

## **Semi-illiterates pick wrong end of stick over a letter about purported BNFA/BRE talks with Zambian government**

**By Mutungulu Wanga, Deputy Chairman-General, BNFA**

In the past thirty-six (36) hours the Barotse Post has published some articles written by self acclaimed Barotse revolutionaries of the Linyungandambo grouping condemning the Barotse National Freedom Alliance (BNFA) and the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE) of having sold out over Barotseland independence by opting to go into talks leading to signing of a new agreement with the Sata regime to replace the dead 1964 independence unity treaty, commonly known as the Barotseland Agreement 1964. The source of these peoples' fury and accusations is, according to them, a purported letter from the Zambian government to the BRE in which it is affirmed that President Sata will lead a high powered delegation of his cabinet to Limulunga on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014 to meet the BRE and some named BNFA leaders. It is further alleged that the Zambian government will offer a public apology over its commissions and omissions with regard to Barotseland before engaging the BRE and BNFA into a discussion leading to reconciliation and signing of a new unity accord between the parties to replace the defunct Barotseland Agreement 1964. There has also been an article written by one, Sikopo Mataa, of Linyungandambo New York branch in the USA, speaking ill of the latest proposal by the BNFA to form the Barotseland Transitional Authority.

It is the policy of the BNFA not to go into public arguments with some claimants to revolutionary status, which they base on misplaced belief that their brand of advocacy of Barotseland independence is sound, if only to protect them from adverse publicity that may strip them of some semblance of respectability acquired by propagating ill-informed interpretation of Barotseland statehood. The BNFA takes no pride in exposing the ignorance of activists who have chosen to work outside the BNFA as often espoused by their laughable utterances, which only serve to reduce the value that discerning people attach to the actualization of Barotseland statehood. To this end, the BNFA Executive Committee only offers responses to public criticism of its affairs in situations where the public has not had access to counter information that enables one to make a fair judgment of the said criticism. In this particular case, it is an issue of the said [letter](#) from government not having been seen by the public in general and some of the people condemning both the BRE and BNFA Executive Committee in particular. We have no doubt that some of our ardent critics from Linyungandambo grouping may have seen the [letter](#) but lack the capacity to correctly interpret it while mistakenly seeing in it none existent political mileage against the BNFA. The BNFA initially had no knowledge of the said [letter](#) and got wind of it from the publicity through the Barotse Post upon which efforts were made to obtain a copy. Firstly, the [letter](#) is not from the Zambian government but is authored by a non-descript conflict resolution organization called AGAPE Associates. Secondly, the [letter](#) has not invited BNFA, in particular, to its proposed Truth and Reconciliation Conference (TRC) but has specifically mentioned Linyungandambo in that regard. More importantly, the [letter's](#) narration of the evolution of the Barotseland problem speaks volumes of the lack of knowledge of the subject by its author(s) as not to be taken seriously by sensible people. In view of the foregoing, anyone who gets excited by this [letter](#) is either illiterate or is supposed to be considered to be in the same league as its author as being ignorant of the issue they are dealing with. The other plausible explanation is that the [letter](#) is a plant by enemies of Barotseland to sow seeds of discord among our people and those riding high on it are actually agents of the enemy. We leave it to the readers to pass judgment over these issues after reading the [letter](#) and the damning criticism being leveled against the BRE and BNFA.

On the issue of the BTA, it is quite clear that the BNFA critics have no clue on how governments are formed. They believe a government of Barotseland whether before or after independence can be formed by proclamation by whoever fancies themselves as leader or administrator over the territory. They forget that in modern times sovereignty and government come from the people of the concerned territory and processed in a manner that leaves no doubt as to the legitimacy of the claim of authority. It is for this reason that it is believed that a person who declares independence from a hiding hole in the ground and, thereafter, goes into perpetual hiding cannot be said to be governing the territory. Which sensible person can accept that there is 'a government in place' even when the governed do not see that government and cannot engage with it? The phrase 'government-in-place' was coined after the earlier one, 'government-in-waiting', was questioned with regard to how long that government was going to stay in waiting. We are now supposed to be under a government-in-place in an 'independent' Barotseland in a situation where supporters of that independence are arrested by Zambia police within the same independent country, tried by Zambian courts inside the same independent country and imprisoned by Zambian prison personnel within the said independent country. While all this is happening the government-in-place remains comfortably hiding in its place within the same independent country. Ki bulyangu bo bucwani bo?

There are basically four organs of state power in Barotseland and anyone who has no control over them cannot be a government. The first is the Monarch who is the Head of State, the second is the legislative authority responsible for making laws, the third is the judiciary responsible for behavioral control over those who dwell within the area of jurisdiction, and the fourth is the executive—through cabinet, responsible among others for the treasury/economy that enables control over livelihood of the people and control over the instruments of enforcement (the military, the police and the prisons). In modern statecraft, authority over these organs of power is legitimized by consent of the governed.

When the Kaunda regime legislated against the Barotse government and renamed it Barotse Royal Establishment, he did not annul the Litungaship or the office of chief in Barotseland. These were left intact and they did not bother him that much. What Kaunda destroyed was the Katengo Legislative Council, the Parliament of Barotseland, which was popularly elected and mandated to form cabinet and exercise executive control over the affairs of Barotseland on behalf of the Litunga. The powers of the Katengo were illegally transferred to the newly created district councils which were answerable to the Minister of local government who in turn was answerable to the President of Zambia. This is all that Kaunda did to illegally take over control of Barotseland and since that time (1965) there has been no effective government of Barotseland—with cabinet handpicked by the Litunga. So the first step towards Barotseland statehood is to reclaim the legislative authority and an executive body and all other instruments of government, not ant-hole proclamations of state authority.

There is the issue of how those who have been arrested and tried in Zambian courts have behaved. We have some insisting that the Zambian courts should not have jurisdiction over them, which is a good political stance but it is spoiled by requesting the same court to send them to the so called commonwealth court, whatever this is. We would like to know where this court is located and what kind of matters it adjudicates over. How do you ask a court that you do not recognize to do anything for you?

At the time Honourable Sinyinda was detained alongside the Linyungandambo elements, there was a tug of war on the question of legal representation and general approach to the defence with the latter rejecting services of a Zambian lawyer and insisting on demanding trial by the so called commonwealth court. In the end the BNFA decided on legal representation for Hon. Sinyinda and any of the others who desired it. When the defence strategy of calling Kaunda, Sata, etc., to the witness stand was unveiled, all

the detainees, including those who did not recognize the court's jurisdiction, embraced and parroted it in court. We need not remind all and sundry that all the eighty plus detainees were released because the state prosecution team found itself in a tight corner. In the latter case of Nayoto and others the BNFA decided to give room to the 'no jurisdiction and commonwealth court' arguments. The results have their own story which deserves no elaboration.