

Abortion Bills Around the World

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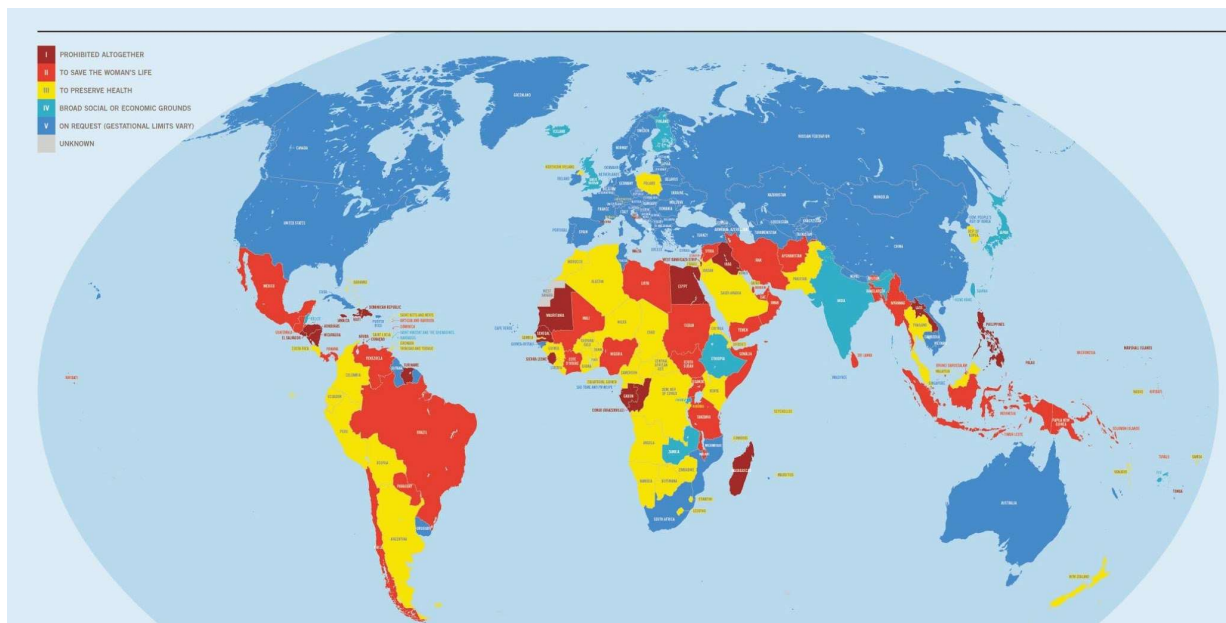
On April 15, Polish law-makers started to work on new legislation which would ban abortion in the case of fetal abnormalities. In a country which already strict rules while allowing abortions, only in the cases of rape, danger to the mother's health or life, or severe damage to the fetus, this meant criminalization of abortion nearly altogether. On October 22, the abortion bill passed, resulting in a frustrated and angry crowd on the streets. After protests continued with the same passion for days, the government delayed the bill. (1)



On the other hand, South Korea's Constitutional Court decriminalized abortion in April 2019 and giving a time frame until the end of 2020 for lawmakers to reform the law, stating the current law as "against the human rights." On October government announced a new draft which would allow abortion until 14 weeks, and in some special circumstances 24 weeks. Even though the new bill misses the opportunity to legalize reproductive rights, it is such a huge improvement in the case of South Korea. Abortion was very limited even in special cases, such as limiting the permit for in the case of sickness to only a few, and women, medical staff who performed the act would be punished severely. It is worthy to mention that the newly drafted law will remove the consent of the husband requirement.

Likewise to what happened South Korea and Poland, as the political views and ideologies change some governments improve their laws, and others try to take back the little number of rights that women were given to. Unfortunately, there are only 64 countries in which abortion can be performed on women's request, which only account for 34%. Even though there are only a few countries which criminalize abortion with no exception, like the Vatican City, in the majority of the cases it is very limited. These legal restrictions are generally exclusive to the case of risk to the woman's life, a risk to her health, fetal impairments, rape, or socioeconomic factors; although they vary from one country to another.

In many scenarios, the woman's mental health is not even taken into consideration for the "risk of health" factor. Laws may mention it is legal to have an abortion if the fetus has "fetal impairments", on the other hand, there may be a clause that indicates down syndromes wasn't deemed as such, which was the case in South Korea. There are time limits in the rape incidents, and they have to be proved for the abortion to take place. In federal states, there can be different states with different abortion bills. In Mexico, there are only two states where abortion is legal: Mexico City and Oaxaca. In summer of 2020, Mexican Supreme Court took side against the request of decriminalization of abortion in the first 12 weeks in all states.³



4

All around the world, women are in a constant fight with the governments for their rights, taking the problem to the courts or taking it to the streets and protesting, and it has been this way for so long. Currently, there are no universal abortion rights or universal reproductive rights, in spite of the fact that women's needs are universal. They can only be interpreted from the universal declaration of human rights. For these reasons, many women have no choice but to have their abortion illegally, without safe conditions, and taking the risk of going to jail. To sum up, such exclusive laws that allow extreme cases certainly does not meet the needs of women, and in today's world, they continue to be a shame for any lawmaker.

1 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/03/poland-stalls-abortion-ban-amid-nationwide-protests>

2 <https://news.sky.com/story/tens-of-thousands-protest-against-polands-near-total-ban-on-abortion-12119359>

3 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-53584575>

4 <http://gabriel-lee.design/imgs/wam/wam-full.jpg>