

Committee: Economic and Social Council

Issue: Ensuring access to legal abortion services

Student Officer: IoannaFlessa

Position: Deputy President

INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

ECOSOC's third topic is one of the most controversial and complex issues of our era. Formerly, abortion without medical necessity was considered as an illegal action which was chastened by the law. However, people's concept changed throughout the years and medical abortions were legalized under certain circumstances.

Nowadays, the topic of abortions is a subject of ongoing debate with many people having different opinions on the matter.

This study guide will provide you with a very good starting point for your research. However, it is extremely important that you do your own research as well, regarding your country's policy.

Should you have any questions on the topic or the conference in general, feel free to contact me via email (iwannaflessa@gmail.com) or my Facebook account (IoannaFlessa). I hope that this experience will be special and enlightening for you and I am looking forward to meeting and working with all of you at the conference!

Kind regards,

Ioanna Flessa

Important note from the chairs' team

In order for the chairs to fully understand the dynamics of the committee, discovering any misunderstanding prior to the debate and for the better preparation of the delegates you are asked to proceed as indicated below;

1) Conduct your chairs via email and informing them about your mun experience so that they can know what exactly to expect of you.

2) Prepare and send your chairs by 11:59 of the 6th of November one position papers For each of the topics you are going to discuss during the conference. You can conduct the expert chair, of each topic for further information concerning your country's policy if needed, and for general guidance when it comes to your position papers (word limit structure etc). You are going to receive general comments during the lobbying for your position papers as well as personal feedback and grades for your papers. The points you will receive will add up to your general score which is one of the factors that determine the best delegate award. If you for any reason fail to send your papers before the final deadline you will not be eligible for any award.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Pregnancy

Pregnancy is the state of carrying a developing embryo or fetus within the female body. Pregnancy lasts for about nine months and it's conventionally divided into three trimesters, each roughly three months long.¹

Abortion

Abortion is the deliberate termination of a human pregnancy, most often performed during the first 28 weeks of pregnancy. It is a common and safe medical procedure.²

Unsafe abortion

Unsafe abortion is defined as a procedure for terminating an unwanted pregnancy either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking minimal medical standards, or even both.³

Safe abortion

An abortion is regarded as safe if it is conducted by trained and skilled personnel and carried out in safe, clean environment and also conforms to medical standards such as use of sterilized instruments, maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation.

Induced abortion

Induced abortion is an abortion that is brought about intentionally. It's also called artificial or therapeutic abortion as opposed to a spontaneous abortion (miscarriage).⁴

Forced sterilization

Forced or coerced sterilization is the process of surgically removing or disabling an individual's reproductive organs without their full and informed concern. It is a gross violation of human rights but continues to be implemented in many countries throughout the world. The procedure is performed on both genders; however women are much more frequently victimized.⁵

Genital mutilation

¹ Jr, William C. Shiel. "Definition of Pregnancy." MedicineNet.

² "Abortion." Merriam-Webster. Merriam-Webster.

³ "Preventing Unsafe Abortion." World Health Organization. World Health Organization.

⁴ Jr, William C. Shiel. "Definition of Artificial Abortion." MedicineNet.

⁵ "Forced/Coerced Sterilization." Forced/Coerced Sterilization

Genital mutilation is any time of cutting or removal of all or some of the genital organs, especially excision of the clitoris.⁶ Namely, female genital mutilation is a procedure that has no health benefits for girls and women and can cause severe bleeding, urinating problems, infections, complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.⁷

Abortion tourism

Abortion tourism is when a woman travels for the purpose of obtaining an abortion in country with more liberal laws. It was estimated that over 6.000 women traveled to England to have abortions every year.⁸

Maternal death

Maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes. Unsafe abortions can lead to maternal death. Legal, accessible and safe abortion saves people's lives. Medical complications and maternal mortality related to abortion become truly rare only when people have access to safe abortion services.⁹

Maternal morbidity

Maternal morbidity is an overarching term that refers to any physical or mental illness or disability directly related to pregnancy or childbirth. They are not necessarily life-threatening but can have a significant impact on the quality of life.¹⁰

Reproductive rights

Reproductive rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international laws and international human rights documents and other consensus documents. These rights rest on the recognition of the basic rights of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes the right to make decisions concerning

⁶ "Genital Mutilation." Dictionary.com. Dictionary.com.

⁷ "Female Genital Mutilation." World Health Organization.

⁸ "Abortion Tourism." Wiktionary.

⁹ "Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100 000 Live Births)." World Health Organization.

¹⁰ Koblinsky, Marge, Mahbub Elahi Chowdhury, Allisyn Moran, and Carine Ronsmans. "Maternal Morbidity and Disability and Their Consequences: Neglected Agenda in Maternal Health." *Journal of Health, Population, and Nutrition*. June 2012

reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents.¹¹

Fetal Heartbeat Bill

"Fetal heartbeat" bills are legislation that would make abortion illegal as soon as a fetus' heartbeat can be detected. This can happen as early as six weeks, though it depends on many variables, including the technology used.¹²

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Many pregnancies are caused accidentally due to ineffective contraceptive methods, lack of sex education, or sexual abuse. Around the world there are states that provide women access to legal abortion services, but there are nations where ending a pregnancy is considered as an illegal action and women are forced to move through a full pregnancy.



