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Interview conducted by Robert M. Press ([bob.press@usm.edu](mailto:bob.press@usm.edu); [press.bob@gmail.com](mailto:press.bob@gmail.com))

Location of interview: Nairobi, Kenya; in her law office.

Date of interview: October 29, 2002

**Interviewee: Martha Koome**

Chair (at the time of the interview) of the Kenya Chapter of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA). When the opposition won the presidential elections in 2002, she was appointed a High Court Judge.

Interview was conducted, recorded and transcribed by Robert Press. BP = Bob Press; MK = Martha Koome. Researcher's notes, bold for emphasis and reference, plus tape counter numbers are shown.

BP What was your strategy to promote human rights?

**[No activists' strategy to promote human rights]**

MK There was no strategy laid down. There was no strategy that I thought about myself; I just got involved in the normal course of my work as an advocate.

[TACTIC: government co-opting main civil society groups, seeks control of lawyers' group]

**A disputed election in LSK pits pro-government chair against "progressive" activists]**

This election [of the chair of the Law Society of Kenya] was just a normal election for me; I was a very young lawyer. 1989. So we were brought papers to select whom we vote for the chair. Ordinarily, the election is done through post office; we receive our ballots through the post. For this particular time, the chair, the...candidate Fred Odhiambo [spelling??] who was already working with the government, but we didn't know as members. But people like Paul Muite, senior colleagues in the Law Society knew that the government was also strategizing to take over the Law Society so that it becomes the mouthpiece of the government. And it had been organized that lawyers, even on a pure courtesy call on the President at State House, and lawyers were always at State House and introduced by the President. You know, just like other groups were being done – the **women's groups, the workers, the unions** – he [Moi] had also tried the churches but they were not forthcoming, especially the mainstream churches. But he was already working with the Evangelicals, but the Catholic church and the main Protestant churches, the APCK [??], the Methodist and PCEA were resisting the move through the NCKK [National Council of Churches of Kenya] to work with the President.

**[Three ballots instead of one for LSK chair]**

So when this nomination paper came for us to elect the chair, I didn't mind because I got it...in the corridors. Fred Odhiambo [??] told me himself, no, we have a shortage of personnel at the secretariat and we were not sure if this paper would reach you in mail, so we are asking colleagues to just sign it in the corridors. I signed for him because he's a good man. I had no problem. But when I went back to the office, I received another one through the post office. I didn't sign it. And as I was continuing to sit in my office another colleague brought another one, saying we have a shortage of personnel so we are relying on ourselves to deliver to as many colleagues as possible. I said I have already voted in the court corridors. So when we went for the AGM [annual general meeting of LSK] and members questioned the process and the manner in which the ballot papers were dispatched to members to vote and questioning whether there was room for people to vote three or four times, Fred Odhiambo [??], who is a born again Christian denied that he used any other process other than the mail. And I was in that meeting – and he [had] asked me to vote in the corridors. I was incensed. I wasn't happy.

#### **[LSK activists seek to oust chair]**

So from there I joined a group that was calling for a special general meeting for purposes of removing Fred Ojiambo from the office of the chair of the Law Society. We called for – we requisitioned for a special general meeting. I signed the requisition; we were fifteen of us who signed the requisition and we struggled throughout the year. We could not have a special general meeting because they went to court and obtained an injunction order to stop us from having any meeting. That is when I realized now we are not just fighting the battle of Law Society, we also have to fight the battle of an independent judiciary.

BP Who brought that injunction, that suit?

MK He [Ojiambo] organized some friends of his to go to court and say: you have to block these lawyers from –

BP Was it Lee Muthoga?

MK It wasn't Lee Muthoga; it was another lawyer who filed, but of course working with Fred Ojiambo.

#### **[LSK chair seen as pro-government]**

BP Did you have any indication that Odhiambo ?? was pro-government?

