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## Police in Belfast seize abortion pills and robots from campaigners

The demonstration saw an “abortion robot” deliver abortion pills to a number of women.

BY CORMAC FITZGERALD | THURSDAY 31 MAY 2018, 5:14 PM | [HTTP://JRNL.IE/4046328](http://jrnl.ie/4046328)



Campaigner Eleanor Crossey Malone (far right) surrounded by media in Belfast.

*Image: Facebook*

**POLICE SEIZED ABORTION** pills and two robots that were used to give the medicine to campaigners at a demonstration in Belfast.

Demonstrators from a number of groups including the campaign group Rosa – which played a role in the recent Eighth Amendment campaign – attended the event outside a courthouse in Belfast.

The demonstration saw an “abortion robot” – controlled remotely from the Netherlands – deliver abortion pills to women present. The pills are illegal to take in Northern Ireland if a woman is pregnant.

The robot is controlled remotely so that it avoids breaking the law in Northern Ireland, campaigners said.

Police confirmed they seized two small robots along with a number of pills, which were surrendered voluntarily, during the demonstration outside Laganside Court this afternoon.

Chief Inspector Stephen McCauley said

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**“ Officers recorded footage of the demonstration, the details of a number of participants and have spoken with one of the event organisers. We will be reviewing the footage to determine whether any offences have been committed, but as we are now investigating this matter, we will not be commenting further. ”**

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There was a strong police and media presence reported at the event.

Abortion remains illegal in Northern Ireland except in very rare circumstances where the life of a woman is at risk or there is a serious risk to her health.

### **Growing pressure**

Pressure has been growing in Northern Ireland from campaigners to liberalise the nation’s abortion laws, following Ireland voting overwhelmingly to repeal the Eighth Amendment last week.

British Prime Minister Theresa May has come under pressure on foot of the referendum to introduce legislation to make abortion legal in the North.

Northern Ireland's legislation on abortion is separate to British and Irish law.

Speaking at the event today, Rosa spokesperson Eleanor Crossey Malone said that women in Northern Ireland were taking abortion pills "every single day".

"As long as we don't talk about it, as long as we act as though it is a secret, politicians aren't under pressure to legislate on this issue.

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**“ But we're bringing this issue into the spotlight in order to demand that politicians take action on this immediately.**

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After the demonstration, campaigners planned to drive the "abortion bus" around Northern Ireland to offer counselling and ultrasounds to women.

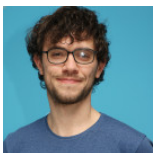
Solidarity-PBP TD Ruth Coppinger was also supporting the campaign.

"I'm very happy now to be supporting today's action, which builds on that work," she said.

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**“ These acts of civil disobedience supplied pregnant people with safe but illegal abortion pills, but they were also instrumental in shifting the debate on abortion.**

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