

Polish Parliament Must Protect Women's Health and Rights

22 March 2018

We are deeply concerned by relentless attempts to roll back the reproductive rights of women in Poland.

This week Poland's parliament is debating a new draft bill entitled "Stop Abortion." If adopted, this legislation will further limit the already restricted grounds on which women can lawfully access abortion in Poland. It will place women's health and lives at risk and violate Poland's international human rights obligations.

We call on Members of Poland's Parliament to listen to the voices of women across Poland and to reject this regressive legislative proposal and protect women's health and human rights.

Poland already has one of Europe's most restrictive abortion laws. Abortion is only lawful to safeguard the life or health of women, in situations of severe fetal anomaly or where the pregnancy results from rape or another criminal act such as incest. Even in those situations in which abortion is legal, multiple barriers combine to limit women's access in practice. The latest "Stop Abortion" proposal seeks to ban abortion in situations where there is a severe fetal anomaly.

If the "Stop Abortion" bill is passed it will mean that abortion care will no longer be available to women in Poland when they receive a diagnosis of a severe or fatal fetal anomaly. Official statistics from 2016 show that in practice 96% of legal abortions in Poland are performed on these grounds. Most women in Poland who decide to end a pregnancy resulting from rape or because their health is at risk are unable to access legal abortion care in Poland and must travel outside the country to do so. This bill would further hinder women, particularly those from low-income and rural communities, from accessing safe abortion care.

Since 2011, Poland's government has launched repeated attacks on women's reproductive rights. In 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2016 draft legislative proposals were introduced that contained total or near total bans on abortion. Following massive public protests, such as the Black Protests in 2016, these draft bills were defeated.

Prohibiting women from accessing safe, legal abortion violates a number of human rights enshrined in international law, including the rights to life, health and health care, nondiscrimination and equality, privacy, and freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The European Court of Human Rights has previously ruled that the Polish government, in hindering timely access to abortion, has violated women's rights under the European Convention on Human Rights. Numerous international human rights bodies, including the UN Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Committee Against Torture, have called on governments to remove barriers to abortion services and ensure access to safe and legal abortion.

Signatories

1. Abortion Rights Campaign, Ireland
2. Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, Canada
3. Abortion Support Network, United Kingdom
4. ACAI, Spain
5. Agrupación de Madrid del Forum de Política Feminista, Spain
6. Albanian Center for Population and Development, Albania
7. A.L.E.G. Romania
8. Alianza por la Solidaridad, Spain
9. Alliance des Femmes pour la Démocratie, France
10. Alliance for Choice in Northern Ireland, UK
11. ALRANZ Abortion Rights Aotearoa, New Zealand
12. Amnesty International
13. AnA Society for Feminist Analyses, Romania
14. ANCIC, France
15. Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APA)
16. Asociación con la A, Spain
17. Asociación Feminista, Spain
18. Association Défense de la Démocratie en Pologne, France
19. Association des anciennes députées de l'Assemblée Nationale française
20. Association for Family Planning and Sexual Health, Latvia
21. Association HERA-XXI, Georgia
22. Association Histoire, Femmes et Sociétés- revue Clio, France
23. Association Mnémosyne, France
24. AIED - Associazione Italiana per l'Educazione demografica, Italy
25. Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Malaysia
26. ASTRA Network
27. ASTRA Youth Network
28. Atria - Institute for Gender Equality and Women's History, the Netherlands
29. ATTAC France
30. "AUT" LGBTIQ+ student initiative, Croatia
31. Avortament Lliure i Gratuït. Dret al Propi Cos, Spain
32. Avortement en Europe, les Femmes décident, France
33. Autonomous Women's House Zagreb – Women Against Violence Against Women, Croatia
34. B.a.B.e. (Be active, Be emancipated), Croatia
35. UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development & Reproductive Health, UK
36. Beyond Beijing Committee, Nepal
37. Calala Fondo de Mujeres, Spain
38. The Catalan Family Planning Association, Catalonia
39. Catholics for Choice
40. Center for Community Mediation and Security, Romania
41. Center for Health, Ethics and Social Policy, USA
42. Center for Promotion and Defense of Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Peru
43. Center for Reproductive Rights

44. Centre Women and Modern World, Azerbaijan
45. Center for Women's Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia
46. CEDES – Center for the Study of State and Society, Argentina
47. Centro de Estudios e Investigación sobre Mujeres, Spain
48. CGT France
49. CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, the Netherlands
50. City University of New York Law School, Gender Justice Clinic, USA
51. Clínica Dator, Spain
52. Colectivo de Salud Feminista, Argentina
53. Collectif 13 Droits des femmes, France
54. Collectif des Féministes pour l'Egalité, France
55. Collectif Féministes contre le cyberharcèlement, France
56. Collectif Libertaire Anti-Sexiste
57. Collectif National pour les Droits des Femmes, France
58. Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail, France
59. Conseil National des Femmes Françaises, France
60. Culture, Egalité, France
61. Dziewuchy Dziewuchom Berlin, Germany
62. Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality, Fiji
63. Doctors for Choice UK
64. DOK – Democracy is OK, Poland
65. Drogheda Abortion Rights Campaign, Ireland
66. El Colectivo Hetaira, Spain
67. Encore Féministes! - Network, France
68. Ensemble! - Political Movement, France
69. Equidad de Género, Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia, México
70. Equilibres & Populations (Equipop), France
71. Estonian Sexual Health Association, Estonia
72. European Association for the Defence of Human Rights
73. European Civic Forum
74. European Humanist Federation, France
75. European NGOs for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Population and Development
76. European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development
77. European Women's Lobby
78. Family Planning and Sexual Health Association, Lithuania
79. Family Planning Association of Moldova
80. Fédération de Normandie du Planning Familial, France
81. Federation for Women and Family Planning, Poland
82. Fédération Laïque de Centres de Planning Familial, France
83. Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes, France
84. Fédération Nationale Sud Santé-Sociaux, France
85. FEMEN International

