



BAROTSE NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

16<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2014

### **MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY TO THE BNFA CHAIRMAN GENERAL'S LETTER DATED 31<sup>st</sup> MAY 2014 ON THE SIEGE OF BAROTSELAND BY OCCUPYING ZAMBIAN SECURITY FORCES.**

Barotse National Youth League, wish to join many in congratulating you on your recent protest letter to President Michael Chilufya Sata of Zambia dated 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2014, to immediately withdraw their military personnel and hardware from Barotseland, as Barotseland is not at war.

Barotse National Youth League believes the matter of, disengaging from Zambia is not a **War matter but a Law matter**. Therefore there is no need for any legitimate government to resort to use of force and military tactics to resolve a straight forward issue. We believe only the law can peacefully settle this issue once and for all, and Barotse people have shown their willingness to go that way, as witnessed by the over 10,000 signatures which have been collected from Barotse Nationals at home, in Zambia and abroad, not forgetting those who may not have done so for fear of intimidation and victimization from Zambian authority and many more still coming.

We condemn the Zambian President's failure to sign the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) submission agreement, which would have allowed the BNFA lawyers, Messrs Dougue & Kirtley, to apply for setting up of an Arbitration Tribunal in The Hague, The Netherlands, to resolve the Barotse impasse. The failure by the Zambian president to sign the submission agreement in relation to the PCA process can only be interpreted as a clear admission of guilt. We also condemn the current media intimidation experienced in relation to covering the Barotseland issue. The recent report on Muvi TV station which is privately owned, that the Zambian government was threatening its reporter based in Mongu Barotseland, which can only be described as acts of evil and meant to suppress the voices of the people of Barotseland and their right to be heard by the outside world. In the meantime, the Zambian government has resorted to use its national broadcaster, Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation to promote propaganda alleging that all is well in Barotseland. We wonder what kind of media freedom Zambia is promoting where media houses are stopped from operating freely, while media houses are dictated on who should be given coverage, where certain groups of people are not given coverage based on where they come from. We urge the BNFA leaders who were recently called by Zambian Police Force based in Mongu Barotseland not to be intimidated but remain steadfast as we peacefully resolve our Independence process. Further, they should just know that such acts are signs of a dying horse.

The time for actualization of Barotseland's independence has come and cannot be postponed to later date and all concerned parties should sit together on a round table and settle the disengagement process leading to sharing of assets. The rest of Zambia still has time to continue

to maintain its name of being peaceful and conducting its elections in a democratic manner, while peaceful separating from Barotseland will help Barotseland and Zambia to continue to be good neighbors for the benefit of the two countries. We also agree with the word contained in your letter that, "It (Barotseland independence) is (like) an ideal whose time has come. Like the immortal words attributed to Victor Hugo, the renowned French Poet, "There is nothing more powerful than an *idea whose time has come*" and , again as Victor Hugo said, "More powerful than the might of all the armies on Earth is an idea whose time has come". For this idea alone, more Barotse nationals than you can imagine are willing to give up everything. To borrow the sentiments of Nelson Mandela, "this is an ideal for which **we** hope to live for and to see realized. But if need be, it is an ideal for which **we** are prepared to die (at any time)".

In line with the Post liminium doctrine we can no longer be obliged to honor an international Agreement that the other party has abrogated, which has reverted us to our original status. We the people of Barotseland declared that Barotseland is now free to pursue its own self-determination and destiny and we are committed to a peaceful disengagement with the Zambian government in the same manner that we attempted integration as a state within Zambia. This is in line with the resolution of the Barotse National Council (BNC) of March 26-27, 2012 held in the winter capital city of Barotseland, Limulunga, which was also attended by Zambian government representatives in Barotseland including military personnel. The Barotse National Council is the highest policy making body in Barotseland whose decision cannot be quashed by any institution or individual apart from another BNC. Therefore, Mr. Chairman General you have the power which you draw from the BNC resolutions, with specific reference to resolution number 3, 5, 6 and 9 below:

3. The Zambian government to immediately refrain from committing actions of violence and intimidation against the people of Barotseland. " *As you and your Ministers are aware, for some time now, there has been a constant heavy build-up of your country's security forces in Mongu, Lukulu, Senanga and other parts of Barotseland for no apparent reason. While your oppressive authorities claim that it is a routine security operation, we, the people of Barotseland, have watched as this so called routine operation culminated into unprecedented high levels of deployment of security forces, which reached a crescendo at several battalions just before May 28, 2014*".

5. The Barotse Government should immediately formalize the DECLARATION OF DISPUTE with the Zambian Government on the basis that the Zambian Government has violated and unilaterally abrogated the Unity Treaty whose purpose was to bind the two territories of Barotseland and the rest of Zambia, and also notify the SADC, AU, Commonwealth and United Nations of that fact. " *The international community is legally and morally compelled to move in and ensure that for once, a potentially volatile situation is averted by putting pressure on the Zambian regime to sign the PCA submission agreement and vacate Barotseland forthwith*".

6. The people of Barotseland shall exercise their right to revert Barotseland to its original status as a sovereign nation, so that the people of Barotseland shall determine their political, cultural, social and economic development. " *Mr. President, I give you two solemn assurances, first that we are determined never ever to give up the fight for our Right to self-determination, no matter*

*what obstacles Zambia puts in our way, and second, that we are determined never ever to succumb to Zambia's temptations to make us use their door of violence and lawlessness."*

9. We mandate the Barotse Government to immediately engage the Zambian government with the sole purpose of working out transitional arrangements towards self-determination for Barotseland within the shortest possible time under the auspices of the United Nations.

Finally, we support your call upon the international community to legally and morally be compelled to move in and ensure that for once, a potentially volatile situation is averted by putting pressure on the Zambian regime to sign the PCA submission agreement and vacate Barotseland forthwith.

In conclusion, as Barotse National Youth League we wish to assure you, Mr. Chairman General, that we stand ready to support you and your executive in your activities aimed at liberating Barotseland from Zambia peacefully.

**FOR THE BNYL**

Signed

**Charles Wambinji**

**For the National Publicity Secretary**

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