



**\*UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL THURSDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 09:00 CET\***  
*FOR RELEASE IN THE USA*

**Award winning killed escorts campaign highlights sex buyers' (and websites') responsibility in fueling sex trafficking**

*"Girls of Paradise" escort site advertised real women, but when clients called or chatted online to "buy a prostitute", they were informed the women had been killed or severely injured on the "job".*

"Girls of Paradise", a fake website advertising real escorts who have been killed or severely injured by sex buyers and pimps, is a joint campaign released today by CAP International member Movement du Nid, a French frontline organization that provides direct services to prostituted persons, and lead advertising agency McCann Paris.

Grégoire Théry, Executive Director of CAP International, said:

*"The fake site forced sex buyers to be confronted with the epidemic of violence underpinning sex trafficking, which is kept in the shadows for the sake of their "friendly user experience".*

The case study video (<https://youtu.be/v5C8fETpsWc> - **EMBARGOED until Sept 22**) outlines the project and highlights the role of sex buyers and websites in respectively perpetuating and facilitating the violence that is particularly hidden from view when sex trafficking is moved online.

This unveiling comes at a crucial moment in the USA, as Backpage.com was under fire last week for not wanting to comply with an investigation into child sex exploitation on their website.

Théry said:

*"By exposing sex buyers to the realities of sex trafficking, we wanted to show them the violence that lies beneath the surface of their actions.*

*In the first 48 hours, thousands of sex buyers contacted Girls of Paradise to "buy a prostitute". This immediate and large influx demonstrates websites' role in facilitating access to the purchase of sex and their responsibility in perpetuating sex trafficking.*

*But holding websites to account, while necessary, only puts a Band-Aid on what is an inherently violent problem rooted in economic and gender inequalities.*

*To fix it, governments must pass laws to end demand for trafficking and prostitution.*

*Law enforcement agencies across the US are already considering and implementing more victim-centered responses that shift the legal responsibility from the victims to the buyers, pimps and traffickers, echoing the forward-thinking and holistic example set by the recent French legislation.*

*But more needs to be done. Prostitution must be formally recognized as violence against women and girls, prostituted persons must be fully decriminalized and support services to them must be increased.”*

McCann Paris and Mouvement du Nid’s “Girls of Paradise” (<http://girlsofparadise.sex/>) campaign is the recent winner of a prestigious gold Clio Award (<http://clios.com/awards>), given to creative business endeavors. It will be presented in New York on 28 September.

ENDS

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#### NOTE TO THE EDITORS

##### About France’s recent prostitution law:

On 6 April 2016, France passed an historic law that recognizes prostitution as violence against women, provides support services to prostituted persons and criminalizes buyers of sex.

It also obliges internet service providers to promptly inform public authorities of any content that violates anti-pimping laws, and to make public the means and measures they devote to combating such illegal activities.

To learn more about the key aspects of the law, read our info pack: [http://www.cap-international.org/uploads/4/0/6/7/40678459/understanding\\_frances\\_prostitution\\_law\\_infopack.pdf](http://www.cap-international.org/uploads/4/0/6/7/40678459/understanding_frances_prostitution_law_infopack.pdf)

##### About CAP International

Mouvement du Nid is a member of the Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution (CAP International), a coalition of 14 frontline NGOs providing direct assistance to victims of human trafficking, prostitution & sexual exploitation.

The fundamental objective of CAP international is to contribute to the adoption and implementation of holistic policies and legislation at the domestic, continental and international level that can bring about an end to commercial sexual exploitation – in particular by combatting the demand for purchased sex. In order to reach this objective, CAP international aims to: strengthen the domestic capacities of each of its members & coordinate international advocacy initiatives, so as to reinforce the collective impact of its members.

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