

Newsbeat Navigation

newsbeat newsbeat

[Latest Articles](#) [Most Popular](#) [Topics](#)

Abortion campaigners 'hand themselves in' to police over N Ireland prosecution

By Amelia Butterly *Newsbeat reporter*

1d
1 day ago

Share this article

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

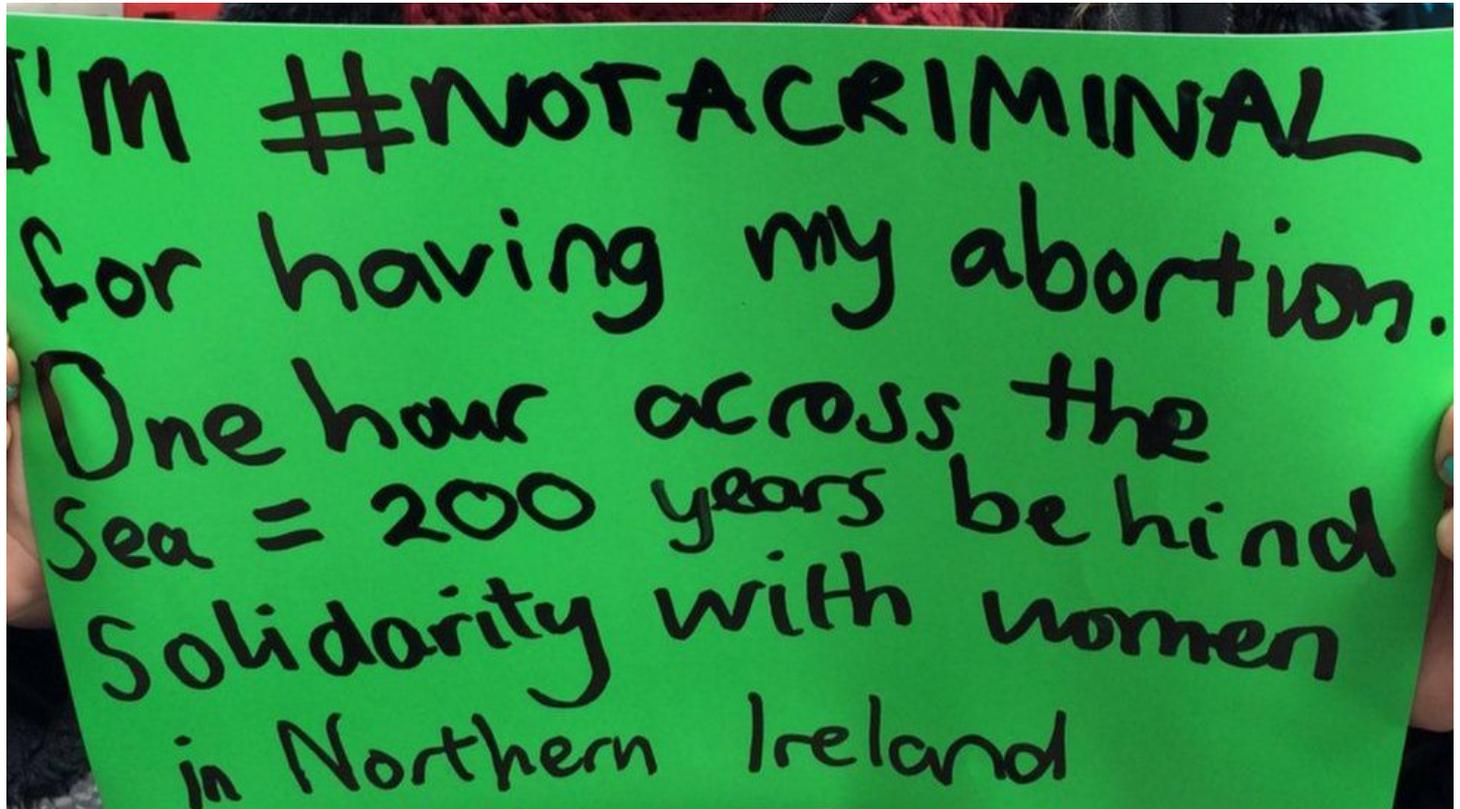
Show share tools

Share with friends

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

[Read about these links](#)

Hide share tools



A group of pro-choice supporters have offered themselves up for arrest, as a protest against the prosecution of a woman in Northern Ireland.

The 21-year-old from Belfast was [given a suspended sentence](#) after buying drugs on the internet to start a miscarriage.

She had been unable to raise the money to travel to England for an abortion.

A group of about 20 gathered outside a central London police station on Saturday lunchtime, in "solidarity" with the woman, who has not been named.



