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This Dutch Group Is Going To Absurd Lengths To Help Women Obtain Safe Abortions

"It makes clear the absurdity of the laws: to go to international waters only to take a pill."

[Samantha Leffler](#)

[Daily Impact](#)

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May 08, 2017
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Access to a safe abortion varies depending on where you live, but for the majority of women around the world, obtaining an abortion can be a costly and frequently illegal and life-threatening process.

That's why a Dutch organization called [Women on Waves](#) has made it their mission to sail women seeking abortions into international waters, where they're given a combination of mifepristone and misoprostol pills to medically induce an end their pregnancies.

As reported by [HuffPost](#), [Women on Waves](#)' 36-foot sailboat makes its way more than 12 miles off the coast of various countries, and at that point the laws of its country's flag — Austria — are enforced. In Austria, abortions are permitted during the first three months of pregnancy.

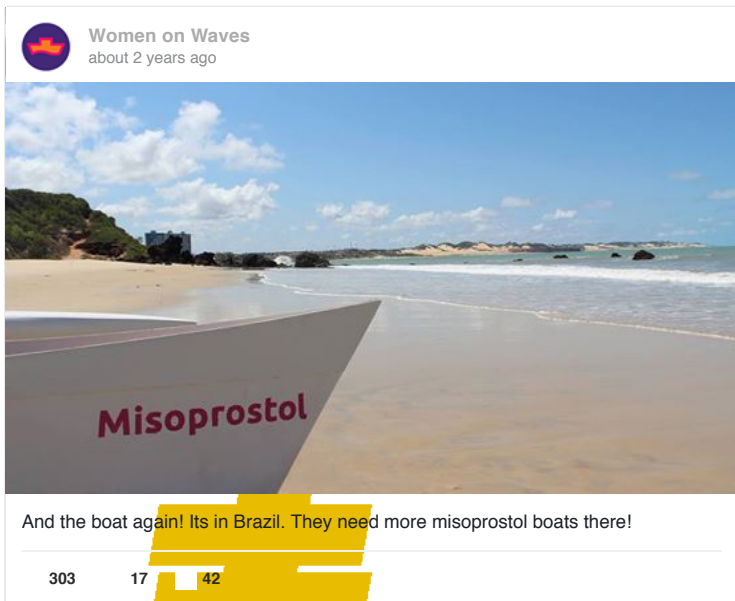


 **Women on Waves**
about 5 years ago

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Per [HuffPost](#), the boat sailed off the coast of Mexico last month and provided abortions for several Mexican citizens. Abortion laws in Mexico vary from state to state just as they do in America, but women who live in states where abortion is illegal typically don't have the means to travel to a state where it's permitted. As a result, they often end up turning to unsafe methods of terminating a pregnancy.

"It makes clear the absurdity of the laws: to go to international waters only to take a pill," [Women on Waves](#)' Leticia Zenevich explains to [HuffPost](#). "The fact that women need to leave the state's sovereignty to retain their own sovereignty — it makes clear states are deliberately stopping women from accessing their human right to health."



Aside from the recent trip to Mexico, Women on Waves has visited a number of other countries since the nonprofit was founded in 1999. Still, the missions are costly and help fewer than 10 women at a time, and the organization has been met with hostility from local governments in the past.

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Women on Waves
@WomenOnWaves_

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"Where we travel depends on our resources, the availability of the crew and doctors and of local participants," Zenevich told Bustle. "A boat campaign take months of planning. Women on Waves has been to Ireland, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Morocco and Guatemala with the boat."

Women on Waves also helps other ways when and where they can. In addition to establishing a hotline flush with abortion info in each country visited, WoW has gone high tech, to date the group has conducted drone campaigns, delivering abortion pills to Poland in 2015 and to Northern Ireland last year. There's also [an app you can use](#) for getting about abortion law, the availability of abortion pills, and what clinics or organizations are working on abortion issues in your country.

