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Abortion ship leaves Morocco

Friday 05 October 2012

A pleasure yacht operated by the abortion campaign rights group Women on Waves has been escorted out of Smir harbour in Morocco and is now in international waters, according to media reports on Friday morning.

On Thursday it emerged the boat was already moored in Smir when the crew claimed navy ships had stopped it from entering.

Nos television said the boat - a normal pleasure yacht - had been in the Smir marina for several days. The organisation only announced its intention to sail to Morocco when the yacht was safely moored, Nos said.

Navy

Earlier on Thursday Women on Waves claimed their boat had been stopped from entering the harbour by a navy ship. However, while the marina had indeed been sealed off, the campaign boat was already moored inside.

Later the organisation admitted the ruse was aimed at generating publicity to make an open discussion about abortion possible. 'That has happened,' a spokeswoman is quoted as saying. 'The abortion boat has been in all the Moroccan media.'

International waters

The Women on Waves organisation campaigns for abortion rights. It also operates a larger boat which sails under the Dutch flag and is equipped to carry out abortions in international waters.

The organisation has gone to Morocco at the request of a local pro-abortion campaign group. Abortion is illegal in Morocco but hundreds of illegal operations are carried out every day, campaigners say.

In 2009, the European court of human rights ruled Portugal broke the law when it blocked the free passage of the Dutch abortion boat in 2004.

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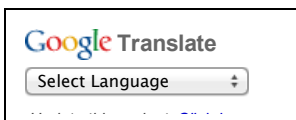
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