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# Pro-abortion campaigners to fly abortions pills in NI by drone



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12:10 Thursday 16 June 2016

**Abortion pills will be flown by drone across the border from Co Louth into Co Down next Tuesday to protest against the criminalization of abortion in both jurisdictions, pro-choice campaigners have said.**

In a joint initiative between four groups, the package of tablets will be brought by the unmanned craft from a spot on the R173 on the southern side of the border and retrieved in the north.

Following the flight, the campaigners from Alliance for Choice, Rosa, Labour Alternative and Women on Waves will stage a protest in front of Belfast's Court of Appeal.

The protest will coincide with the hearing of an appeal against a decision by the High Court that Northern Ireland's abortion law breaches the European Convention on Human Rights.

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In November last year, a High Court judge ruled that the grounds for abortion should be extended. Mr Justice Horner said that women who were the victims of sexual crimes, and in cases of fatal foetal abnormality, were entitled to have abortions within the law. Northern Ireland's Attorney General John Larkin said he was "profoundly disappointed" with the court's decision and launched an appeal.

Courtney Robinson of Labour Alternative said it was not a criminal act to fly the pills across the border, and that the initiative was designed to make more women aware of their options.

"Abortion is happening whether we like it or not, and we need to make sure that it's safe and it's legal rather than backstreet abortions, being criminalized for a pill, or having to go to England,"

Pro-life campaigners have vowed to do all in their power to stop the drone.

Bernadette Smyth from the Belfast-based group Precious Life said: "I am currently speaking to the PSNI and may very well be in contact with the PSNI to ensure that these pills will be confiscated and destroyed. We are not used to destroy the lives of unborn children."

The PSNI has repeatedly failed to act in cases where campaigners have claimed to have hidden illegal abortion pills – [see this case for example \(http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/abortion-arrests-challenge-after-a-month-1-6919899\)](http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/abortion-arrests-challenge-after-a-month-1-6919899).

However, the authorities have occasionally moved to prosecute individual women over abortion matters.

**PPS pressing ahead with prosecution:**

The Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland has said it will press ahead with action against a mother accused of procuring an abortion for her daughter - by purchasing pills online from campaign groups.

The 1967 Abortion Act allows terminations in England, Scotland and Wales up to 24 weeks of pregnancy on a number of grounds, including foetal abnormalities that could result in the child being severely handicapped, but does not apply in the Province.

Under current legislation, medical staff are legally obliged to notify police if a person present makes it known they have procured a miscarriage by taking abortion tablets.

It is estimated that around 1,000 women from Northern Ireland travel to England for abortions each year.

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