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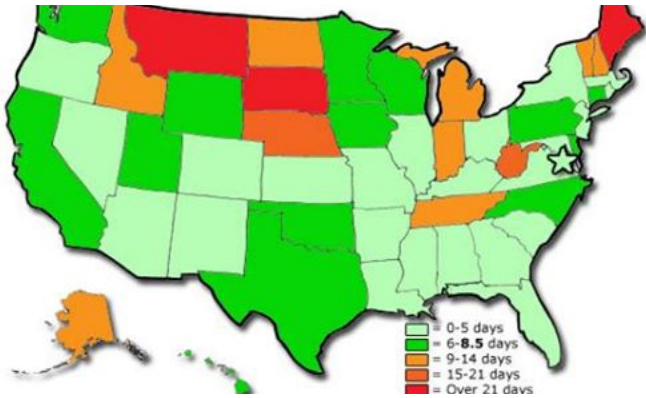
Bangladesh Hotline launched for Menstrual Regulation!! "Naribandhob" hotline number: 088-01853-892424. The hotline is a collaboration with [Asia Safe Abortion Partnership](#), [Aware Girls](#) (Pakistan), [Women on Waves](#), [Women on Web](#), and [Community Life Bangladesh](#). Menstrual regulation is legal in Bangladesh up to 10 weeks from the last menstrual period, though many women still use unsafe methods to terminate unwanted pregnancies. Hopefully with this hotline more women will be able to ... [See More](#)

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If anything, this illustrates the need for access to abortion information and services across the globe. According to the [World Health Organization](#), in 2008 more than 97 percent of abortions were unsafe, and the same was true for upwards of 95 percent of abortions in Latin America.

Though the United States is far better than that, certain states have very strict and damaging anti-abortion laws. Louisiana, Mississippi, Kansas, North Dakota, and Arkansas have their tough anti-abortion legislation, while [Oklahoma recently introduced a bill](#) that would require a woman to get the written consent of the fetus before having an abortion, even in cases of rape.

Women on Waves
about a year ago



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To help women worldwide find safer access to abortions consider volunteering with or donating to Women on Waves. To support the cause closer to home, check out [NARAL Pro-Choice America](#), which engages in political action and advocacy efforts to oppose restrictions on abortion and expand access to it, and [Planned Parenthood](#), which provides reproductive health care on a national and international scale.