Pro-choice Arguments

Despite all the laws and restrictions on abortion around the world, the termination of a pregnancy is a common and safe medical procedure. The vast majority of women perform it during the first trimester, where they have less than 0,5 percent risk of serious complications and the fetus is dependent on its mother's health and cannot exist outside her womb. Thus, the fetus is incapable of feeling pain.

In cases where the pregnancy is the result of a crime, forcing a woman made pregnant by this violent act would cause further psychological harm to the victim.

Adoption cannot be considered as an alternative to abortion since most women by the end of their pregnancies they have developed a strong bond with their children, whether they

¹¹ "REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS - OHCHR." United Nations.

¹² Feller, Madison. "Judges Have Already Called This Abortion Law Unconstitutional. So Why Are States Trying to Pass It?" ELLE. May 07, 2019.

like it or not. Statistics show that less than 3 percent of unmarried women choose to give up their babies after denied abortion.

Above all, pregnancy is a private and personal decision and the ability of a woman to make decisions about her own body is critical to civil rights. The choice over when and if to have children is central to a person's independence and ability to determine their future, since having a child is an important decision that requires consideration, preparation and planning. No person should be forced to become a parent. Usually unwanted pregnancies are associated with birth defects, low birth weight, maternal depression, increased risk of child abuse and physical violence.

Before abortion was legalized, women would frequently try to induce abortion by using coat hangers, knitting needles, radiator flushes, by throwing themselves down the stairs and other harmful methods. Accordingly, the rate of medically, supervised abortions will drop the number of the unsafe ones will increase, along with the maternal deaths.

In nations where safe and legal abortion services are difficult to access, women usually travel to neighboring countries to abort their babies.

Pro-life Arguments

There are two main approaches to pro-life perspectives; the moral and the religious one. Since life begins at conception, abortion is similar to murder as it is the act of killing an innocent human being that hasn't been born yet. It basically violates feminist principles as it is considered as a form of violence against the person that is developing.

Abortion defies the word of God. More specifically, the Greek word "βρέφος" (brephos) is used in the Bible to refer to both an unborn baby and an infant. By the time a baby is conceived, it is recognized by God as a person.

People need to take responsibility for their actions and accept the consequences. Having sexual intercourse, even when contraceptive methods are used, carries with it the risk of a pregnancy.

Furthermore, abortion can have a serious psychological impact on the mother's health, since it increases the risk for subsequent depression, stress and anxiety.

Also, according to the Hippocratic Oath, doctors are not allowed to perform abortions, because their job is to heal, never kill and maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception.

In cases of rape or incest, proper medical care can ensure that the woman won't get pregnant. Abortion punishes the unborn child who committed no crime. It's not fair an unborn child to pay the price for his parents sins.

It is believed that terminating a pregnancy is an extreme measure as there are many other ways to help parents raise their child, by supporting them financially and socially.

Last but not least, instead of aborting a baby, adoption is a viable alternative. Women should give their unwanted babies to families that cannot conceive their own.

The Pro-Choice Movement

The pro-choice movement contends that women have a constitutionally protected right to decide what to do with their bodies and has sought to keep abortion safe and legal. The term "pro-choice" was used by advocates years after the 1973 Supreme Court decision supported abortion rights.

The current global pro-choice movement had been heavily influenced "women's liberation" movements worldwide. The most frequent way pro-choice feminist movements operate is through the use of social media. Especially after Georgia's, Missouri's and Alabama's abortion bans, a social media storm erupted with tweets about abortion. Like clockwork, women who have had an abortion came forward and shared their most personal stories. By sharing their stories, women found other women who had had similar experiences and they created a community where they could feel less alone and isolated.

However, pro-choice politics do not solely operate online. A further important characteristic of contemporary feminist movements is their occupation of public spaces and spectacles. Public demonstrations of politics are a longstanding means of demanding change.

Global pro-choice movements are now showing that broad-based, social justice oriented movements that mobilize online and engage in spectacles and protests are effective. They prove that disruption is an important political tactic. They show that a specific site of injustice can be a vehicle for highlighting wider social inequalities and that intersectionality does not undermine a movement's political efficacy.¹³

The Pro-Life Movement

After the 1973 Supreme Court decision, which legalized abortion in all 50 states, the modern antiabortion political movement was born. Before Roe v. Wade, the antiabortion movement was very small geographically disperse, and focused on individual state legislatures.

¹³ Duffy, Deirdre. "What the New Global Pro-choice Movements Can Teach Politics." The Conversation. January 24, 2019.

After 1973 activists and state legislators alike worried that Roe prescribed a one-size-fits-all abortion law that could only be addressed at the national level.

Thus, in the 1970s, activists promoted the Hyde Amendment and pushed, unsuccessfully, a constitutional amendment banning abortion. After 1973 the direction of pro-life activism changed, even as its demographics and core political arguments remained the same.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, evangelical Christians joined the movement in great numbers, rejuvenating and eventually radicalizing the movement. Previously, in the late 1960s, evangelical scholars, pastors, and physicians could not agree on whether or not abortion was sinful.

