

Thousands of women on the streets of Poland against the “almost” abortion ban

The entry into force of a Constitutional Court decision on Wednesday prohibits abortion even in cases of severe fetal malformation.

Thousands of people took to the streets in Poland after the conservative government announced on Wednesday that the Constitutional Court's decision practically banning abortion would take effect after its publication in the Official Gazette on the same day.

In Warsaw, demonstrators lit torches, waved rainbow flags, the emblem of the gay movements, as well as posters with the words “This means war”, “Free choice, without terror”.

The demonstration, which began in front of the Constitutional Court in Warsaw, stopped traffic. The demonstrators then headed for the headquarters of the ultra-catholic party Law and Justice Party (PiS).

Similar rallies took place in other Polish cities, despite restrictions prohibiting mass gatherings due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

In October, the Constitutional Court banned voluntary termination of pregnancy in cases of severe fetal malformation, ruling that it is “incompatible” with the Constitution, resulting in the prohibition of all abortions except in cases of rape or incest or when the mother's life is in danger.

Mass mobilization in October

Mass demonstrations began in Poland on October 22, when the

Constitutional Court, reformed by Law and Justice Party (PiS) and according to its wishes, took this measure on abortion.

The government had suspended publication of the decision, after these protest actions that were taking place in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

“We asked everyone to go out into the street. (...) Express your anger as you think best,” said Marta Lempart, of the Women’s Strike, the main movement behind the protests, to reporters before Wednesday’s demonstrations. Klementyna Suchanow, who belongs to the same group, also launched :

“All of Poland is mobilizing, not just Warsaw, we are ready! Before we talked about the hell of women, now we will talk about the hell of government. Let’s cook a hell for you. »

Poland, a predominantly Catholic country, has one of the most restrictive laws against abortion in Europe.

Today there are less than 2,000 legal abortions per year in Poland, according to official data. Feminist organizations also estimate that about 200,000 abortions are performed illegally or abroad each year.