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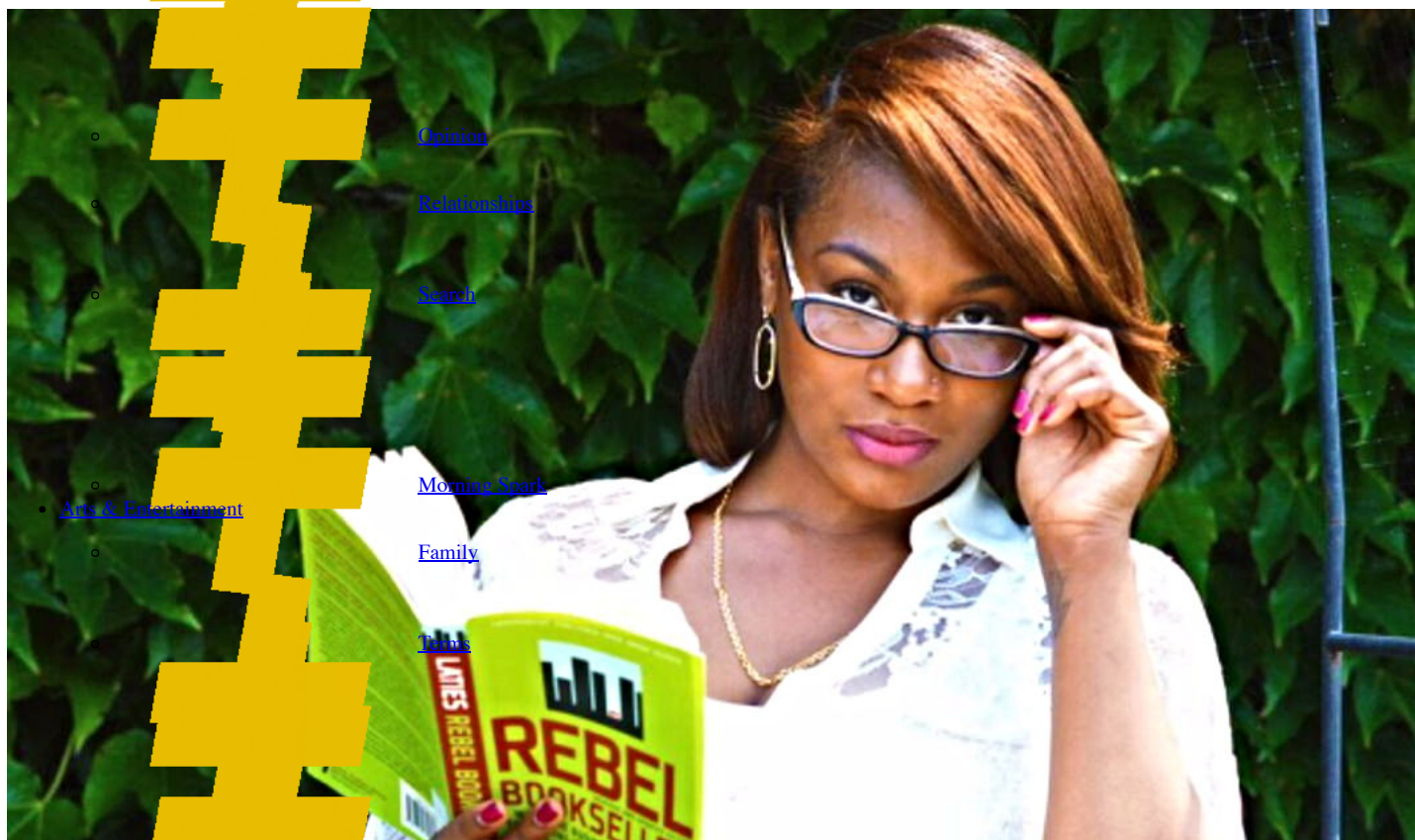
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