

BRIEF PROFILE OF PROFESSOR JACK MAPANJE

Professor Jack Mapanje is Malawi's most accomplished poet. He is also a distinguished linguist, editor and scholar. He was jailed without trial for three years, seven months and sixteen days for his poetry book *Of Chameleons and Gods* which criticized Kamuzu Banda's dictatorial regime. Professor Mapanje was declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International.

He was awarded the 1988 Rotterdam Poetry Award, the 1990 PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award, the 2002 African Literature Association Fonlon-Nichols Award and he is a fellow of University of London. He has five poetry books to his credit, an Autobiography plus he has edited numerous books.

Professor Mapanje has been a visiting Professor at Leeds University, at Newcastle Upon Tyne University, at University of York, at York St John University and is now on a sabbatical year at University of Botswana. He has held many research and writer's residencies.

The Department of Literature at Makerere University teaches his work and was one of the Departments at African Universities that protested his imprisonment. The Department of Literature feels a bond with Jack Mapanje not only because his work is taught here but also because of his close and longtime friendship with Prof. David Rubadiri another prominent Malawian poet and scholar that Makerere and Uganda claim as their very own.

He is here in Uganda as the keynote speaker at the African Writers' Trust Writer's Conference, 2013.