But by late 1970s and early 1980s, this sentiment had changed. Many evangelical laypeople and clergy opposed legal abortion and joined the fight to end it. Some simply joined existing pro-life groups; others formed new, more radical groups that rejected the politics of legislative reform. The most famous of the latter cohort was Operation Rescue, which sought to end abortion by "any means necessary." Operation Rescue pioneered the pro-life "rescue," in which thousands of activists created human blockades in front of clinics.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Operation Rescue performed such rescues in cities across the nation, tying up the city's police departments, filling local jails, and making it incredibly difficult to get an abortion. Their national media spectacle sought to attract reporters and stun the American public.

Extremists in the movement went even further. Between the early 1980s and the 2000s, there were 153 assaults, 383 death threats, 3 kidnappings, 18 attempted murders, and 9 murders related to abortion providers.¹⁴

Abortion methods

Types of abortion procedures during the first trimester:

- ✓ Mifepristone and Misoprostol is a medical abortion procedure used up to the first to seven to nine weeks of pregnancy. It doesn't involve surgery.
- ✓ Manual Vacuum Aspiration is a procedure used between the third and twelfth week since the last period. It is considered less invasive and only needs a local anesthesia on the cervix. It involves the use of a specially designed syringe to apply suction.
- ✓ Aspiration is a surgical abortion procedure used to terminate a pregnancy up to sixteen weeks from the last period. It involves the use of a thin tube that is attached by tubing to a bottle and a pump, which provides a gentle vacuum. The tube is passed into the uterus, the pump is turned on, and the tissue is gently removed from the uterus.

Types of abortion procedures during the second trimester:

Medication can no longer be provided during the second trimester.

¹⁴ "Pro-life Movement in America." The American Historian.

- ✓ Dilation and Evacuation is a surgical abortion procedure used to end a pregnancy after the sixteenth week of the pregnancy. It involves removing the fetal and placental tissue with suction and instruments.
- ✓ Induction Abortion is done by inducing labor with drugs. The procedure is similar to labor but the fetus is smaller and the process lasts shorter.

Types of abortion procedures during the third trimester:

- ✓ Induction Abortion
- ✓ Intact dilation and Extractionis is a surgical abortion procedure used to terminate a pregnancy after 18 weeks of the last menstrual period. It involves the removal of the fetus intact.

Complications and side effects of safe and unsafe abortion

Medical abortion procedures have minor effects, such as vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, fever, warmth or chills, headache, weakness and dizziness. Some of these may be caused by pregnancy itself.

During and after the abortion procedure, side effects and complications may occur. Some women experience bleeding that is an annoyance, which is completely normal, while others have heavy bleeding that requires medical or surgical intervention. However, safe abortion is safer than giving birth. A medical supervised abortion is a very safe procedure when it is performed in sanitary conditions by a specialized physician. In fact, safe abortion is one of the safest medical procedures that exist.

On the other hand, unsafe abortion may have several consequences when it comes to the physical recovery of the woman. Deaths and injuries are higher when unsafe abortion is performed. According to the World Health Organization, unsafe abortions can lead to complications such as:

- ✓ Incomplete abortion (failure to remove or expel all the pregnancy tissue from the uterus)
- ✓ Haemorrhage (heavy bleeding)
- ✓ Infection
- ✓ Uterine perforation (caused when the uterus is pierced by a sharp object)
- ✓ Damage to the genital tract and internal organs by inserting dangerous objects such as sticks, knitting needles, or broken glass into the vagina or anus.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

North America

Up until around 1880, abortions were legal and widely practiced, because not even the Catholic Church believed life existed before the fetus could actually move. In 1857, the American Medical Association began a crusade to make abortion illegal. In 1873, Congress passes the Comstock Law which completely banned abortion drugs. By 1880, abortion was illegal in most states, unless the woman’s life was in danger.

In 1973 the Supreme Court legalized abortion in all 50 states of the United States. However, nowadays, most states have set limits to restrict them.

In Canada and Puerto Rico, abortion is legal at all stages of pregnancy.

In Mexico, abortion is acceptable during the first twelve weeks of pregnancy.

In Cuba, Costa Rica, Panama, Jamaica, Guatemala, the Bahamas, Haiti, Belize and El Salvador, abortion is restricted by criminal law, but it is allowed when the pregnancy endangers the physical health of the mother or is a result of rape and incest.

In the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, and San Marino, ending a pregnancy is illegal in all circumstances.

South America

Countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean can be classified into six categories, according to the reasons for which abortion is legally permitted.

Reason	Countries and territories
Prohibited altogether (no explicit legal exception)	Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Suriname
To save life of woman	Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil (a), Chile (a,c), Dominica, Guatemala, Mexico (a,c,e), Panama (a,c,d), Paraguay, Venezuela
To save life of woman/ preserve physical health*	Argentina (a), Bahamas, Bolivia (a,b), Costa Rica, Ecuador, Grenada, Peru
To save life of woman/preserve physical or mental health	Colombia (a,b,c), Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia (a,b), Trinidad and Tobago
To save life of woman/preserve physical or mental health/socio-economic reasons	Barbados (a,b,c,d), Belize (c), St. Vincent and Grenadines (a,b,c)
Without restriction as to reason	Cuba (d), Guyana, Puerto Rico, Uruguay (d)

Australia

In Australia there are regions where abortions are considered legal, legal with restrictions and illegal. Almost every Australian territory allows abortion when the pregnancy endangers the mother's life.

