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Sending Sex Traffickers and Johns a Message Before NATO

Posted: 05/17/2012 5:40 pm
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Pimps and traffickers understand the role that demand plays in driving the sex trade. When big events like the NATO Summit come into town, traffickers know that the influx of visitors means the potential for more business. [Traffickers themselves say](#) that they work with convention information centers and hotels to discover where the johns are so they can bring in prostituted people to those places to meet the increased demand.

In preparation for NATO, both local law enforcement and the military are sending a message to pimps, traffickers and potential customers: If you buy sex in Chicago, there will be consequences for your crimes. This week, another violent Chicago pimp was arrested and charged with human trafficking. [Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez's office detailed](#) how DaJuan Brown ran a sex trafficking ring, using violence and control to keep women from leaving the sex trade.

"More than ever, we are focusing our efforts on rescuing women and children caught up in this crime and punishing the traffickers to the fullest extent of the law," Alvarez said. When men buy sex, they are often contributing to the trafficking of

women and girls like the ones who were in Brown's control. I applaud State's Attorney Alvarez for spreading the word that Chicago will not tolerate this exploitation. But what about the people buying sex? How can they be deterred?

The military chimed in about the issue this week, as [General Charles Jacoby issued an order](#) to NATO troops that specifically prohibited them from soliciting prostituted people. While I believe this policy should be in place at all times for anyone serving our country, it certainly doesn't hurt to state it explicitly and often (especially in the media). [The Secret Service scandal in Colombia](#) revealed how a workplace culture that tolerated buying sex led to tacit acceptance of exploitation. The key is for johns to know that if they are caught buying sex, there will be consequences. Even johns who aren't in the military should be on the lookout: [a Cook County trafficking investigation last August netted more than 50 customers.](#)

In another partnership with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, the [End Demand Illinois campaign](#) is currently lobbying for reforms to our state's human trafficking code that will make it easier for prosecutors to build cases against traffickers who use schemes or plans to ensnare their victims. To learn more about efforts in Illinois to address demand, [I invite you to join the campaign.](#)

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