



TO: Pro-Life Friends
FROM: Scott Fischbach
Executive Director
RE: Morocco under pressure to expand abortion
DATE: March 21, 2018

In 2016, the Moroccan government [expanded the circumstances](#) in which it permits abortion to include cases of rape, incest, and fetal disability. Abortion was already permitted to protect the life or health of the pregnant woman.

Recently, outside groups have pushed to expand Morocco's law much further—so that it permits abortion on demand through the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. This is a very dangerous idea.

Part of the argument for more abortion is that it is required by international human rights instruments. That's [just false](#). No U.N. treaty has ever created an international right to abortion—despite what some treaty monitoring bodies and abortion advocacy groups have claimed. On the contrary, U.N. treaties [protect](#) “the inherent right to life” of “every human being” and [call for](#) “legal protection [for children] ... before as well as after birth.”

Proponents of expanding abortion also claim that a large number of Moroccan women undergo illegal abortions and that some of them die at the hands of unsafe practitioners. But the numbers proponents cite are their own estimates—not official data—and are likely very speculative.

In addition, legalizing abortion does not suddenly make it safe. The legality of abortion and the safety of abortion are two different things. “Illegal abortion is not synonymous with unsafe abortion,” an [editorial](#) in the Bulletin of the World Health Organization concedes. And legal abortion can be very dangerous (depending on the medical context). Even abortions performed in the best medical circumstances pose [inherent risks](#) to women's health.

The truth is that maternal health depends on the quality of maternal health care. It is [not determined](#) by the legal status of abortion. Evidence from many countries shows that legalizing abortion is [simply not necessary](#) to reduce maternal mortality and protect the lives and health of women.

Legalizing abortion doesn't save lives. So what *does* happen when abortion laws are loosened? [More abortions](#) take place. More unborn children are killed and more women are subjected to the physical and psychological risks abortion may pose. [Evidence from Ethiopia](#), for example, indicates that the incidence of abortion rose substantially after that country (facing similar pressure to legalize abortion) weakened its protection for unborn children.

Morocco must prioritize maternal health care and education. Only by taking steps like these can Morocco reduce mortality, empower women, and increase development. The legalization of more abortions will not bring about any of those things—just more abortion.

MCCL GO strongly urges the Moroccan government to resist the abortion pressure and to increase investment in women and children instead.

MCCL GO is a pro-life NGO global outreach program of the Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Education Fund. Learn more at www.mccl-go.org.