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## These Women Are Driving An "Abortion Pill Bus" Around Ireland To Protest Anti-Abortion Laws

"We're breaking unjust laws to show the dire need for a referendum on abortion," the campaign's organisers told BuzzFeed News.

posted on Oct. 23, 2015, at 4:05 p.m.



**Laura Silver**  
BuzzFeed News Reporter, UK

A group women are driving an "abortion pill bus" around Ireland on Friday and Saturday to protest the country's anti-abortion laws.



Facebook: ROSAwomen2014

As the bus set off from Dublin on Friday morning, Laura Fitzgerald, a member of the Reproductive rights against Oppression, Sexism and Austerity (ROSA) group which has been involved in organising the bus action, told BuzzFeed News: "The continued ban on abortion in Ireland is draconian, dangerous, and completely discriminatory



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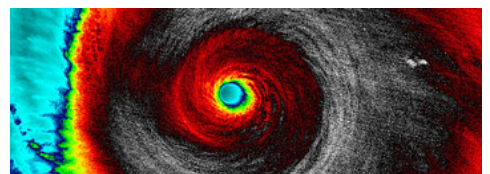
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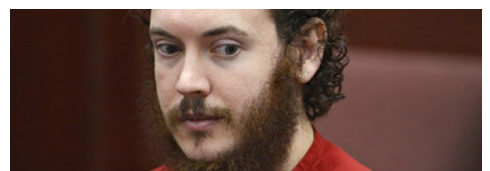
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against women.”

Under the 8th amendment of the constitution abortion is completely illegal in Ireland unless the life of the mother is considered to be at risk.

Any women who is found to have had an abortion in Ireland, even in cases of incest, rape, or where the foetus may not survive, could face 14 years in prison.

She said the anti-abortion laws demonstrated “huge misogyny” and that “we can’t let women’s bodies be policed.”

The bus will stop to hold pro-choice rallies in Limerick, Cork and Galway, before returning to Dublin for a final rally on Saturday afternoon.

**Working with Dutch organisation [WomenOnWeb](#), who help individuals and organisations that support abortion rights, ROSA will offer on-board consultations and abortion pills as the bus travels around the country.**



**Saoirse Anton**  
@E\_dayEccentric

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So glad to have been able to see the Abortion pill bus off this morn! Best wishes for the trip! #repealthe8th

1:42 PM - 23 Oct 2015

1

According to the [Irish Family Planning Association](#), at least 163,514 women and girls travelled from the Republic of Ireland between 1980 and 2014 to carry out a termination in another country.

Abortion pills, Fitzgerald told us, are “extremely important to women who may not be able to travel for the procedure for financial reasons, or because of their immigration status, or in an abusive relationship, or have difficulties traveling because of other children.”

The medication, which allows a woman to chemically terminate her pregnancy up to nine weeks into its term, is also illegal in Ireland. ROSA has been provided with the pills by WomenOnWeb.

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**Diana O'Dwyer**  
@DianaODwyerAAA

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Photos from [#abortionpillbus](#), arriving in Galway soon [#repealthe8th](#)

2:06 PM - 23 Oct 2015

7 5

"We're breaking unjust laws to show the dire need for a referendum on abortion," Fitzgerald told us. Pro-choice activists gathered to see the bus off on Friday said Gardaí [Ireland's police force] would be "foolish" to try and stop them giving out illegal abortion advice, [according to local radio station, Newstalk](#).

Fitzgerald agreed that she did not expect any trouble from the authorities during the campaign. "If [Gardaí] try and prevent this or criminalise us, it would provoke a massive reaction," she said. "We're supported by the vast majority of Irish people."

In August 2015, [a survey by Ireland's Sunday Times](#) found that 63% of people polled were in favour of a referendum on abortion while [another survey by Red C](#) in July found that 67% of its participants believed the government should decriminalise abortion.



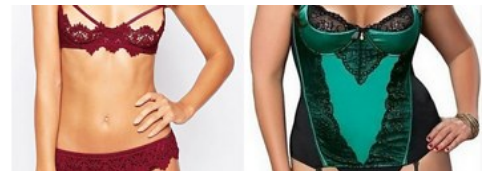
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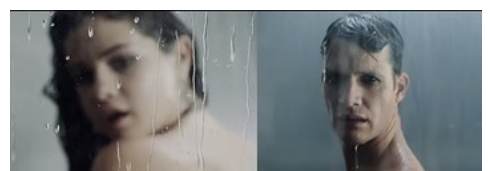
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**Friday 23rd October**  
Send off the Abortion Pill Bus  
Central Bank, Dame St. D2 @ 9.30am

**Galway Rally**  
Spanish Arch @ 1pm

**Limerick Rally**  
O'Connell St (City Centre) @ 5pm

**Saturday 24th October**  
**Cork Rally**  
Winthrop St. @ 11:30am

**Dublin Final Rally**  
Central Bank, Dame St. @ 3:30pm

**ROSA** For Reproductive rights, against  
Oppression, Sexism & Austerity

rosawomenireland.tumblr.com

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Fitzgerald felt that [Ireland's same-sex marriage referendum this year](#) had spurred people on for the same to happen over anti-abortion laws, adding that there is a "strong desire for progress and the separation of church and state" in the country right now.

In July and September, [thousands of people marched in Dublin](#) to call for a change to the laws on abortion.

As Ireland's next general election approaches in spring 2016, Fitzgerald told us a referendum on abortion would be a huge campaign issue for all parties.