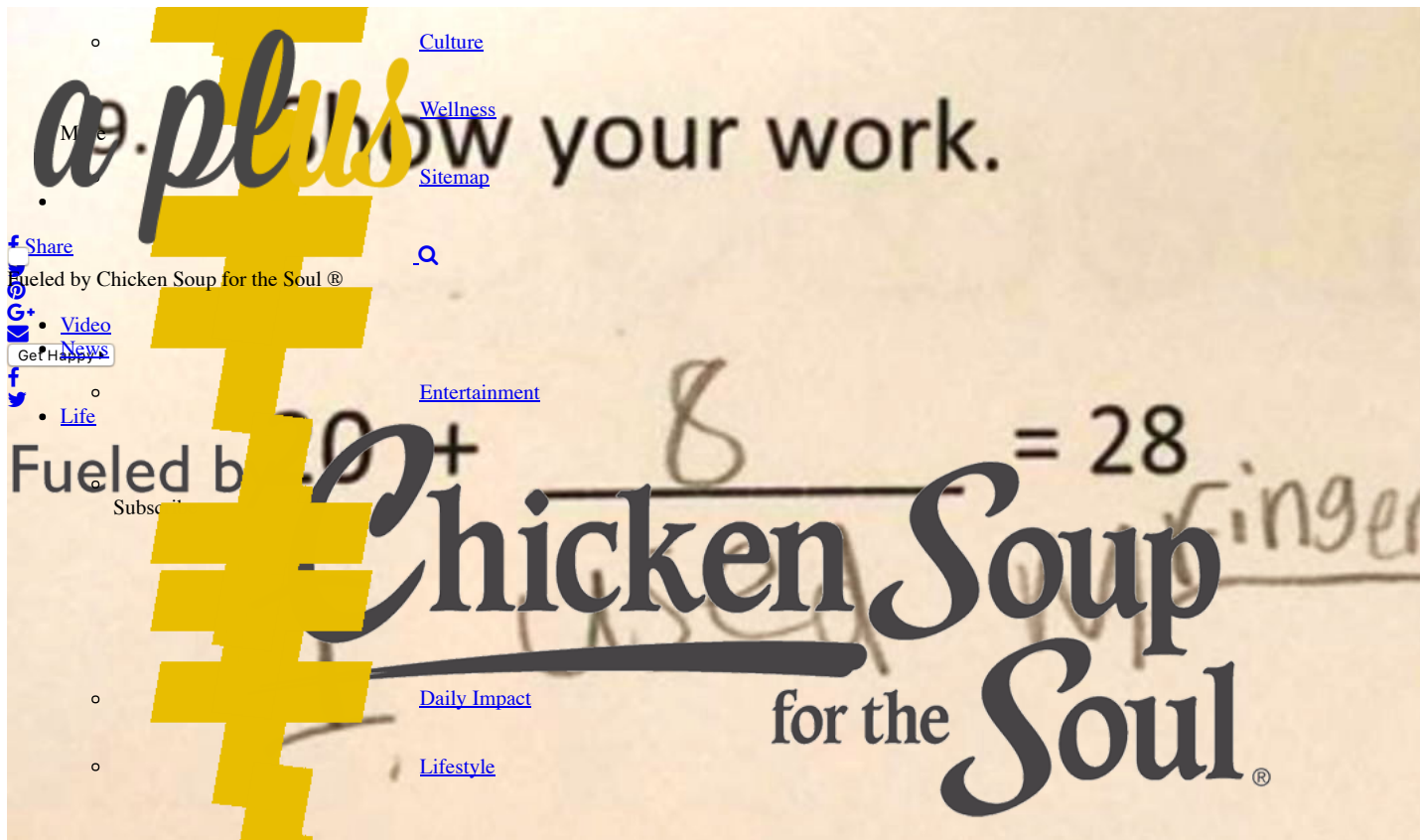
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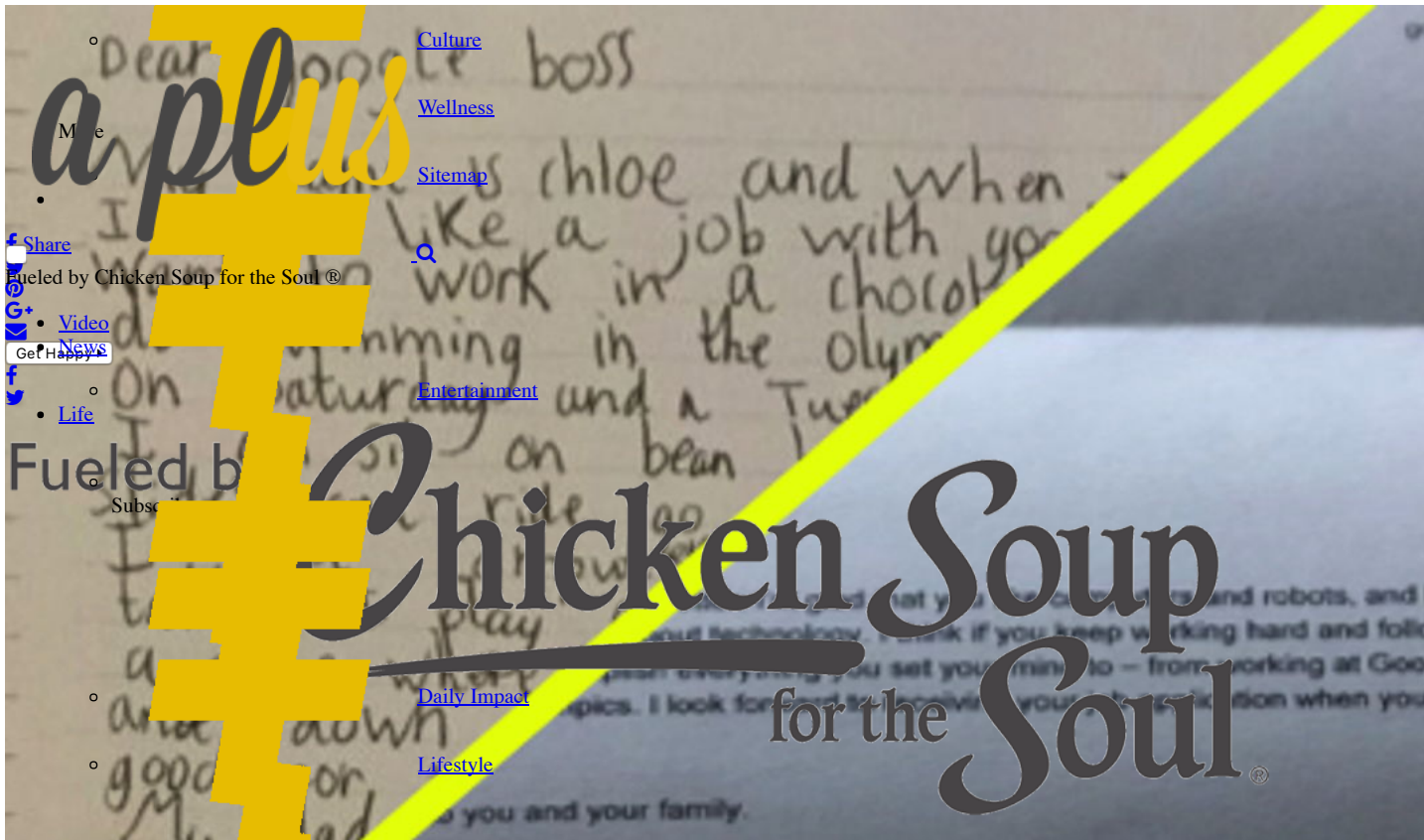


