* *16 May 2017 The New York Times By HARI KUMAR Ellen Barry contributed reporting.*

**Indian Girl, 10, May Be Forced To Give Birth**

NEW DELHI — A 10-year-old girl who was repeatedly raped by her stepfather, and who is now at least 20 weeks pregnant, may be forced to give birth because of India’s restrictive abortion law.

In a case that has become a glaring example of both impunity for rapists and a lack of women’s reproductive rights in India, a court must decide whether the pregnant girl is entitled to an abortion.

A medical board in the northern Indian state of Haryana said on Monday that the girl’s life had not been endangered by the pregnancy, a necessary condition under the law for most abortions conducted after 20 weeks. India enacted that law in part to discourage the widespread termination of female fetuses in a part of the world where boys are preferred.

In making its determination, the medical board said a court would have to determine if the girl’s case meets the legal threshold of “exceptional circumstances” that justify an abortion.

The case came to light Wednesday when the police received a tip on a help line dedicated to crimes against women. The caller was the girl’s mother, said Pankaj Nain, the police chief of Rohtak district in Haryana State.

Investigators found that the girl had been “repeatedly raped by her stepfather over a period of time,” said a police inspector at a Rohtak police station devoted to crimes against women.

“We found the girl in very miserable condition,” said the inspector, Garima, who, like many Indians, goes by a single name. The girl’s mother and stepfather worked as day laborers on construction sites, and her stepfather, who was in his early 20s, would exploit her mother’s absence to rape the girl, said Dr. S. K. Dhattarwal, the head of the forensic medicine department at Rohtak’s Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences.

The victim was examined by a medical board consisting of seven doctors, Dr. Dhattarwal said. They concluded that she was 10 to 12 years old, and that her pregnancy exceeded 20 weeks.

“She is traumatized and not able to speak properly,” Dr. Dhattarwal said. “She was not able to understand what was going on with her. She was subjected to sexual intercourse several times.”

Two other recent rapes in the region have reinforced India’s reputation as dangerous for women. The badly mutilated body of a woman in her early 20s was found last week, and medical examiners said the bones in her head had been shattered and sharp objects inserted into her vagina.

“It was a brutal sexual assaultcum-murder,” said Dr. Dhattarwal, who also supervised the medical examination in that case.

The police have made two arrests in the case.