MK He was pro-government...He organized visits to State House and he resisted us to have a special general meeting because he didn't want this progressive force to take the Law Society because the government wants him to continue being the chairman of the Law Society. Because why would you - [as] the chair of FIDA, why would I block people who want a special general meeting? ...in a democratic organization, people want space to come and express themselves and get things the way they want.

BP So LSK was in danger of being co-opted at that time?

#### **[Basic human rights of lawyers violated]**

MK At that time. So now we presented this force of lawyers issuing statements, signing in our own names. Colleagues had been arrested. We issued a statement condemning the arrests and detention and refusal by the government for people to have, you know, meetings and associate freely. So I was telling you now, that battle we fought for a whole year, until now we were in another election and [Paul] Muite, Paul Muite was elected in 1990 [verify year??] ...1989 we were fighting a court battle for trying to have a special meeting to remove Fred Ojiambo.

**[TACTIC: public criticism of judiciary; seeking independent one]**

And that was my involvement. I realized now that we also have to agitate for an independent judiciary and I think within the same time that was when the constitution was amended to return the security of tenure for the judges...but you see the security of tenure had been taken away. [In 87 or 88??] So returning it did not really bring any independence of the judiciary [explain??] and also the subsequent appointment of judges; you know, people who are already sycophants of the government or people whose opinions are – or people who are who have no credibility as lawyers; they have [allegedly] already [taken] clients' money, so they need protection, so the protection they get is if you become a judge and you already hold clients' money and nobody will come and ask for it. So the battle now moved even from me agitating for the independence of the judiciary, realizing that we needed multi-party, a system of government in which people can express themselves.

BP What did you do to try to get independence of the judiciary?

MK It [was] just criticizing [the government]. We made speeches.

BP As an organization?

**[Individuals within LSK spoke out]**

MK No. Then I wasn't actively invoking the..organization; but we were acting as a group of lawyers within LSK. If something outrageous happened in the courts, then 15 lawyers, 20 lawyers would sign a statement.

**[TACTIC –defend activists in court]**

Then I played a very active role in representing persons who were in detention. I defended Raila Odinga [as the second lawyer; Shamalla was the lead lawyer] when he was in detention...when they were put in detention with Ken Matiba and Rubbia [1991??] I also defended Koigi Wamwere in the treason trial. We were the lawyers of Koigi Wamwere...I was the second lawyer. There was the principal lawyer who was Japheth Shamalla [spelling??] I was the second lawyer. I used to visit them in Kamiti [spelling; the maximum?? Security prison outside of Nairobi]. We were working in the law firm; it was called Shamalla, Koome and Company Advocates. So my senior partner was the lead lawyer and I was...his law partner.

**[The 'war room' for human rights activists]**

He [Shamalla] played a very active role. He housed people [in his downtown office] who were agitating for multi-partyism. All those meetings took place in that law firm where I worked.

BP One person referred to those meetings as a 'war room.'

MK **It was actually the 'war room.'** All decisions, strategies [to defend human rights] were [made] in that office. And I used to pay rent so they would have a space to meet.

BP How many people participated in that strategy, 'war' room?

[TACTIC: use the courts; slow the proceedings; expose and shame the court]

MK Well it was really not a proper strategy, so to speak. It was like you deal with the day to day basis. So and so's been arrested, so let us appear in court, let us make this kind of applications. And we would make motions, and motions, and motions. Motions to allow the Queen's Counsel to come here and represent them. All manner of applications.

BP What were those motions designed to do?

MK Just to prolong the process, tire them, expose them. You know, to expose the judiciary; basically to expose the judiciary...lack of respect for the rule of law because when you against the laid down principles of law, of course you get exposed. They [the judges] would go against precedent; you know, what had been done before; now you are departing from it. And to **shame them**, basically. Yes.

[TACTIC: publicity via the courts of abuse of human rights]

BP Was this aimed at simply publicity or did you think...

114

MK It was publicity (emphasis). Actually it was to **sustain publicity on the level of abuse of human rights in Kenya**. Because we would make application that they are not getting good diet or good facilities in prison. The next day we would make an application that they be allowed these diets; we would make an application for a doctor to come and testify in court about their conditions. We would make applications that they need to be allowed to be seen by a doctor; that we should be allowed to take to them basic necessities, things like toilet paper...