Europe

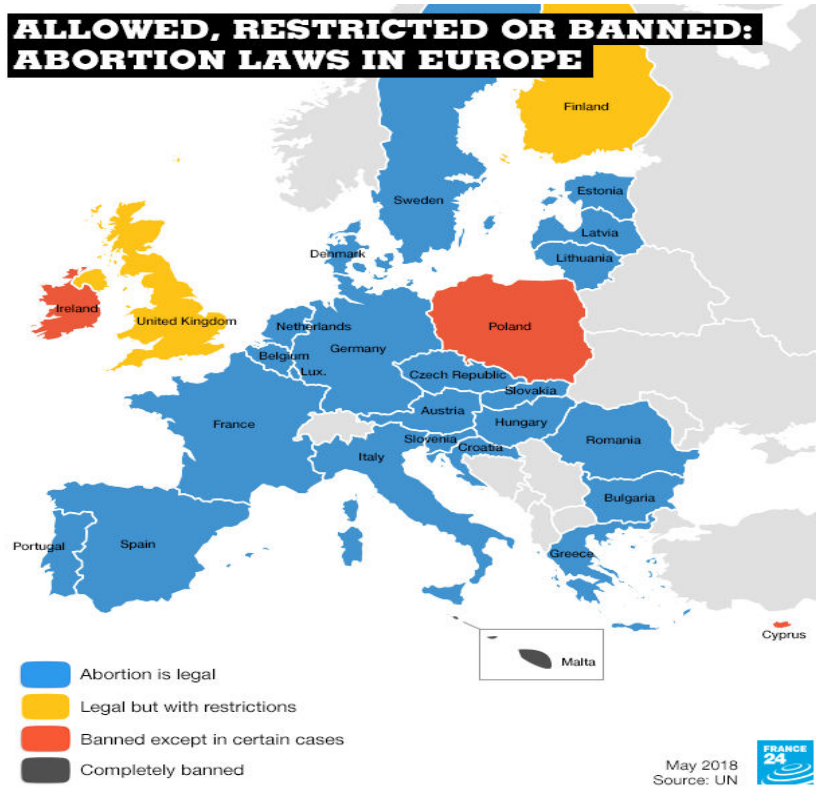
Abortion is considered as a legal action in almost every country in Europe; however there is a great variety of restrictions under which it is permitted. Abortion during the first three months of the pregnancy is acceptable in many European countries, but there are only few that permit it during the second and third trimester. In the process of the second trimester the baby's organs are completely developed and they start moving, hearing and swallowing. Henceforth, the fetus is considered as a living organism.

Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Sweden and Denmark are countries where abortions are legal.

The United Kingdom and Finland are nations where abortions are mainly legal but with restrictions. Theoretically, an abortion is permitted only when the mother is underage or over the age of 40, has already four children or faces health problems. In order to perform an abortion the woman needs a medical permission by two doctors.

Ireland, Cyprus and Poland are states where abortions are not permitted except in certain extreme cases such as rape, incest and when it threatens the life of the mother.

In Malta, any woman who has an abortion, along with the physician who performs it can face serious charges, such as imprisonment, and it doesn't have an exception, even if the woman's life is in danger.



Asia

Every country in Asia has a different legal environment when it comes to abortion.

Countries and territories in Asia can be classified into six categories, according to the reasons for which abortion is legally permitted.

Reason	Countries and territories
Prohibited altogether, (no explicit legal exception)	Iraq, Laos, the Philippines
To save the life of woman	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan (a,b), Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia (a,c,e), Iran (c), Lebanon, Myanmar, Oman, Sri Lanka, Syria (d,e), Timor-Leste (d), United Arab Emirates (d,e), West Bank and Gaza, Yemen
To save life of woman/preserve physical health*	Jordan, Kuwait (c,d,e), Maldives (e), Pakistan, Qatar (c), Saudi Arabia (d,e), South Korea (a,b,c,e)
To save life of woman/preserve physical or mental health	Israel (a,b,c), Malaysia, Thailand (a,c)
To save life of woman/preserve physical or mental health/socio-economic reasons	Cyprus (a,c), Hong Kong (China) (a,b,c), India (a,c,d,g), Japan (a,e), Taiwan (a,b,c,d,e)
Without restriction as to reason	Armenia (d), Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cambodia (d), China (f,h), Georgia (d), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal (f), North Korea (h), Singapore, Tajikistan, Turkey (d,e), Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam (h)

Africa

Countries in Africa can be classified into six categories, according to the reasons for which abortion is legally permitted.