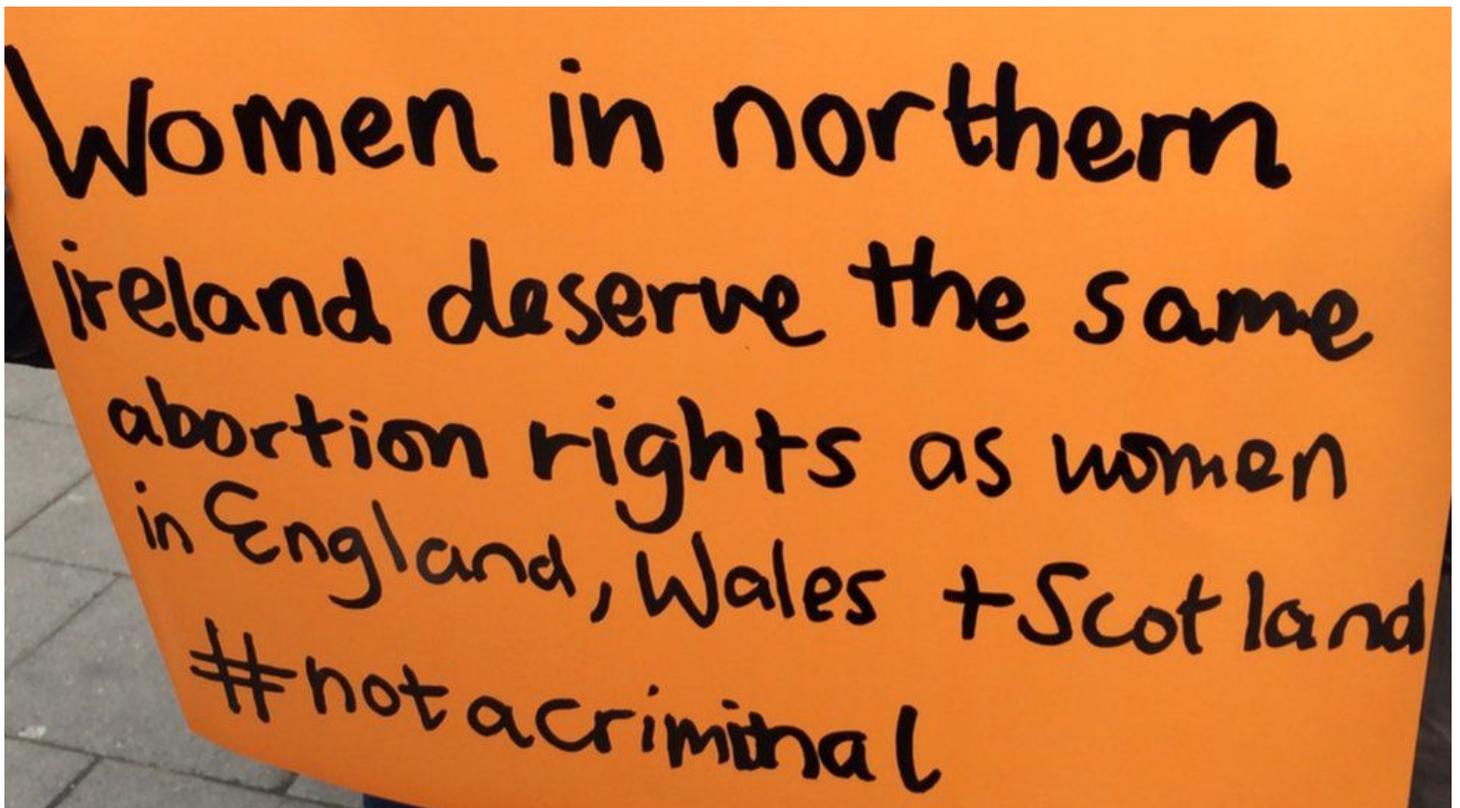
Alisa Berry Ryan from Abortion Rights said similar demonstrations were taking place around the country in places like Cardiff, Glasgow and Liverpool. Groups are also protesting in Belfast.

"This is a symbolic gesture," she explained. "We've got a whole group of women who are disclosing that they have had an abortion, including myself.

"If you're going to arrest one of us, arrest us all."

Rashida Islam, also of Abortion Rights, said: "I'm here today because it's 2016, we're living in the UK and we're still punishing women for exercising bodily autonomy."

Speaking earlier in the week, Bernadette Smyth, director of anti-abortion group Precious Life, said [she was shocked](#) that the penalty for a "serious crime" was so "manifestly lenient".



Also at the demonstration was Dr Pam Lowe, an expert in sociology and reproductive health from Aston University.

