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## Dutch 'Abortion Boat' Women On Waves Barred From Moroccan Port

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A Dutch “[abortion](#) boat” sponsored by Women on Waves was blocked from entering the Moroccan port of Smir on Thursday. The group travels to countries where abortion is illegal, providing abortions and giving advice to women.

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The Moroccan authorities stopped the boat from docking at the harbor by sealing the area and citing their reason as “military maneuvers,” [reports Yahoo! News](#).

Morocco’s health ministry stated on Wednesday that the ship would not be allowed to operate in the country. They called the authorities to apply the law against Women on Waves and the ship.

Dr. Rebecca Gomperts, who is the group’s founder, stated that they plan on launching “A surprise” in response to Morocco, but they didn’t elaborate. Dr. Gunilla Kleiverda, a gynecologist for Women on Waves, stated that “of course, we always expect problems, that’s part of being involved with Women of the Waves.” She added that “the most important thing is to change the law and we make abortion legalized.”

Kleiverda stated that illegal abortion is a “big women’s health problem.” The group’s website backs this claim with statistics, which stated:

“[In Morocco] ... approximately 600 to 800 women still have an abortion every day. While wealthy women can afford safe abortion access, women of low socio-economic-status must often resort to unsafe methods that can result in morbidity and death... access to safe abortion is fundamentally an issue of social justice. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), unsafe abortion methods cause 13 percent of pregnancy-related deaths.”

[BBC notes](#) that, in a press release by Women on Waves, the group stated that the ship provides legal medical abortions for women up to six-and-a-half weeks pregnant, while being anchored in international waters. The group’s main intentions in Morocco were to promote the fact that an abortion-inducement drug is already available to the women there, though most of them are unaware that it exists.

Along with the abortion boat, Women on Waves has also launched a hotline number that helps women obtain information about contraception and abortion. While the group has spent the past 11 years visiting countries like Ireland, Poland, Portugal, and Spain, Morocco was supposed to be the first Muslim country they were going to visit.

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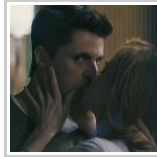
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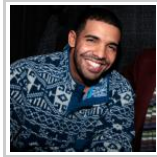
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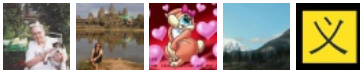
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
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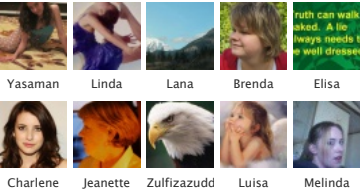
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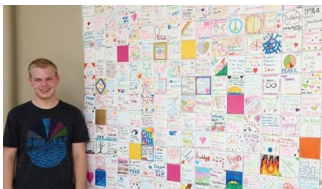
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