

NO ESCAPING LIVE MUSIC. Sounds Great!

Austin
Visit TheUSA.com

LEARN MORE

Home > Lifestyle > Women > Health

'It's an act of defiance': Drone delivers abortion pills to women in Northern Ireland



Courtney Robinson swallowing an abortion pill in Northern Ireland, that was delivered by drone
CREDIT: ROSA IRELAND/ROSA IRELAND



EDITOR'S CHOICE

- 1** The weirdest and wisest fatherhood advice from celebrity dads
19 Jun 2016, 8:00am
- 2** The One Show's Alex Jones on facing the truth about her fertility
18 Jun 2016, 9:02am
- 3** Why I want to be badass - the highest praise for a modern woman
CELIA WALDEN
18 Jun 2016, 9:00am
- 4** 9 surprisingly sexist Father's Day cards you definitely shouldn't buy
18 Jun 2016, 7:00am
- 5** Jo Cox murder: Death threats and sexual torment have become part of the job for our MPs - enough is enough
SOPHY RIDGE
17 Jun 2016, 12:19pm



Sponsored
Find out how much your home is worth

By **Meabh Ritchie**
21 JUNE 2016 • 12:15PM

A drone carrying abortion pills flew into Northern Ireland on Tuesday morning to highlight the strict laws governing terminations in Ireland, north and south.

The drone set off from Omeath in County Louth, Ireland at 10am and landed shortly after at Narrow Water, near Newry in Northern Ireland, where some of the women present swallowed a pill.

A coalition of pro-choice groups were behind the flight - Alliance For Choice,

Rosa, Labour Alternative and Women On Waves, which staged a similar stunt from Germany to Poland in 2015 - and in a statement, said that no laws were being broken.

The women who took the pills didn't disclose whether they were pregnant. A number of police officers were present at the landing site, but they did not confiscate the medication, which had been prescribed by two doctors.



The drone carrying abortion pills which flew into Northern Ireland CREDIT: ROSA IRELAND/ROSA IRELAND

The drugs being carried by the drone, mifepristone and misoprostol, can be taken up to nine weeks into a pregnancy.

Eighteen-year-old Courtney Robinson, from the political party Labour Alternative (pictured), described the stunt as an "act of defiance".

"I took the pills to counter the lies of anti-choice groups and some politicians that these pills aren't safe," she told Telegraph Women. "They're approved by the World Health Organisation and they're used all over Europe, and yet women (in Northern Ireland) are being prosecuted for taking them... This is an act of solidarity with them."

She added: "As long as politicians in Stormont and the Dail (the Irish parliament) continue to ignore human rights, we aren't going to stop."



Sponsored



Share your views and win a £25 Amazon voucher

Everyone has an opinion. Why not get rewarded for yours? Join Telegraph Pulse panel

[Read more >](#)





Courtney Robinson (L) and Lucy Simpson take abortion pills flown in by drone CREDIT: ROSA IRELAND/ROSA IRELAND

The stunt aims to highlight the strict laws which criminalise abortions in Ireland, except for a minority of cases, and the fact that Irish women are forced to cross borders and travel to access terminations in the vast majority of cases, including where a woman has been raped and in cases where the fetus can't survive outside the womb.

In Northern Ireland, the maximum penalty for the crime of administering a drug to induce miscarriage under the relevant law - the Offences Against The Person Act 1861 - is life imprisonment. In the Irish Republic, the offence of procuring an

abortion carries a potential 14-year jail term.

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.

In a statement, the coalition of campaigners said of the event: "It is an all-island act of solidarity between women in the north and the south to highlight the violation of human rights caused by the existing laws that criminalise abortion in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland except in very limited circumstances."

Women hand themselves in for buying abortion pills
01:05



As the drone was flying over the Irish border, Belfast's High Court continued to hear an appeal against a ruling which found that banning abortion in cases of rape, incest or fatal foetal was incompatible with human rights legislation.

Activists involved with the drone flight are planning to campaign against the appeal at the court at 2.30pm today.

In June, a UN committee ruled that the Republic of Ireland's abortion law was a violation of women's rights.

FAQ | NI abortion laws



What is the law in NI?

It is unlawful to perform an abortion, except to preserve the life or mental health of the mother, and anyone who performs the procedure faces life imprisonment.

What about the 1967 Abortion Act?

