



A Global View of
the Sanctity of Life

3 Myths 3 Facts

Abortion from the
International Perspective



ADF INTERNATIONAL

INTRODUCTION

Three facts about the sanctity of life

International law protects unborn life, and it is the right and responsibility of every state to uphold the right to life for all by imposing restrictions on abortion. No society can say it authentically protects human rights if the most vulnerable are in danger in their mother's womb.

For example, in Europe, Germany tragically faces a massive push for the decriminalisation of abortion during the first 12 weeks. The UK faces similar pressure as the parliament is expected to vote in late May 2024 on changes to the UK abortion law for the first time in over 50 years. The amendment on the table would, in effect, decriminalise abortion up to birth.

Across the world, hardly any country is spared immense pressure to remove protections for unborn life.

In this climate, let us review three prevailing myths regarding abortion and the importance of an authentic human rights-based response.



MYTH #1

“Planned Parenthood only works within the USA.”

The history of Margaret Sanger, Planned Parenthood’s founder, is widely known, and her writing and speeches reveal that she was a committed eugenicist. But does Planned Parenthood’s influence extend beyond the United States today?

FACT #1

Yes, sadly Planned Parenthood has a large international footprint. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) has a central office in London¹ and six regional offices. The central and regional offices conduct their advocacy efforts, run programmes, and execute projects.² However, IPPF largely works through its 120 national member associations, which operate on national, regional, and/or international levels in 120 countries.³

Its member associations conduct advocacy and provide ‘sexual and reproductive health services’ directly to constituents. The Federation also holds general consultative status through the United Nations Economic and Social Council (‘ECOSOC’)⁴, a status held by only three percent of ECOSOC-accredited organisations to the UN. This grants it special privileges such as increased speaking time allotments and increased word limits for written submissions. It also maintains close working relationships with UN agencies, including the Population Fund (UNFPA), UNAIDS, and WHO.

IPPF and UNFPA have a “long-standing history of cooperation on sexual and reproductive health”⁵. The IPPF even co-hosts large conferences alongside UN bodies, such as the Women Deliver conference, which promotes abortion as a component of maternal health, and the International Conference on Family Planning. Tragically, IPPF has fully and proudly participated in carrying out China’s one-child policy.⁶ Its involvement in China is through the China

Family Planning Association (CFPA), which became a full-member association of IPPF in 1983. The official statement announcing the creation of the CFPA in 1980 affirmed, '[t]he association will implement government population control policies.' Though China's family planning program was resoundingly decried around the world for its human rights violations, IPPF representatives did not terminate cooperation.⁷



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- 1 <http://www.ippf.org/>
 - 2 <http://www.ippf.org/our-work/programmes>
 - 3 <https://www.ippf.org/resource/financial-statements-2022>
 - 4 <https://esango.un.org/civilsociety/displayConsultativeStatusSearch.do?method=search>
 - 5 <http://www.ippf.org/news/New-IPPFUNFPA-Initiative-Family-Planning-announced>
 - 6 See, e.g. Jacqueline Rorabeck Kasun, *The War Against Population: The Economics and Ideology of World Population Control* (2 edn, Ignatius Press 1999) 122
 - 7 Matthew James Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Harvard University Press 2009) 345

MYTH #2

“The USA has banned abortion.”

Since the 2022 ruling in the *Dobbs* case, it is often said that the United States has banned abortion. What actually happened? Is abortion really banned across the country?

FACT #2

No, the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* only returned the issue of abortion to the people and their elected representatives. Over twenty U.S. states have already passed legislation to protect unborn life.

In 1973, in the case of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court of the United States found a “right” to abortion in the U.S. Constitution, effectively legalizing abortion in all 50 states. This fundamental misreading of the Constitution prevented the states from protecting the lives of the unborn through legislation.

As a result, children could be aborted at any time during pregnancy. This is only possible in very few countries, e.g., Canada or China. In contrast, in most countries where abortion is permitted on demand, it is limited to 12 weeks or less.

In 2022, the Supreme Court considered a model bill passed by the state of Mississippi that would protect unborn children after 15 weeks in the womb. The Supreme Court ultimately overturned *Roe v. Wade* and rightly held that a so-called right to elective abortion has “no basis in the Constitution’s text or in our Nation’s history.” Americans now have an opportunity to affirm that life is a human right and ensure that women have real support.

Twenty-one states include: Idaho, Utah, Arizona, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida

MYTH #3

“The baby in the womb has no rights.”

“My body, my choice” is one of the most well-known slogans of abortion advocates. Wouldn’t the unlimited self-determination of women restrict the rights of the unborn child? What about its right to life?

FACT #3

Every pregnancy involves different rights and freedoms: those of the mother, those of the father, and those of the unborn child. The child has its own right to life, which must be respected. In conflict situations, different rights must be weighed against each other.

The right to life is protected in all major international human rights treaties. The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* guarantees the right to life of every child (CRC Art. 6-1). This right must be read with particular attention to the preamble of the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*. It states that “the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth” (*Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959, Preamble*).



CONCLUSION

There is no international or universal “right to abortion”, and international law recognizes the rights of unborn children, mothers, and fathers. Ultimately, abortion—the taking of innocent human life at its most vulnerable stage—can never be a human right.

ADF International
seeks to safeguard
the right to life
through the
following advocacy
efforts:

#1 Hold States accountable for their obligations to protect the right to life at the international institutions.

#2 Secure and expand legal protections for life at the national level.

#3 Defend those who suffer violations of their rights to conscience for upholding the sanctity of human life.

#4 Defend those who suffer violations of their rights to free expression for their pro-life views.

*Thank you for standing with us to
protect life at every stage.*

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Registration seat: Vienna | Address: Postfach 5, 1037 Vienna, Austria |
Commercial register: Commercial court Vienna, FN 460299k