Abstracts

In this conversation Ollen Mwalubunju discusses the politics of exile, the rise of Malawi’s popular movement in the early 1990s and its legacies. Further, Mwalubunju discusses at length the struggle by civil society groups to deepen the democratic space that has emerged since the demise of the postcolonial authoritarian regime in 1994. Finally, Mwalubunju reflects on the tensions and complexity of his work as a social activist and the difficulties of promoting the respect and protection of human rights in the current global political and economic conjuncture.

This conversation took place in January 2006.

Dialogos sobre derechos humanos.

Conversación con Ollen M.K. Mwalubunju

En esta conversación M discute las políticas del exilio, el origen del movimiento popular en Malawi en los primeros noventay su legado. Además M subraya las contradicciones y contribuciones de los grupos de sociedad civil en Malawi en su lucha por profundizar el espacio democrático que emerge desde el fin del

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1 Mwalubunju is a founding member of the Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation in Lilongwe, Malawi, an organization in which he has served as an Executive Director for ten years. This dialogue was carried out via telephone and email in January 2006. Eunice would like to thank Judith Blau for her encouragement during this process and for Ollen for taking the time from his extremely busy schedule to engage in this dialogue.
Eunice:
The period 1990–1997 saw a significant number of Malawians return to the country after many years in exile. The years were also characterized by the rise of popular protest that played a major part in the demise of the postcolonial totalitarian regime. What made you decide to return from exile and what developments stand out for you from this period of intense popular struggle in Malawi?

Ollen:
To begin with, being a victim of human rights violations of the postcolonial one party regime forced me to leave the country. During my years in exile I devoted all my energies to politics with the main activity being opposing the repressive political system that existed in Malawi. Demands for an end to