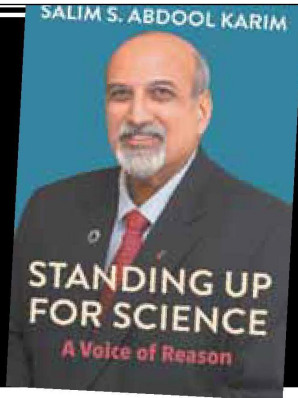


Top medical scientist's releases new book on Covid-19 era



By Marlan Padayachee

Distinguished Durban medical scientist, epidemiologist and world renowned HIV-AIDS expert, Professor Salim Abdool Karim, will soon provide an insider view, opinions, medical analysis and thoughts on his three-year experience as South Africa's leading spokesman and government adviser on the deadly Covid-19 pandemic that claimed almost hundreds of thousands of lives in South Africa.

Nkanyenzi Tshabalala, publicist for the publisher, Pan Macmillan South Africa, confirmed that Professor Karim's new book, *Standing Up for Science: A Voice of Reason*, would be released this month. Already, the Durban-based founder of the Centre for the Aids Programme in South Africa (CAPRISA), based at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, has received influential peer-review accolades from the world's eminent scientists in the book.

"A captivating narrative from a world-leading scientist at the heart of the Covid-19 pandemic response," wrote Francoise Barre-Sinoussi. Peter Plout, European Union's Chief Scientific Adviser on Covid-19 to the EU President in Brussels, Belgium, penned: "A must-read to understand the complex and vital interaction between science and politics by one of the world's thought leaders in science and health, sharing precious, first-hand experience during the Covid pandemic."

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He was appointed head of the ministerial advisory committee on Covid-19 by President Cyril Ramaphosa, and later handed his resignation to health minister, Dr Zweli Mkhize. His famous line was: "None of us is safe from Covid if one of us is not."

In the book, featuring a portrait of Professor Karim on the cover, the book chronicles the iconic scientist's personal, behind-the-scenes experience of his first 36 months of the pandemic, making it an inspiring and informative account of the events that transpired in the new nation's first catastrophic health hazard 2020 and the storyline continued up the current day.

The author shares some of the ground-breaking and globally recognised achievements that were made through science in a battle against the worldwide overwhelming and terrifying disease. "No one anticipated the devastation and disruption Covid-19 would cause in communities and industries across

the world, and there were many complexities and challenges, some concerning international co-operations integral to responding to the pandemic, as well as controversies in the science-to-policy processes to ensure the best decisions possible were being made," the publishers wrote ahead of the nation-wide release of the book. "But with the guidance of leading experts like Professor Karim, science, and its power to help tackle some of the world's biggest problems, proved the most valuable in helping steer the international response to Covid-19."

The book, a spectacular achievement considering how Professor Karim was in demand for his time and knowledge economy, almost daily from the media, particularly the TV stations and radio, for his opinions, advisory and knowledge of how to overcome the health scourge that brought the country and its economy to almost a standstill, is far more than just a personal and captivating story about the events that transpired during and after the pandemic. He dealt with the challenges and intricacies of translating science into policy; the international linkages and coordination of effective Covid response plans, and the important lessons learnt that prepare leaders and nations better for future epidemics.

The book is bound to resonate within the medical science fraternity and intra-institutions and ordinary people as *Standing Up for Science* promises to be a stimulating read and ode to science from one of the world's leading epidemiologists – Durban's very own son of medical academia. Professor Karim, and his equally award-winning and academically acclaimed wife, Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim, became household names in high-level research work within the HIV and AIDS sphere – and also collaborate on research – and their work has attracted numerous awards and international positions for them in the past two decades. The couple was hailed as heroes by American billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates during the pandemic in 2020.

Professor Salim Abdool Karim is head of the HIV-AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA) and CAPRISA Professor of Global Health at Columbia University, and an Adjunct Professor of Immunology and Infectious Diseases at Harvard University, Adjunct Professor of Medicine at Cornell University and Pro Vice-Chancellor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and also Vice-President of the International Science Council, member of the World Health Organisation Science Council and the Advisory Board of Physicians for Human Rights, board member of the New England Journal of Medicine, The Lancet Global Health and The Lancet HIV, and member of the US National Academy of Medicine, World Academy of Science, and Fellow of the Royal Society.

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