

An introvert by nature, Malawi attorney found her voice as an advocate



By Brian Cox

As the senior legal associate at Sauti & Company, Sania Kamfose is living her dream.

Her work at the Malawian law firm is the fulfillment of an ambition she's carried since primary school. Long before she understood the intricacies of contracts, arbitration clauses, or litigation strategy, Kamfose was a young girl in Malawi listening to radio programs in which children talked about what they wanted to become when they grew up. Some said doctors. Others said teachers. A few said lawyers.

For reasons she can't explain, the legal profession captured her imagination.

"So, since primary school," she says, "I used to say that I wanted to be a lawyer."

There were no lawyers in her family who might have influenced her interest. Kamfose, the youngest of seven children, grew up in a



Sania's parents raised their seven children in Blantyre, Malawi. Her father was a banker and her mother worked with a farmers' association.

close-knit family in Blantyre, where she attended both primary and secondary school. Her father worked as a banker for the National Bank of Malawi before retiring. Her mother has spent more than three decades as an administrator at a farmers' association.

As a child, Kamfose loved books, especially novels, and spent much of her free time reading. Somewhere along the way, she absorbed the notion that lawyers needed to immerse themselves in words, arguments, and ideas. Reading became both a pastime and preparation.

Her academic ability became apparent early. Before finishing primary school, she skipped ahead because teachers believed she was capable of succeeding at a higher level.

"It was all about reading," she says with a laugh, going on to describe herself as determined, prayerful, and outspoken.

After secondary school, Kamfose enrolled at the Staff Development Institute, a government institution that offered legal studies programs. There, she earned a diploma in law before continuing at the University of Malawi Chancellor College, where she completed her law degree.

The process took six years in total: two years at the institute and four years at the university. Each year brought her closer to achieving the dream.

Yet, for all her academic determination, Kamfose faced a challenge that might have discouraged others from entering the courtroom. By nature, she describes herself as an introvert, and she recognized that it was a tendency she would have to overcome to be the lawyer she aspired to be.

So instead of avoiding litigation, Kamfose deliberately pursued it.

"Litigation was going to challenge me a lot," she says. "So, I made a decision that I would have to challenge myself and face my fears."

Nearly a decade into practice, she no longer thinks of the practice of litigation as an unnerving barrier that she has to conquer.

An introvert by nature, Malawi attorney found her voice as an advocate

“My journey as a litigation lawyer has been coupled with exciting and yet challenging assignments,” she says. “I now find it enjoyable.”

She recalls a particular case from when she was barely two years into practice that dramatically elevated her confidence in her skills as a lawyer. The client had petitioned the court to nullify the results of parliamentary elections in her constituency.

“The case was very complex and required extensive research, given that it was an area of law which, at that time, had not been litigated extensively,” explains Kamfose.

While the case involved many sleepless nights and a fair amount of anxiety, Kamfose secured a ruling for her client that successfully nullified the parliamentary elections.

She describes the case as one of the “most treasured” and “profound” experiences of her young career.

After graduating and being admitted to the bar, Kamfose applied to several law firms before joining Sauti & Company, where she has now practiced for nine years. At the time, the firm was much smaller, but she recognized something important in its founder’s vision and leadership.

Founded in 2015 by Ralph Sauti Jr., the firm has grown into one of Malawi’s emerging commercial practices, with a team experienced in corporate and commercial law, employment and industrial relations, conveyancing, arbitration, and dispute resolution. The firm emphasizes strategic, tailored legal services while using modern legal practice technologies to improve efficiency and client service.

Kamfose has grown alongside the firm.

“The nature of work that I’m doing now is completely different from what I used to do during the first years of practice,” she says.

She proudly relates the story of the first injunction she secured for a client that accused another company of infringing on its registered design for plastic shoes.

As the firm expanded its corporate client base and began handling increasingly complex matters, Kamfose found herself developing expertise across multiple areas of law. Today, she serves not only as senior legal associate but also as chief operations officer, supervising junior lawyers and managing the firm’s litigation team.

The firm is headquartered in Kamfose’s hometown of Blantyre, Malawi’s second largest city and a financial hub located in the Shire Highlands.

Much of Kamfose’s work involves contractual disputes, employment matters, personal injury claims, and negligence cases. In Malawi, she says, road accidents and occupational health issues frequently generate litigation, particularly where employers fail to comply with workplace safety requirements.

At the same time, she has watched Malawi’s legal landscape evolve.

Alternative dispute resolution and arbitration are becoming increasingly important as businesses seek faster, more efficient ways to resolve conflicts outside traditional court proceedings. The emergence of the International Arbitration Centre in Malawi has accelerated that shift, especially among corporate clients whose contracts now often require arbitration before litigation.

Sauti & Company has adapted alongside those changes, helping clients navigate both courtroom disputes and modern dispute-resolution mechanisms.

Kamfose’s early experiences also shaped the kind of lawyer she wanted to become. During internships at the Legal Aid Bureau and with private firms, she gained exposure not only to drafting legal documents but also to working with vulnerable individuals unable to pay for representation.

“The Legal Aid Bureau gave me experience in handling clients who could offer nothing in return,” she says.

Outside the office, Kamfose describes herself as family-oriented. Much of her free time is spent with her young daughter, Selaphie, who is under two years old. She has also devoted time to community service, previously serving on the boards of St. Joseph Hospital and the Chisombezi Deafblind Centre, an organization supporting children with disabilities.



Sania spends as much of her free time as possible with her daughter, Selaphie.

An introvert by nature, Malawi attorney found her voice as an advocate

Even with a demanding legal practice, she continues pursuing further education through a master's program in commercial law at the University of Malawi, where she is currently completing her thesis.

Nearly a decade into practice, Kamfose's willingness to challenge herself has transformed into confidence – not only in the courtroom, but also as a leader within a growing firm. Whether supervising younger lawyers, managing complex disputes, or advocating for clients, Kamfose has developed a reputation for speaking her mind and offering a perspective she believes deserves to be heard.

"I've been given several opportunities to express myself," says Kamfose, "which I think has also expanded my horizons."



Sania serves as senior legal associate at Sauti & Company where she supervises junior lawyers and manages the firm's litigation team.