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## NGO Says Legal Abortion in Brazil Would Be Life Saver to Poor Women

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Most of the women who suffer complications or die in Brazil due to botched abortions are poor, black, and uneducated. These data come from a study that is being done by the non-governmental organization Citizens' Human Rights Advocacy.

The information was presented during a debate held Wednesday, September 28, in Rio de Janeiro to commemorate the Day for the Decriminalization of Abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The executive director of the NGO, Gleyde Selma da Hora, points out that these results confirm that women from lower social classes are the ones who suffer most from abortions, while women from economically more privileged classes have access to safer means.

"Poor women who undergo abortions already have an average of three children and maintain that they are unable to guarantee a decent life for an additional child; others claim they cannot count on their partners to share the responsibility; and there are also some who say that the condom ripped and the pregnancy was unwanted," da Hora observed.

The participants in the debate are hoping for the legislature to approve a law that will allow pregnancies to be interrupted. At present, the National Congress is considering around 35 bills dealing with the legalization of abortion or the continuation of its prohibition.

A file prepared by the Feminist Health Network indicates that approximately one million women submit to abortions in Brazil each year. This figure is based on the number of women who show up at public hospitals for post-abortion curettages.

The file also suggests that abortions are the fourth largest cause of maternal deaths in the country and that, between 1999 and 2002, there were over two thousand female fatalities in public hospitals as a result of abortion-related complications.

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