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Abortion Is Coming To Poland...By Drone



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A coalition of abortion rights groups in Germany and Poland are launching an offensive against the latter's strict abortion laws by using unmanned aerial drones to airlift abortion pills into the country.

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The drones will carry medical abortion pills from the German border town of Frankfurt (Oder) to the Polish town of Slobice immediately across the Oder River.

The operation is expected to be carried out June 27. The women launching the drones say that because the drones will be flying low and will weigh under 5 kilograms, they can act without requiring approval from Germany or Poland. Once the drones have dropped off their cargo, Polish activists will distribute the pills to women in the early stages of pregnancy to perform do-it-yourself abortions. The drugs, mifepristone and misoprostol, are effective up to the ninth week of pregnancy.

Technically, the pills themselves are not illegal, but taking them without the approval of state officials is, meaning activists could potentially be prosecuted for the illegal provision of abortion. Polish law does not prosecute women who receive an abortion.

The stunt is primarily being organized by the Dutch abortion-rights group <u>Women on</u> <u>Waves (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_on_Waves)</u>, which is known for sailing ships near countries that restrict abortion in order to provide abortions in international waters. Backing the group up are the German group Cocia Basia, which helps procure abortions for Polish women, and the Polish feminist group <u>Fundacja</u> <u>Feminoteka (http://feminoteka.pl/)</u>.

Poland stands apart from most other European countries with its strict abortion laws. The procedure is only allowed in cases of rape, incest, serious fetal deformities, or when the mother's life is in danger. Under Communism, abortion was far more widely available, but after the fall of the Iron Curtain the law was substantially rolled back, thanks largely to the influence of the Catholic Church. Thousands of women in Poland are believed to receive illegal underground abortions, while others travel to foreign countries to receive them.

Besides Poland, the only other sizable European country where abortion is mostly banned is Ireland. Many small countries, such as Malta and Andorra, ban it as well. All of them are historically Catholic.

The abortion activists say that if the Poland stunt is a success, they may target Ireland next.

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