Reason	Countries
Prohibited altogether, (no explicit legal exception)	Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Egypt, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mauritania, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal
To save life of woman	Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Malawi, Mali (a,b), Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan (a), Tanzania, Uganda
To save life of woman/ preserve physical health*	Benin (a,b,c), Burkina Faso (a,b,c), Burundi, Cameroon (a), Cen. African Republic (a,b,c), Chad (c), Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea (d,e), Ethiopia (a,b,c), Guinea (a,b,c), Kenya, Lesotho (a,b,c), Morocco (e), Niger (c), Rwanda (a,b,c), Togo (a,b,c), Zimbabwe (a,b,c)
To save life of woman/preserve physical or mental health	Algeria, Botswana (a,b,c), Eritrea (a,b), Gambia, Ghana (a,b,c), Liberia (a,b,c), Mauritius (a,b,c,d), Mozambique (a,b,c), Namibia (a,b,c), Seychelles (a,b,c), Sierra Leone, Swaziland (a,b,c)
To save life of woman/preserve physical or mental health/socio-economic reasons	Zambia (c)
Without restriction as to reason	Cape Verde, South Africa, Tunisia

The World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Health Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health. WHO plays an active role on this topic, since it provides technical and policy guidance on the use of contraception to prevent unintended pregnancies, safe abortions and treatment of complications from the unsafe ones. Every year, many campaigns are mobilized by the UN in order to inform the public about the use of effective contraception to prevent an unintended pregnancy, the dangers of unsafe abortion and the need to seek for medical treatment in case of complications.

“Criminalizing the termination of pregnancy does not reduce the number of women who resort to abortion procedures. Rather, it is likely to increase the number who end up have unsafe “back street” procedures.”

“Governments have a duty to ensure that women and girls who have abortions are treated humanely and without judgment or assumption of violating laws, in particular in cases of miscarriages”.

“It is therefore crucial that countries demonstrate their commitment to eliminating discrimination against women in their legislation and to advancing women’s and adolescents’ sexual and reproductive rights, in accordance with international human rights standards.”

The Guttmacher Institute

The Guttmacher Institute is a leading research and policy organization committed to advancing sexual reproductive health and rights worldwide. It examines the incidence of abortion, access to legal abortion services, factors affecting women's choices to end a pregnancy, features of women who have abortions and the condition under they are obtained. The institute also provides statistics about the number of unsafe abortions annually and publishes articles concerning the consequences of unsafe abortion, the reasons why do women decide to terminate a pregnancy etc.

Planned Parenthood

Planned Parenthood was founded in 1916 by Margaret Sanger, Ethel Byrne and Fania Mindell. They opened the first birth control and family planning and abortion clinic in Brooklyn. After nine days, the police shut down the clinic and the three women were charged with crimes related to sharing birth control information. Sanger spent 30 days in jail and after that she traveled the country in order to educate women about birth control and the Planned Parenthood Movement began. Contraceptive pills were created and women started claiming their right to control their own bodies.

National Abortion Federation (NAF)

National Abortion Federation is an organization of abortion providers. Its mission is to unite, represent, serve and support abortion providers in delivering patient-centered, evidence-based care. NAF has worked since 1977 to ensure that all women have access to factual information about abortion. Also, it has created a series of carefully researched fact sheets that cover topics related to abortion and abortion care. (<https://prochoice.org/education-and-advocacy/about-abortion/abortion-facts>)

Center for Reproductive Rights

The Center for Reproductive Rights is the only global legal advocacy organization dedicated to reproductive rights, following the international human rights and the US constitutional law. It has used different means to ensure that women have access to legal abortion services.

40 Days for Life

40 Days for life is an international, religiously-based pro-life advocacy group that campaigns against abortion in over 20 nations worldwide. Its mission is "to bring together the body of Christ in a spirit of unity during a focused 40 day campaign of prayer, fasting and peaceful

activism to seek God’s favor to turn hearts and minds from a culture of death to a culture of life, thus bringing an end to abortion”.

NAPAL Pro-Choice America

The NAPAL Pro-Choice America is an organization in the United States that fights for access to abortion care, birth control, paid paternal leave and protections from pregnancy discrimination. It educates the population about the impacts of anti-choice policies, promotes progressive policies that advance reproductive freedom and challenge harmful restrictions that threaten access to basic health care.

National Women’s Health Network

The National Women’s Health Network is a non-profit women’s health advocacy organization, which aims to improve the health of all women by developing and promoting a critical analysis of health issues in order to affect policy and support consumer decision-making.

Gynuity Health Projects

Gynuity Health Projects is an “ally” organization, which envisions a world where each individual has access to safe and effective reproductive and maternal health care delivered where, when and how needed.

The Latin American Consortium against Unsafe Abortion (CLACAI)

CLACAI is a regional network that promotes access to information and safe technologies and strategies to reduce unsafe abortion in Latin America. It works in the framework of full respect for human rights, in particular sexual and reproductive rights, from a gender and equity perspective as a substantive contribution to the democratic agenda. It is composed of individuals, organizations and networks dedicated to activism, research, and provision of health services, the legal environment and other related areas of work.

