

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF IRELAND

**ORLA O'CONNOR
DIRECTOR**

**ADDRESS TO THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON ITS CONSIDERATION OF ARTICLE 40.3.3, BUNREACTH NA
HÉIREANN**

(THE EIGHTH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION)

MARCH 2017



National Women's
Council of Ireland
Comhairle Náisiúnta
na mBan in Éirinn

Who We Are

- ❖ Founded in 1973, NWCI is the leading national women's membership organisation in the country.
- ❖ Membership of over **180 groups and organisations** from a diversity of backgrounds, sectors and locations across Ireland.
- ❖ We seek to address the full range of inequalities that women experience: **poverty; decision making; pensions; childcare; lone parenting; and health.**
- ❖ We are **recognised by government** as the **expert representative body for women** in Ireland

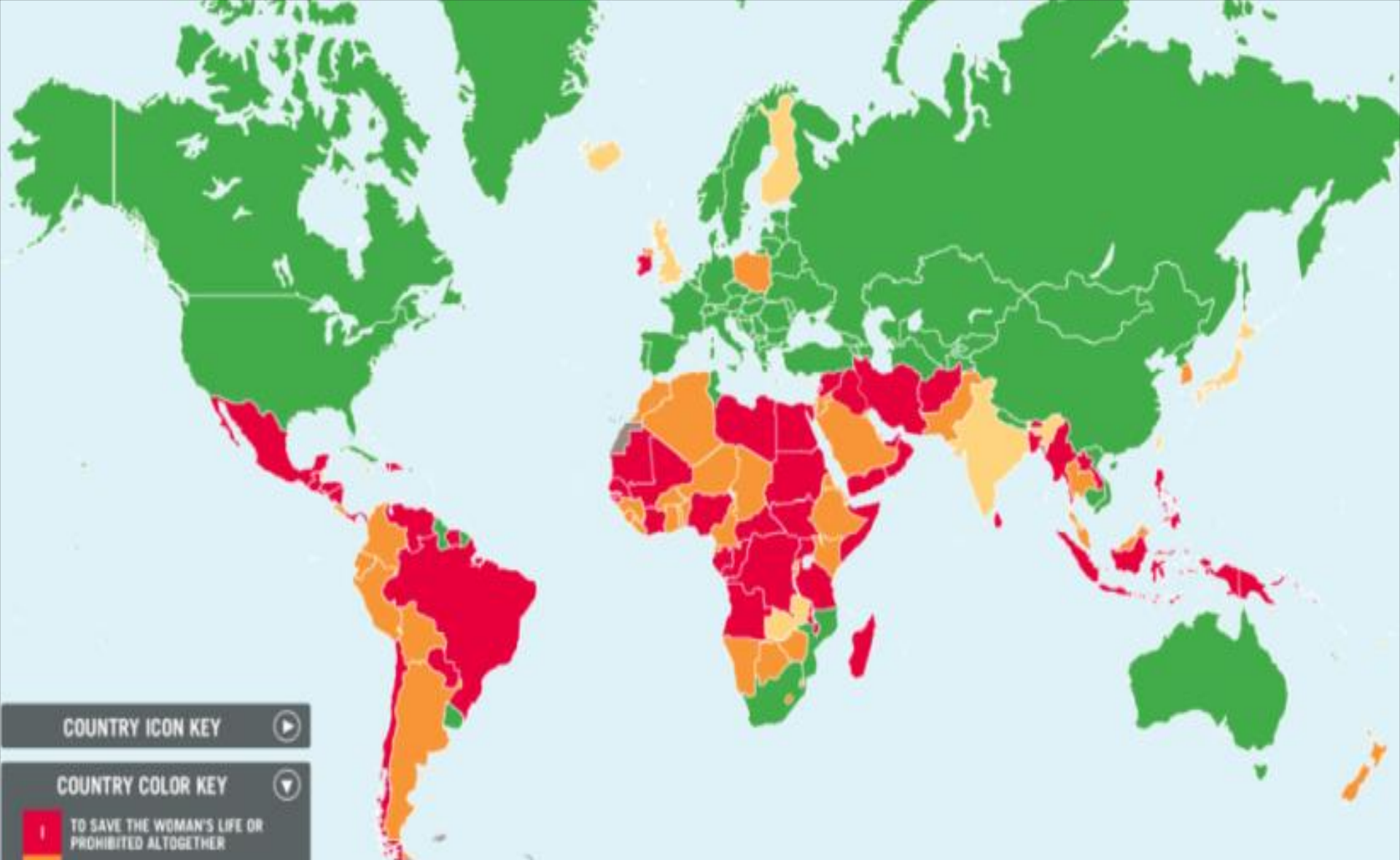
Who Is Accessing Abortion Services

UK Department of Health Statistics 2015

- ❖ 46% of the women resident in Ireland who have an abortion in English and Welsh clinics were in their 20s
- ❖ 45% of women accessing these services were 30 years of age and over

BPAS statistics

- ❖ In 2016, 54% of women resident in the UK accessing their abortion services already had children



COUNTRY ICON KEY



COUNTRY COLOR KEY



- I TO SAVE THE WOMAN'S LIFE OR PROHIBITED ALTOGETHER
- II TO PRESERVE HEALTH
- III SOCIOECONOMIC GROUNDS
- IV WITHOUT RESTRICTION AS TO REASON
- UNAVAILABLE

CENTER
FOR
REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS

THE WORLD'S ABORTION LAWS 2016

WHO Safe Abortion Guidance

- ❖ Restricting legal access to abortion does not decrease the need for abortion
- ❖ Conversely, laws and policies that facilitate access to safe abortion do not increase the rate or number of abortions.
- ❖ Regulatory and policy barriers that hinder access to safe abortion should be removed

Proposed Solutions

- ❖ A referendum to **repeal the Eighth Amendment** to the Constitution
- ❖ **Enact legislation** providing access to abortion on a woman's request in line with good practice in other European countries, combined with abortion in later terms certain circumstances.
- ❖ **Remove all criminal sanctions** on women seeking and accessing abortion services in Ireland.
- ❖ **Removal of criminal sanctions** on medical professionals performing abortions and **regulate through customary medical disciplinary procedures** and general criminal law.