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2. 21 June 2016 at 4:24pm

'Abortion drone' delivers pills to women in Northern Ireland



Courtney Robinson (left) and Lucy Simpson of Labour Alternative hold boxes of abortion pills which were delivered by drone. *Credit: PA*

A drone carrying abortion pills has delivered medication to women in Northern Ireland.

Two women took the pills which can be taken up to nine weeks into a pregnancy.

The pro-choice organisers of the stunt described it as an act of solidarity aimed at highlighting the strict abortion laws that exist on both sides of the Irish border.



A drone delivers the pills: Mifepristone and Misoprostol. *Credit: PA*

We are here to say we are going to defy the law in helping women obtain these pills and we are going to work to make the law unworkable and stand in solidarity with all women who want to have an abortion and have the right to do so in Northern Ireland.

The reason we are doing this is to highlight that these pills are available to women who are not able to travel outside of Northern Ireland for an abortion.

I have no concerns. I know the pills are safe.

As long as politicians in Stormont and the Dail continue to ignore human rights we will continue our campaign.

– *Courtney Robinson, a member of pro-choice group Labour Alternative who took the pills*



Courtney Robinson of Labour Alternative takes a pill. *Credit: PA*

Pro-life organisations had vowed to do all in their power to stop the drone, however there was no protest at Narrow Water in Co Down, the site of the landing. Police attended but no action needed to be taken.

The drones were flown from Northern Ireland to Omeath just south of the border to collect the pills. It then flew back again.

In Northern Ireland, the maximum penalty for administering a drug to induce miscarriage is life imprisonment, while in the Irish Republic, the offence of procuring an abortion carries a potential 14-year jail term.

The event was organised by pro-choice groups Alliance For Choice; Rosa; Labour Alternative and Women On Waves. They said no laws had been broken.



Pro-choice activists from the Irish Republic hold signs. *Credit: PA*

The law is archaic. We are governed in Northern Ireland by an Act which is dated 1861, which is in the dark ages, it's like when dinosaurs were on earth. We think it should be changed radically and we can't really wait any longer.

Thousands of women suffer every year in Northern Ireland and the Republic having to travel abroad for abortions and go through very traumatic times.

We feel now is the time to change legislation.

– *Lucy Simpson, of Labour Alternative took the pills*



Lucy Simpson of Labour Alternative takes an abortion pill. *Credit: PA*

Later in the day campaigners staged a picket outside Belfast High Court where a ruling which found the law in Northern Ireland was incompatible with human rights legislation is being appealed against.

The pills, Mifepristone and Misoprostol, had been prescribed by a doctor and were approved by the World Health Organisation in 2005.



Dutch drone operator Marc Godefroy of Women On Waves prepares to fly a drone. *Credit: PA*

The 'abortion drone' will mark the different reality for Irish women to access safe abortion services compared to women in other European countries where abortion is legal.

– *The pro-choice groups*

In April a 21-year-old woman was handed a suspended sentence by a judge in Belfast after she bought drugs on the internet to induce a miscarriage because she could not afford to fly to England.

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