Generation Initiative for Women and Youth Network (GIWYN)

The Generation Initiative for Women and Youth Network is a non-governmental and profitable organization. Its purpose is to protect women and youths in need and to develop a violence free society where women can enjoy social, political, cultural, economic and reproductive health rights.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1916	Planned Parenthood was founded.
1920	Vladimir Lenin, the first head of the Soviet State, legalized all kinds of abortion for the first time.
1931	Mexico was the first country to legalize abortion in cases of rape.
1932	Poland was the first country in Europe to legalize abortions in cases of rape and treat the mother's health.
1935	Iceland became the first western country to legalize medical abortions only under limited circumstances.
1936	Joseph Stalin reversed Lenin's abortion law in order to increase the population.
1948	The World Health Organization was established.
1955	Abortion legalized in the Soviet Union again.
1968	The Guttmacher Institute was established.
1973	Abortion legalized in all 50 states of the US.
1976	Congress adopts the first Hyde Amendment barring the use of federal Medicaid funds to provide abortions to low-income women.
1992	<i>Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey</i> reaffirms the "core" holdings of <i>Roe</i> that women have a right to abortion before fetal viability, but allows states to restrict abortion access so long as these restrictions do not impose an "undue burden" on women seeking abortions.
2000	Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act is passed by Congress with a large majority in response to the murder of Dr. David Gunn. The FACE Act forbids the use of "force, threat of force or physical obstruction" to prevent someone from providing or receiving reproductive health services. The law also provides for both criminal and civil penalties for those who break the law.
2003	A federal ban on abortion procedures is passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush. The National Abortion Federation

	immediately challenges the law in court and is successful in blocking enforcement of the law for its members.
2004	NAF wins lawsuit against federal abortion ban. Justice Department appeals rulings by three trial courts against ban. ¹⁵
2009	In Spain a bill decriminalizes abortion, making it legally accessible to women in the first 14 weeks of the pregnancy.
2013	North Dakota became the first state to pass the heartbeat law.
July 2015	WHO publishes Health worker roles in providing safe abortion care and post-abortion contraception.
January 2019	Ireland allowed free access to abortion services until the 12 th week of pregnancy and in cases where there is a risk to the life or of serious harm to the health of the pregnant person.
May 2019	Alabama’s governor signed into law a draconian bill that could punish doctors who perform abortions with life in prison.
May 2019	Georgia, Ohio, Mississippi and Louisiana have passed laws which ban abortion after six to eight weeks of gestation.
28 th September	International Safe Abortion Day


UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

 [Resolution 2002/1](#) (Reproductive rights and reproductive health)

The report provided recent information on selected aspects of reproductive rights and reproductive health, covering topics such as the entry into reproductive life, reproductive behavior, family planning, abortion, maternal mortality and morbidity, sexually transmitted infections and reproductive rights. In that resolution, the Commission requested the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to continue its research and requested the United Nations Population Fund to continue its programming on reproductive rights and reproductive health, in close collaboration with each other and with all other relevant funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system.¹⁶

¹⁵ “History of Abortion.” National Abortion Federation, January 29, 2015. <https://prochoice.org/education-and-advocacy/about-abortion/history-of-abortion/>.


¹⁶ “Commission on Population and Development.” United Nations , n.d. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/376/92/PDF/N0237692.pdf?OpenElement>.

 [Resolution 2010/1](#) (Health, morbidity, mortality and development).

The Commission concentrated on the monitoring of population programmes, focusing on health, morbidity, mortality and development, which provided an overview of the programmatic work of the United Nations Population Fund to improve maternal health and reduce morbidity and mortality. The report concluded that the most cost-effective interventions to reduce maternal mortality were access to family planning, assistance from skilled birth attendants during delivery and access to emergency obstetric care when needed. The report documented the activities of UNFPA in supporting family planning and midwifery, enhancing reproductive health commodity security, preventing and treating obstetric fistula, eliminating female genital mutilation and cutting, addressing adolescent pregnancy, preventing child marriage, combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, and eliminating all forms of gender-based violence.¹⁷

 [Resolution 2011/1](#) (Fertility, reproductive health and development).

The Commission considered the report of the Secretary-General on the monitoring of population programmes, focusing on fertility, reproductive health and development. The report provided an overview of the programmatic work of the United Nations Population Fund to improve reproductive health and listed some key elements in improving universal access to sexual and reproductive health. These included making sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights national priorities; utilizing a human rights framework in developing programmes on reproductive health; strengthening health systems, including by training health-care providers; and building participatory processes and adopting a multisectoral approach to improve sexual and reproductive health. It was important to satisfy the demand for sexual and reproductive health commodities and to ensure adequate funding for family planning as a cost-effective intervention to improve the lives of women and their children.¹⁸

 [APA resolution –Termination of Unwanted Pregnancies \(1969\)](#): “...BE IT RESOLVED that termination of pregnancy be considered a civil right of the pregnant woman to be handled as other medical and surgical procedures in consultation with her physician, and to be considered legal if performed by a licensed physician in a licensed medical facility.”