"A lot of people are not aware that abortion is still a crime [in the UK] unless you comply with the conditions of the 1967 Abortion Act," she told Newsbeat.

"Any woman, whether she's in England or Northern Ireland, if you buy pills over the internet [to induce a miscarriage] you're subject to criminal prosecution."



The Abortion Act 1967 made amendments to existing laws prohibiting abortion.

It states that an offence hasn't occurred if the pregnancy is less than 24 weeks along and two doctors agree there is risk to the pregnant woman's health, or there is substantial risk to the unborn child.

"We don't want women to necessarily medicate themselves," said Dr Lowe. "Ideally everybody would see a healthcare professional.

"That's not the same as saying it should be a criminal offence."



Following the demonstration outside the West End Police Station, the group moved to a larger protest outside the Polish embassy.

Groups have gathered there to oppose a proposal to outlaw abortion entirely in Poland.

Thousands of people have been demonstrating in Warsaw, many bringing coat hangers as a symbol of the backstreet abortions they say will happen if the bill is passed.

Women who have abortions and doctors who perform them could potentially be sentenced to up to five years in prison.

It's 2016, we're living in the UK and we're still punishing women for exercising bodily autonomy
Rashida Islam
Abortion Rights

Poland already has some of the strictest abortion laws in Europe. It is currently only allowed in cases of rape or incest, when a mother's health is endangered or the foetus has medical abortions.

"I'm incredibly disturbed with what's happening at the moment in terms of reproductive justice," said Alisa.

"There have been real waves of anti-women policy."

Find us on Instagram at [BBCNewsbeat](#) and follow us on Snapchat, search for [bbc_newsbeat](#)

Related Topics

[Health Women's health](#)

Most Popular

1. [1](#)



[Paul Walker's daughter gets \\$10m settlement](#)

[From the topic Entertainment](#)

1d
1 day ago

2. [2](#)



[Kevin Simm: The Voice win isn't cursed](#)

[From the topic Entertainment](#)

6h
6 hours ago

3. [3](#)



[American footballer Will Smith shot dead](#)

[From the topic Sport](#)

4h
4 hours ago

4. [4](#)



[Court orders Potter star to pay agent](#)

[From the topic Entertainment](#)

2d
2 days ago

5. [5](#)



[Caffe Nero staff lose free lunch](#)

From the topic [Money](#)
 2d
 2 days ago

Latest stories



[Kevin Simm: The Voice win isn't cursed](#)

From the topic [Entertainment](#)
 6h
 6 hours ago

Share this article

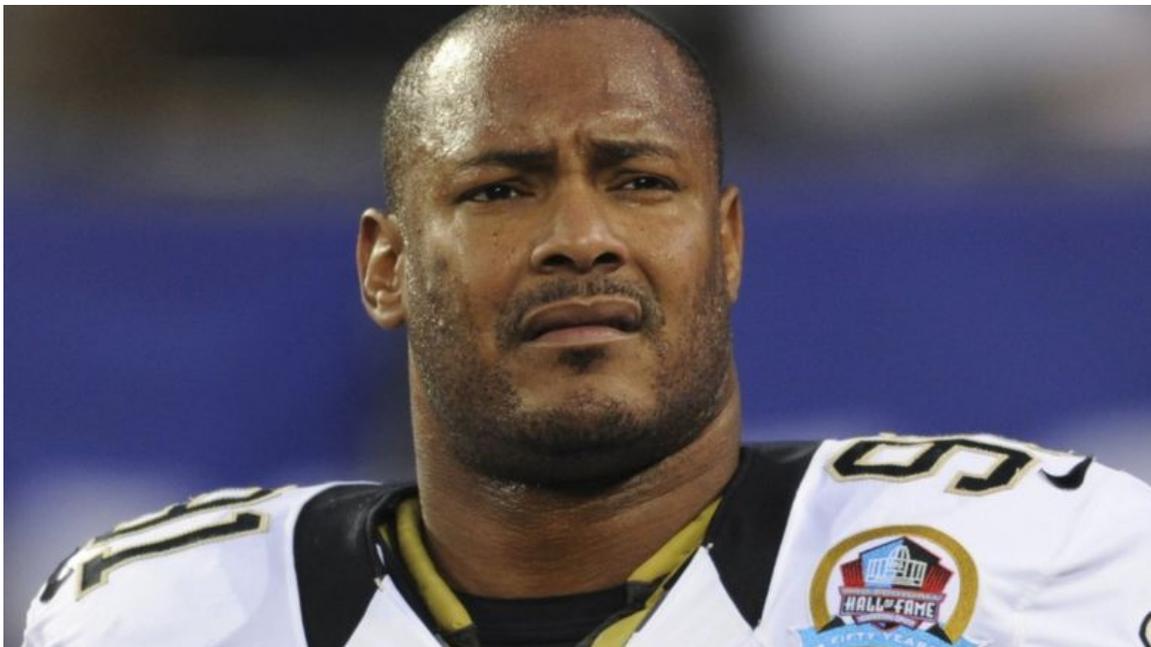
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