86. Féministes pour une autre Europe, France
87. Femmes Contre les Intégrismes, France
88. Femmes Libres Radio libertaire, France
89. Femmes pour le Dire, Femmes pour Agir, France
90. Femini Berlin Polska Berliński Kongres Kobiet Manifest Wolnej Polski (Congress of Women), Poland
91. FILIA Centre, Romania
92. FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development, Norway
93. Fórum de Política Feminista, Spain
94. Frente Ecuatoriano por la Defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos, Ecuador
95. Freedom of Choice
96. FRONT Association, Romania
97. Fundación Arcoiris. Mexico
98. Fundación ASPACIA, Spain
99. Fundación Desafío de Ecuador, Ecuador
100. Fundacja im. Kazimierza Łyszczyńskiego, Poland
101. Gals4Gals Lodz, Poland
102. Gender Alternatives Foundation, Bulgaria
103. GERT – Gender Education, Research and Technology Foundation, Bulgaria
104. Gender Scan, France
105. Global Doctors for Choice
106. Global Fund for Women, USA
107. Great Lakes Initiatives for Human Rights and Development, Rwanda
108. H.E.R.A. – Health Education and Research Association, Macedonia
109. HowToUse
110. Humanists UK
111. Human Rights Watch
112. ILGA - Europe
113. International Campaign for Women’s Right to Safe Abortion
114. International Commission of Jurists
115. International Federation for Human Rights, France
116. International Women’s Health Coalition, USA
117. IPPF European Network
118. IPPF Global Federation
119. Irish Family Planning Association, Ireland
120. Kazakhstan Feminist Initiative "Feminita"
121. KOD - Independent Group Berlin, Germany
122. Kollektief Antikonceptie, Belgium
123. Komitet Obrony Demokracji - Niezależaa Grupa Berlin, Germany
124. L'Assemblée des Femmes, France
125. L'Egalité, c'est pas sorcier, France
126. La Paille et le Mil, France
127. Ladder for Rural Development, Malawi
128. League for International Women’s Rights, France
129. Legal Center for Women’s Initiatives “Sana Sezim”, Kazakhstan

130. Lesbian Group Kontra, Croatia
131. Les Effronté-es, France
132. Libres Mariannes, France
133. Lights4Rights, Belgium
134. Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, France
135. Lobby Europeo de Mujeres- LEM España, Spain
136. London-Irish Abortion Rights Campaign
137. Luna Abortuscentrum Antwerpen, Belgium
138. Marche Mondiale des Femmes France
139. Marche Mondiale des Femmes Belgique, Belgium
140. Marche Mondiale des Femmes Midi-Pyrénées, France
141. Médecins du Monde, France
142. Medical Students for Choice
143. Mediterranean Women's Fund, France
144. Mujer y Salud en Uruguay
145. Novgorod Gender Centre, Russia
146. Osez le Féminisme!, France
147. PaRiter, Croatia
148. PARI o DISPARE, Italy
149. Planned Parenthood Federation of America
150. Planning Familial 76, France
151. Planning Familial National, France
152. Plataforma CEDAW Sombra País Valenciano, Spain
153. Polish Society of Antidiscrimination Law, Poland
154. Population Matters, United Kingdom
155. Pro familia Bundesverband, Germany
156. Regards de Femmes, France
157. Regina Women's Network, Lithuania
158. Reproductive Health Matters
159. Reproductive Health Training Center, Moldova
160. RESURJ
161. Roda – Parents in Action, Croatia
162. Romanian Women's Lobby, Romania
163. Ruptures, France
164. Rutgers, Netherlands
165. Safe2choose
166. SALUS Foundation, Ukraine
167. Sarajevo Open Centre, Bosnia
168. Sensoa, Belgium
169. Sexual Health Switzerland
170. Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition, South Africa
171. Sexual Rights Initiative, Canada
172. Society for Education on Contraception and Sexuality, Romania
173. Society Without Violence, Armenia

174. Solidarité France Grèce pour la Santé, France
175. S.O.S. Sexisme, France
176. Spanish Federation of Family Planning (FPFE), Spain
177. Surkuna - Centro de Apoyo y Protección de los Derechos Humanos, Ecuador
178. Sustainable Health Development Center – VietHealth, Vietnam
179. Tendo's World (Arts & Health), Uganda
180. L'Union des Familles Laïques (Union of French Secular Families), France
181. Union syndicale Solidaires, France
182. Union Women Center, Georgia
183. Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, USA
184. Väestöliitto – Family Federation of Finland
185. Voice for Choice UK
186. WISH Associates, South Africa
187. Women Enabled International
188. Women's Front of Norway
189. Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)
190. Women Help Women, Poland
191. Women on Waves
192. Women on Web
193. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, France
194. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Italy
195. Women's Link Worldwide
196. Women's Resource Center, Armenia
197. Women's Rights Center, Armenia
198. Women's Room – Center for Sexual Rights, Croatia
199. YouAct - the European Youth Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights
200. Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights
201. Young Women for Change, Nepal
202. Youth Champions Advocacy Nepal (Youth CAN), Nepal
203. 40 ans de mouvement, France