

OCTOBER 29, 2014

REPORTS

Irish politician defies ROI's abortion ban by securing an illegal pill

Socialist party's Ruth Coppinger shows her pro-choice support.



By Claire Hodgson

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on pills, in defiance of

the Republic of Ireland's ban on terminations.



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At the moment, a woman is only allowed an abortion if her life is thought to be in danger either from

medical complications or because **she is at risk of taking her own life**.

This leaves both **women who have been raped and women whose babies are stillborn unable to have abortions**, meaning many are forced to travel abroad to have a termination.

As a result, Ruth, who is a TD in the Socialist party, joined 30 other pro-choice activists to travel to Northern Ireland where they received abortion pills from the pro-choice organisation Women on Web.

Ruth reportedly said before the trip: "They [politicians] continue to give Catholic beliefs centrality when a large majority now favour allowing abortion to protect women's health, both physical and mental."



Pro-choice protestors mourned the death of Savita Halappanavar two years ago.

The pills are used during miscarriages in the ROI, but are currently only otherwise available through prescription (if you meet the above criteria).

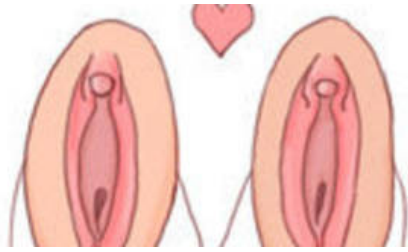
Campaigners returned to Dublin today, where several women swallowed the pills to demonstrate that they are safe. Ruth would not reveal whether any of the women taking the pill were in fact pregnant.

She explained to **NewsLetter**: "None of us wants to be arrested. We all want to go home and go back to our lives when we get back to Dublin. We're not challenging the Gardai to arrest us, or the northern state either."

The group say it is unlikely they will be arrested as authorities would rather "brush this under the carpet" and added that they will keep a supply of the pills "**in case there are women in need**".

Two years ago, **Savita Halappanavar** died in a Galway hospital, after she was denied an abortion despite her child being dead, which she knew could cause severe blood poisoning.

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