

Justice Targets Child Sex Trade



Georgia's child prostitution problem will get some new attention from the Justice Department. Attorney General Eric Holder spells out the first [National Strategy for Child Exploitation Prevention](#) in a 280 page report. The plan focuses on child prostitution, child pornography, sex tourism and child exploitation in Indian Country. It's a multi-agency effort that includes a national database to allow federal, state, local and international law enforcement to work together better and analyze trends. The Justice Department is adding 38 new Assistant U. S. Attorneys devoted to child exploitation cases. And the U.S. Marshals Service is targeting the top 500 most dangerous sex offenders in the nation.

The extent of Georgia's child sex trade came to light last spring, when a study done for [A Future Not a Past](#) revealed that an estimated 7,200 men are paying for sex with teenage girls every month in the Atlanta area. Child prostitution is also a big problem in Connecticut, Washington, DC, Florida, New York and Texas.

Holder lays out the problem with this stark description:

"Children are being recruited and coerced into the world of prostitution in our own cities. Teen runaways – who are often trying to escape abusive homes – may turn to prostitution as a means of survival. They also frequently fall prey to "pimps" who lure them in with an offer of food, clothes, attention, friendship, love, and a seemingly safe place to sleep. Once the pimps gain this control over the children, they often use acts of violence, intimidation, or psychological manipulation

to trap the children in a life of prostitution. Pimps will also cause the children to become addicted to drugs or alcohol (or will increase the severity of a pre-existing addiction) in order to ensure complicity. These children are taught to lie about their age and are given fake ID. They are also trained not to trust law enforcement and to lie to protect their pimps. As a result, these victims are often not recognized as victims, and may be arrested and jailed. The dangers faced by these children— from the pimps, from their associates, and from customers—are severe. These children become hardened by the treacherous street environment in which they must learn to survive. As such, they do not always outwardly present as sympathetic victims. These child victims need specialized services that are not widely available given that they often present with illnesses, drug additions, physical and sexual trauma, lack of viable family and community ties, and total dependence – physical and psychological – on their abusers, the pimps.”

Read more:

[Atlanta's War on Child Prostitution](#)

[Child Prostitution Report Triggers Warning from Craigslist](#)