

Illegal abortion pills to be dropped into Ireland by drone

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Published 04/07/2015 | 02:30



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A Pro-choice group is to smuggle abortion pills into Ireland using a drone

A Pro-choice group is to smuggle abortion pills into Ireland using a drone, the Irish Independent has learned.

Women on Waves announced it will attempt the drop in the coming weeks following its successful delivery of abortion drugs to two women in Poland last week using its 'abortion drone'.

The drone was piloted from Frankfurt in Germany and flew the abortion pills misoprostol and mifepristone to the Polish city of Slubice.

The Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) and the Gardaí have warned that any drone drop of abortion pills could result in prosecutions.

A HPRA spokeswoman told the Irish Independent that the "mail order supply of prescription medicines is prohibited. This applies regardless of the nature of the medicine concerned."

She said the scenario mapped out by Women on Waves appeared to fall within the definition of supply by mail order as defined in the Prescription Regulations'

The HPRA, in co-operation with Revenue's Customs Service, the Gardaí and other international regulatory and law enforcement agencies, "actively monitors the supply of prescription and illicit medicines to Ireland" and can seize the product and make prosecutions, she warned.

According to Sergeant Damian Hogan, it is an offence to use drugs or instruments to procure an abortion in contravention of the terms of the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act and the Offences against the Person Act.

Dr Rebecca Gomperts, founder and director of Women on Waves, which operates an abortion boat that carries out terminations offshore, acknowledged to 'Newsweek' that the legal implications of sending a drone to women in Ireland would need to be addressed as anyone who received and took the drugs could be prosecuted.

Cora Sherlock of the Pro-Life Campaign criticised the drone plan as a "cheap publicity stunt" which she said showed an "utter disregard for women's health".

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