

# The World's Abortion Laws Map 2013 Update

**Currently, more than 60% of the world's population lives in countries where induced abortion is permitted either for a wide range of reasons or without restriction as to reason. In contrast, 26% of all people reside in countries where abortion is generally prohibited.**

The table on the following page illustrates the varying degrees to which countries worldwide permit access to abortion. Laws are categorized according to provisions in national statutes, regulations and court decisions. The categorization of each law does not necessarily reflect the law's actual implementation in that country. Depending on such factors as public support for abortion rights, the views of government officials and providers, and individual circumstances, laws in each category may be interpreted more broadly or restrictively than indicated by their classifications. Countries in Category I have the most restrictive laws. Those in each subsequent category recognize the grounds specified in the preceding category as well as additional grounds.

## **TO SAVE THE WOMAN'S LIFE OR PROHIBITED ALTOGETHER**

The most restrictive laws are those that either permit abortion only to save a woman's life or ban the procedure entirely. Many countries in this category explicitly permit abortion when a pregnancy threatens a woman's life. These countries appear in bold on the following page. In other countries, laws that make no explicit exception to save a woman's life may be interpreted to permit life-saving abortions on grounds of the general criminal law defense of "necessity." In this situation, although laws do not expressly permit abortion, it could be performed on the rationale that it is necessary to preserve a woman's life.

## **TO PRESERVE HEALTH**

Laws that authorize abortion to preserve the woman's life or health form Category II. Some of these laws specify that abortion is available only if the physical health of a woman is in danger, whereas others permit abortion if her mental or physical health is at risk. Most countries in this category authorize abortion on "health" or "therapeutic" grounds. According to the World Health Organization, "health" is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Laws in this category that do not make an explicit exception to protect a woman's mental health should be interpreted to allow abortion on such grounds.

## **SOCIOECONOMIC GROUNDS**

Laws in Category III, which allow abortion on socioeconomic grounds, explicitly permit abortion based on consideration of factors such as a woman's age, economic status or marital status. Such laws are usually interpreted liberally. Generally, socioeconomic grounds for abortion are considered within the framework of women's health.

## **WITHOUT RESTRICTION AS TO REASON**

Laws in Category IV are the least restrictive abortion laws and permit abortion without restriction as to reason. Most countries with such laws impose a gestational limit during which women can access abortion services without providing legal justification. Abortions may be performed after the gestational limit only on prescribed grounds.

Several countries explicitly recognize three other grounds for abortion: when pregnancy results from rape; when pregnancy results from incest; and when there is a high probability of fetal impairment. Countries that recognize these grounds may fall within any of the categories described above. In addition, countries in any category may restrict access to abortion by requiring a woman to obtain parental or spousal authorization. These additional grounds and restrictions are identified according to the indications set forth on the following page.

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## Countries, by restrictiveness of abortion law, 2013 *Categories from the Most to Least Restrictive*

### I. To Save the Woman's Life or Prohibited Altogether (countries printed in bold make an explicit exception to save a woman's life)

**Afghanistan**  
Andorra  
Angola  
**Antigua & Barbuda**  
**Bangladesh**  
**Bhutan**–R/I/+  
**Brazil**–R/+  
**Brunei Darussalam**  
Central African Rep.  
Chile–x  
Congo (Brazzaville)  
**Côte d'Ivoire**  
Dem. Rep. of Congo  
**Dominica**  
Dominican Republic  
Egypt  
El Salvador–x  
Gabon  
**Guatemala**  
Guinea-Bissau  
Haiti  
Honduras  
**Indonesia**–SA/R/F  
**Iran**–F  
Iraq  
**Ireland**  
**Kiribati**  
Laos  
**Lebanon**  
**Libya**–PA  
Madagascar  
**Malawi**  
**Mali**–R/I  
Malta–x  
Marshall Islands–U  
Mauritania  
**Mexico**–FS/R/F  
Micronesia–U  
**Myanmar**  
Nicaragua–x  
**Nigeria**  
**Oman**  
Palau–U  
**Panama**–PA/R/F  
**Papua New Guinea**

**Paraguay**  
Philippines  
San Marino  
Sao Tome & Principe  
Senegal  
**Solomon Islands**  
Somalia  
**South Sudan**  
**Sri Lanka**  
**Sudan**–R  
Suriname  
**Syria**–SA/PA  
**Tanzania**  
**Timor-Leste**  
Tonga  
**Tuvalu**  
**Uganda**  
**United Arab Emirates**–SA/PA  
**Venezuela**  
**West Bank & Gaza Strip**  
**Yemen**

**66 Countries,**  
**25.64% of World's Population**

### II. To Preserve Health (also to save the woman's life). Countries printed in bold recognize an exception to preserve a woman's mental health.

