

# JANUARY 14, 2014

## Mungandi wa Muwina Mungandi

It's exactly three years ago today (as I write) when, on that fateful 'Black and Bloody Saturday' of January 14, 2011, the Zambian aggressive and oppressive occupying forces ran amok on the peaceful and humble people on the streets of Mongu. The occupying forces caused havoc of unprecedented magnitude—killing several people, wounding and maiming many more as well as resulting in in disappearances of several others and damage to property. Two of our people were killed in cold blood near BP filling station. We now know, thanks to the Rodger Chongwe Commission of Inquiry, that 17 people died as a direct consequence of the skirmishes of that day and about five or so persons are yet to be accounted for. At this moment, please take a moment of silence as you go through the Register of the January 14 Deaths and Missing. Also think about the maimed and the numerous others traumatized and those whose lives were disrupted and forever destabilized as a result of the events of that day.

It is worth noting that the occupying Zambian government continues to enforce a policy of aggression against all those who think that Barotseland has the 'Human Right' to self-determination, when the same government unilaterally abrogated the Barotseland Agreement of 1964. Ironically Zambia's PF government came to power after the January 14 fracas and on the promise that it would address the BA '64 issue within the first 90 days of its rule. Although it unconditionally released the January 14 detainees and set up the Chongwe commission of inquiry, it has arrested more people over BA '64 related offenses in its two years in power than the MMD did in its 20 years, and probably more still than the UNIP regime in its 27 years of draconian rule.

Yet the question that begs for an answer even as I toss and wrestle against unseen forces through this night is how many more January 14ths shall be witnessed before *Freedom* or *Tukuluho* day for Barotseland? *Tukuluho* day for Barotseland is a question of when, and not if—as one compatriot put it, '*with God on our side, Barotseland shall be free!*' Yet the question still begs for an answer; how many more arrests? How many more deaths? How much more pain, torture and anguish? The inner soul seems to wail, 'How many of these, O Lord?'

This makes me think of the Lyrics of **Bob Dylan's 'Blowin' in the Wind'**, especially the last two verses:

Yes, how many years can a mountain exist  
before it's washed to the sea?  
Yes, how many years can some people exist  
before they're allowed to be free?  
Yes, how many times can a man turn his head  
pretending he just doesn't see?  
The answer my friend is blowin' in the wind  
the answer is blowin' in the wind.

Yes, how many times must a man look up  
before he can see the sky?

Yes, how many ears must one man have  
before he can hear people cry?  
Yes, how many deaths will it take till he knows  
that too many people have died?  
The answer my friend is blowin' in the wind  
the answer is blowin' in the wind.

A Christian artist trying to Christianize Bob Dylan's Song put the refrain this way:

The answer my friend is living in all men  
The answer is living in all men

I guess that implies we as humanity have the answers to solve the ills of humanity and by implication we as the Barotse people have the key to the Barotse problem. It is really up to us to determine through God's Grace how long we are going to allow this to go on.

As we remember our departed friends on this day, when a dark cloud hovered over our land in this so called 'year of Jubilee', I just wish to remind all who care to be reminded of the words I spoke on the occasion of the first anniversary of January 14, 2011 at a memorial service held for that purpose:

*[A keynote speech delivered by Mungandi wa Muwina Mungandi-Movement for the Restoration of Barotseland – (MOREBA) National Secretary, to the first Memorial Service of the January 14 2011 Victims at Mongu Stadium on January 14<sup>th</sup> 2012]*

The Honourable Induna representing His Majesty the Litunga of Barotseland, Honourable Deputy Minister for Barotseland, Mwana' Mulena Nathaniel Mubukwanu, The Permanent Secretary Mr. Augustine Seyuba, The Deputy Permanent Secretary Mr. Liomba, The District Commissioner Mr. Mushengo, The deputy Mayor for Mongu Municipal Council. All distinguished Indunas here present, All Government Officials. All the Gallant men and women of Barotseland and indeed all protocols observed.

