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**From:** Verveer, Melanne S <VerveerMS@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 2, 2012 1:59 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Ireland Case

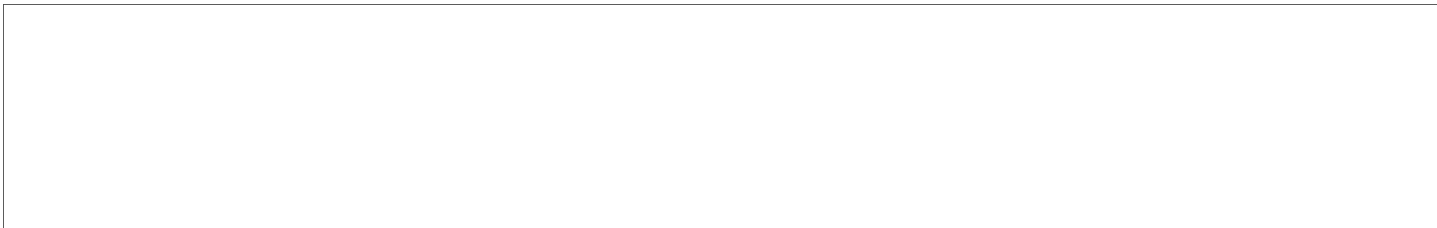
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In advance of your trip to Ireland, we wanted to raise a few issues about the case of Savita Halappanavar, the woman who died last month after doctors refused to perform an abortion and waited to remove the fetus until its heartbeat stopped days later. This is clearly a tragic case. However, you will want to be aware of the following should you comment publicly.

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The Halappanavar case has reopened a decades old debate in Ireland over whether the government should pass legislation to allow abortion when the life of the mother is at risk. A 1983 constitutional amendment was initially interpreted as banning abortion in all circumstances. In 1992, when challenged in a case involving a 14-year-old rape victim, the Supreme Court ruled that abortion was permitted when the woman's life was at risk. However, successive governments have refused to make clear the circumstances under which a threat would make an abortion legal, and the European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2010 that Ireland must clarify its position. This is still being hotly debated in Ireland, with clear political

divisions over whether legislation should be passed clarifying the circumstances in which abortion should be permitted to save the life of the mother.



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Another concern about raising the case is that the Irish government has launched an investigation which is not yet complete. While the family asserts that the woman was denied essential medical services which resulted in an infection that caused her death, there is some difference of opinion, and this cannot yet be confirmed without the results of an autopsy being done as part of the investigation.

Clearly, this is a terrible situation that has justifiably received condemnation around the world. One can't help but see this as a terrible tragedy, but we wanted to be sure you had this background information.