



WELLNESS

# Activists Used 'Abortion Robots' to Deliver Pills to Women in Northern Ireland

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Last Friday Irish citizens voted to repeal the Eighth Amendment to the country's constitution, [making abortion legal](#). The historic referendum should mean the end of Irish women having to travel long distances to receive abortion care, which had been outlawed even in cases of rape or incest. But it doesn't help those in Northern Ireland—which is part of the U.K. and the only part that still completely outlaws abortion. Women there are still without [access to time-sensitive care](#), and they're at risk of being arrested if they seek it. One group of activists has found a rather inventive workaround to this imbalance: robots.

This morning in Belfast, Northern Ireland, representatives from [Women on Waves](#) and [Women on Web](#), which provide online information about abortion care, and [ROSA Northern Ireland](#) (a socialist feminist activist collective) staged a protest of the laws that had women being arrested and put in jail for ordering abortion pills online. According to a Facebook video of the event, a small robot bearing a white box rolled up to a woman who knelt down to pick up the package it carried. She then pulled out what appears to be a pill and swallowed it, right there on the spot. A report from [SkyNews](#) this morning says there was a large police presence at the rally, and that the woman who took a pill was led away for questioning, but protesters intervened and she was not arrested.

The city council of Belfast voted in April to no longer prosecute women who had been arrested for buying abortion pills, [the Guardian reports](#). And a press release sent out ahead of the rally explained that the robot would be operated out of the Netherlands, and thus not in violation of Northern Irish law. Still, this was a onetime event to show the great lengths to which women have to go for necessary health care. As of right now, a Wall-E for reproductive choice is not a permanent part of life on either side of the border.



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