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Moroccan navy blockades Dutch 'abortion boat'

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 [Abortion boat](#)

The Moroccan navy is blocking access to the the Dutch 'abortion boat' in the harbour of Smir say organisers Women on Waves.

"They have blocked the port. We can see a big warship in front of the harbour," Gunilla Kleiverga, a gynaecologist, told AFP. An AFP photographer also reported that police were preventing journalists from reaching the port.

The boat is sailing to Morocco at the invitation of the Alternative Movement for Individual Freedoms (MALI), which is campaigning for the legalisation of abortion in the North African country. The ship sails under the Dutch flag and since it falls under Dutch legislation, Women on Waves can legally terminate pregnancies in international waters.

On Wednesday, the health ministry announced that the ship was not authorised to operate in Morocco and called on the relevant authorities to prevent the visit from taking place. However, Kleiverga insisted that the boat would not counsel or treat women in Morocco. "We're only going to provide treatment to women in international waters... Of course we (will) adhere to Moroccan law, and we're not going to offer abortions in Morocco," she added.

This is the first attempt Women on Waves has made to visit an Islamic country. In the past 11 years, its ship sailed to Ireland, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

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