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Pro-choice drone to fly into Catholic Poland

Agence France-Presse, Warsaw | World | Thu, June 25 2015, 11:20 PM

A Dutch women's rights group said Thursday it will fly a drone carrying abortion pills into Poland this weekend to highlight the staunchly Catholic country's restrictive abortion laws.

The drone will set off from the German city of Frankfurt an der Oder, fly over the river to the bordering Polish town of Slubice and deliver the pills to individual women, according to the Women on Waves non-profit organisation.

"It's a symbolic operation to show that these few kilometers represent a gulf in terms of respect for women's rights and reproductive rights," according to Jolanta Gaweda from the Polish women's group Feminoteka, which is co-organising the operation.

"Distributing these pills is prohibited in Poland," she told AFP, adding that there were "minimal" chances that the country would ease its abortion laws.

The government did however recently authorize the morning-after pill, which was "a big step forward", Gaweda said.

Poland only allows abortion within 12 weeks of pregnancy in cases of rape or incest, or 24 weeks in cases of irreversible foetal malformation or a threat to the mother's life.

After 24 weeks of pregnancy, the procedure is allowed on a case-by-case basis if the mother's life is at risk.

Women on Waves has over the years sent abortion boats to countries including Ireland, Portugal and Spain to provide women with free treatment that circumvents strict abortion laws.

There was a wave of protests when such a boat docked in Poland in 2003, while the latest operation has been slammed by the ultra-Catholic daily *Nasz Dziennik* as a "drone of death".

"During the Nazi occupation Germany proposed destroying Poland by promoting abortion and contraception," the newspaper wrote.

Also on Thursday, Poland's parliament adopted a law on in vitro fertilization (IVF), which was previously allowed but remained unregulated because of opposition from the right and the Church. (iik) (++++)

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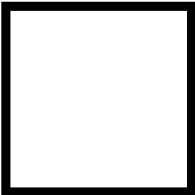
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