BP So this was a human rights tactic?

MK Yeah. It wasn't really a strategy laid down, it was running out day to day. We go to courts today; we receive this treatment, then we come up with another strategy.

BP But what was the ultimate aim? Were you trying to change laws or release individual prisoners.

**MK We were trying to attract attention on the violation of rights; we were trying to shame them – the judiciary and the government...on detainees, detention without trial. And we were trying to get the release of these people. See, eventually when they [the judges] were very tired, they released them (laughs)**

BP So that was the impact. I was going to ask you what the impact of this was?

**[Impact: detainees were released]**

MK The impact was their...release eventually because the government - everybody was tired of providing them with special menus, this application, the other application – then they were released.

BP You think that's the reason they were released?

**[Boomerang in action: activists made contact with international rights groups]**

MK There was a lot of pressure from internationally, locally. Yes.

BP Did you make contact with international organizations.

MK We did. Absolutely. We were in touch with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, we were in touch with all human rights organizations. And those days we didn't even have email. We were communicating through faxes. Yeah.

BP What role did Mr. Shamalla play in all that?

**[TACTIC: under the cover of lawyer-client private meetings, to keep police away]**

MK He was – he provided the office where these strategies took place; he was involved in giving cover..[at] Corner House. He was giving them cover, you know because – they are seeing a lawyer, so you can't – you know, there's a privilege between a client and a lawyer. So the Special Branch, the police would not come and arrest them because these are privileged proceedings.

BP Between lawyers.

MK No, between lawyers and clients (laughs). Yeah.

**\*[Note: This subterfuge would not have been possible unless the authoritarian government wants to be seen as upholding the rule of law. Much of the human rights struggle in Kenya was carried out in the courtrooms as the government pretended to support the rule of law and the activists attempted to expose their lack of commitment to the same.]**

BP So the clients, who were detainees didn't need cover, did they?

**[TACTIC: 'war' room served both lawyers and politicians seeking greater human rights, multi-party.]**

MK The clients who were detainees were in jail; they were out there. But the people out here working for their release, these are lawyers. We were active in many forums. These were lawyers. And then there are political activists. People like ...the late Oginga Odinga; people like [Martin] Shikuku. There were six of them, the original FORD people; there were six of them. They were working now on agitating for multi-party space within people can express themselves.

So now, that was my activism. We did the Law Society. I eventually served in the Council of the Law Society..

BP There were actually two groups meeting in Shamalla's office. One was you and the others working for detainees; the other was the political group.

MK Yeah. There were two groups.

BP And the two never really –

MK No, we never met to share strategies. We were, you know, lawyers, doing like this, politicians were doing this. Like I wasn't involved [with] the politicians; the formation of FORD and all that. I wasn't involved. But I was involved in the lawyers group. But Shamalla was in both – and facility.

BP They met in the same office.

**[Motivation: self-interest: “safeguarding my profession.”]**

MK Yeah. Because I wanted to be completely, you know, professional. I was young and I was, like I'm not interested in politics. But I'm interested in safeguarding my profession.

**[Young “Turks”]**

BP Some of the young attorneys – this other group called them the “young Turks” – I think Shikuku is the one who called them [that]

**[“Imanyara played a critical role”]**

MK Yeah. They were meeting there, [James] Orengo, [Paul] Muite, [Gitobu] Imanyara,. **Imanyara played a very critical role those days.** He was also one of those people who are, who faced one of these trumped up charges and was also in detention without trial. He was running a very, very progressive magazine...Nairobi Law Monthly...Then there was Martha Karua, another lady called Beatrice Nduta [spelling??] who were in the forefront and were meeting there. Myself. Charles Nyachae was in there for some time. Then I think when his father [Simeon Nyachae, who ran for President in2002] started working for the government, he dropped out. So..these young people were working together. But me, I never went to the political meetings. I just used to go to the professional meetings.

