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Morocco says it does not welcome Dutch "abortion boat"

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RABAT, Oct. 4 (Xinhua) -- The Dutch "abortion boat" due to arrive on Thursday in Morocco to provide "safe legal medical abortions" is not welcome, authorities said.

In a statement issued Thursday, the Moroccan Ministry of Health urged the Ministry of Interior to prevent the ship from docking in Moroccan territorial waters, noting that the health ministry had not been notified, and therefore it did not authorize such medical procedures by any non-resident parties in Morocco.

Abortion is a medical procedure governed by specific legal provisions that define the case of legal abortion, said the statement, adding that the practice of medicine by foreign doctors is subject to Moroccan law.

The boat trip is sponsored by the Dutch non-profit organization Women on Waves, with the help of a Moroccan youth group, the Alternative Movement for Individual Liberties (MALI).

The ship, which is due to anchor at Marina Smir, in northern Morocco, Thursday afternoon, plans to receive women gathered for this opportunity by the MALI group, and provide them with safe abortions in international waters before returning to Moroccan territorial waters.

According to the organization, between 600 and 800 abortions are performed illegally everyday in Morocco, exposing women to health risks.

Women on Waves was founded in 1999 by Dutch physician Rebecca Gomperts to bring reproductive health services, particularly nonsurgical abortion services, to women in countries with restrictive abortion laws.

Over the past 11 years, Women on Waves ships have visited Ireland, Poland, Portugal and Spain, sparking protests from anti- abortion groups.

Editor: Bi Mingxin



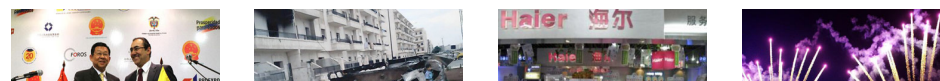
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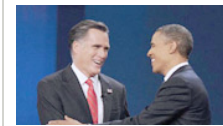
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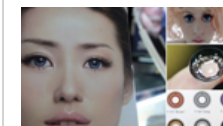
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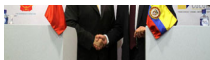
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