Pro-Choice supporters hold placards in front of the gates of the Irish Parliament building in Dublin in July. Peter Muhly / AFP / Getty Images

Earlier this week, [Amnesty International launched a campaign](#) to put pressure on the Irish prime minister to change the law on abortion. The charity is [working with Irish comedy writer Graham Linehan](#) and his wife Helen, who sought out an abortion in the UK when she discovered her baby with a fatal foetal abnormality.

Not all are in favour of the change, however. On the morning of the “abortion pill bus” launch, pro-life campaigner Dr Ruth Cullen [told the Irish Independent](#): “It is an incredibly dangerous and irresponsible one that puts the lives of women at serious risk. Those lending their support to the abortion pill bus have no credibility talking about women’s health.”

But Fitzgerald would not be discouraged. “A lot of women have already contacted us to say that they will be meeting us on the bus,” she said. “We want to keep the momentum going. There is a huge demand for this service.”

## CORRECTION

163,514 women and girls travelled from the Republic of Ireland to have an abortion in another country between 1980 and 2014. A previous version of this article attributed that figure to 2014 alone. Oct. 23, 2015, at 5:17 p.m.

Laura Silver is a reporter for BuzzFeed News and is based in London.  
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 Junior Animals Writer  
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Tagged:ireland, abortion, feminism, pro-choice, referendum

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**Paul Livingstone** · University of Oxford

Glad to see Ireland dragging itself into the 21st century, if a bit late. A few years ago their backward thinking killed a woman giving birth, leaving her husband with a dead wife and a dead baby. Whenever people go on about the US and birth control rights, I always wondered why Ireland seems to get a free pass. US has had much more liberal laws in this arena than Ireland for decades.

Like · Reply ·  19 · 23 October 2015 16:31 · Edited



**Katie Gared** · Brooklyn, New York

If we don't keep a Democrat in office, we'll be well on our way to being an equal with Ireland. It makes me incredibly nervous, womens reproductive rights mean absolutely nothing to the ultra-religious. They need to control everything. I hope Ireland can fix itself on this issue.

Like · Reply ·  3 · 23 October 2015 16:35



**David Fischer**

A few years ago ONE person died? How shocking! Did you know that abortion has killed tens of MILLIONS of babies?

Like · Reply ·  1 · 23 October 2015 16:54



**Liam Tipler**

Katie Gared it will be even worse if morons like carson get in charge. the man who single handedly showed us you can be thick as shit and be a brain surgeon.

Like · Reply · 23 October 2015 17:08

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**Dan Crowter**

Well done sisters #RepealThe8th

Like · Reply ·  10 · 23 October 2015 18:08



**Maeve McQuillan**

Irish people have held pro-choice views since the inception of the 8th amendment, and the campaign to repeal it has never ceased. Unfortunately it's about getting policymakers to sit up, listen and make changes, which is no easy feat. The Savita Halappanavar case of 2012 ignited a lot of anger and brought the issue back into mainstream social consciousness. Let's hope the next election sees some willingness from candidates to actually address the issue rather than ignore it and hope it'll go away, as has been the case up to now. As is clear from the figures above, criminalising abortion does not stop it, it only stops free and safe abortions, and having to travel abroad only adds expense and

it only stops free and safe abortions, and having to travel abroad only adds expense and trauma to an already horrible process.

Like · Reply ·  9 · 23 October 2015 16:39



**Deirdre Forde**

They are absolutely terrified to touch it because if the 8th is repealed, as far as I can tell, it essentially leaves Ireland with a blank page when it comes to abortion laws... Who wants to be the government to draft such laws to fill the void on such ridiculously divisive issue? It seems to me, a lot of what is stalling the issue is this fear of the unknown. It is absolutely essential that this is addressed but no one in power at the moment seem to have the balls. Trying to make the current laws in any way workable is just leading to more and more tragedy.

Like · Reply ·  1 · 23 October 2015 17:53



**Liam Tipler**

people's bodies have been policed for decades. try taking some drugs and see how your rights dont mean anything.

also, i would say the anti abortion stance is less misogyny and more stupid religion.

also, a lot of the anti abortion crowd are female.

btw, im pro choice but i think they need to get rid of the theocracy before they seen any real change. ireland are still stuck in the bronze age with all this nonsense.

Like · Reply ·  3 · 23 October 2015 17:07



**Emer Kavanagh**

It's starting to happen, without forcing it. People are still religious, but also quite liberal. To be honest, it's more that the archaic laws need to be changed to suit the change in society. We shouldn't still have to follow a constitution that was written for a society in the 1900s. That same constitution says that women shouldn't work outside the home, because raising catholic Irish children is the greatest job they can do for society. I suggest now, in 2015, with 4.5 million of us in a country that can't sustain us, perhaps its time to take that particular part of the constitution out.

Like · Reply ·  1 · 23 October 2015 20:02



**Katie Jane**

Liam really... men are always talking about abortion and why it's wrong.. so many religious fuck nuts who are also men.. its quite annoying when a man thinks he knows right by your body

Like · Reply ·  1 · 9 hrs



**Robyn Webb** · Works at MUA freelance

I am fully behind this, but are people who are medically trained to talk people through how the medication works on the bus, or is it just campaigners?

Like · Reply ·  3 · 23 October 2015 16:45



**Niamh Sheehan** · University College Cork

From the interview, I think that the people on the bus will be informed themselves about the medication but anyone who actually wants it has to make a skype call to a doctor in the Netherlands before they will send it out to the woman. I could be wrong in some part, but that's the general gist of it.

Like · Reply · 23 October 2015 17:53





**Sami El-Sayed**

It'll be campaigners on the bus but there'll be a consultation with a doctor online through WomenOnWeb before pills are given to anybody.

Like · Reply · 23 October 2015 19:36

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