

UN urges Chile to allow abortion in some cases

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The UN Human Rights Committee asked Chile Thursday to make exceptions to its ban on abortion in cases of rape, incest and the health of the mother.

Chile is one of the few countries in the world that prohibits abortions for any reason.

Legislation that would create exceptions has been blocked in the Chilean parliament.

In a periodic report on Chile, the committee said it "should establish exceptions to the general prohibition of abortion, contemplating therapeutic abortion and in those cases in which the pregnancy is a consequence of a rape or incest."

Alvaro Elizalde, a government spokesman, said the UN committee's suggestion "must be analyzed on its merit and if a decision is adopted it will be announced in a timely manner."

The UN report expressed concern over the high rates of clandestine abortions in Chile, estimated to exceed 150,000 a year.

Chile "should make sure that reproductive health services are accessible to all women and adolescents," the report said.

President Michelle Bachelet in May announced her intention to reopen

debate on [abortion](#) with an eye to passing legislation by the end of the year that would permit the procedure in therapeutic cases where the health of the mother is at risk or the fetus is unviable.

Abortions on those cases were permitted in Chile until 1989 when it was outlawed near the end of the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Divorce was only approved in 2004.

The UN report was based on the conclusions reached by the UN Human Rights Committee, which debated the Chilean case last July.

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