

Interview with Edna Adan, former first lady of Somalia, by Evelin Lindner (video-tapes), on 3 December 1998

Edna Adan:

I think humiliation is a very difficult thing to describe. But I think **humiliation is when someone tries to bring someone down to their level. They think that you are above them and they want to hurt you, humiliate you, bring you down to their level, so that you have no more self-respect, so that you lose the respect you have for yourself and others lose the respect they have for you.**

Edna Adan:

Once they said I was planning to escape from the country, and I spent six days in jail for that. For the first, why didn't they wait until I tried to escape, why arrest me from my house! They put me in a cell of my own, but I didn't have a toilet. And right in front of the place where they put me, there was a toilet, and it had no doors. And there was the cell next to me, it was full of men, of criminals, of thieves, I don't know, just men, men all behind the bars. And, so I called out, and I said, - you know, - 'I, - I, - I need to go and use the bathroom!' And that is after I had been the first lady of the country! And they said: 'Well, you want to use the bathroom? There is the bathroom! You use everybody's bathroom! There! You are not better than the others! There is the bathroom they use!' And I thought - how can I use the bathroom with no doors facing a cell full of men! Full of criminals and people who, - you know, - and I just came out of my cell and I just looked at those men, and I said: 'Listen. I am going to use this bathroom. And, would you be watching your mother or your sister if she was using a toilet and she had no door, - is this the kind of men you are that you would watch a woman using a bathroom?' And they said, 'No.' And the first one said 'turn around,' and they made everyone turn the other way, until I finished using the bathroom. And that was one of the most emotional moments of my time. And the police was so shocked, because they couldn't get their objective, they couldn't get me to be humiliated and using a bathroom with all these men watching and shouting at me. So, this is another form of resistance, and resisting humiliation!

Edna Adan:

Does humiliation lead to war? I would answer that question by saying, 'Yes, it does!' You can push human beings too far, just far enough until they turn back and say 'Hei, wait a minute, enough is enough.' And then they begin to resist with violence, with strength, with force, with whatever way they know. And, I think a good example of resisting humiliation through war is what has happened to our country, the people of Somaliland.

Edna Adan, concluded: 'I hope you have strong cupboards to put your conscience into! Where are all the weapons produced which kill innocent people?'