**[Insert your university name] Amnesty International Group**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DATE XXX**

**STUDENTS STAGE SILENT SUITCASE STUNTS ACROSS UK AND IRELAND TO PROTEST NORTHERN IRELAND’S ‘CRUEL’ ABORTION LAW**

**[Insert your university name] students take part in Ireland and UK-wide day of action for abortion law reform**

**Student activists stage suitcase protests at campuses across both countries**

[Insert your university name]students joined students across the UK and Ireland for a day of action in support of the decriminalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland on Monday (26 November).

Amnesty student groups from Dundee to Dublin staged silent ‘suitcase protests’ on their campuses to raise awareness of Northern Ireland’s restrictive abortion law, which forces women to travel to other parts of the UK to access abortion services. In 2017, at least 919 women travelled to England or Wales to have an abortion.

Students collected signatures for an [Amnesty petition](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/northern-ireland-abortion-not-crime?from=issue) calling for the decriminalisation of abortion and encouraging people to [write messages of solidarity](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights/action/northern-ireland-abortion) and support for women in Northern Ireland who are being impacted by the law.

[Insert University Amnesty group name] took part in the action, alongside Amnesty student groups at other universities, including Sheffield, Bristol, Northumbria, Royal Holloway, Dundee, Durham, Lincoln, Exeter and Edinburgh. [You can insert detail of your activities – how many people were involved, when/where your activity took place, how many signatures you got etc.].

The student-led action will took place during the [16 Days of Activism](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/16-days-of-activism) to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls (25 November – 10 December).

[Name of spokesperson], [Title/Member] of [Insert University name] Amnesty Group, said:

[Insert a quote or use/adapt the following]:

“Northern Ireland is still governed by one of the harshest abortion laws in the world. Women face prison sentences for accessing services that are freely available to all other women in the UK.

“Every year, around a thousand women have to pack a suitcase and take plane journeys to have an abortion in England – forced through this difficult experience away from home and family. This is the reality for women living in Northern Ireland, including those who chose to study there.

“That’s why we joined students from around the UK and Ireland to stand with our peers in Northern Ireland who are tirelessly campaigning to change the abortion law.

“The UK Government can’t continue to deny women and girls their rights. Abortion must be decriminalised across the UK – including Northern Ireland.”

Grainne Teggart, Amnesty International’s Campaign Manager for Northern Ireland, said:

“Students came out in force during Ireland’s referendum to repeal the Eighth Amendment, to demand a change to the archaic law. It is fantastic to see students equally determined and uniting to demand change for Northern Ireland which remains the only part of these islands with a near-total abortion ban. Knowing that others across the UK and Ireland will not accept this injustice means a lot to women here who are impacted by the law and who are campaigning every day for its change.”

**Northern Ireland abortion law**

Despite being a part of the UK, abortion is illegal in Northern Ireland in almost every circumstance, including when the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest, and when the foetus has a fatal abnormality that means it would not survive outside of the womb. Women from Northern Ireland are forced to travel to the other parts of the UK, and sometimes further, to access this basic healthcare. Amnesty is calling on the UK Government to decriminalise abortion in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

**ENDS**

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