

Abortion pills will be delivered by drone this weekend

Activists aim to raise awareness around Poland's strict approach to reproductive rights

By **Amar Toor** on June 24, 2015 05:44 am

(Brendon Thorne/Getty Images)

A group of activists will use a drone to deliver abortion pills to Poland on Saturday, as part of an effort to raise awareness around the country's conservative approach to reproductive rights. The stunt was announced this week in a **statement** from Women on Waves, a Dutch reproductive rights nonprofit organization that is organizing the flight together with activist groups from Germany and Poland. The 11-pound drone will take off from a German town near the Polish border and deliver the pills to the Polish town of Słubice.

"Women in Poland don't have access to safe abortions," says Rebecca Gomperts, the director of Women on Waves, which has used boats to provide contraceptives and safe abortions to women in international waters. "It's legally restricted, and this is causing a lot of social injustice for a lot of women."

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Poland is **one of three** European countries, together with Ireland and Malta, where abortion remains illegal except under extreme circumstances. Polish law only

permits abortions if the mother's life is in danger, the fetus is abnormal, or in cases of rape or incest, yet activists say access is still limited even in these situations. A so-called "[conscience clause](#)" allows doctors to deny abortions on the grounds that it violates their personal beliefs, and women who pursue them face stigmatization in predominantly Catholic Poland. As a result, many are forced to [travel abroad](#) to terminate their pregnancies, or [take matters into their own hands](#) with dangerous underground remedies.

The groups behind this week's demonstration say they want to draw attention to the discrepancy between abortion laws in Poland and the majority of the European Union. The drone taking off on Saturday will deliver packages of mifepristone and misoprostol, which are WHO-approved drugs for at-home abortions. They're freely available in most European countries, including Germany, but remain unregistered in Poland.

Gomperts says the pills will be delivered to individual women that her organization has identified, adding that the campaign was inspired by the recent drone delivery programs from [Google](#) and [Amazon](#). She also acknowledges that the project may face protests from Polish pro-life groups, as the organization did when its mobile boat clinic [set sail for Poland](#) in 2003.

"There were quite aggressive protestors there, so we are prepared that that might happen again," Gomperts says. "But this will not stop women from needing an abortion, so it's really important that we continue putting this issue on the agenda."