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Morocco blocks abortion ship

Women on Waves sails to countries where abortion is illegal to provide services from international waters

BY NATASHA LENNARD



(Credit: (Women on Waves release))

A ship heading to Morocco to offer free abortions, which are illegal in the country, has been blocked by the authorities. The boat, belonging to the Dutch group, Women on Waves, anchors off the coast of countries where abortion is not permitted to offer medical provisions and information from the safety of international waters.

On Wednesday, Morocco's Harbor of Smir was closed off to prevent the ship's arrival. AFP reported that "the country's health ministry said that the ship would not be allowed to operate in the country and called on the authorities to apply the law against the group and the ship." However, according to a release from the group, "Women on Waves is currently working on an alternative strategy for the ship to reach coastline of Morocco."

Women on Waves, which over the past decade has traveled to Poland, Portugal, Spain and Ireland, is able to provide legal medical abortions for women who are up to six-and-a-half weeks pregnant using an inducement drug. Based on figures from the Moroccan government, the group reports that between 600 and 800 illegal abortions take place every day in the North African country.

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