May I begin my discourse by inviting all those who know the song to have the liberty to join me in singing:

**Jesu Kale u felisize lindwa**  
*(O Jesus you helped bring an end to wars)*  
**Felisa cwalo lunya, maswenyeho**  
*(In the same way help put an end to social ills)*  
**O lifasi le la bondata' luna**  
*(O! May this land of our forefathers)*  
**Libe ni kozo**  
*(Abound in peace)*

That song or hymn or Anthem or whatever you would like to call it, and that particular stanza, is a prayer of the people of Barotseland. I request you to hold on to the words of that beautiful prayer throughout my presentation. It is by God's Grace, through Jesus Christ that we are saved from the ravages of wars in the past. It is him we implore to save us from the ravages of social ills like unnecessary hunger and misplaced anger, poverty and political suppression, systemic marginalization and institutionalized under development.

This day, January the 14<sup>th</sup> shall forever be remembered as a day when the suffering, anguish and torment of the people of Barotseland reached a crescendo. This is a day when our serene atmosphere was disrupted by the sound of gunshots, the cries of painful anguish and the wailing and mourning of mothers whose sons were no more. A day when Brothers, Sisters, friends and acquaintances weeping for the untimely departure of their beloved ones. It is a day when our land was destabilized and our tranquility was disrupted. A day when our peaceful people were brutalized, harassed and arrested like common criminals.

Today and everyday that shall ever be called January 14<sup>th</sup> as time and ages roll by, forevermore, we shall remember our anguish, sorrow and mourning as a people. We shall weep and refuse to be comforted like Rachael in the Bible account; "In Ramah a voice is heard, lamentations and weeping and great mourning, Rachael weeping for her children and would not be comforted, because they are no more" Matt 2: 18.

Coincidentally the month of January is named after a Greek mythological god by the name of Janus who was believed to be a god with two faces; one looking backward and the other looking forward. So we shall use January 14 as a day to look **backwards** and **forward**. Over and above that we shall use January 14 as a time to look **inward** and also **upwards**. We shall look **backwards** and see how our nation has evolved under the patronage of our gallant and vigilant forefathers who through the tempestuous and turbulent storms of tribal wars, missionary influence, European interference, and the scramble for Africa by the colonizers but managed to preserve our Identity Unity and indeed Autonomy.

We shall look **inward** and see the ills that have bedeviled us for almost half a century, sowing seeds of disunity, antagonism and cowardice amongst ourselves, thus hindering us to be cohesive and united in purpose and direction. As we look **further inward**, we shall be able to see the untapped potential within each of us and all of us collectively. Yes within each of us and all of us are seeds of greatness which must be nurtured and allowed to grow to maturity. We shall look **upwards** to God. Our Great God who created all men equal and ordained it that no man shall down trod another. From Him shall we expect and receive the grace of courage to forge ahead until our right to self-determination is respected by all. We shall then look **forward** with renewed courage and vigour, demanding our freedom because it is our birthright. We shall refuse to be intimidated as we march forward because IT IS NOT TREASON TO SEEK FREEDOM AND SELF-DETERMINATION.

One of my favourite Christian authors wrote about the church:

*"We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget how the LORD has led us in the past"* Ellen G. White.

This is as true for the church of Christ as it is true for Barotseland. January 14 then shall be our Ebenezer, our 'stone' of remembrance, our monument carved not in wood or stone but in time! What we are saying is:

*"Thus far has the Lord helped us"* 1 Samuel 7:12

And by implication we are saying further still will He guide us. Because of January 14, we will always remember that God hears our cries. He is touched by our tears, moved by our fears and pays attention to our prayers. The Lord has taken note of the blood that has been shed, the lives that have been lost and those that have been shattered by trauma for Barotseland. That blood has not been shed in vain;

those lives have not been lost in vain; our lives are not disrupted, shattered and traumatized in vain. Because of January 14, we shall wake up every morning with the assurance that FREEDOM IS COMING TOMORROW. Our aspirations shall be fully satisfied. Should tomorrow come without the freedom that we crave, deserve and desire, we shall have a more intensified hope that FREEDOM IS COMING TOMORROW! Until the day when we shall cry from every mountain top, hilltop, and indeed rooftop...FREE AT LAST! FREE AT LAST! THANK GOD ALMIGHT WE ARE FREE AT LAST! MAY THE GOOD LORD & GOD OF ALL BLESS BAROTSELAND!