauma and mitigate potential post-traumatic stress disorder development, while providing long-term monitoring of recovery progress and reinforcement of coping mechanisms.

Underpinning this response framework is GALZ's rigorous documentation system, which methodically archives all reported cases through standardised protocols. This systematic approach serves multiple strategic purposes: creating an evidential foundation for targeted advocacy, identifying patterns in rights violations, informing strategic litigation efforts, and strengthening calls for systemic reform. By integrating immediate response mechanisms with long-term support structures and comprehensive documentation practices, GALZ's methodology makes significant contributions to advancing justice, equity and substantive protections for Zimbabwe's LGBTI community, while simultaneously building an institutional knowledge base that informs both current interventions and future policy development. The organisation's work in this area demonstrates how carefully coordinated legal, medical and psychosocial support systems, combined with thorough documentation, can create meaningful pathways toward justice and societal change for marginalised communities.

Key Terms

1. **Blackmail:** Threatening to reveal sensitive information unless demands (often financial) are met.
2. **Extortion:** Obtaining something through force or threats.
3. **Police Harassment:** Unjust or aggressive behavior by law enforcement, including wrongful arrests or bribes.
4. **Assault:** A physical attack, often motivated by prejudice.
5. **Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):** Abuse within a romantic or sexual relationship.
6. **Disownment:** Family rejection, often leading to homelessness.
7. **Invasion of Privacy:** Unauthorized access to or sharing of private information.
8. **Institutional Harassment:** Discrimination by organizations like schools or healthcare providers.
9. **Outing:** Revealing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity without consent.
10. **Psychosocial Support:** Emotional and social assistance for coping with trauma.
11. **Family Reintegration:** Reuniting LGBTQ+ individuals with rejecting families.
12. **Cyberbullying:** Harassment or threats using digital platforms.
13. **Kidnapping:** Unlawful abduction, often involving violence.
14. **Economic Vulnerability:** Financial instability increasing susceptibility to exploitation.
15. **Societal Stigma:** Negative attitudes and discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals.
16. **Heteronormativity:** Assuming heterosexuality as the default, marginalizing LGBTQ+ people.
17. **Systemic Discrimination:** Institutional practices perpetuating inequality.
18. **Legal Mediation:** Resolving disputes through negotiation, avoiding formal charges.
19. **Digital Privacy:** Protecting personal information in digital spaces.



“Blackmail

Dirk*, a gay man in his 70s, sought legal advice from GALZ offices in February. He revealed that he had met another man named Devan on Grindr, and they had engaged in consensual anal and oral sexual activities after meeting in January. The next day, Dirk discovered that \$3500 in cash was missing from his bedroom drawer. Dirk confronted Devan, who denied any knowledge of the missing money but sent Dirk a video of him performing oral sex on Devan. Devan then attempted to blackmail Dirk, demanding \$1500 to prevent the video from being leaked to the press or Dirk's workplace. Dirk sought help from GALZ, who advised him to ignore the blackmail and informed him of his rights in such situations. Despite this, Devan persisted with his threats, leading Dirk to return to GALZ for further assistance. GALZ's Legal Officer contacted Devan and warned him about the illegality of extortion. Reluctantly, Devan agreed to cease harassing and blackmailing Dirk.

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Rogers*, a gay man in his 60s approached GALZ in March seeking advice on how to handle a blackmail case. He stated that he met a young gay man on Grindr whose personal details he is unaware of. Thereafter, they moved the conversation to WhatsApp where they exchanged nude pictures. Unfortunately, Rogers sent the guy pictures that included his face. Riding on that, the unidentified man began threatening to leak these pictures to Rogers' wife and family unless he paid the man \$500 as hush money. Rogers then approached GALZ for legal advice and options were explored. Rogers was advised against giving in to the monetary requests from the unidentified man and proceeding to block all interactions with him. As at the time of writing, no report of persistence from the blackmailer has been noted.

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In late October, **Frank***, a married bisexual man, got informed about a post that was on the social media platform X, which had his picture together with his wife with a caption that was asking Frank to get hold of the person (Fanuel) who had generated the post. Apparently, Frank had engaged in consensual sexual intercourse with Fanuel's boyfriend and Fanuel got wind of this. Frank then contacted Fanuel regarding the post and Fanuel stated that he wanted to sleep with Frank in order for him not to tell Frank's wife about his sexual encounter and sexual orientation. Fortunately, Frank managed to iron out the matter with Fanuel without the two having to sleep together as earlier suggested.

