



- I** TO SAVE THE WOMAN'S LIFE OR PROHIBITED ALTOGETHER
- II** TO PRESERVE HEALTH
- III** SOCIOECONOMIC GROUNDS
- IV** WITHOUT RESTRICTION AS TO REASON

# THE WORLD'S ABORTION LAWS 2014

Currently, more than 60% of the world's people live in countries where induced abortion is permitted either for a wide range of reasons or without restriction as to reason. In contrast, more than 25% of all people reside in countries where abortion is generally prohibited, while nearly 14% live in countries where abortion is permitted to preserve the woman's health.

The table below illustrates the varying degrees to which countries worldwide permit access to abortion. Laws are categorized according to provisions in national statutes, regulations and court decisions. The categorization of each law does not necessarily reflect the law's actual implementation in that country. Depending on such factors as public support for abortion rights, the views of government officials and providers, and individual circumstances, laws in each category may be interpreted more broadly or restrictively than indicated by their classifications below. Countries in Category I have the most restrictive laws. Those in each subsequent category recognize the grounds specified in the preceding category as well as additional grounds.

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## CATEGORIES OF ABORTION LAWS FROM MOST TO LEAST RESTRICTIVE

### I. TO SAVE THE WOMAN'S LIFE OR PROHIBITED ALTOGETHER

Countries printed in bold make an explicit exception to save the woman's life. See also NOTE I.

- Afghanistan
- Andorra
- Angola
- Antigua & Barbuda**
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan- R/I/+
- Brazil- R/+
- Brunei Darussalam
- Central African Rep.
- Chile- x
- Congo (Brazzaville)
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Dem. Rep. of Congo
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Egypt
- El Salvador- x
- Gabon
- Guatemala
- Guinea-Bissau
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Indonesia- SA/R/F
- Iran- F
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Kiribati
- Laos
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mal- R/I
- Malta- x
- Marshall Islands- U
- Mauritania
- Mexico- R/F/◆**
- Micronesia- U
- Myanmar
- Nicaragua- x
- Nigeria
- Oman
- Palau- U
- Panama- PA/R/F**
- Papua New Guinea**
- Paraguay
- Philippines
- San Marino
- Sao Tome & Principe
- Senegal
- Solomon Islands**
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan- R
- Suriname
- Syria- SA/PA
- Tanzania
- Timor-Leste- PA
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- United Arab Emirates- SA/PA
- Venezuela
- West Bank & Gaza Strip**
- Yemen

### II. TO PRESERVE HEALTH

(also to save the woman's life). Countries printed in bold recognize an exception to preserve the woman's mental health. See also NOTE II.

- Algeria**
- Argentina- R
- Bahamas
- Benin- R/I/F
- Bolivia- R/I
- Botswana- R/I/F**
- Burkina Faso- R/I/F
- Burundi
- Cameroon- R
- Chad- F
- Colombia- R/I/F**
- Costa Rica
- Equatorial Guinea- SA/PA
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia- R/I/F/+
- Gambia
- Ghana- R/I/F/+**
- Grenada
- Guinea- R/I/F
- Israel- R/I/F/+**
- Jamaica
- Jordan
- Kenya
- Kuwait- SA/PA/F
- Lesotho- R/I/F
- Liberia- R/I/F**
- Liechtenstein- +
- Malaysia
- Maldives- SA
- Mauritius- R/F/PA**
- Monaco- R/I/F/xx
- Morocco- SA
- Mozambique
- Namibia- R/I/F**
- Nauru**
- New Zealand- I/F**
- Niger- F
- Northern Ireland**
- Pakistan
- Peru
- Poland- PA/R/I/F
- Qatar- F
- Rep. of Korea- SA/R/I/+
- Rwanda- R/I/+

### III. SOCIOECONOMIC GROUNDS

(also to save the woman's life and health)

- Barbados- PA/R/I/F
- Belize- F
- Cyprus- R/F
- Fiji- R/I/F/PA
- Finland- R/I/F/+
- Great Britain- F
- Hong Kong- R/I/F
- Iceland- R/I/F/+
- India- PA/R/F
- Japan- SA/R
- Saint Vincent & Grenadines- R/I/F
- Taiwan- SA/PA/I/F
- Zambia- F

### IV. WITHOUT RESTRICTION AS TO REASON

See also NOTE IV.

