

# Call the National Guard!

Lawmakers want Guard to curb violence in Chicago

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FILE IMAGE by Getty Images

Shootings, abductions, beatings, rapes, home invasions ... the list of atrocities that take place in [Chicago](#) practically every day reads like a montage from "[A Clockwork Orange](#)." That's why a group of state lawmakers say they want to call in the [National Guard](#).

State Reps. [John Fritchey](#) and LaShawn Ford, both Chicago Democrats, are calling on the governor, Mayor Daley, and [Police Superintendent Jody Weis](#) to use the Guard to clean up the city's streets.

"As we speak, National Guard members are working side-by-side with our troops to fight a war halfway around the world," Fritchey said in a Sunday release. "The unfortunate reality is that we have another war that is just as deadly taking place right in our back yard. Is this a drastic call to action? Of course it is. But is it warranted when we are losing residents to gun violence at such an alarming rate? Without question."

The representatives used a shocking comparison to drive home their point: 113 people have been killed in Chicago so far this year -- the exact same number as U.S. troops killed during the same time period in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Enough is enough. We've already lost too many lives. We need action now," Ford said.

The call for National Guard troops isn't a criticism of Chicago police, the lawmakers said, but rather a realization that they're stretched too thinly.

"... by calling up the National Guard, we can help the police do their job and save lives in the process. We have trained and ready National Guardsmen living right here in Chicago who could be immediately deployed to assist our police officers. Let's get them out into the streets," Fritchey said.

Fritchey and Ford said action needs to happen soon, because summer is right around the corner and the warm weather brings an increase in violence. They also suggested that Guard troops wouldn't have to be used all over the city. Instead, they could be strategically deployed on the 9 percent or so of Chicago's streets where most of the violence happens.

Ford said having armed military on the streets wouldn't bother him at all.

"If they can save even one life, one child, in my community, I would welcome the National Guard with open arms and I am confident that my constituents would as well," he said.

The lawmakers noted that the National Guard has been used in Illinois and other states during specific moments of violence, but they have never been used to combat "general urban unrest."

Weis responded by saying he thinks the proposal is well-meaning, but wouldn't work. The military's mission isn't always compatible with civilian law enforcement, Weis told the Associated Press. Gov. Quinn's office has not issued a response.