

Corona Conversation With An Activist

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How have you and your campaign adjusted strategies during the pandemic?

Well our work is critical especially at this time as we consider the ways freedom of movement and information flows are affected by lock-down measures. So we have had to move online and one of our main techniques has been webinars to check in with activists in all the provinces. We also have a WhatsApp group to communicate.

How has protest action been affected by the lock-down?

Well you are allowed to protest but there are restrictions on the number of people who can 'gather'. I don't believe we should abandon the right to protest during this time but we need to consider new methods and means of protest. These include protest using visuals and posting photos of our contexts to draw attention to our cause. Also we could follow international examples where people have come out safely wearing masks and maintaining social distance.

Have you been involved in any lock-down protest?

Yes – we answered the call to attend the Anti Gender Based Violence movement protest in Durban. We were all wearing masks and kept a safe distance from each other so it was a strange, new way to stand in solidarity and to stand together against this violence which is also escalating during lock-down. But the police dismantled it by coming in and arresting protesters (without observing social

distancing) citing the fact that the protest organisers had not observed Section 4 protocols and that the protest was illegal under Level 3 Lockdown regulations.