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Globally, 3 in 5 citizens say abortion should be legal in all or most cases

Proponents outnumber opponents in 22 of 27 countries surveyed; support is weaker in the U.S. than in all other western countries

New York, NY, August 2, 2022 — On average, 59% of adults surveyed by Ipsos in 27 countries say abortion should be legal in all or most cases while 26% say it should be illegal in all or most cases. Those who say it should be legal outnumber those who say it shouldn't in 22 countries – nowhere more than in Sweden, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands. Opposition prevails in only four countries – Peru, India, Malaysia, and Colombia.

Views about whether abortion should be legal vary depending on the circumstances. On average across the 27 countries, four in five adults surveyed say it should be allowed if the pregnancy threatens the life or health of the woman, three in four if it is the result of a rape, and two in three if the baby could have severe disabilities or health problems. A clear majority (62%) say abortion should be legal for any woman in the first six weeks of a pregnancy, a plurality (45%) for any woman in the first 14 weeks, but only a minority (27%) for any woman in the first 20 weeks.

Opposition to the legal status of abortion in the United States is generally higher than it is on average globally – and conversely, support for it tends to be lower – both as a general rule and when considering various circumstances. Americans are more likely than the 27-country average to say abortion should be illegal in all or most cases (33% vs. 26%), if there is a strong chance the child may be born with severe disabilities or health issues (21% vs. 17%), or for any woman in the first 6 weeks of a pregnancy (26% vs. 21%).

Should abortion be legal...	27-country average				United States	
	Yes	No	Yes highest in:	No highest in:	Yes	No
in all or most cases	59%	26%	 Sweden (86%)	 India (49%)	54%	33%
if the pregnancy threatens the woman's life or health	80%	9%	 Sweden (91%)	 Malaysia (20%)	78%	10%
if the pregnancy is the result of a rape	76%	13%	 Belgium (90%)  Sweden (90%)	 Malaysia (40%)	73%	15%
if the baby is likely to be born with severe disabilities or health problems	67%	17%	 France (85%)	 Malaysia (36%)	58%	21%
for any woman in the first 6 weeks of a pregnancy	62%	21%	 Sweden (80%)	 Peru (43%)	60%	26%
for any woman in the first 14 weeks of a pregnancy	45%	34%	 Sweden (70%)	 Peru (66%)	44%	36%
for any woman in the first 20 weeks of a pregnancy	27%	47%	 Sweden (44%)	 Peru (75%)	29%	49%



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The survey of 20,523 adults under the age of 75 was conducted on Ipsos' Global Advisor online platform between June 24 and July 8, 2022.

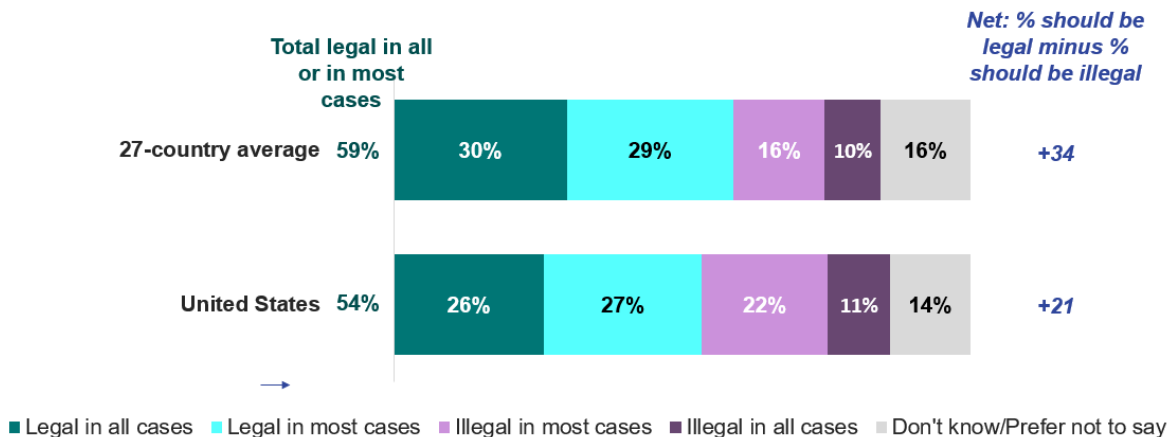
Detailed Findings

Geographic and demographic differences in views on the right to legal abortion

Views on abortion are nuanced: on average globally, three in 10 say it should be legal in *all* cases (30%), and about as many that it should be legal in *most* cases (29%). On the other hand, 16% say it should be *illegal* in *most* cases and just 10% that it should be illegal in *all* cases. Another 16% do not know or prefer not to express their opinion.

