

Russia, U.S. Team Up Against Abortion at UN

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Valery Sharifulin / TASS

Russia, the United States and 18 other members of the United Nations have banded together to try to purge abortion- and reproductive health-related language from the international body's terminology.

The UN [adopted](#) a universal health care declaration Monday which included "the need to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services and reproductive rights." Russia has the second-highest abortion rate in the world after China, though its anti-abortion movement has [gained](#) momentum in recent years as the Orthodox Church has gained political influence.

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"We do not accept the terms 'sexual and reproductive health' and 'sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights,'" U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar [said](#) at

the UN meeting Monday. “These terms in no way imply that there is an international right to abortion.”

A total of 20 countries including Russia have signed on to the U.S. anti-abortion statement.

A coalition of Western powers [fought](#) to preserve the language on reproductive rights against the “completely isolated” U.S. earlier this month.

In July, Azar and State Secretary Mike Pompeo [boasted](#) of having a “broad and diverse” coalition that oppose “ambiguous terms and expressions [which] cause confusion and have become associated with anti-family and pro-abortion policies.” The coalition included Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Indonesia and Iraq, among other countries.

Hungary, Belarus, Sudan and Yemen have also signed on to the U.S. statement [delivered](#) by Azar on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on Monday.

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