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Police Pull Abortion Pill Robots From Belfast Streets, As Pressure Mounts On Northern Ireland To Rethink Ban

Robots deployed on the streets of Belfast to deliver abortion pills in an awareness-raising exercise were impounded by police on Thursday, as pressure mounts for Northern Ireland's strict pregnancy termination laws to be liberalised.

Rights groups Rosa and Women on Waves used two robots to deliver the pills to women outside a court in the city, as they press their demands for reform after neighbouring Ireland voted last week to liberalise its laws.

Women on Waves founder Rebecca Gomperts said police had removed the robots, which were controlled from the Netherlands to show that the pills could be delivered to women in Northern Ireland seeking abortion without breaking the law.

"The momentum is now there for Northern Ireland to make a change," Gomperts said.

"The fact that abortion is not allowed here in Northern Ireland is violating women's rights."

Abortion is permitted in Northern Ireland only if a woman's life is at risk or there is a risk to her mental or physical health that is long-term or permanent.

Pressure to relax the law has intensified since voters in Ireland on Friday backed the removal of a constitutional abortion ban by two-to-one.

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