- Albania- PA
- Armenia- PA
- Australia- ◆
- Austria\*
- Azerbaijan
- Bahrain
- Belarus
- Belgium\*
- Bosnia- Herzegovina- PA
- Bulgaria
- Cambodia\*- PA
- Canada\*
- Cape Verde
- China\*- S
- Croatia- PA
- Cuba- PA
- Czech Rep.- PA
- Dem. People's Rep. of Korea\*
- Denmark- PA
- Estonia
- France\*
- Fmr. Yugoslav Rep. Macedonia- PA
- Georgia- PA
- Germany\*
- Greece- PA
- Guyana†
- Hungary
- Italy‡
- Kazakhstan
- Kosovo†- PA/S
- Kyrgyzstan
- Latvia- PA
- Lithuania- PA
- Luxembourg\*
- Moldova- PA
- Mongolia-∞
- Montenegro- PA/S
- Nepal- S
- Netherlands\*
- Norway- PA
- Portugal‡- PA
- Puerto Rico\*
- Romania\*
- Russian Fed.
- Serbia- PA
- Singapore\*\*\*
- Slovak Rep.- PA
- Slovenia- PA
- South Africa
- Spain\*- PA
- Sweden\*\*
- Switzerland
- Tajikistan
- Tajikistan
- Tajikistan
- Turkey‡- SA/PA
- Turkmenistan
- Ukraine
- United States\*- PA/◆
- Uruguay- PA
- Uzbekistan
- Vietnam\*



#### A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

"Countries" listed on the table include independent states and, where populations exceed one million, semi-autonomous regions, territories and jurisdictions of special status. The table therefore includes Hong Kong, Northern Ireland, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Other entities, where visible on the map, appear in colors corresponding to laws in force, but they are not listed on the table.

**NOTE I** Laws that make no explicit exception to save a woman's life are normally interpreted to permit life-saving abortions on grounds of the general criminal law defense of "necessity." In this situation, although laws do not expressly permit abortion, the procedure could be performed on the rationale that it is necessary to preserve the life of the woman.

**NOTE II** According to the World Health Organization, "health" is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Laws in this category that do not make an explicit exception to protect a woman's mental health should be interpreted to allow abortion on such grounds.

#### NOTE IV GESTATIONAL LIMITS KEY

All Countries in Category IV have gestational limits of 12 weeks unless otherwise indicated. Gestational limits are calculated from the first day of the last menstrual period, which is considered to occur two weeks prior to conception. Where laws specify that gestational age limits are calculated from the date of conception, these limits have been extended by two weeks.

- † Gestational limit of 8 weeks
- ‡ Gestational limit of 10 weeks
- § Gestational limit of 90 days
- ∞ Gestational limit of three months
- \* Gestational limit of 14 weeks
- \*\* Gestational limit of 18 weeks
- \*\*\* Gestational limit of 24 weeks
- ^ Law does not limit pre-viability abortion
- ◊ Law does not indicate gestational limit; regulatory mechanisms vary

#### INDICATIONS

- R Abortion permitted in cases of rape
- R<sub>1</sub> Abortion permitted in the case of rape of a woman with a mental disability
- I Abortion permitted in cases of incest
- F Abortion permitted in cases of fetal impairment
- SA Spousal authorization required
- PA Parental authorization/notification required
- + Abortion permitted on additional enumerated grounds relating to such factors as the woman's age or capacity to care for a child
- S Sex selective abortion prohibited
- x Legislation eliminated all exceptions to prohibition on abortion; availability of defense of necessity highly unlikely
- xx Legislation explicitly permits abortion only to protect the physical health of the woman
- U Law unclear
- ◆ Federal system in which abortion law is determined at state level; classification reflects legal status of abortion for largest group of people

**CENTER FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

The Center for Reproductive Rights is a nonprofit legal advocacy organization dedicated to promoting and defending women's reproductive rights worldwide.

120 Wall Street  
New York, New York 10005, United States  
[www.reproductiverights.org](http://www.reproductiverights.org)

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