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“ Assault



On the 26th of December, **Crystal***, a lesbian woman reached out requiring assistance. She had been assaulted by her live-in girlfriend, thrown out of the house and had her dog beaten up. As a result, she had nowhere to go. The Legal Officer and Programs Manager attended to her and she narrated her story and her need for an intervention. The Legal Officer liaised with a local partner who agreed to house her in the interim while she got her things in order. Unfortunately, Crystal refused to lay any charges on her partner, so no police report was made. After a couple of days, Crystal requested to go to her aunt in Gwanda who she said had agreed to take her in. Contrary to her going to Gwanda, she went back to stay with her partner and asked that the two of them get counselling in order to deal with their domestic issues.



On the 2nd of April, **Sophia and Patricia***, a lesbian couple woke up to heavy and incessant knocking and banging on their door at their rented premises in Highfields Harare. At the door were Sophia's three brothers and their friends. They demanded to see Patricia whom they accused of 'recruiting' their sister into homosexuality. The men then quizzed and beat her up with clenched fists. They only stopped after Sophia intervened. Sophia and Patricia managed to escape and reported the matter to the police. However, upon further reflection, they decided against opening an assault case against Sophia's brothers, and opted for a protection order, which was duly granted by the Magistrate's Court.

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In early December, a Ugandan national **Chris*** was referred to the GALZ Harare office by the office of the UNHCR. Chris had been assaulted and had his life threatened at the behest of his uncle while in Uganda and had to skip the country for safety. While in Harare, he received psycho-social support at GALZ and was connected with a South African-based LGBTI organization which then took him in for safety.

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Between late October and early November, **Eddie***, a gay man from Shurugwi had his life threatened by a group of artisanal miners since they alleged that he was gay and had asked out one of their friends. Prior to this unfortunate incident, Eddie had befriended Kudzai (artisanal miner) and during their interactions, Kudzai accused Eddie of asking him out, which allegations Eddie vehemently denies. Kudzai then went on to talk to a police officer who approached Eddie and asked him to pay a fine lest he gets arrested. Fortunately, Eddie was well aware of his rights and refused to do so. That is when Eddie sought the 'services' of his friends who came to the shop he was working at in the evening and threatened to kill him. Fortunately, Eddie managed to hide at the back of the shop and a neighbor liaised with the artisanal miners in order for them to leave. Thereafter, Eddie and the neighbour called the shop owner who advised Eddie to leave the area for his own safety. Eddie then went to Masvingo to put up with a relative, and in the process reached out to GALZ for psychosocial support which he received on two occasions. The GALZ Masvingo team have remained in touch with Eddie for emotional support after the traumatizing incident.



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Around mid-December, **Victor***, a transwoman, was assaulted by a neighbour who accused her of asking her out. Apparently, this did not go down well with the neighbour who then decided to stone Victor, which assault resulted in some head injuries for Victor. Victor managed to escape from the scene and reported the matter to the police. Unfortunately, the police could not attend the scene since they informed her that they did not have fuel for their vehicle. Victor then went for a medical examination and was treated. Investigations on the assault matter are still underway.



9

In April, **Kudakwashe*** who resides in Gaza's High-density Suburbs in Chipinge was assaulted by a member of the Zimbabwe National Army at Chitima Nightclub. It is alleged that whilst Kudakwashe Nhaitai was having drinks he sought to use the nightclub's toilets and the individual followed him to the bathroom where he assaulted him alleging that Kudakwashe had tried to sexually harass him in the toilet. Through guidance from a GALZ legal officer, the matter was reported at Chipinge central police station and the perpetrator was arrested and charged with assault.





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Disownment

In August, **Belinda***, a 49-year-old community member who had been staying with her elderly mother was disowned and evicted from her family home as a result of her sexuality. She was then left homeless considering she had no means to find housing and food of her own. The GALZ and SRC officers then went to assess her situation and offered her psychosocial support. Further, they also managed to get a community member to accommodate her in the interim. Further, follow-ups have also been done to support her with her day-to-day needs.