¹⁷ “Commission on Population and Development.” United Nations , n.d. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/345/99/PDF/N1034599.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹⁸ “Commission on Population and Development.” United Nations , n.d. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/314/23/PDF/N1131423.pdf?OpenElement>.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

- ✚ AIDS 2018: On July 2018, the movements for HIV/AIDS and safe abortion care joined their forces in that event and brought together more than 200 prominent global advocates and decision-makers in order to promote global policies and programs that uphold dignity and bodily integrity.
- ✚ Last year in Argentina, lawmakers introduced a bill in order to legalize abortion up to 14 weeks, but the decision didn't pass in the Senate because of religious issues. After several demonstrations, where people marched through the streets waving flags, the Argentine movement gathered international support. This year, Argentina from totally banning abortion, now allows it only in cases of rape and when the mother's life is in danger. However, more than 350.000 women undergo unsafe and illegal abortions and thousands of them are hospitalized for complications.
- ✚ In 2013, the Center for Reproductive Rights litigated a six-week ban passed by North Dakota in federal court and won at the district court level. The Supreme Court declined to hear the case.
- ✚ In 2014, the Supreme Court refused to review Arizona's ban on abortion at 20 weeks of pregnancy.
- ✚ In 2016, the Supreme Court refused to review the 12-week ban in Arkansas.
- ✚ The Center for Reproductive Rights challenged a sex week ban in Mississippi and the ACLU challenged a similar abortion ban in Kentucky, Ohio and an almost total ban in Alabama.
- ✚ 28/06/2019: The American Liberties Union, the ACLU of Georgia, Planned Parenthood and the Center for Reproductive rights filed suit challenging a six-week abortion ban signed into law last month by Georgia Governor Brian Kemp. This law would make terminating a pregnancy illegal before many women even know they're pregnant.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Ensuring access to legal abortion services is an issue that should be dealt with immediately. All women have the right to decide whether they want to become mothers or not, let alone have access to safe, affordable and accessible legal abortion services.

Nations that allow abortion must ensure that these services are safe, affordable and accessible to women without discrimination. The legal framework for access to abortion

must include mechanisms for rapid decision-making with a view to limiting to the extent possible risks to the health of the pregnant mother.

In countries, where terminating a pregnancy is considered illegal, women shouldn't be denied their right to access health services. States must organize health services in order to ensure that women are not prevented from accessing them. Furthermore, "states must take steps to ensure access to appropriate health-care services for women and to eliminate such barriers to the provision of abortion services and that lead women to resort to unsafe abortions, including eliminating unacceptable delays in providing medical attention."

USEFUL LINKS

What actually happens when you have an abortion: <https://youtu.be/vWKqeJnzeBc>

Abortion Policies and Reproductive Health around the World:

<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/policy/AbortionPoliciesReproductiveHealth.pdf>

Abortion and the "Woman Question:

https://law.yale.edu/system/files/documents/pdf/Faculty/Siegel_AbortionandtheWomanQuestion.pdf

Abortion is a problem to be solved, not a moral issue:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/abortion-is-a-problem-to-be-solved-not-a-moral-issue/>

Preventing unsafe abortion:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/preventing-unsafe-abortion>

Reproductive Rights are Human Rights:

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/SexualHealth/INFO_Abortion_WEB.pdf

Studying unsafe abortion:

https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/63596/WHO_RHT_MSM_96.25.pdf;jsessionid=0B384F0A2F0D22AA256D8423820AB0EB?sequence=1

How to talk about abortion:

https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/ippf_abortion_messaging_guide_web_0.pdf

Key strategies and promising practices for increasing young women’s access to abortion services:

https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/ippf_youth_and_abortion_guidelines_2014.pdf

Ensuring access to safe, legal abortion in an increasingly complex regulatory environment:

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/23e4/9772c4b3965c14e3a58050818ee896d3429c.pdf>

<https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/guideline-medical-abortion-care/en/>

A Youth Activist’s Guide to Safe Abortion Advocacy:

http://www.youthcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/YCSRR_Freedom_of_Choice.pdf

Increasing Access to Abortion:

<https://www.acog.org/-/media/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Health-Care-for-Underserved-Women/co613.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20171011T2045552523>

Ensuring Access to Abortion at the State Level:

<https://www.guttmacher.org/gpr/2019/01/ensuring-access-abortion-state-level-selected-examples-and-lessons>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jr, William C. Shiel. “Definition of Pregnancy.” MedicineNet. Accessed August 20, 2019.

<https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=11893>.

“Abortion.” Merriam-Webster. Merriam-Webster. Accessed August 20, 2019.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abortion>.

“Preventing Unsafe Abortion.” World Health Organization. World Health Organization, November 28, 2014.

https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/unsafe_abortion/hrpwork/en/.

Jr, William C. Shiel. “Definition of Artificial Abortion.” MedicineNet. Accessed August 21, 2019. <https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=17776>.

“Forced/Coerced Sterilization.” Forced/Coerced Sterilization, September 2011.

http://www.stopvaw.org/forced_coerced_sterilization.

"Female Genital Mutilation." World Health Organization. Accessed August 20, 2019.
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>.

"Genital Mutilation." Dictionary.com. Dictionary.com. Accessed August 20, 2019.
<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/genital-mutilation>.

"Abortion Tourism." Wiktionary. Accessed August 21, 2019.
https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/abortion_tourism.

"Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100 000 Live Births)." World Health Organization. World Health Organization, March 11, 2014.
<https://www.who.int/healthinfo/statistics/indmaternalmortality/en/>.

Koblinsky, Marge, Mahbub Elahi Chowdhury, Allisyn Moran, and Carine Ronsmans. "Maternal Morbidity and Disability and Their Consequences: Neglected Agenda in Maternal Health." Journal of Health, Population, and Nutrition. June 2012. Accessed August 20, 2019.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3397324/>.

"REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS - OHCHR." United Nations.
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/NHRIHandbook.pdf>.

"Medical Abortion Study Guide - Ipas.azureedge.net." Accessed August 20, 2019.
<https://ipas.azureedge.net/files/MEDABSGE13-MedicalAbortionStudyGuide.pdf>.

"ABORTION - Ohchr.org." United Nations Human Rights. Accessed August 20, 2019.
https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/SexualHealth/INFO_Abortion_WEB.pdf.

"Miscarriage: Signs, Symptoms, Causes, & Treatments." RxList. Accessed August 20, 2019.
https://www.rxlist.com/miscarriage_causes_and_symptoms/article.htm.

"Safe Abortion Care: The Public Health and Human Rights Rationale." Safe Abortion: Technical and Policy Guidance for Health Systems. 2nd Edition. January 01, 1970. Accessed August 20, 2019. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK138200/>.

Duffy, Deirdre. "What the New Global Pro-choice Movements Can Teach Politics." The Conversation. January 24, 2019. Accessed August 23, 2019.
<https://theconversation.com/what-the-new-global-pro-choice-movements-can-teach-politics-98643>.

"How to Talk about Abortion." IPPF. Accessed August 20, 2019.

https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/ippf_abortion_messaging_guide_web_0.pdf.

"Abortion Laws Vary Significantly across the EU." France 24. May 25, 2018. Accessed August 20, 2019. <https://www.france24.com/en/20180525-abortion-laws-vary-eu-ireland-malta-poland-termination>.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20180525-abortion-laws-vary-eu-ireland-malta-poland-termination>.

"Abortion in Africa." Guttmacher Institute. June 22, 2018. Accessed August 20, 2019.

<https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/abortion-africa>.

"Abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean." Guttmacher Institute, 22 June 2018,

www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/abortion-latin-america-and-caribbean.

"Abortion." Guttmacher Institute. August 01, 2019. Accessed August 20, 2019.

<https://www.guttmacher.org/united-states/abortion>.

"Induction Abortion." Our Bodies Ourselves. Accessed August 20, 2019.

<https://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/book-excerpts/health-article/induction-abortion/>.

"Abortion Procedures Intact Dilation and Evacuation (Dilation and Extraction)."

Abortion by Dilatation and Extraction. Accessed August 20, 2019.

<http://www.awomansright.org/d&x.html>.

"Preventing Unsafe Abortion." World Health Organization. Accessed August 20,

2019. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/preventing-unsafe-abortion>.

"Induced Abortion in the United States." Guttmacher Institute. February 14, 2019.

Accessed August 20, 2019. <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>.

Lowen, Linda. "Common Arguments for and Against Abortion." ThoughtCo. June 23,

2019. Accessed August 22, 2019. <https://www.thoughtco.com/arguments-for-and-against-abortion-3534153>.

"Pro-life Movement in America." The American Historian. Accessed August 23, 2019. <https://tah.oah.org/november-2016/abolishing-abortion-the-history-of-the-pro-life-movement-in-america/>.

Staggenborg, S. "The Survival of the Pro-choice Movement." Journal of Policy History: JPH. 1995. Accessed August 23, 2019. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12346343>.

"Viral Social Media Campaign #youknowme Asks Women to Share Their Abortion Stories." CBS News. Accessed August 23, 2019. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/busy-philipps-abortion-the-viral-social-media-campaign-youknowme-asks-women-to-share-their-abortion-stories/>.

Borges, Anna. "On Choosing to Share Your Abortion Story Online-or Not." SELF. Accessed August 23, 2019. <https://www.self.com/story/sharing-your-abortion-story-online>.

Faria, G., E. Barrett, and L. M. Goodman. "Women and Abortion: Attitudes, Social Networks, Decision-making." Social Work in Health Care. 1985. Accessed August 23, 2019. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/4081975>.

"Pros & Cons - ProCon.org." Abortion. Accessed August 22, 2019. <https://abortion.procon.org/>.

Lopez, Raquel. "Perspectives on Abortion: Pro-Choice, Pro-Life, and What Lies in between." 2012. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/bbdc/b17b6616460d58ecb0efab1e31da8507329a.pdf>.

Bauer, Gary. "Pro-life Is Pro-science." Washington Examiner. January 18, 2019. Accessed August 22, 2019. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/pro-life-is-pro-science>.

"Mission." 40 Days For Life. Accessed August 20, 2019. <https://40daysforlife.com/mission/>.

"About the National Women's Health Network." NWHN. Accessed August 20, 2019. <https://nwhn.org/about-us/>.

"Vision and Mission." Vision and Mission - Gynuity Health Projects. Accessed August 20, 2019. <https://gynuity.org/vision-mission>.

"Who We Are - GIWYN: Women's Rights Are Not Negotiable." GIWYN. Accessed August 20, 2019. <http://giwynn.org/who-we-are/>.

"2015 2019 Strategic Plan - Clacai.org." CLACAI. Accessed August 20, 2019. <https://clacai.org/wp-content/uploads/StrategicPlan20152019Clacai.pdf>.