The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

‘Give Me a Choice’: Activists Urge Russian Doctors to Defend Women’s Right to Abortion

July 17, 2025



Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Activists are appealing to Russian doctors to protect abortion rights for women as authorities across Russia continue to clamp down on access to the procedure.

“Don’t take part in propaganda. Don’t forget that abortion is still legal in Russia. Don’t delay the process. Help women carry out their choice,” Feminist Anti-War Resistance, a group founded in protest against Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, urged medical professionals in the digital campaign, called Give Me a Choice.

“If your superiors pressure you to talk women out of it, if you’re afraid of inspections — you can always quietly sabotage these practices from within,” the group added, contrasting their message with a nationwide summer anti-abortion campaign called Give Me Life.

Related article: In Russia, International Safe Abortion Day Is a Reminder of Reproductive Rights Backsliding

Russia formally permits abortion on request up to the 12th week of pregnancy, but debates over a potential ban have intensified in recent years amid a deepening demographic crisis and the Kremlin's promotion of "traditional family values."

While officials maintain that the procedure will remain covered by the country's mandatory health insurance program, some regional clinics have stopped offering abortions amid mounting pressure from pro-life activists, local authorities and the Russian Orthodox Church.

At least 20 Russian regions, including Kursk, Vologda and Omsk, have passed regional laws outlawing any form of encouragement or persuasion to terminate a pregnancy.

Russian legislation defines "encouragement to have an abortion" as any attempt to pressure a pregnant woman into terminating her pregnancy through "persuasion, offers, bribery, or deception."

Fines for "encouragement to have an abortion" vary from up to 5,000 ($63) rubles for individuals to up to 500,000 ($6,389) for legal entities.

Russian lawmakers in December 2023 rejected a bill that would have banned abortions in private clinics nationwide after President Vladimir Putin warned against passing strict legal measures.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/07/17/give-me-a-choice-activists-urge-russian-doctors-to-defend-womens-right-to-abortion-a89858