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Abortion Ship 'Escorted From Moroccan Port'

A Dutch ship which offers women abortions is reportedly escorted from Moroccan waters after being denied access to a port.

1:24pm UK, Friday 05 October 2012



Video: 'Abortion Ship' Blocked By Morocco

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The ship was blocked from entering Smir

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A Dutch ship which offers women around the world abortions has reportedly been escorted from Moroccan territorial waters after it was denied access to a harbour.

Women on Waves, the Dutch group which organises visits by the 11-metre Langenort, said Moroccan authorities searched the vessel in the harbour town of Smir before escorting it out to sea.

The group claimed it had denied access to the ship that was docked in the town for "several days", after initially saying it was due to arrive there on Thursday.

The Moroccan interior ministry said the vessel had left the harbour, but claimed it was a diversion to distract attention from the failure of the real abortion ship to make port.

The ministry said it was "just a yacht with two Dutch citizens on board" and said it had arrived in Smir on September 2.

In a statement, it added: "The two Dutch citizens raised a banner on Thursday afternoon in a sign of solidarity with the boat in question, to try to deflect the media attention from, and cover up the failure of this operation."

Earlier, Women on Waves had claimed the Moroccan navy was blocking the arrival of the ship at its first Muslim country.

Abortion is illegal in Morocco, a relatively conservative Muslim society, and the health ministry had said the ship was not authorised to operate in its territory.

Hundreds of people gathered in Smir to protest against the vessel's visit.

Demonstrators shouted slogans and waved banners reading "life is a divine gift that must be preserved", according to the MAP news agency.

In the past 11 years, a Women on Waves ship has visited Ireland, Poland, Portugal and Spain, sparking protests in each country from pro-life groups.

Security forces were still restricting access to the harbour - around 25 miles east of Tangier.

Women on Waves estimates that between 600 and 800 illegal abortions take place every day in Morocco, but only 200 of them are done properly.

Rebecca Gomperts, the group's founder, said illegal abortions cause the deaths of 78 women in Morocco a year on average.

The activists said the ship will stay near Morocco while they plan their next move.

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Florbela Ruas
7:59 AM on 18/10/2012

Score: 0

Fairly unbiased report I was thinking to myself but when it got to the part about Portugal and Spain (have no idea what the reaction was in Poland or Ireland but suspect similar to Morocco in neither country) it is just bull.. misleading. When they came abortion was legal in both countries (and was free, covered by local equivalent of NHS and that terribly inaccurate description "on demand" also applied. If they have an agenda it is about women's reproductive health issues. Not about abortion rights which are far more liberal in Portugal and Spain than in their native Netherlands. Catholicism and Islam would be focal points for some outrage in relatively religious countries (Morocco, Poland) but not in highly secularized ones such as Spain and Portugal (and for all I know even Ireland by now). Still, I suppose it's kudos to SKY for having covered this non-story than not having touched upon it at all. TT

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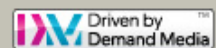


limey john
4:13 PM on 5/10/2012

Score: 0

As always the Catholic church is loitering in the background telling people what they should do with their lives.

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