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Diana*, an 18-year-old lesbian woman, had been staying with her grandmother for a while. She then decided to disclose her sexuality to the grandmother and apparently she did not take it well. Diana was subsequently thrown out of the family home and managed to seek shelter in a local nightclub for the night. The following day, she went to the GALZ office wherein the counsellor conducted their assessment of the matter and recommended temporary accommodation support and family reintegration. Diana was then supported with rentals for that month while family reintegration was taking place. The following month, she was taken back home by her grandmother.

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Munashe*, a 22-year-old gay man, was staying with his friend, Diana, at Diana's grandmother's house. When Diana disclosed her sexuality to her grandmother, the grandmother then chased both her and Munashe away from the home. Both Diana and Munashe sought shelter in a nightclub overnight and reached out to GALZ the following morning. GALZ assisted Munashe with rentals for the month while working on a plan to ask his maternal uncle to take him in. Unfortunately, Munashe's uncle was not able to house him. On the bright side, Munashe managed to secure employment and was able to rent a room of his own.

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“ Invasion of privacy



In October, two gay (**Julian & Frya**)* men went on a night out and returned in the wee hours of the morning. They sort lodgings at Freya's brother's house for the night. It is alleged that they indulged in consensual sexual intercourse and then retired to bed. The following morning, they woke up to a buzz on social media wherein naked pictures taken of them in a compromising position were in circulation. Unfortunately, they did not know who took these pictures. The GALZ team advised the two to lodge a police report, but they were reluctant to do so. Additionally, the two were offered counselling as a means of helping them to deal with the situation they found themselves in.

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In October, **Mtho***, a gay man had his privacy invaded by a friend of his. He had been friends with Munya and one night when the two were hanging out together, Munya gained unauthorized access to Mtho's mobile phone wherein he discovered information that made him suspect that his friend was gay. Thereafter, Munya made sexual advances on Mtho and the two ended up getting intimate. The following morning, Munya complained of pain in his genitalia and that he was going to report the matter to the police alleging that Mtho had forced himself on him. Munya proceeded to make a police report and Mtho's family had to pay off both the police and Munya in order to stop the matter from being blown out of proportion. Mtho then reached out to GALZ for psychosocial support.

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In June, **Kingston and Trevor***, a gay couple, were under threats of physical harm from their uncle who is said to be an influential member of the secret service. The threats came after Kingston's uncle discovered that Kingston was gay and was in a gay relationship with Trevor. This led Kingston's uncle to evict the two from the family home (Kingston was raised by his uncle after both his parents died in a car crash when he was young). The uncle told the two to leave town lest he send his 'boys' to kill them. Kingston tried to report the matter to the police but the police told him that they were afraid to lose their jobs and there was nothing they could do about it. Kingston and Trevor reached out seeking assistance with relocation from the area they were staying in to a place that was safer and further away from the existing threat.

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“ Outing



In October, **Brighton***, a gay man was asked out by Tyrese. Unfortunately for Tyrese, his advances were turned down. Apparently, this did not go down well with Tyrese, who kept on nagging Brighton. Tyrese went further to contact Brighton's cousin and told the cousin that Brighton was gay and had stolen money from him. The harassment continued for a while which led to Brighton reaching out to GALZ for assistance. The GALZ team managed to reach out to Tyrese whom they warned against the harassment he was directing at Brighton and the legal consequences thereof. Considering the effect on his mental health of this ordeal, Brighton was also given psychosocial support.

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Around mid-June, **Takudzwa***, a bisexual man living in Hatfield was having issues with his live-in girlfriend (Mercy). The girlfriend had stumbled across private communication on Takudzwa's mobile phone which suggested that Takudzwa was intimately involved with a man. This did not go down well with Mercy leading her to beat Takudzwa, break household property go out of the house and inform every passerby who had the time to listen that Takudzwa was gay. This went on for a couple of weeks until Takudzwa was fed up with the situation. He then reached out to GALZ wherein he was advised to file a police report in relation to the assault and destruction of property. However, after making the report, Mercy asked for forgiveness and promised to repent of her ways, leading to Takudzwa withdrawing the charges he had laid against her. Considering the experience he had gone through, Takudzwa required psychosocial support, which the designated counsellor gave him.

