



1 August 2019

UCT and AHF take a stand against gender-based violence

The University of Cape Town (UCT) is partnering with the world's largest non-profit HIV healthcare provider, AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION ([AHF](#)), in taking a stand against the silencing and dehumanising effects of gender-based violence (GBV) through a [Silent Protest](#) on Friday 2 August. The march will launch the university's #JustNo campaign against GBV.

A Silent Protest takes a powerful stand against GBV, through silent embodied resistance. The day will see protesters with their mouths taped shut, visually representing the hostile and inhuman treatment of GBV victims and survivors.

The proceedings will begin at 12:00 at the Sarah Baartman Memorial Hall on UCT's upper campus. There are two types of participants: those who choose to be silenced will wear "Believe Survivors" t-shirts to show solidarity with survivors of GBV, and self-identifying survivors of sexual assault, rape and child abuse survivors who feel comfortable disclosing publicly will wear "Survivor" t-shirts.

After formalities and a message from the UCT Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng, the march will depart to the Bremmer building and later return to the Sarah Baartman Memorial Hall. The march is intended to publicly demonstrate the silence in our communities and institutions around sexual violence and the silencing effect of rape culture.

"We must challenge ourselves collectively to do something differently that enables the change we seek at UCT," said Professor Phakeng. "We all need to account: account for inaction, account for lack of participation. In all these phases, we do not ask survivors to act – in fact, we ask those who have not been affected by violence to enable the difference that is sought!"

Professor Lillian Artz, director of the Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit at UCT, said: "The intervention model of Silent Protest has been effectively used since its inception, in 2007 at Rhodes University, and has organically matured, through various contexts, collaborations and higher learning institutions, with steadfast momentum and power, beyond all limitations."

She added: "We believe through the Silent Protest we can expose the pervasive effects of toxic masculinity, patriarchy, sexism and homophobia and give a voice to the victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Join us to be heard."

GBV is a harsh reality in all communities throughout South Africa. During the 2017/2018 period, 40 035 counts of rape were reported and some research findings indicate that the vast majority of rape cases go unreported in South Africa.

“Research presented at the SA AIDS Conference in June highlighted a clear correlation between the epidemic of rape and the epidemic of HIV. If we are to reduce new HIV infections, we need to address rape and sexual and gender-based violence,” said Larissa Klazinga, Regional Policy and Advocacy Manager, AHF South Africa.

For more information on AHF, visit either www.aidshealth.org or www.facebook.com/aidshealth.org

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

Nombuso Shabalala

Head: Media Liaison

Communication and Marketing Department

University of Cape Town

Rondebosch

Tel: (021) 650 4190

Cell: (076) 473 5882

Email: nombuso.shabalala@uct.ac.za

Website: www.uct.ac.za