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“Abortion Drone” scheduled for Launch June 27

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Look! Up in the sky! Is it a bird? Is it a plane?

No, it’s an abortion drone, launched by the same folks who brought you the “abortion ship,” abortion hotlines where you can learn how to self-abort, and the “I need an abortion” website where you can order abortifacients: “Women on Waves.”

Before going further, I must emphasize that although the following might sound as if it is a figment of my imagination—how could this possible be true, you might ask– the following is actually in the works, according to multiple media outlets.

The plan is to have a drone carrying abortion pills launch from Frankfurt, Germany, cross the border and deliver mifepristone (RU-486) and a prostaglandin (misoprostol) to women in Slubice, Poland, where abortion laws are highly protective.

The main group responsible for this latest misuse of technology is (who else?) Women on Waves. Women on Waves insists that these chemical abortifacients can be taken "without medical supervision" for pregnancies of less than nine weeks.

Whether this latest venture is merely another in a long line of publicity stunts or is actually supposed to become some new delivery system will become obvious with time. Women on Waves and their partners have already announced that the drone will leave Frankfurt Saturday, June 27 at 11am and said that the press will be allowed to ask questions once the drone lands. But they say that the landing location will be announced Friday evening.

One expects that Polish authorities are aware of the planning, though Women on Waves says that given the weight of the drone (about eleven pounds), the way it is being flown (not through commercial airspace), and the fact that it is not being used for any commercial purposes, no authorization is required for the flight under Polish or German law.

Gomperts is joined by local activists groups who are part of the campaign to overturn Poland's abortion laws and policies. Her website identifies Coccia Basia, a "Berlin based abortion support group for Polish women," Warsaw based Fundacja Feminteka, the 8th of March women's rights informal collective "Porozumienie kobiet 8 marca" and a group called "Berlin-Irish Pro-Choice Solidarity."

Why Poland and who is next? According to The Telegraph, "Gomperts said Poland was chosen because of the lack of awareness around their abortion laws, but if the mission is a success, it could also be deployed to Ireland, where women can only have abortions if their lives are at serious risk."

LATEST IN A LONG LINE

As *NRL News Today* has reported previously, Women on Waves is the group founded by former Greenpeace activist Rebecca Gomperts in 1999. Their first big public splash was when Gomperts anchored her "abortion ship" in international waters just off the coast of Ireland 2001. They offered to ferry women to the boat where they could have abortions using the combination of mifepristone and misoprostol.

From there the boat went on to Poland, Portugal, Spain, Ecuador, Morocco, wherever Gomperts and her group wanted to draw media attention to countries where abortions were not allowed and unborn children were legally protected.

It isn't clear whether Women on Waves ever did an actual abortion on the abortion ship, but they were successful in drumming up massive publicity, to the point where they were the subject of an award-winning documentary "Vessel" produced in 2014.

Gomperts's group switched tactics in 2009, turning to launching abortion "hotlines" in Chile, Argentina, Peru, Pakistan, Venezuela, Morocco, Bangladesh, Kenya, Indonesia, Malawi, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Poland, and Uruguay. Women who call these hotlines are told how to obtain misoprostol, already available in many countries as an anti-ulcer drug, and use the drug to abort their babies.

For a number of years, one of Women on Waves related groups, Women on Web, has run the "I need an abortion" website where women from countries where abortion is illegal can answer a series of medical questions that are supposed to amount to a consultation (though it doesn't really seem matter what answer you give – the website will let you keep going) and be referred to a "licensed doctor" who will "provide you with abortion pills" that will be shipped to your address.

You are asked to make a "donation" of between 70-90 euros at the end of the consultation before the pills

are shipped, and you are asked to electronically certify that you will not hold them responsible if you have any problems (you are advised to go to the nearest hospital with a trusted friend if you do, but they tell you that "You do not have to tell the medical staff that you tried to induce an abortion; you can tell them that you had a spontaneous miscarriage.")

Beyond being an attention grabbing ploy, Gomperts' move is simply an extension of the abortion industry's efforts to reduce physician involvement and make abortion less dependent on the dwindling supply of willing abortionists. Chemical abortions were the first move, reducing the need for qualified surgeons, then there were the web-cam abortions where a woman's only contact with the abortionist was through a computer terminal.

At least with the web-cams, she had to travel to some store front clinic and meet with someone who could at a minimum check her blood pressure and take her vitals. Now, however, if the new technology takes off, even that minimal encounter could become a thing of the past. All she has to do is order her pills and wait for a drone to fly the package to her front door.

Even the most sensible caution has been thrown to the wind for the sake of the cause.



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