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In October, **Firodzangu*** a gay man, started staying with his partner who had relocated from Rusape Town. On that particular day, the couple was having drinks at a friend's house in Sakubva and the partner got drunk. Firodzangu then advised the partner to discontinue drinking which did not sit well with the partner. The couple then decided to go back to their place of residence. When they arrived Firodzangu's partner started being violent towards him shouting to the whole neighbourhood that he wanted money from him for having anal sex with him every night. The landlord was awake and she had a conversation with Firodzangu that she could not believe that he was staying with a gay couple at his house. The counsellor had a counselling session with the couple to map a way forward.

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“ Arbitrary Arrest/Detention

Casper*, a 35-year-old gay man, was in a year-long relationship with Emmanuel, another gay man. After an argument in January, Emmanuel left Casper's family home in Braeside and went to stay with his own family in Chinhoyi. Two months later, Casper received a call from the police accusing him of sexually assaulting Emmanuel. He reported to the police the next day and was arrested and detained for nearly four hours, but he was not formally charged. Casper paid a \$20 fine and was released. Two weeks later, the police called him again and told him to report to the station, where Emmanuel showed them WhatsApp chats between the two that proved they were lovers. The chats also revealed that their relationship involved consensual anal intercourse. The police informed Emmanuel that lying to the police was a crime and that consensual anal intercourse (sodomy) was also illegal. Ultimately, the police mediated a resolution between the two without filing any criminal charges. Has been advised to receive counselling services.



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In November, **Simba***, a transgender woman and her friend were arrested on allegations of theft. They were accused of stealing a mobile phone. They were taken to a local police station where the arresting officer went on to 'counsel' them about homosexual activity and how it was 'bad' for them, and how they would have to pay a fine lest the officer aggravate the matter. The two paid the requested 'fine' to the police officer. Within that week, Simba was arrested again for 'disorderly conduct' and asked to strip before the police officers so she could 'affirm' her gender. However, no formal charges were laid against Simba but was asked to pay another bribe so as to be released. Simba then reached out to GALZ for assistance. Besides offering counselling to Simba, GALZ has also launched its own investigations into the alleged unlawful arrest and undignified conduct by the police.



“ Access to Healthcare



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In May 2024, **Innocent***, a gay man visited a sister organisation for HIV Testing Services. During his visit, the clinician on duty questioned the member's sexual orientation and advised him to seek deliverance. The clinician also gave innocent Bible books to read and recommended that he attend a deliverance service at a local church in June 2024. On the back of this ordeal, Innocent received psychosocial support at the GALZ Drop-in Centre. The matter was reported to the GALZ Programmes Manager who engaged the sister organisation on the incident.



“ Sexual Assault



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Kudakwashe*, a 27-year-old gay man, arranged a consensual hookup with another man through an online platform. The meetup was planned to take place at a private residence in Chitungwiza. However, upon arrival, Kudakwashe was met by three men who kidnapped him, subjected him to sexual molestation, and took pictures of him in compromising positions. The perpetrators also extorted money from Kudakwashe, accusing him of sodomy. The rapid response team managed to help Kudakwashe to report the matter to the police and the suspects were caught and arrested for kidnapping. All the photos were deleted from the phones. Later on, Kudawashe decided to drop the charges against the 3 men. Psychosocial support was given and the dangers of online hook-ups were stressed out.



“Threats/ Intimidation/IPV



Around mid-October, **Takudzwa***, a gay man reached out to GALZ and reported that his ex-partner (Vitalis) was threatening his life after their breakup. Takudzwa narrated how Vitalis (who is an active member of the Zimbabwe National Army) would come back to Takudzwa's house at night, hit against the doors and windows wanting to be allowed in. This happened for two nights, without Takudzwa opening the door for Vitalis. On the third night, Vitalis managed to break in, but fortunately Takudzwa escaped and went straight to the nearest police station where he was attended to by an officer at the VFU. The officer at the VFU advised that the two solve their problems amicably with the help of a friend or family member before considering getting the law involved. Takudzwa then reached out to GALZ the next day, and the counselor mediated between them leading to a truce being reached.