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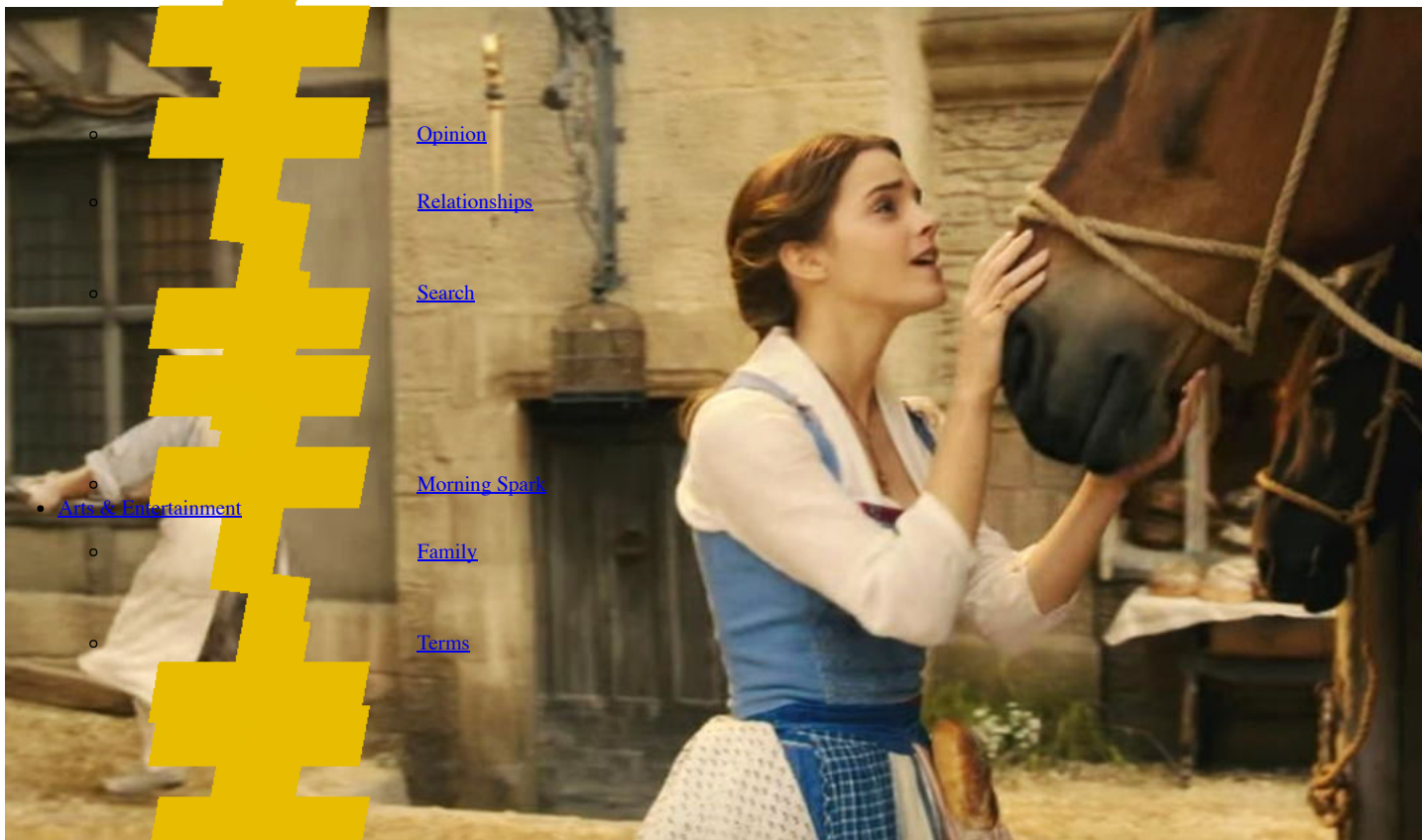
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