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THE AMERICAS

Dutch boat docks off coast of Guatemala to offer abortions in international waters

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The boat has the right conditions to provide medical abortions to women who are up to 10 weeks pregnant. (PRENSA LIBRE/YouTube.com)

Guatemala authorities and a Dutch nonprofit organization are locked in a standoff over a sailboat that has docked off the coast of the Central American country offering to perform free abortions.

The government of President Jimmy Morales said Thursday it will not allow the group, Women on Waves, to pick up women in port for the procedure.

Abortion is illegal in Guatemala.

ANTI-ABORTION ACTIVISTS, COUNTER-PROTESTERS RALLY AROUND US

The boat arrived in the Pacific port of Quetzal on Wednesday and planned to stay five days. Leticia Zenevich, a spokeswoman for the organization, said officials from the prosecutor's office for human rights were inspecting the boat.



She said the vessel has the right conditions to provide medical abortions to women who are up to 10 weeks pregnant.

Women on Waves selected Guatemala as the first Latin American country they visited because of the strength of its women's organizations, Zenevich said.

TRUMP EXPANDS ANTI-ABORTION BAN TO ALL US GLOBAL HEALTH AID

She explained the boat would sail 12 miles off the Guatemalan and only then would doctors start the procedures.

"Abortions would take place in international waters under the jurisdiction of international laws, the laws of the country will not be violated," Zenevich said.

Pro-abortion activists are calling for the protection of the boat's crew, who remain under the army's watch since Thursday afternoon.

The AP contributed to this report.

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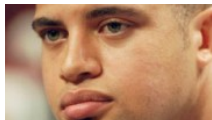
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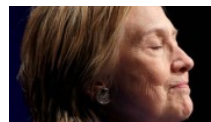
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