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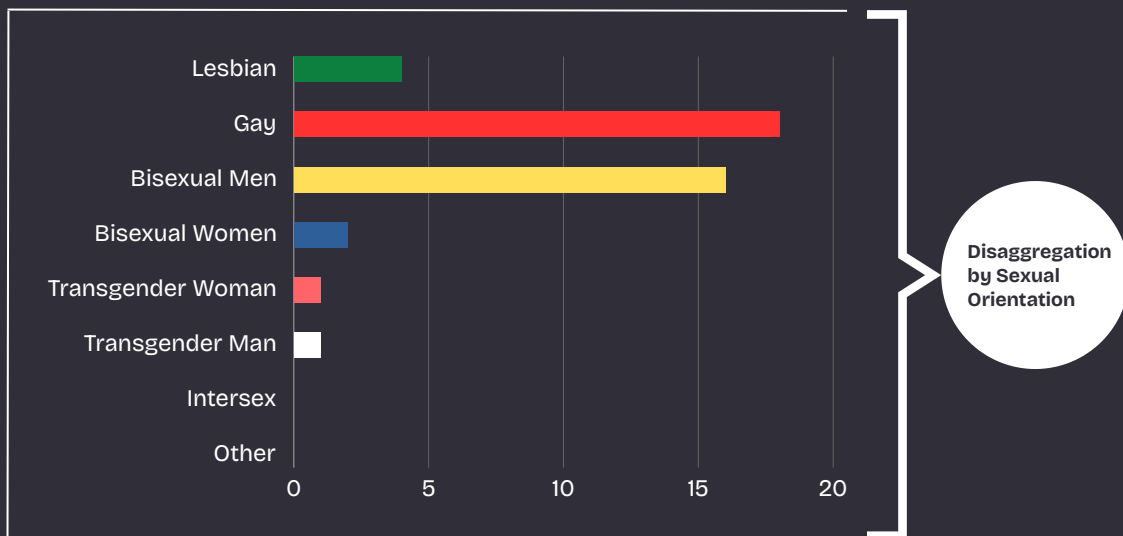
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Between late October and early November, **Eddie***, a gay man from Shurugwi had his life threatened by a group of artisanal miners since they alleged that he was gay and had asked out one of their friends. Prior to this unfortunate incident, Eddie had befriended Kudzai (artisanal miner) and during their interactions, Kudzai accused Eddie of asking him out, which allegations Eddie vehemently denies. Kudzai then went on to talk to a police officer who approached Eddie and asked him to pay a fine lest he gets arrested. Fortunately, Eddie was well aware of his rights and refused to do so. That is when Eddie sought the 'services' of his friends who came to the shop he was working at in the evening and threatened to kill him. Fortunately, Eddie managed to hide at the back of the shop and a neighbor liaised with the artisanal miners in order for them to leave. Thereafter, Eddie and the neighbour called the shop owner who advised Eddie to leave the area for his safety. Eddie then went to Masvingo to put up with a relative, and in the process reached out to GALZ for psychosocial support which he received on two occasions. The GALZ Masvingo team have remained in touch with Eddie for emotional support after the traumatizing incident.