BP Some of these young “Turks,” so called, wanted to be part of it [the political meetings] and Shikuku said, no way.

MK There were many others who never met in Shamalla's office but were, you know, working [to promote human rights] in different areas. People like Willy Mutunga.

BP How often would you meet?

MK Every day. Yeah, every day.

BP What was the atmosphere like?

MK It was a very good, conducive, working atmosphere. It's just that we didn't have..strategies [laughs]. Everything was new and we were dealing with the dynamics of the day. But we met virtually every day.

BP What did you do.

MK When we strategized it was like, draw this application tomorrow; go to Kamiti to see the prisoners.. do this..just that. Yes. Communicate with this, communicate with the others. Yeah, that's what we did.

BP And protect yourselves?

**[No personal risk felt]**

MK I never protected myself. I was never at risk [although Martha Karua, a member of the group, detailed several apparent attempts by police to harm them.] They thought, this is a young lawyer, just [attends] these meetings and goes home; it doesn't go anywhere. So I wasn't at risk; I never felt at risk, but other people were feeling at risk.

BP So you were going on to the second thing that you did.

MK Yes, the second thing I did – now, come now this time when Moi said Kenya is multi-party and Section 2A of the constitution has been amended [deleted] to make us a multi-party state, then the Party – FORD was born. When FORD was born, it became exclusive. We could not work in it – those meetings; and before they couldn't meet without us. [??] You see?

BP No, I lost you; I'm sorry.

MK What I'm saying is it was now legal for people to meet. So they definitely don't have to meet in our office anymore. [In other words FORD's initial meetings were at Shamalla's office]. So meetings moved to other forums, like even the office of Muite, Ufungamano, Intercontinental [Hotel]. But now when we went to Intercontinental, it wasn't easy for us to just go into the steering committee and enter and sit down and contribute the way we were doing before. When we asked to enter in Ufungamano we were told there is a women's wing that is sitting at a certain place, at Wangari Maathai's place, so we leave the men in Ufungamano, we go and meet at Wangari Maathai's place as women wing. So that's when I decided, no, I think we need a serious lobbying for

women to – we can not work with them so far and then they drop us like this. So we needed to form women's organizations that can advocate for positive change that can agitate for...women.

[interrupted by a phone call]

..women's organization. That's when I joined now the women's movements. I got into the mainstream of FIDA. I got into the Council of FIDA in, I think 1991. We needed to strengthen FIDA so that it can effectively lobby for lack of discrimination, you know, respect for women, respect for human rights. I became a Council member. This must have been 1991.

225 What else did you do specifically to try to push human rights forward.

MK Within FIDA I joined the Council of FIDA and I joined many women's organizations. I also joined one called Kenya Women Finance Trust that accesses credit to poor women. I was the Secretary of Kenya Women Finance Trust and [addresses] gaps within the law the perpetuate discrimination against women.

BP Were any of those activities designed to push the core political human rights?

**[Consciousness-raising on women's rights]**

MK That was multipartyism, freedom of expression. Independence of judiciary; no detention. What I've been doing on the women's rights front: I've been focusing on highlighting the glaring gaps within the law, within the practice, within the procedures, so that ...women...can ask for change. I go to talk to women's groups, church groups. They know the law doesn't protect us...using awareness around these issues. Then whenever they stand up to speak they know the law of this country and this, and this, and this defect [concerning] the rights of women. This I've done in many, many forums. I've written papers, done it in the media – the local media, the BBC, I've gone to international forums and done that.

BP You've been working pretty hard. Why do you do that?

MK I do that because I have a conviction that we have got to change. And especially the rights of women, the position of women, the unequal position of women in this country can never, never be remedied unless we begin with the law. So my agitation was first of all for change of the constitution so we remove those fundamental frauds in the constitution-issues of inequality, issues of discrimination.

BP Did you take part in the 1997 demonstrations?