Relative to the global average, the percentage of Americans saying abortion should be legal in *all* cases (26%) is four points lower while the percentage declaring it should be *illegal* in *most* cases (22%) is six points higher. As a result, proponents of abortion in the U.S. outnumber opponents by only 21 points vs. 34 points on average globally.

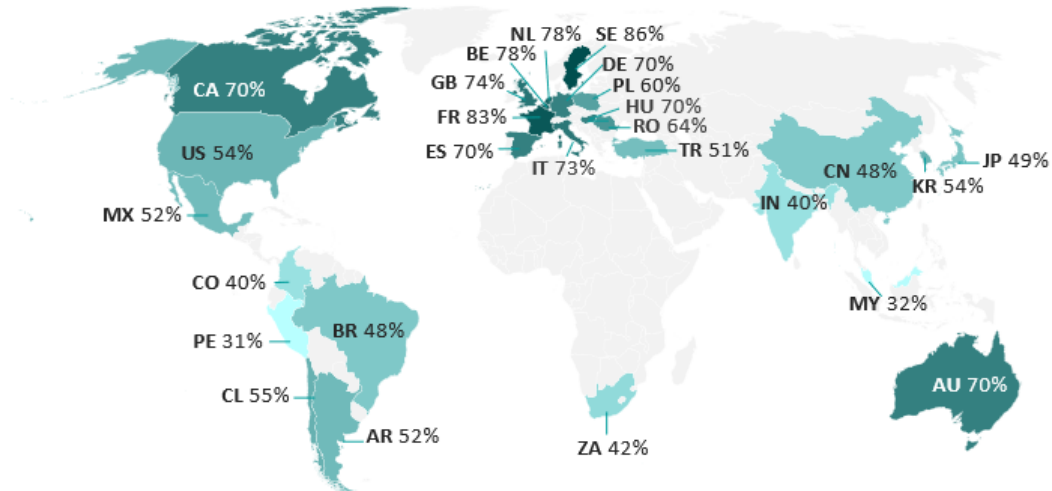
ABORTION SHOULD BE...



Opinion on the right to legal abortion varies widely across the 27 countries. Combined, support for abortion being legal in all cases or most cases averages 59% globally, but it ranges from 86% in Sweden to just 31% in Peru. The view that it should be illegal in all or most cases adds up to a global average of 26%, but it ranges from 49% in India to just 8% in Japan and France.

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% SAYING ABORTION SHOULD BE LEGAL IN ALL OR MOST CASES



On average, globally, support for the legal status of abortion in all or most cases is somewhat higher among women than it is among men, among those aged 50-74 than among those under 50, and among those with a university-level education than those without. However, these skews do not apply uniformly. For example, in the U.S., the opinion that abortion should be legal in all or most cases is expressed by 55% of women vs. 51% of men, and by 57% of those under the age of 35 vs. 54% of those aged 35-49 and 50% of those aged 50-74.

A country-by-country analysis shows that:

- The gender gap in pro-choice sentiment is most marked in South Africa, Argentina, South Korea, and Poland (at least 10 percentage points higher among women than among men) but it is nonexistent or reversed in countries as diverse as Colombia, Malaysia, the Netherlands, and Japan.
- The age gap also goes in opposite directions depending on the country. Older adults tend to be a lot more favorable to the legality of abortion than younger adults in Germany, Romania, and Sweden (by 10 points or more among those aged 50-74 than among those under 35). However, the reverse is true in Brazil, Malaysia, Peru, and Chile (where pro-abortion sentiment is higher among those under 35 than among those aged 50-74 by 10 points or more).