Show share tools

Share with friends

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

[Read about these links](#)
 Hide share tools



[American footballer Will Smith shot dead](#)

[From the topic Sport](#)

4h
4 hours ago

Share this article

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

Show share tools

Share with friends

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

[Read about these links](#)

Hide share tools



[Paul Walker's daughter gets \\$10m settlement](#)

[From the topic Entertainment](#)

1d
1 day ago

Share this article

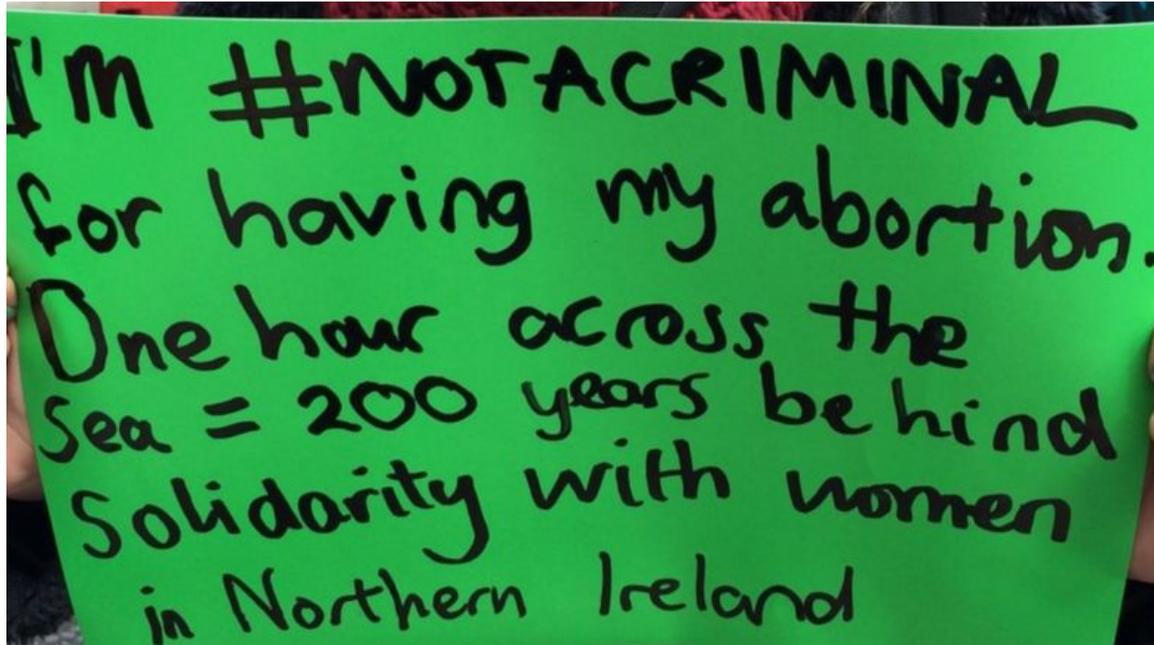
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

Show share tools
Share with friends

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Linkedin](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

[Read about these links](#)
Hide share tools



[Abortion campaigners ask to be arrested](#)

1d
1 day ago

Share this article

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Linkedin](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

Show share tools
Share with friends

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Linkedin](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

[Read about these links](#)
Hide share tools



[Caffe Nero staff lose free lunch](#)

[From the topic Money](#)

2d

2 days ago

Share this article

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

Show share tools

Share with friends

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

[Read about these links](#)

Hide share tools



[Court orders Potter star to pay agent](#)

[From the topic Entertainment](#)

2d

2 days ago

Share this article

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

Show share tools

Share with friends

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Whatsapp](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google+](#)

[Read about these links](#)

Hide share tools

Show More articles

Explore the BBC

News

Weather

Earth

Capital

Autos

TV

Sport

Shop

Travel

Culture

Future

Radio

[CBBC](#)
[Food](#)
[Bitesize](#)
[Arts](#)
[Taster](#)
[Local](#)

[CBeebies](#)
[iWonder](#)
[Music](#)
[Make It Digital](#)
[Nature](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Accessibility Help](#)

[Contact the BBC](#)

[Ad choices](#)

[About the BBC](#)

[Cookies](#)

[Parental Guidance](#)

[Advertise with us](#)

Copyright © 2016 BBC. The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites. **[Read about our approach to external linking.](#)**