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Guatemalan army blocks Dutch abortion ship from docking

By ANNA GIARITELLI ([HTTP://WWW.WASHINGTONEXAMINER.COM/AUTHOR/ANNA-GIARITELLI](http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/author/anna-giaritelli))
([@ANNA_GIARITELLI](https://twitter.com/anna_giaritelli) ([//TWITTER.COM/ANNA_GIARITELLI](https://twitter.com/anna_giaritelli))) • 2/23/17 11:27 PM

A Dutch boat that offers abortion pills to women in countries where the procedure is illegal was taken into custody by army officials in Guatemala on Thursday after it tried to pick up people seeking the services.

The Guatemalan military detained the boat, including some of the Women on Waves crew members, near the Port of San Jose, according to a spokeswoman for the nonprofit.

The boat offers abortion services to women who are up to 10 weeks pregnant and takes them out to international waters where the procedures are not illegal. Women are given a pill that combines mifepristone and misoprostol, which is effective at terminating more than 90 percent of pregnancies. The women are then taken back to shore.

The Guatemalan army said it intervened because the procedure does not adhere "to the Constitution regarding the preservation of human life and the laws in effect in our country," according to a Reuters

report (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-guatemala-abortion-idUSKBN163080?il=0>) late Thursday.

In addition, the country has a large population of Catholics and Evangelicals, whose religions by and large only permit abortion if the mother's life is at risk should the pregnancy continue.

Women on Waves' last trip was to Morocco in 2012. That journey was also blocked by the government.