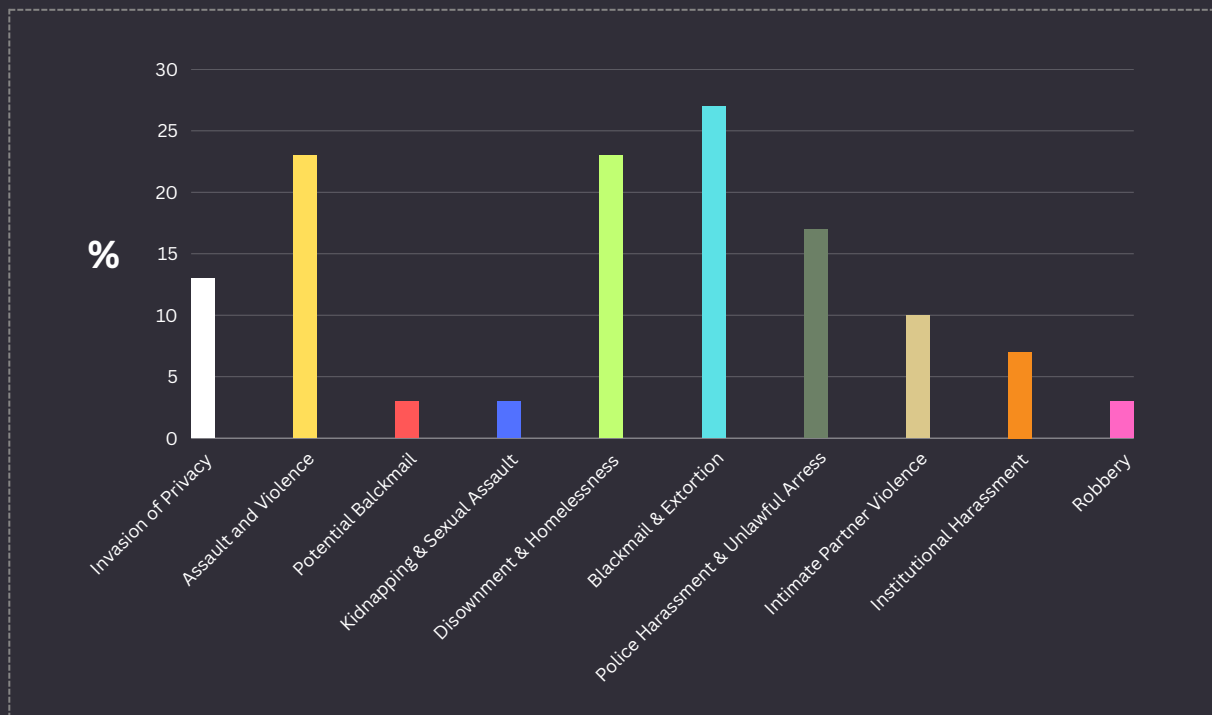
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Data Analysis



The 2024 violations report reveals a disturbing yet predictable pattern of systemic discrimination and violence targeting LGBTI individuals in Zimbabwe, with distinct manifestations across different demographic groups. Gay men experience disproportionate levels of blackmail, extortion and police harassment, a phenomenon directly attributable to the criminalisation of same-sex relations, entrenched social stigma and economic vulnerability that collectively create conditions ripe for exploitation. Lesbian women face particular vulnerabilities to intimate partner violence and familial rejection, consequences of both their systematic erasure from public discourse and patriarchal attempts to control female sexuality, while bisexual individuals navigate the dual marginalisation of biphobia from both heterosexual and LGBTI communities alongside the persistent threat of non-consensual disclosure of their orientation. The report's findings further demonstrate how intersecting social vulnerabilities compound these violations, with LGBTI refugees, homeless individuals and healthcare seekers experiencing particularly acute forms of discrimination that highlight the pervasive nature of systemic exclusion. These patterns cannot be dismissed as isolated incidents but rather emerge from deeply embedded structural inequities perpetuated by heteronormative social norms, institutionalised patriarchy and state-sanctioned discrimination. The data underscores the urgent necessity for comprehensive, multi-pronged interventions including legislative reforms to repeal discriminatory laws, nationwide awareness campaigns to challenge social stigma, and targeted support programmes addressing the specific economic and social marginalisation faced by LGBTI individuals. Such measures must be implemented through coordinated efforts engaging policymakers, community leaders and civil society to transform both the legal frameworks and cultural attitudes that currently enable and perpetuate discrimination against sexual and gender minorities in Zimbabwe. The report ultimately serves as both a documentation of current violations and a roadmap for the substantial structural and cultural changes required to achieve genuine equality and protection for all citizens regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.



Blackmail and extortion, constituted 27% of reported cases, disproportionately affect gay men, often involving threats to expose their sexual orientation or intimate details. This pattern suggests a systemic exploitation of societal stigma and the criminalization of same-sex relations, which emboldens perpetrators to use fear and secrecy as tools for financial gain. The high frequency of assault and violence (23%) further underscores the physical dangers faced by LGBTI individuals, particularly in environments where heteronormative norms are rigidly enforced. These acts of violence, often perpetrated by intimate partners, family members, or strangers, reflect deep-seated prejudices and a lack of legal protections for LGBTI individuals. Police harassment and unlawful arrests (17%) reveal a troubling complicity of law enforcement in perpetuating discrimination, with cases of wrongful detention, extortion, and degrading treatment highlighting systemic failures within the justice system. Disownment and homelessness (13%) and invasion of privacy (13%) point to the societal and familial rejection faced by LGBTI individuals, often leading to precarious living conditions and emotional trauma. The lower but significant percentages of intimate partner violence (10%), institutional harassment (7%), kidnapping and sexual assault (3%), and robbery (3%) indicate specific vulnerabilities that, while less common, are equally severe and demand attention.