**[No civil disobedience, but plenty of talking]**

MK I was involved; I was involved. Well I may not have gone to the streets, but I was involved in agitation for a new constitution, for Bomas of Kenya [a public forum for discussion of a new constitution, in 2000?]. I attended the Safari Park forums [similar forum in 2002?]. We did lobbying, we came up with a process...went to Ufungamano [another constitutional forum]...I was among the group that negotiated the merger

between Ufungamano and the Raila Committee...the Parliamentary Committee [headed by Raila Odinga] so that we have now one process. It was in 2000...

The real clamor for constitutional change was between 1997 [and 2002]. '98 Moi was under tremendous pressure for constitutional reform; 99 the same. 2000 the same. So I was involved in the whole process in the clamor for a new constitution. We had made presentations...

BP Which tactic did you use that you thought was the most effective in pushing the government of Moi to accept the idea of constitutional change.

**[Most effective TACTIC: mass action (street demonstrations)]**

MK Moi's government – the only language they have understood and reacted to it was mass action. Whenever they are pushed...total standoff between the Moi government and the public, that's the language they understand.

BP So mass action is crucial. Were you involved in the planning of that?

MK No, no, no. I wasn't involved in the planning, in the nitty-gritty of the planning [carried out mostly by young activists], but of course I supported everything that happened. Of course you remember it was scuttled by the IPPG. The IPPG..

BP Yes, I know. What I don't know is which organizations were helping to push the mass demonstrations.

MK The mass demonstrations were spearheaded by NCEC...and the religious organizations were working with them. The political parties were also involved.

BP Which religious organizations?

MK The NCCK...even the Moslems were involved...political, opposition parties were also involved. So now Moi arranged a strategy of removing the political parties so they can move to the IPPG and scuttle this process. But there are NGOS – human rights NGOS who were involved in the plans.

BP Was there an organization that coordinated human rights NGOs?

**\*\*[No coordination: bane of activism in Kenya?]**

MK Nobody coordinated. You see that is the problem, that is the problem of our struggle. It has never really been coordinated from anywhere (emphasis). It's sporadic; it just happens like that.

BP Why do you think that is?

**[Activists' euphoria (at repeal of 2A), while Moi plans strategy]**

MK I think its – people don't seem to give it time. People don't sit down to give it serious thought – and draw out a new strategy for change. You know, you just join a euphoria; you think you will carry the day, and Moi is busy planning [laughs] to the letter.

BP Maybe you've summarized multi-party in 1992 and ...

MK Everything will be OK [so the activists of 92 thought], then you realize you can't get anywhere with only a change of 2A [allowing more than one party].

BP Do you see a relationship between your many hours of work and miles of travel in promoting women's rights; do you see a relationship between that and some kind of awareness of people who perhaps go out on a mass demonstration, or is that an entirely different group of people who go out on a mass demonstration?

**[TACTIC – Mass actions participants have become aware of their rights]**

326

**MK The group, probably, that goes out on a mass demonstration here in Nairobi, or even come out upcountry, they have received some liberal awareness; they have been touched somewhere by the injustices and what is happening** and they really are looking for change. Some are related to that. But my work in the area of the rights of women has had more impact in terms of the agenda, the national agenda. You find the issues of women can not just be wished away; there are real issues. The topic of women is really on top of the agenda, and that's...

BP What agenda are you talking about?

MK For instance, when you are talking about a new constitution, if you look at it, you can see [these] issues are included. .. Women's issues are topical. You know, these days, you can't just violate the rights of women...people say [when their rights are violated], I'll take you to FIDA; I'll take you to – you know, FIDA will do something about [the violation]. So there is a level of awareness for the respect of the rights of women as [a result, in part] of the work we are doing. Women are also coming out to claim their rights – claim protection of the law.

BP What evidence is there of that?

IMPACT of rights-awareness: increase in number of cases

MK Oh, more people coming; more cases being filed [tabulated by FIDA]. They have some documents; there are numbers. People don't just take away your land – they go to FIDA; you don't just beat them; you don't violate them...go raping young girls. They do [fight] back, they know FIDA [can help].

