**Women to Go" Store Causes Uproar in Israeli Mall**

by [Amanda Kloer](http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog?author_id=60) October 25, 2010 06:25 AM *(PT)* Topics: [Prostitution](http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/category/prostitution), [Sex Trafficking](http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/category/sex_trafficking)

The windows of an upscale shopping mall in Tel Aviv, Israel feature a number of the products for sale, including designer clothes, vintage comic books, and women. That's because a controversial new display called "Women to Go" features women of several ages and ethnic backgrounds posed in the store window with large price tags listing their height, weight, and country of origin. It's a part of a campaign meant to spread awareness of sex trafficking in Israel and garner support for national legislation which would criminalize men who buy sex.

Over the past decade, upwards of 10,000 people have been [trafficked](http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/10/24/israel.women.trafficking/index.html?hpt=C2) into Israel, many of whom have been women forced into prostitution. Currently, around 3,000 women are estimated to be [trapped](http://www.euronews.net/2010/10/20/women-to-go-protest-targets-sex-trade-in-israel/) in the sex trade. In Israel, prostitution is legal for both the buyer and seller, although pimping, brothels, and sex trafficking are not. But some advocates believe the impunity with which men can buy sex in Israel has led to their trafficking problem. So two years ago, several concerned Israeli citizens founded a coalition to support a bill in the [Swedish model](http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/will_swedish_prostitution_laws_prevent_trafficking_in_the_us) of anti-prostitution law, which would make it a crime to buy sex in Israel but not criminalize those who sell it. The bill was introduced, but has been collecting dust ever since.

That's why Ori Keidar, one of the [creators](http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/women-go-on-sale-at-tel-aviv-shopping-center-1.320059) of the "Women to Go" display put women up for "sale" in a shopping mall. He and his colleagues want to raise awareness about the crime of sex trafficking in Israel and drum up support for the legislation they say will fight it. In addition to having access to more information, shoppers moved (or appalled) by the display will have the opportunity to sign a petition asking Parliament to support the legislation. The display also reveals the brutal nature of sex trafficking; the women in the "Women to Go" windows are painted with bruises and stare hollowly into space. It's a look that is good for a petition campaign but probably bad for business at the mall.

In the week or so that "Women to Go" has been up, Keidar and his colleagues have received hundreds of petition signatures and gotten media attention from major news outlets in Israel, Europe, and globally. In doing so, they have made more progress in a week on passing legislation which could drastically reduce sex trafficking than in the two years it has languished in the government. Their efforts are a prime example of how connecting an avant-guard, controversial awareness demonstration with concrete action people can take to address human trafficking can be incredibly effective.

Israel is not the only country where important legislation languishes in the political process. But sometimes, popular support can be the key to creating the political will to pass such legislation. What laws could help reduce human trafficking in your country? How can you teach people about the issue and then use their interest to support those laws? If you're looking for inspiration, [sign this petition](http://humantrafficking.change.org/petitions/view/support_the_domestic_minor_sex_trafficking_deterrence_and_victims_support_act) to support the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Support Act here in the U.S.