



PRESS RELEASE: Participation in International Safe Abortion Day expected to be bigger than ever

28 September 2016

Campaigning across borders for the right to safe abortion began in the late 1970s. In 1990, a Latin American feminist conference launched the first regional campaign for the decriminalisation of abortion. They chose 28 September as their day of action, and it has remained as such since. In 2011, the day of action was adopted internationally.

Five years later, International Safe Abortion Day on 28 September is being celebrated in every corner of the world by a wide range of women's groups, human rights groups, and many other civil society organisations, from a local to international level, which support sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the right to safe abortion.

In 2015, Health Ministries in three countries – the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal and France – joined with national NGOs to celebrate International Safe Abortion Day. Dozens of groups from around the world participated in a global tweetathon, which reached almost half a million people. Moreover, national and international news media have begun covering these activities in a growing number of countries, interviewing and helping to draw prominent national figures into the discussion of how to make all abortions safe.

This year, we expect participation to be bigger than ever.

A range of activities is taking place in every region of the world. From the International Campaign, we sent an [Open Letter](#) to the United Nations Secretary-General and the heads of UN agencies - signed by 33 international and regional NGOs, and just under 400 national groups and individuals from 73 countries – asking them to make 28 September an official UN Day. Today, three UN human rights experts have issued their own [statement](#) called “Unsafe abortion is still killing tens of thousands of women around the world – UN rights experts warn”, which endorses our call for 28 September to become an official UN Day.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, members of parliament will join UN representatives, professionals associations for midwives and doctors, and a long list of civil society organisations to discuss unwanted pregnancy and abortion in the context of International Safe Abortion Day.

Polish women are planning a protest on 1 October and as we write this they have just called a national women's strike on 3 October to voice their opposition against a new bill intended to criminalise all abortions as well as sexuality education and prenatal screening.

“Voice Your Abortion. Defeat Stigma” is a platform organised by and for Indian women to share their experiences with abortion in order to fight stigma. Women Help Women, an international group linking activists, organisations and researchers around the world to increase the availability of reproductive health choices, is collecting statements from women around the globe on why they risk imprisonment in order to help women access the abortion pills they need to preserve their rights and autonomy.

The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and the international group Resurj are planning a joint statement and social media campaign to urge the Egyptian government to liberalise the abortion law.

The Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights and LoveMatters are sharing the experiences and stories of people who have had an abortion, and are inviting the world to #StepIntoOurShoes.

We have published a [statement](#) and a full [list of activities](#) planned around the world for this year’s 28 September, so that you can see and report on what’s happening in your region.

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