
NEWS

Abortion pills to be delivered by robots to Belfast court house

A doctor in the Netherlands will be operating them



1

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By [Shauna Corr](#)

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Abortion pills will be delivered by robots to activists waiting to take them outside Laganside Courts.

The action - in answer to the ongoing abortion ban in Northern Ireland - is planned by activists calling for a change in the law.

A doctor in the Netherlands will be operating the droid dropping off the tablets at noon on Thursday.

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Organisers [Women on Waves](#) , [Women on Web](#) and [ROSA Northern Ireland](#) have also planned a bus tour which will stop in Lisburn, Cookstown and Derry to offer abortion counselling and ultrasounds.

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Eleanor Crossey Malone from socialist feminist movement ROSA told Belfast Live that NI women are already taking these pills after ordering them online.

She said: "It's become the major, most accessible way for women here to have abortions and it's very widely done.

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Activists dressed as handmaids

"Having an abortion ban doesn't stop abortions from taking place. It just stigmatises them and makes them more difficult.

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"Politicians and police are aware that the pills are widely being used and we want to highlight the reality of the situation."



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Laganside Courts is being targeted because "this is the court room where women have been prosecuted for accessing these safe but illegal abortion pills" according to the activist.

A recent UN report said the UK was violating the rights of women here by not allowing pregnancies to be terminated in Northern Ireland, but the issue of abortion has been more widely debated since the Republic of Ireland voted in favour of repealing the eighth amendment.

The **DUP** said they would oppose any change in the law here, but women from Northern Ireland can now access free abortions by travelling to Great Britain.

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Eleanor said she feels action must be taken in the wake of the Abortion Referendum in the Republic of Ireland, as "we are going to be the last place in Europe apart from Malta that have a virtual blanket ban on abortions and I think we need to take strong action now".

"We won't rest until we have abortion rights in Northern Ireland," she added.

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ROSA activists before the Republic's referendum

"We will not accept being forced to travel or go around in the shadows about this anymore.

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"We will be having our protest at 12pm tomorrow outside Laganside Courts. Some of our activists will take safe, but illegal, abortion pills in defiance of the law. We have had a lot of support on this so we are hoping that a lot of people will turn up to show solidarity.

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"We will have 25 to 30 activists on the bus, which will then travel to [Lisburn](#), Cookstown and [Derry](#)."

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ROSA share their views

The action will be live streamed on the [Women on Web facebook](#) and [Women on Waves](#) Facebook pages.

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Anti abortion group Precious Life have dubbed the plan a "desperate publicity stunt".

Director of Precious Life, Bernadette Smyth said: "This is another attack on our pro-life laws in Northern Ireland. These pro-abortion groups are attempting to 'change the law by breaking the law'.

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Activists touring before the referendum vote

"Precious Life will protest at this bus illegally giving out abortion pills. We call on Northern Ireland's Chief Medical Officer Michael McBride to urgently issue information to women about the serious dangers of these illegal abortion pills.

"Women in crisis pregnancies need real help and support. Abortion is never the answer.

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► NI women can now arrange free abortions in England with one phone call

"The drugs kill unborn babies, but women deserve to be fully informed of the dangers to themselves of these drugs. No flouting of the law should be tolerated. Our laws matter because every life matters."

The PSNI's Detective Chief Superintendent Tim Mairs said: "Offences of procurement of an abortion are outlined in Sections 58 & 59 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861 and Child Destruction Sect 25 (1) Criminal Justice (NI) Act.

"These offences can reasonably be suspected in circumstances where individuals receive

or procure prescription medications which are known to be used or advertised as suitable for inducing an abortion. Ingesting such drugs when pregnant or ordering and providing them to another person who is pregnant may constitute a criminal offence.

"Where we have reasonable grounds to suspect any offence has been committed or attempted the PSNI is obliged under Section 32 of the Police Act 2000 to take measures to bring the offender to justice. Where PSNI is made aware of any suspected offences, each case will be investigated on its own merits.

"The issue of Abortion is clearly a very emotive and sensitive issue that divides opinion."

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sarahi

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I'm pro choice but the idea of a group of women taking abortion pills as a form of protest is so disappointing. I believe in a women's right to decide and choose for herself but this screams stunt and is a bit grotesque and does more to harm the pro life movement in my opinion!

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