BP So rape and land cases... And there has been an increase over the last –

MK Yes, that is at the level of public awareness. Also in terms of touching the policy and laws; there has been a touch and go work by this government. Try and change laws; try

and change policies. Of course there is no good will to go all the way to implementation. But Parliament has seen introduction of many, many bills by the opposition, though us; you know we sponsored some women [to run] for Parliament.

**[TACTIC – draft legislation]**

BP FIDA was actually helping sponsor some legislation?

MK Yes, we have; drafting legislation; forcing them to draft, to have a national legal aid scheme. So we have impacted. You know, working with the police, making them change their attitudes toward women, respect for the rights of women.

BP Then Charity Ngilu is at least running [for President]. There has also been an increase in the number of women running for office-

MK There are many, many impediments for women running.

BP I don't know how many women are in Parliament?

**[Few women in Parliament]**

MK There are only 9 out of 220 [membership]...four of whom are elected; five are nominated. So it's really a negative number.

BP You're not a member of Parliament.

MK I'm not a member.

BP Are you running this time [2002]?

MK No, I'm not running.

BP Have you chosen not to or –

**[Candidacy expensive]**

MK The planning ground is still very much uneven. The constituency that I would have run [in] is very huge; it's the largest constituency with very very many numbers of voters; very poor infrastructure  
90 polling stations. I was just trying to imagine even hiring agents to be at all the polling stations – how much money would I need?

BP It's just a matter of money in many cases?

**[Widespread?? Vote buying adds to cost of being a candidate]**

MK Yes, its just money. By the way it is cost[ly]...and this election [2002] has been corruption. I mean you buy votes; I can't deal with it. I don't want to back up myself and harass myself beyond...I realize I am also doing something in FIDA and [can] just concentrate...

BP If you were to look back at the reasons why there were some changes – there weren't that many: '87 torture stopped, for a while; '92 multi-party; '97 you had a few laws changed. There's nothing in here [the in between years 92-97].

**[Despite concessions 92-97, legislation is growing on rights with help of NGOs]**

MK In here and here, there is nothing [emphasis]. There is nothing. But there have been [in] Parliament bills introduced on equality, on domestic violence, on criminal amendments, on sexual violence against women. You know this is forcing it to the throats of the government: gender, development policy. So these are on the floor of Parliament: the economic rights bills...on land there is a commission looking at property ownership and land law...so women can get land rights. So this is because of pressure; so that they look like they are doing something. It's window dressing, it's camouflage, whatever it is, but there was an attempt.

BP But its happening; that's the point.

MK It's happening; we forced it.

BP Where did you force it; where did all that begin?

MK These bills have been the work between 98 and 2002. They are in the floor of Parliament; this is the unfinished business of the...Parliament...including the draft constitution.

BP If I understand what you're saying, you're saying it's a slow start.

MK It's a slow start. When it comes here, a lot of incomplete business, but its started.

BP But women's issues are getting more attention.

MK Yeah. They are all before Parliament in terms of bills...like this one, the Kenyan National Commission on Human Rights[?? Name]; that one actually went through [a state human rights commission which did little groundbreaking but was at least a symbolic commitment to official protection of human rights]. The domestic violence/family protection bill. So you know, work like this.

BP Will these bills be re-introduced in the new Parliament.  
(taping stopped briefly then re-started as she continues)

MK ..building a lot of pressure, pressure.

**BP What kind of pressure works best?**

MK Standoff, between him [Moi] and the public.

BP How do you get a standoff?

MK Through mass **action and disobedience** of him...and realizing you can not get it unless you did this and that. **And embarrassment, exposure [emphasis]**. He doesn't like to be exposed. (laughs loudly)

BP Can you give me an example?

**[TACTIC: shaming a government that claims to be pro-human rights; tactic works if govt. cares about its reputation ]**

MK The person we have exposed is the Attorney General [Amos Wako], through lack of commitment on the rights of women, lack of support of respect for human rights. So he has rushed and put that Committee on human rights [Commission?]. He has drafted these bills to show, really, his support for the right of women. Because we had gone to national forums and made presentations that this is the situation of Kenya.