It applies everywhere in the UK, except Northern Ireland

Can women have abortions on the NHS?

Even if they travel to England, they have to pay for it privately. In the last five years, 24,599 women travelled from the north and south of Ireland, where abortion is also banned, to England or Wales for terminations


Is Northern Ireland's law about to change?

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) took a case against the Department of Justice, to try and change the law to offer women and girls a choice of accessing a termination in circumstances of fatal foetal abnormality, rape or incest.

The judge agreed with the NIHRC that the current law is incompatible with human rights law and results in a breach of the rights of women and girls seeking a termination of pregnancy in these circumstances. But he said it was up to politicians to change it.

The ruling has since been appealed and is being heard in Belfast's High Court in June, 2016.





The Telegraph
Like Page 3.4M likes

READ MORE ABOUT:

- HEALTH
- PREGNANCY
- NORTHERN IRELAND
- ABORTION

Sponsored



Quiz: Which Ab Fab character are you?

Are you a kooky free spirit, a trendsetter or the voice of reason within your squad?

[Read more >](#)



To nap or not to nap

Here is your must-have guide to helping you relax, unwind and get a good night's sleep

[Read more >](#)

Promoted stories



Will Young leaves Saturday Kitchen viewers 'disgusted' after...

OK!

Sponsored



London's best places to eat



Farrar's Awe-Inspiring Messages Before She Died

Viral Piranha



What's making you look older than you are?

Victoria



What did sun bathing look like in the 1950s?



The 'leaked' story of Northern Ireland at Arsenal's...

Women latest





Sexually frustrated at 70? Don't take it lying down

21 Jun 2016, 1:52pm



Are these the women secretly calling the shots on Donald Trump's campaign?

21 Jun 2016, 1:12pm



Claudia Bradby: my life as a referendum widow

21 Jun 2016, 1:07pm



Abortion pills: Everything you need to know

21 Jun 2016, 12:37pm

A fitting tribute to Jo Cox? Let us take in Europe's lost children

[ALLISON PEARSON](#)

🗨️ | 21 Jun 2016, 12:36pm



Theresa May might finally be about to make her leadership bid - Boris Johnson should be scared

[CATHY NEWMAN](#)

🗨️ | 21 Jun 2016, 11:07am





Bollywood's Salman Khan condemned for 'raped woman' joke

21 Jun 2016, 7:31am



I like Melvyn Bragg. I had an affair - and years later, fell for my old flame all over again

~~Like Jo Cox's son, my mum died when I was 5. I miss her every day~~

20 Jun 2016, 6:23pm



Like Jo Cox's son, my mum died when I was 5. I miss her every day

20 Jun 2016, 3:35pm



Shane Watson: I have a serious case of FOGOH (that's Fear of Going on Holiday)

20 Jun 2016, 3:30pm

Why we mustn't stop calling girls girls - even if it causes offence

REBECCA REID



20 Jun 2016, 12:40pm



Twiggy: 'I'm lucky - I've never failed'

20 Jun 2016, 12:32pm



#NoWomanEver addresses aggressive street harassment

20 Jun 2016, 11:28am



How I revolutionised my work-life balance - and you can too

20 Jun 2016, 7:00am



Barbara Taylor Bradford: 'What this referendum needs is Mrs Thatcher'

20 Jun 2016, 6:00am



Why abuse victims wait until their twilight years to come forward

Why abuse victims wait until their twilight years to come forward

19 Jun 2016, 11:00am



Meet the brave women who escaped being killed by Isil

19 Jun 2016, 11:00am



The weirdest and wisest fatherhood advice from celebrity dads

19 Jun 2016, 8:00am



Shane Watson: "Why every woman needs an Absolutely Fabulous friend"

SHARLE WATSON Why every woman needs an abortion: FABRIOUS HERO
19 Jun 2016, 7:00am

Jo Cox murder: Where does our fractured democracy go from here?

JENNY MCCARTNEY

 19 Jun 2016, 6:00am

Jess Phillips MP: The death of my friend Jo Cox makes me want to fight harder

JESS PHILLIPS

 19 Jun 2016, 6:00am

[Contact us](#)

[Subscribers](#)

[Archive](#)

[Reader Prints](#)

[Advertising](#)

[Syndication](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Terms and Conditions](#)

[Leave your feedback](#)

© Telegraph Media Group Limited 2016