

Dark secrets on island

Volatiana keeps her secret behind a flimsy wooden gate at the back of her vegetable garden in Madagascar's capital, Antananarivo. **'There are around eight fetuses buried here,'** said the Malagasy mother of six. The woman, who did not wish to use her real name, had carried them all. When they were removed from her body 'I felt a sense of release'. Abortion is illegal on the island state of Madagascar where Pope Francis visited last week as part of his second trip to sub-Saharan Africa. A report on the [News24](#) site notes that termination is punishable by 10 years in prison, and banned even when pregnancy results from rape. Prosecutions are rare, but an attempt to decriminalise abortion was pushed back by Parliament in 2017. One in four women in Madagascar have terminated their pregnancies, according to abortion rights group Nifin'akanga.