**[TACTIC – shaming government in international forums]**

BP You've used international forums, right? And you think that embarrassment works against, not Moi, but Wako?

**[Shaming impact: small gestures; govt. tactic do just enough to shift the spotlight off them]**

MK Exposing Kenya, the situation of Kenya; it works. It makes them do something little, though not major.

BP You chip away

MK (laughs)

**[Institutional change – even “window dressing” helps provide leverage for human rights demands]**

BP Has that [national human rights] commission done anything?

MK It hasn't; its window dressing. These are not things that can change this country.

BP But does it provide you some leverage: now you can go back and say, well, you haven't done anything?

MK Yeah. At least when they are there as institutions you know you can now, when it comes to making them work, the implementation – Because we keep saying: give us the laws. And leave the implementation to us; we will always go to court to challenge this and the other. But we need a framework.

BP During this period it was mostly individuals who stepped forward like Imanyara, and yourself. Then the parties came in. And here organizations seem to come in [showing her my timeline of activism between 1987-1997, with organizations becoming more active

after 1992]; these were organizations from about here on. What organizations would you say were in the forefront between 1992 and 1997 in human rights?

MK Especially between '91-93, the Law Society was very active. And then civil society organizations – there used to be many, like NCKK, ...four C's; FIDA, ICJ...[called] professional groups to come and discuss topical issues, especially freedom of movement, freedom of expression..in that period 93 [to 97]

BP Who was the most active ICJ person in those years?

MK Kiraitu Murungi (pause)...Charles Nyachae was in ICJ.

BP You come from a time when you couldn't even talk, openly?

MK Yeah. You couldn't do like this; I mean this; I'd be [unclear].

[Individuals burnout; organizations have more lasting impact]

BP I wonder if you can make a comment on the importance of individuals as compared to the importance of organizations in trying to promote human rights at different times?

MK You see, **individuals get exhausted. As an individual you cannot carry the battle too far**...you get 'burnout.' And once, like the burnout I suffered, as an individual, then I had to find a place in an organization; an organization that would do a few things for me, like set up a press conference, so I'm just going to address as opposed to me [making all the arrangements], even draft that statement for me; do a few things for you so that you can be able to ...

BP Clerical help?

MK Clerical help, institutional support; administrative. Yes.

BP So you suffered burnout yourself?

[**Activists divide into: politics, NGOs**]

MK Yeah, as an individual...I really didn't feel like I have suffered burnout. It's just that I felt alone now. People have gone to politics; they have formed these political parties. I'm alone. I've got to a sisterhood in a women organization.

BP Some went to politics; some to NGOs.

MK Yeah, NGOs, so we continue with the work. Because my own voice would not be heard anymore. If people had gone different ways, the people we were working with, they've gone to politics. Yeah. Shamalla [her former law office partner], they have all gone to politics.

BP So you did join FIDA, and you had an intention of staying involved in the organization.

MK Yeah, because I felt its more sustainable, its more structured; you can draw out a plan and say, look, we are seeking now for legislative policy reform, creation of awareness and you can even navigate it through the organizational systems. But as an individual, I can't continue keeping, representing, a lot of clients alone, but with an organization we can even do that. We do represent clients.

BP So you have a greater impact, really.

MK I feel as an organization, even the impact is more directed to results. You can count on the results. Although this one, if it was a strategic planner, I mean somebody who directs us on how to put our energy – because we were dealing with day to day dynamics. Nobody planned for us; nobody put us together. Just ourselves. So if there were somebody to organize us here, then we would have [had] more impact [during the pre-organization phase]...we would have sustained the fight from here to, OK, now realize we have a new political order in that there is now multi-party, but this is not enough. Let's move [on] constitutional reforms, straight from '92, so that by '97 we have a new constitution.

575 (end of interview; side A, tape one of one)