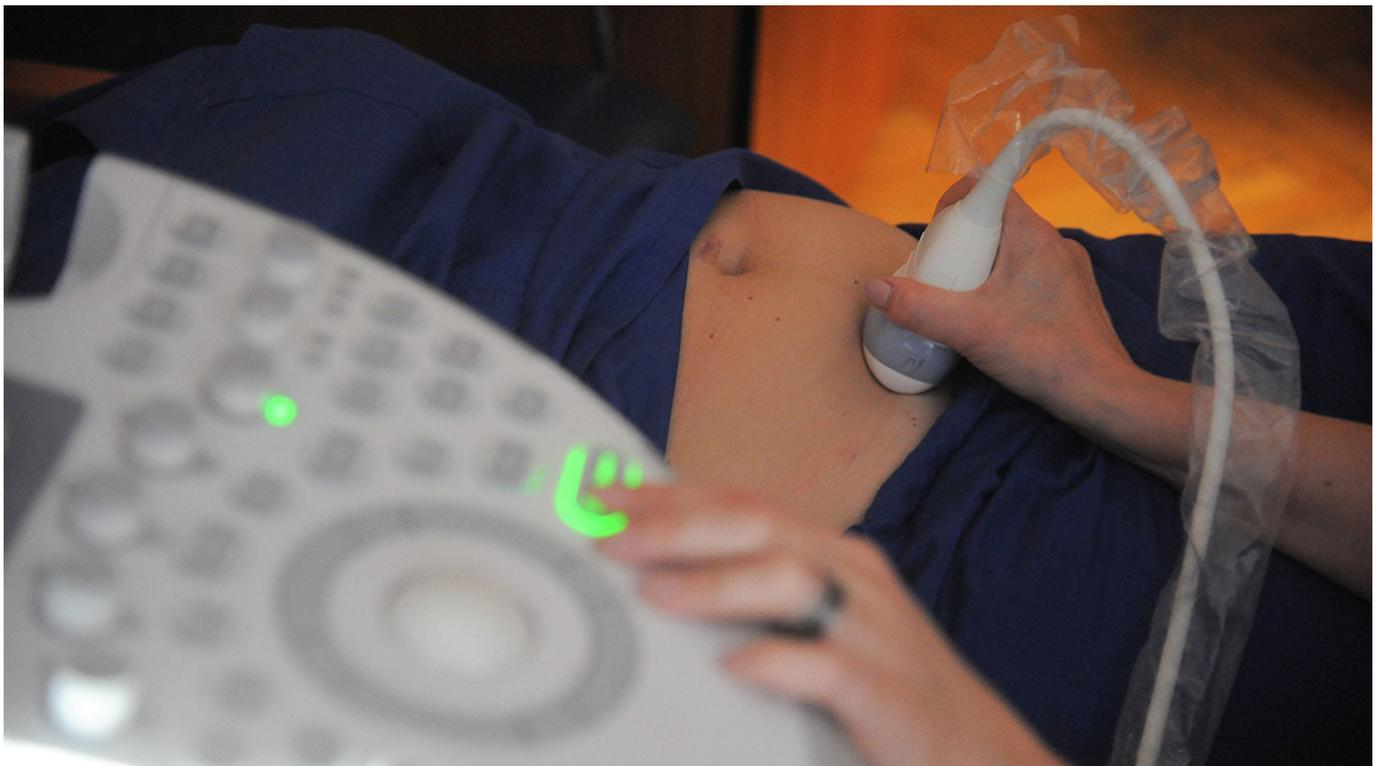


Crimean Private Clinics Stop Providing Abortion Services

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Private clinics in annexed Crimean have “voluntarily” stopped providing abortion services to patients, Kremlin-installed health officials on the peninsula [said](#) Thursday, amid growing concerns about a possible nationwide abortion ban.

Crimea’s Health Ministry was informed about the decision by the region’s private clinics to stop providing abortion services following a meeting with state officials and representatives from the Russian Orthodox Church.

“[At the meeting] the heads of private clinics were asked to make their contribution toward improving [Russia’s] demographic situation,” Crimea’s Kremlin-installed Health Minister Konstantin Skorupsky wrote on the Russian social media website VKontakte.

“Thus, artificial termination of pregnancy in Crimea will be provided only in state medical institutions,” he added.

Related article: [Russia Edges Closer to Abortion Ban in Quest to Preserve 'Traditional Values'](#)

According to Skorupsky, state-run clinics and hospitals are better suited for providing abortion services since they “inform [patients] about existing social support programs for families with children, as well as [offer] psychological counseling.”

Earlier this month, the northwestern Tver region became the second in Russia to [outlaw](#) the act of “coercing women” into undergoing an abortion, with individuals and organizations facing hefty fines for “persuading, suggesting, bribing or deceiving” a woman into having an abortion.

Russia has historically maintained a liberal abortion policy with the exception of the Stalin-era ban that lasted until 1955.

But the country's demographic crisis has prompted officials to weigh various measures for raising birth rates.

At the same time, the Kremlin's conservative turn, which has coincided with the rising influence of the Russian Orthodox Church in recent years, has [raised fears](#) about the future of reproductive rights in the country.

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