

We need to be wise about this lockdown

I HAVE taken this extraordinary step in the hope that the universal message reaches every South African who reads it as there is wisdom in a gradual loosening of lockdown regulations for our lives and health are irreplaceable while the economy and our survival isn't.

We must learn from our own history. Little is known or remembered about how South Africa bungled the Spanish Flu pandemic which cost us over 300 000 lives in six weeks. History must not repeat itself for Covid-19.

There is so much wisdom. I reiterate this for it happened in San Francisco when the authorities there succumbed to the restive and frustrated citizens and, thinking the flu pandemic had taken its course, loosened health and safety regulations.

The worst is yet to come, President Ramaphosa warns us, so we cannot be hasty in loosening the lockdown regulations considering we are still in uncharted waters.

We must be thankful to the government for its decision to implement a hard lockdown after considering the expert testimony of scientists such as professors Shabbir Mahdi and Salim Abdool Karim in its necessity. We haven't flattened the curve, not by any stretch, despite our hope and wishes to get on with our lives like we did after the HIV/Aids crisis. So to seek to

discredit the efforts of scientists is most regrettable as malevolent whispers are doing their rounds.

We can't afford another "Black October". That will destroy SA and push back any recovery and restoration to pre-Covid19 normalcy. The government at the time wasn't prepared for what was about to hit SA.

However, we must be vigilant that the reality surrounding the coronavirus does not become the backdrop for the erosion of our constitutionally guaranteed human rights.

The Nats exploited the threat to apartheid using the *swart gevaar* ideology to press through Parliament the draconian security laws in existence.

We have to be patient but vigilant and be prepared to assist the government in all reasonable prescriptions, but we shouldn't be complacent and succumb to the wiles of conspiracy theorists who seek to exploit the growing restiveness evident in South Africa.

SABER AHMED JAZBHAY | Newlands West