

Abortion ship refused entry to port

By Europe correspondent [Rachael Brown](#), wires

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PHOTO: The Dutch 'abortion ship' has been sailing for 11 years (AFP: Fadel Senna)

Moroccan authorities in the port town of Smir have turned away a Dutch ship which offers women medical abortions.

MAP: [Morocco](#)

The campaign group Women On Waves provides abortions and advice from boats anchored in international waters off the coast of countries that have outlawed the practice.

It has been sailing for 11 years and visited traditionally Catholic countries Spain, Portugal and Ireland at the invitation of local women's groups.

Morocco was the first Muslim country the group planned to visit, but it has been blocked from entering the

harbour.

Women On Waves says it was invited by a local youth group and was going to teach women about an abortion-inducement drug available in the country, which most women are unaware of.

Morocco's interior minister says the ship will not be granted access.

In Morocco, as in other Muslim states, abortion is illegal and punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

But hundreds of illegal abortions are carried out daily in underground clinics or using herbal medicines, sometimes causing death or injury.

ABC/Reuters

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