Global Abortion Laws relating to Self-Managed Abortion

Prepared by the Policy Surveillance Program Staff

SUMMARY
This map identifies variation in national laws that regulate abortion provision and penalties for obtaining unlawful abortion.

ABOUT GLOBAL ABORTION LAWS RELATING TO SELF-MANAGED ABORTION & THE DATA

This map and the data used to create it present national and sub-national laws that regulate the provision of abortion. Despite evidence suggesting that self-managed medication abortions are safe and effective, global abortion laws impose substantial barriers to provision of abortion medication. In fact, many countries outright criminalize abortion self-care. The map includes key characteristics of these laws, such as permissible grounds for abortion, verification requirements, who is permitted to provide abortion, where abortion may take place, and criminal penalties for participation in unlawful abortions.

Some findings from the dataset include:

- Forty-seven jurisdictions permit abortion on any grounds, while 21 only permit abortion to save the life of the pregnant person.
- Only five jurisdictions permit nurses or midwives to provide abortions.
- Twenty-three jurisdictions only permit abortion to be performed in a health facility specifically designated to provide abortions.
- In 106 jurisdictions, criminal penalties are imposed on health care providers who provide abortion drugs.

NAVIGATING THE DATA

There are two ways to navigate the data by clicking the Filter tab or the Explore tab — for each option, the data can be visualized in a map and table format or in jurisdiction profiles.

Filter
The dataset homepage will default to the Filter tab. Here, users may answer a series of questions to learn more about the characteristics of the laws. Answering more than one question will show all the jurisdictions that meet the combined criteria. Criteria selected will be
listed above the questions, and can be removed by clicking the white X or by clicking “Reset” above the questions.

**Explore**

Users can access Explore by clicking the Explore tab in the bar above the questions. Using Explore, users will see the answers to one question across all jurisdictions.

The primary questions in this dataset are:

1. Does the country regulate abortion by law?
2. Under which grounds, if any, is abortion permissible under the law?
3. What health care professionals are legally permitted to provide an abortion?
4. What tests are health professionals required to administer in order for a person to have an abortion?
5. Where is abortion legally permitted to take place?
6. Who is subject to penalties for participating in an unlawful abortion?

**DISPLAYING THE RESULTS**

There are two display modes once criteria have been selected by using either the Filter or Explore tab — Map display mode and Profiles display mode.

**Map Display**

LawAtlas.org dataset homepages default to the map display mode. When querying the data using the Filter tab, all jurisdictions that meet the criteria selected will display in one tone of yellow. Those jurisdictions that do not meet the criteria selected will be colored gray. When querying the data using the Explore tab, the map will illuminate with colors from yellow to red that are associated with the various answer choices (the color-coding is defined by the key to the left of the map). The sub-national jurisdictions are displayed on the map for Australia and Mexico. Note that both Hong Kong and Mexico are displayed in the Profile view only.

Below the map, a table will appear. Using the Filter or Explore tab to navigate the questions will change the display:

- Using the Filter tab, you can select an unlimited number of criteria and the applicable jurisdictions that meet the combined criteria will be displayed in the table below.
- Using the Explore tab, you can isolate a single criterion and the applicable jurisdictions will appear in the table below.

**Profiles Display**

The Profiles display presents the results of the criteria selected in a text-based format for each applicable jurisdiction. Using the Filter tab, jurisdictions that meet the criteria selected will display. Using the Explore tab, jurisdictions that meet the criterion selected will display. If no criteria are selected, the full profiles for each state will appear under both Filter and Explore.

**Profile Legend**

Within each Profile box, above the questions and answers, there are additional options and information useful in exploring the law:
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|| $§§ | **Toggle Legal Text** – Selecting this option will show all the legal text used to answer questions for this jurisdiction. |
|---|---|
| | $ | **Toggle Full Place Profile** – Selecting this option will show all questions and answers for this jurisdiction, regardless of what was selected using the Filter or Explore tabs. |
| | $ | **Toggle Size** – Selecting this option will make the profile larger, but will not change the information displayed. |

**Map and Profile Legend**
There are a few symbols to be aware of in both Map and Profiles display modes:

| $ | **Section Symbol** – Clicking this symbol will open a window that displays excerpts from the law that correspond to the question and answer. |
| $ | **Caution Note** – Clicking on this symbol will open a small window that displays text that describes important caveats about the question and answer. |

**DATASET RESOURCES**
Each dataset homepage includes the following resources available for download:

- **Data**: The Data file exports in CSV format and may contain two tabs. The “Statistical Data” tab contains the legal variables coded in the dataset, displayed as values defined in the accompanying Codebook. The “Summary Data” tab contains the legal variables coded in the dataset in text form, as well as the accompanying citations and any caution notes that may be included. Note: if there is only one tab available for download it will be the “Statistical Data” as described above.

- **Codebook**: The Codebook defines all of the coded variables in the dataset. The Codebook lists the question, question type, variable name, variable value and variable label. The Codebook should be used in conjunction with the Statistical Data extract.

- **Research Protocol**: The Research Protocol is a comprehensive document that outlines the entire methodology of the project, including the scope, inclusion and exclusion criteria, data collection methods, translation table, definitions, coding scheme decisions, as well as the quality control process.

- **Summary Report**: The Summary Report provides a snapshot of important findings from the dataset.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This dataset was created in collaboration with subject matter expert Patty Skuster, Senior Legal Advisor at Ipas, who conceptualized the project. Patty can be contacted by e-mail at skusterp@ipas.org.

Disclaimer: The information contained herein does not constitute legal advice. If you have questions regarding your legal rights or obligations, please contact an attorney. Legal text was referenced through the WHO Global Abortion Policies Database. The legal text included in this dataset has been translated to the English language. Note, these translations are unofficial and may contain discrepancies from the original legal text.