

## Zambia Declines BNFA Offer to Resolve Barotse Crisis...as 8,000-plus sign Petition

by Muluti Musutu

Indications are that the Zambian government has refused to sign the **Barotse National Freedom Alliance** (BNFA) brokered offer to peacefully resolve the Barotseland impasse in a peaceful, civilized and legal manner.

By midnight, May 28, 2014, Zambian **President Michael Sata's** administration had not responded to BNFA lawyers request to sign an arbitration agreement that would have allowed both the Barotse and Zambian sides to sit at a round table and, like decent people, resolve issues arising from the breach, interpretation and other issues concerning the **Barotseland Agreement of 1964**. According to the petition prepared by BNFA lawyers, **Dugué & Kirtley AARPI** of Paris, France, Mr. Sata's signature and those who support the Barotse cause, were to be received by the lawyers by the close of **May 28, 2014**. Information available at BNFA and Dugué & Kirtley websites- <http://bnfa.info/pca-submission-agreement> and [http://www.international-arbitration-attorney.com/8000-signatures-barotseland-pca-arbitration-agreement-date/#.U4kl8\\_mSzWE](http://www.international-arbitration-attorney.com/8000-signatures-barotseland-pca-arbitration-agreement-date/#.U4kl8_mSzWE) shows that the response to the petition was overwhelming, as more than 8,000 Barotse patriots worldwide have already signed the petition, and more signatures keep coming in. Mr. Sata's signature, however, had not been received by the deadline, and neither had there been any correspondence from State House to explain the delay.

What this means is that the BNFA, being the sponsors of the petition, are now moving to the next step, as evidence gathered over the past five decades clearly shows that Zambia is not interested in resolving the issue amicably except through state-sponsored violence. It was BNFA's hope that Zambia would have seized the opportunity provided by the petition to bring the matter to a close through the **Permanent Court of Arbitration** (PCA). The PCA is a United Nations-affiliated world body created in 1899, and based in The Hague, the Netherlands, to resolve international disputes in a peaceful and honorary manner. One case that is close to home, which the PCA has resolved in the recent past, is the border dispute between Sudan and Southern Sudan.

In a recent interview with Zambia's Muvi-TV, BNFA spokesperson, **Mutompehi Situmbeko Musialela**, said he was hopeful the Zambian government would avail itself the opportunity to put across its claim to Barotseland, and said if Mr. Sata did not append his signature to the petition, other programmes will begin to unfold. The BNFA intends to prosecute its cause strictly through pacific means. Earlier in the year, BNFA Chairman-General, Honorable Clement Wainyae Sinyinda, noting that people's patience was running out, had called upon the world community to intervene in the Barotse impasse, which had seen Barotse blood being spilt by the occupying power's military.

Zambia was born on October 24, 1964, out of the unification of the two former British territories of Barotseland, on the one hand, and Northern Rhodesia, on the other hand,

through the Barotseland Agreement of 1964. However, less than five years after Zambia's independence, and hardly a few months after the death of the signatory to the Agreement, **Barotse King Sir Mwanawina III, Mr. Kenneth David Kaunda**, then President of the new unified state, abrogated the Agreement and sent to jail any person who raised the legality of the abrogation.

The BNFA is an umbrella organization for all known movements that advocate the complete independence of Barotseland, following the **Barotse National Council Resolution of March 28, 2012**, which officially recognized the Northern Rhodesian's unilateral abrogation of the Barotseland Agreement of 1964.