CONTESTING THE REPUBLIC

Law, Democracy, and Inclusion in Malawi

A Conference in Honour of Fidelis Edge Kanyongolo

21 - 22 April 2027 | University of Malawi

Editors: **Dorothy Tembo, Michael Chasukwa, Happy Kayuni, Chikosa Silungwe**

Guest of Honour: **Mordecai Msiska SC** | Keynote Address: **Justice Redson Kapindu, PhD**

Keynote Address: **Associate Professor Nandini Patel**

REVISED CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

RATIONALE

Fidelis Edge Kanyongolo retired from the University of Malawi in 2022. He left behind a legacy of thirty-six years of scholarship that has subtly influenced scholarship and the identity of Malawi as a nation. Across nearly four decades of teaching and research, he examined the legal and political architecture of Malawian democracy: probing the weaknesses of the constitution, the successes and failures of democratic transition, and the meaning of rights in a nation still working to secure its own foundations. His scholarship did not merely describe Malawi's legal and political landscape; it contested it, opening avenues of inquiry that scholars across disciplines continue to pursue.

THEMES

Presentations are welcome on any theme central to Kanyongolo's work, including but not limited to:

- Memory and the Politics of the Past
- Colonial Legacies and Democratic Exclusion
- Law as Text and Language
- Ethnicity, Nationalism, Race and Class
- Religion and the Legitimation of Power
- Customary Leadership and Political Power
- Civil Society and Social Movements
- Institutions and Everyday Forms of Resistance
- Democracy in African Fiction and Life Writing
- Political Speech and Rhetoric
- Personal Rule and the Cult of Personality
- Transitional Justice
- Political Economy/Political Settlements
- Conflict Resolution and Management
- Elections and Democratic Transition
- Independence of Electoral Management Bodies
- Campaign Finance and Corruption
- Gender and Law
- Gender and Poverty
- Women's Political Representation
- Civic Education and Democratic Participation
- Judicialisation of Politics and Governance

- Corruption and Law Enforcement
- Access to Justice
- Land: Law and Politics
- Regional Politics and Democratic Consolidation
- Disability Rights and Electoral Participation
- Media, Elections and Pan-Africanism

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Abstract of 300–400 words stating the paper's argument and contribution, plus a short biography (up to 100 words) and 5 keywords
- Indicate presentation preference: individual paper, panel proposal, or roundtable
- State clearly if you also wish to be considered for the edited volume
- Submit to *kachereseries@unima.ac.mw* with subject line "Conference Abstract: [Title, Your Name]"
- Abstract deadline: **15 November 2026**
- Notification of acceptance: **30 November 2026**

RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMPANION EDITED VOLUME

- This conference is convened alongside a related edited volume, Contesting the Republic: Essays in Honour of Fidelis Edge Kanyongolo, due for publication in late 2027. The two are related but distinct, and neither requires the other. You may present here without any obligation to write a book chapter. This is an opportunity for those who wish to honour Fidelis Kanyongolo but are not in a position to produce a full chapter. Equally, you may contribute a book chapter without attending or presenting at the conference.

We welcome participants who wish to contribute in formats beyond the traditional academic paper. If you do not have a formal paper to present, you are still encouraged to submit an abstract outlining your intended contribution – whether as a speech, a panel discussion, a practitioner presentation, or another suitable format.

If you wish to be considered for both the conference and the edited volume, indicate this on your abstract submission. You do not need to submit twice. One abstract is sufficient for both committees to consider your work.

For partnership, sponsorship, and general enquiries, kindly direct your email to *kachereseries@unima.ac.mw*, with a copy to Dr Dorothy Tembo at *dtembo@unima.ac.mw*.

All conference attendees will be required to pay a fee of **MK200,000**, covering meals and conference materials.

We welcome participation from scholars, early-career researchers, practitioners, and all who wish to honour Fidelis Kanyongolo's contribution to Malawian scholarship and public life.