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# Doctor by Drone? Poland Is About to Find Out

A group of European activists plans to deliver abortion pills to women in Poland to protest the country's laws.

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(Photo: Getty Images)

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Drones have been used to deliver groceries, spray pesticides, and

drop bombs. But a drone set to fly over Poland this weekend has a different aim: distributing medication to [women seeking abortions](#).

In an act of protest organized by four European women's rights organizations, the drone will travel roughly a mile and a half, crossing the border from Frankfurt an der Oder, Germany, to Slubice, Poland, just on the other side of the Oder River.

It's a short flight, but the implications are significant. In Germany, abortion is legal up to 12 weeks into a pregnancy. But in Poland, where the drone is set to drop the medical abortion pills mifepristone and misoprostol, women do not enjoy the same freedom. It is one of just three European countries—the others are Ireland and Malta—where abortion is severely restricted (it's allowed in cases of rape or incest or if pregnancy or childbirth poses a risk to the mother's life).

The drone's flight over Poland, which was co-organized by the Dutch activist group [Women on Waves](#), isn't the first such campaign to raise awareness about abortion laws around the world. Founded by gynecologist Rebecca Gomperts, Women on Waves has set up mobile abortion clinics on boats in international waters to serve women living in countries where abortion is illegal. Since 2001, the clinic has made successful expeditions to Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Morocco. Those performed a medical service safely; it's not clear how the abortion pills dropped from the drone will reach pregnant women, and serious side effects can occur in certain types of pregnancies.

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Moms Deserve Reproductive Health Care

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**So, Why Should You Care?** In spite of its illegal status, Poland has one of the [highest estimated abortion rates](#) globally, which suggests women aren't getting medical care from trained professionals. Nearly half of all abortions worldwide are unsafe, and the vast majority of those occur in developing countries, according to [Guttmacher Institute](#). The procedures can be deadly: Complications from unsafe abortions were linked to an estimated 13 percent of all maternal deaths worldwide. Dropping abortion pills over a small Polish town likely won't lead to sweeping reproductive health reform, and it may not even be a practical option for women seeking an abortion in Poland. Still, the stunt does have the potential to raise awareness about reproductive rights and restrictive health care laws around the world.

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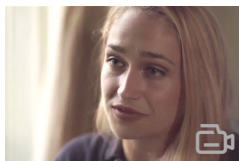
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