Hypothetically, the prevalence of blackmail and extortion could be linked to the economic instability faced by many LGBTI individuals, particularly those disowned by their families, making them easy targets for exploitation. The high rates of assault and violence may be exacerbated by cultural norms that equate LGBTI identities with deviance, leading to violent backlash from individuals and communities seeking to enforce heteronormative standards. Police harassment, on the other hand, may stem from a lack of training and accountability within law enforcement agencies, coupled with discriminatory laws that legitimize the targeting of LGBTI individuals. Disownment and homelessness reflect broader societal rejection, often rooted in religious or cultural beliefs that stigmatize non-heteronormative identities. The invasion of privacy, particularly through the unauthorized sharing of intimate images, highlights the risks posed by digital technology in perpetuating harassment and blackmail.

Age Disaggregate



Young Adults (18-30)

Cases: Kudzai (Diana), Munashe, Rutendo, Kudakwashe (Kidnapping), Mthokozisi, Byron.

Violations: Disownment, institutional harassment, blackmail, invasion of privacy, kidnapping.

Responses: Many sought temporary shelter, psychosocial support, and legal advice.

Outcomes: Some achieved family reintegration (Diana), while others faced ongoing challenges (Mthokozisi).

Analysis: Young adults are particularly vulnerable to family rejection and institutional discrimination, often due to economic dependence and societal stigma.



Middle-Aged Adults (31-50)

Cases: Casper, Chido Pasca (Crystal), Peter Cohen, Dirk, Sophia & Patricia, Lionel & Eddie, Simba, Ignatius, Delight, Soldier, Kennington & Trevor

Violations: Blackmail, police harassment, intimate partner violence, assault, disownment.

Responses: Legal mediation, counseling, temporary housing, and police reports.

Outcomes: Mixed results, with some cases resolved through mediation (Casper) and others leading to ongoing threats (Soldier).

Analysis: This group faces significant risks of blackmail and violence, often exacerbated by economic instability and societal prejudice.



Older Adults (51+)

Cases: Rogers, Noma (Belinda), Tawedzerwa (Victor), Firodzangu.

Violations: Blackmail, disownment, assault, involuntary outing.

Responses: Psychosocial support, temporary housing, and legal advice.

Outcomes: Some achieved temporary stability (Belinda), while others faced ongoing harassment (Firodzangu).

Analysis: Older adults often experience isolation and economic vulnerability, making them targets for exploitation and violence.



Recommendations & Conclusion

Legal Reforms:

- Strengthen protections against blackmail, extortion, and police harassment.
- Ensure accountability for law enforcement and healthcare providers who violate LGBTI rights.

Economic Support:

- Provide financial assistance and housing support for LGBTI individuals facing homelessness or economic instability.
- Create job training and employment programs tailored to LGBTI needs.

Awareness Campaigns:

- Challenge societal stigma and promote acceptance through targeted awareness campaigns.
- Educate communities about LGBTI rights and the harms of discrimination.

Targeted Interventions:

- Develop programs to address intimate partner violence, family rejection, and institutional harassment.
- Provide specialized support for vulnerable groups, such as young adults, older adults, and refugees.

Strengthen Community Networks:

- Expand access to psychosocial support and temporary housing through partnerships with LGBTI organizations.
- Foster safe spaces and support networks for LGBTI individuals.

Digital Privacy Protections:

- Advocate for stronger laws against cyberbullying, blackmail, and unauthorized sharing of intimate images.
- Provide resources to help LGBTQI individuals protect their digital privacy.

This report documents the ongoing violations faced by LGBTI individuals in Zimbabwe, highlighting systemic discrimination, violence, and legal injustices. Through firsthand accounts, data analysis, and advocacy recommendations, we call for urgent action to protect LGBTI rights and ensure dignity for all.

Take Action:

Join us in demanding justice, policy reform, and societal acceptance.
Visit www.galz.org to learn how you can support LGBTI rights.

