CONTESTING THE REPUBLIC

Law, Democracy, and Inclusion in Malawi

Essays in Honour of Fidelis Edge Kanyongolo

REVISED CALL FOR ABSTRACTS — EDITED VOLUME

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

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.

What distinguishes Kanyongolo's legacy is not only its intellectual range – spanning law, political science, and social theory – but its generative power. He has mentored and worked alongside a generation of Malawian academics and researchers, many of whom are well outside the legal field, and the questions he raised remain foundational to Malawian scholarship.

This edited volume gathers original contributions from scholars who have been influenced by, in dialogue with, or in productive tension with Kanyongolo's body of work. Chapters should engage one or more of the themes that defined his career: the nature and limits of Malawi's democratic transition; the interplay of constitutional design and political reality; the role of courts in a fragile democracy; electoral law; and the systemic exclusion of the poor, women, and marginalised groups from rights the law ostensibly guarantees. Together, the contributions form both a tribute to an exceptional academic career and a continuation of its unfinished work.

1.1 THEMES FOR SUBMISSION

The editors welcome contributions on any of the following themes. The list is indicative rather than exhaustive, and interdisciplinary and comparative approaches are especially encouraged. Authors need not confine themselves to Malawi alone, though all chapters should be clearly situated in relation to Malawian experience and the wider comparative debates the volume addresses.

- 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

1.2 THE COMPANION CONFERENCE: HOW THE TWO RELATE

A conference honouring Kanyongolo's legacy will be held in April 2027, ahead of this volume's publication. The conference and the volume are related but distinct undertakings, and neither participation is a precondition for the other.

The conference exists in its own right: it creates space for colleagues, former students, and admirers of Kanyongolo's work to honour him – including those who, for whatever reason, are not in a position to write a full book chapter. It also allows contributors to this volume to present their work-in-progress and receive feedback from conference participants before finalising their chapters.

Concretely, this means: you may write a book chapter without attending or presenting at the conference. You may present at the conference without any obligation to convert your paper into a book chapter. Or, if you wish, you may do both. Participation in either event is entirely optional, and neither commits you to the other.

If you intend to present at the conference and also wish to be considered for this edited volume, simply indicate this on your abstract submission – do not submit the same abstract twice. One submission is sufficient to be considered for both, and the editorial and conference committees will coordinate accordingly. Full details of the conference, including its own themes, dates, and submission process, are available in the separate Call for Conference Papers.

1.3 EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST AND ABSTRACTS

Authors wishing to contribute should submit an expression of interest comprising: an abstract of 400–600 words clearly stating the chapter's argument, methodology, evidence, and contribution to the literature; a short author biography of up to 150 words; and five to seven keywords. If you also wish to be considered for the companion conference, state this clearly at the top of your submission.

Abstracts should be submitted by email to *kachereseries@unima.ac.mw* with the subject line "CFP Abstract: [Title, Your First Name and Surname]." The abstract deadline is 1**5 November 2026**. Authors will be notified of decisions by **30 November 2026**.

1.4 FULL CHAPTER SUBMISSIONS

Full chapters should be between 8,000 and 12,000 words, inclusive of footnotes and references (shorter discussion contributions of 4,000–6,000 words may also be considered). Chapters must:

- Be submitted in Microsoft Word (.docx) format, 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, with Chicago footnote-style referencing
- Be original, unpublished work not currently under review elsewhere
- Be accompanied by an abstract of 250–300 words stating argument, methodology, and key findings
- Be blinded for double-blind peer review, with identifying information placed on a separate title page
- Confirm compliance with applicable ethical protocols where human participants are involved

The full chapter submission deadline is 18 January 2027.

1.5 PEER REVIEW PROCESS

All submissions will undergo double-blind peer review by at least two independent reviewers with expertise in the thematic area. The editors reserve the right to desk-reject manuscripts that fall substantially outside the volume's scope, do not meet minimum academic standards, or have not followed submission guidelines. Authors can expect an initial decision within 5 weeks of submission.

1.6 TIMELINE

All submissions will undergo double-blind peer review by at least two independent reviewers with expertise in the thematic area. The editors reserve the right to desk-reject manuscripts that fall substantially outside the volume's scope, do not meet minimum academic standards, or have not followed submission guidelines. Authors can expect an initial decision within 5 weeks of submission.

MILESTONE	DATE
Deadline for Expressions of Interest / Abstracts (book chapters)	15 November 2026
Notification of Abstract Decisions	30 November 2026
Full Chapter Submission Deadline	18 January 2027
Companion Conference (see separate Call for Conference Papers)	21 - 22 April 2027
First Round of Peer Review Feedback	22 February 2027
Revised Chapters Due	26 March 2027
Final Editorial Decisions	July 2027
Expected Publication	Late 2027

1.7 EDITORIAL TEAM

This volume is edited by an interdisciplinary team with expertise in Religion, Gender, Culture and Social Construction, Ethnicity, Identity, History, Public Sector Reform and Management, Trans-border Ethnicity, Gender in Politics, Development Policy, Political Governance, Development, International Relations, Customary Law, Justice Systems, Law Reform, and Civil Society and Activism. The editorial team is committed to producing a volume that is methodologically and disciplinarily diverse.

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

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. Comparative and interdisciplinary submissions are encouraged. We look forward to receiving your contributions.