



Press Release
September 2017

Safe Abortion Access: Resistance, Persistence and Our Bodies!

The Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition (SRJC), together with its partners and allies, recognise September 28, the Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion. We join our international partners the Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) and International Safe abortion Campaign who are also engaging in a range of activities to mark the day.

It is 2017 and we are marking 20 years since the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act was enacted in South Africa. This process took place in February 1996, following commitments by the African National Congress to [support reproductive health for women](#). South Africa is acknowledged as a world leader in having a progressive abortion law.

While we have a progressive law, implementation has been uneven and not sufficient within our health system. This is due to many reasons including stigma and patriarchal contexts that police women’s bodies and choice. SRJC member Professor Eddie Mhlanga wrote [about conscientious objection](#); where healthcare workers recuse recue themselves from performing abortion procedures. “This has serious implications for women’s health, as it creates a shortage of healthcare providers who have the requisite training and knowledge to provide these services as well as pre- and post-procedure care. This shortage, in turn, has led to an increase in illegal and unsafe abortions and delays in women accessing services, often resulting in serious complications and deaths of thousands of women”.

Marion Stevens, SRJC Chairperson, also wrote about [women’s agency and choice linking to conscientious recognition](#), where she stated “There is little support for, yet much judgment against, women who are following their own consciences and making sense of their options in a harsh South Africa which does little to provide sexual and reproductive justice.” This is also following a Private Members’ Bill that was put forward by a member of the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), proposing to amend the CTOPA towards a more restrictive and limiting Act.

In response to this context we are facilitating spaces for collective listening, discussion and action. Women’s lives are affected every day. **The Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition will be hosting a panel discussion as per below:**

Date: September 28, 2017

Venue: Soul City Institute, 281 Jan Smuts Ave, Johannesburg (Corner Jan Smuts Ave and Bompas Rd)

Time: 09H30- 11H30

Theme: Referral Systems / Provider mapping and Medical Protocols

You are invited to be a part of these conversations and to share this campaign with your audience/partners.

Kindly let us know should you wish to interview the SRJC members, or if you would like to attend the above-mentioned events.



SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE COALITION

Steering Committee

Marion Stevens (Chair), Tlaleng Mofokeng (Deputy Chair), Nomtika Mjwana (Advocacy & Comms), Malvern Chiweshe, Catriona Macleod, Dudu Dlamini, Vikar Singh

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