More support for allowing abortion in dire circumstances

Support for abortion being legal is more widespread in several circumstances. It reaches:

- 80% on average globally and 78% in the U.S. if the pregnancy threatens the life or health of the woman, including a majority in every single country surveyed

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- 76% globally and 73% in the U.S. if the pregnancy is the result of a rape – with a majority in all countries except Malaysia
- 67% globally and 58% in the U.S. if the baby is likely to be born with severe disabilities or health problems – with a majority in all countries except Malaysia and Japan

Pregnancy length matters

According to the Center for Reproductive Rights, gestational limits significantly vary globally. In countries allowing abortion on request, the most common gestational limit is 12 weeks, but abortion is often permitted under a range of circumstances after this limit has expired.

The survey points to differentiated views about the legal status of abortion for “any woman” depending on how long she has been pregnant.

- Those who say abortion should be legal for any woman in the first six months of pregnancy outnumber those who say it should be illegal by a global average of 41 percentage points (62% vs. 21%) and in every country (including the U.S. with 60% vs. 26%) except Malaysia and Peru.
- Those who say abortion should be legal for any woman in the first 14 months of pregnancy outnumber those who say it should be illegal by a global average of 11 points (45% vs. 34%) and in 17 countries including the U.S. (44% vs. 36%). The 10 countries where those who say it should be illegal outnumber those who say it should be legal are Argentina, Chile, Colombia, India, South Korea, Mexico, Malaysia, Peru, South Africa, and Turkey.
- However, those who say it should be legal for any woman in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy are outnumbered by those who say it should be illegal by 20 points both globally (27% vs. 47%) and in the U.S. (29% vs. 49%). They represent a plurality only in seven countries (Australia, Canada, Spain, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden).

Diverging views on penalties for illegal abortions

If an abortion was carried out in a situation where it is illegal, fewer say the woman who had the abortion should be penalized (32% on average across the 27 countries) than say so of the person who performed it (44%) or a someone else who arranged for it (42%). As for all matters related to abortion, attitudes toward punishing various parties involved in an illegal one diverge widely across countries:

- Peruvians and Colombians are those most likely to say each of them should face a penalty: the woman had it (61% and 55%, respectively), the person who performed it (75% and 66%), and someone else who arranged for it (73% and 65%).
- The Japanese are the least likely to say so for each of the three parties (10%, 12%, and 14%).



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Compared to the global average, Americans are less inclined to punishing those involved in an illegal abortion than the global average: 29% someone who had it, 36% someone who performed it, and 30% someone who arranged for it. This is paradoxical considering that Americans are more likely than average to think abortion should be illegal in all or in most cases.

Both globally and in the U.S., the percentage of females who say of each party that it should face a penalty is significantly lower than the percentage of males, pointing to a notable gender gap on whether those taking part in an illegal abortion should be punished.

Trends

The response options that Ipsos employed in 2022 differ from those used in previous surveys conducted annually since 2014. However, this year's survey results seem to indicate an increase in support for abortion in certain circumstances. Globally – and in many countries -- the percentage of adults surveyed in 2022 who say abortion should be legal if the pregnancy is the result of a rape is higher than the combined percentage of those who said in 2021 that it should be permitted “whenever a woman decides she wants one” or “in certain circumstances, such as when a woman has been raped.” It is up five points on average globally, and by at least seven points in Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Turkey, and the United States. The only country where it is lower (by five points) is India.

About the Study

These are the findings of a 27-country Ipsos survey conducted June 24 – July 8, 2022, among 20,523 adults aged 18-74 in the United States, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, and Turkey, and 16-74 in 22 other countries, via Ipsos's Global Advisor online survey platform.

Each country's sample consists of ca. 1,000 individuals in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China (mainland), France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the U.S., and ca. 500 individuals in Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, and Turkey.

The samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S. can be taken as representative of these countries' general adult population under the age of 75.

The samples in Brazil, Chile, China (mainland), Colombia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, and Turkey are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these markets should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more “connected” segment of their population.

The data is weighted so that each market's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data.



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The Global average reflects the average result of all the countries and markets where the survey was conducted that year. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country or market and is not intended to suggest a total result.

Where results do not sum to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be +/-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses.

The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 4.8 percentage points. For more information on Ipsos's use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

The publication of these findings abides by local rules and regulations.

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About Ipsos

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Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

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