**Algeria**  
Argentina–R  
Bahamas  
Benin–R/I/F  
Bolivia–R/I  
**Botswana**–R/I/F  
Burkina Faso–R/I/F  
Burundi  
Cameroon–R  
Chad–F  
**Colombia**–R/I/F  
Comoros  
Costa Rica  
Djibouti  
Ecuador–R<sub>1</sub>  
Equatorial Guinea–SA/PA  
Eritrea  
Ethiopia–R/I/F/+  
**Gambia**  
**Ghana**–R/I/F/+  
Grenada  
Guinea–R/I/F  
**Israel**–R/I/F/+  
**Jamaica**–PA  
Jordan  
Kenya  
Kuwait–SA/PA/F  
**Liberia**–R/I/F  
Liechtenstein–+  
Lesotho–R/I/F  
Malaysia  
Maldives–SA  
**Mauritius** – F/I/R/PA  
Monaco–R/I/F/xx  
Morocco–SA  
Mozambique  
**Namibia**–R/I/F  
**Nauru**  
**New Zealand**–I/F  
Niger–F  
**Northern Ireland**  
Pakistan  
Peru  
Poland–PA/R/I/F

Qatar–F  
Rep. of Korea  
–SA/R/I/F  
Rwanda– R/I/+  
**Saint Kitts & Nevis**  
**Saint Lucia**–R/I  
**Samoa**  
Saudi Arabia–SA/PA  
**Seychelles**–R/I/F  
**Sierra Leone**  
**Swaziland**–R/I/F  
**Thailand**–R/F  
Togo–R/I/F  
**Trinidad & Tobago**  
Vanuatu  
Zimbabwe–R/I/F/xx

**59 Countries,**  
**13.75% of World's Population**

### III. Socioeconomic Grounds (also to save the woman's life and health)

Barbados–PA/R/I/F  
Belize–F  
Cyprus–R/F  
Fiji–R/I/F  
Finland–R/F/+  
Great Britain–F  
Hong Kong–R/I/F  
Iceland–R/I/F/+  
India–PA/R/F  
Japan–SA/R  
Saint Vincent & Grenadines–R/I/F  
Taiwan–SA/PA/I/F  
Zambia–F

**13 Countries,**  
**21.58% of World's Population**

### IV. Without Restriction as to Reason

Albania  
Armenia  
Australia–FS  
Austria\*  
Azerbaijan  
Bahrain  
Belarus  
Belgium\*  
Bosnia-Herzegovina–PA  
Bulgaria  
Cambodia\*  
Canada°  
Cape Verde  
China°–S  
Croatia–PA  
Cuba–PA  
Czech Rep.–PA  
Dem. People's Rep. of Korea\*  
Denmark–PA  
Estonia  
France\*  
Fmr. Yugoslav Rep. Macedonia–PA  
Georgia–PA  
Germany\*  
Greece–PA  
Guyana†  
Hungary  
Italy§–PA  
Kazakhstan  
Kosovo‡–PA  
Kyrgyzstan  
Latvia–PA  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Moldova  
Mongolia  
Montenegro–PA  
Nepal–S  
Netherlands°  
Norway–PA  
Portugal‡–PA  
Puerto Rico°  
Romania\*  
Russian Fed.  
Serbia–PA  
Singapore\*\*\*  
Slovak Rep.–PA  
Slovenia–PA  
South Africa  
Spain\*–PA  
Sweden\*\*  
Switzerland  
Tajikistan  
Tunisia  
Turkey‡–SA/PA  
Turkmenistan  
Ukraine  
United States–FS/PA  
Uruguay– PA  
Uzbekistan  
Vietnam°

**A note on terminology:** "Countries" listed on the table include independent states and, where populations exceed one million, semi-autonomous regions, territories and jurisdictions of special status. The table therefore includes Hong Kong, Northern Ireland, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

**Gestational Limits Key:** All Countries in Category IV have gestational limits of 12 weeks unless otherwise indicated. Gestational limits are calculated from the first day of the last menstrual period, which is considered to occur two weeks prior to conception. Where laws specify that gestational age limits are calculated from the date of conception, these limits have been extended by two weeks.

§ Gestational limit of 90 days      \* Gestational limit of 14 weeks      ^ Law does not limit pre-viability abortion  
† Gestational limit of 8 weeks      \*\* Gestational limit of 18 weeks      ° Law does not indicate gestational limit; regulatory mechanisms vary  
‡ Gestational limit of 10 weeks      \*\*\* Gestational limit of 24 weeks

#### Indications:

R Abortion permitted in cases of rape      R<sub>1</sub> Abortion permitted in the case of rape of a woman with an intellectual disability  
I Abortion permitted in cases of incest      F Abortion permitted in cases of fetal impairment  
S Sex selective abortion prohibited      SA Spousal authorization required  
U Law unclear      PA Parental authorization/notification required  
FS Federal system in which abortion law is determined at state level; classification reflects legal status of abortion for largest group of people  
+ Abortion permitted on additional enumerated grounds relating to such factors as the woman's age or capacity to care for a child  
x Legislation eliminated all exceptions to prohibition on abortion; availability of defense of necessity highly unlikely  
xx Legislation explicitly permits abortion only to protect the physical health of a woman

**61 Countries,**  
**39.22% of World's Population**