

# The National Association of Human Trafficking Victim Advocates

*Combating Trafficking Anywhere*  
888-206-3264



March 29, 2012

National Association of Attorneys General  
2030 M Street NW, 8th Floor  
Washington, DC 20036

RE: Google profiting from adult services advertisements

To the Attorneys General,

The National Association of Human Trafficking Victim Advocates, The Women News Network, and 37 anti-trafficking organizations (and counting), call on NAAG to investigate Google for profiting from the sale of online adult services advertisements, such as for sex tourism, escort services, and "online dating" that contribute to the trafficking of women. Given Google's power and its role as the leading Internet search provider, we believe Google has an obligation to take proactive steps to prevent the sale of these advertisements, which we believe contribute to the \$32 billion global trafficking problem that the Pillars of Hope initiative seeks to combat.

We greatly appreciate your efforts to combat human trafficking by helping to shut down adult services advertisements on Craigslist and for your more recent efforts to shut down adult services advertisements appearing on Backpage.com. The online purveyors of the sex trade – modern day online pimps – are utilizing Google to drive massive volume through sites that are gateways to prostitution and the sex trade. Google's presence in the adult entertainment advertising provides an exponential boost to the sex trade industry. Anyone can place a Backpage.com advertisement, but only the largest and most sophisticated advertisers can afford a sustained Google Adwords campaign. Backpage.com's \$22 million annual revenue is dwarfed by the profits that Google, with total annual revenue of \$38 billion last year, is capable of reaping from similar ads.

Search Google and you will find online ads for exotic services, sex tourism, adult web cams and other sex industry offerings that are not dissimilar from those now found on Backpage.com, even if they are cloaked in the veneer of "Online Dating." These sites are ubiquitous and often violate Google's own AdWords policies. The sites linked to these advertisements show the tell-tale signs of trafficked victims and are not mere "online dating" sites which are permitted by current Google AdWords policies. Kathryn Griffin-Townsend, a former victim and nationally renowned anti-human trafficking advocate, among dozens of other activists, is concerned that these advertisements are a key part of the problem.

*"If you don't think that online dating and sex tourism sites are fronts for prostitution and human trafficking, then you have your head in the sand... just Google it. Ads on Craigslist and Backpage.com pale in comparison to the volume that Google generates," she stated.*

By allowing these ads to "slip through the cracks," in the words of a Google spokesperson, the company is turning a blind eye to a pernicious problem that it has the power to stop, if only Google would relinquish the revenue from the sale of these advertisements, and take proactive steps to prevent them from appearing in the first place.

As the world's largest supplier of online advertising, Google is in a unique position to choke the supply chain that delivers women for sale through online sex trafficking. Join us in conveying our mutual concern over these ads by forcing Google to take the high road and ban these ads.

Please do not take our word on this issue. Investigate. Simply Google "adult fun," or "buy foreign women" and see what you find. We implore with the utmost urgency the National Association of Attorneys General to send a clear message to Google by investigating their adult services advertisements and forcing them to stop profiting from online sex trafficking.

Peace,

The National Association of Human Trafficking  
Victim Advocates

WNN - Women News Network (as media messenger only – GLOBAL)  
ECPAT - End Child Prostitution and Trafficking  
Coalition Against Trafficking Women  
LA Students Against Trafficking of People - California  
Mission at Serenity Ranch - Texas  
Free SARA KRUZAN Now! - California  
A Future. Not A Past. - Georgia  
We've Been There, Done That! - Texas  
Generation Echo – Florida  
Worldwide Entertainment - GLOBAL  
Georgia Women for a Change - Georgia  
Chab Dai - USA  
Restore Innocence - Colorado  
METRO TASK FORCE - Louisiana  
Chab Dai Coalition - CAMBODIA  
Chab Dai & Yejj Charitable Trust - UNITED KINGDOM  
BE FREE Ministries - South Dakota  
United Hope UAE - UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

United Hope Ethiopia – ETHIOPIA  
World Relief Spokane – Washington  
Chab Dai - CANADA  
Break Out - Helping Victims Break Out Of Their  
Enslavement! - GLOBAL  
VillageVoicePimp.com - USA  
STOP Human Trafficking Dayton - Ohio  
The National Crittenton Foundation - Oregon  
Sojka Foundation – California  
DEEYAH - Music Producer and Celebrity - NORWAY  
The Pixel Project - USA  
Fundacion Reintegra, A.C. - MEXICO  
The Feminist Peace Network - GLOBAL  
Non-State Torture.org - GLOBAL  
Youth and Students Advancing Gender Equality  
(YSAGE) - PHILIPPINES  
National Association of Human Trafficking Victim  
Advocates - USA  
NW Advocates - Washington  
Churches Against Trafficking – GLOBAL  
Trafficking In America Task Force - USA  
Lawyers To the Rescue – US