

Statement to the Resident Minister of the failed unitary state of Zambia protesting against occupying Zambian police harassment and continued human rights abuses in Barotseland

by Barotse Imilemas

We, members of Barotse Imilemas (BIs) a youth activist group advocating for Barotseland's right to self-determination on our own behalf and indeed on behalf of the down trodden people of Barotseland, wish to register our dismay and utter disgust at the continued harassment by the occupying Zambian police force and other so called Zambia Security agents currently flooding Barotseland. Mr. Resident Minister, as you are aware, Mongu police officers in the latest episode of this sustained campaign of terror and harassment, summoned our leader, Honorable Clement Wainyae Sinyinda on 12th November 2014. The Hon. Sinyinda is the Chairperson General of the Barotse National Freedom Alliance (BNFA), an umbrella organization of all Barotse activist groups. Your officers interrogated Hon. Sinyinda over fictitious allegations of planned sabotage by Barotse activists under his leadership, aimed at hindering the forthcoming Zambia Presidential elections in Barotseland. Barely two days later, on Friday 14th November 2014, some among us were also summoned by police and questioned over the same allegations as outlined hereunder:

Zambia police allegations and our response

On the alleged planned killing of some senior police officers and top Zambian government officials operating in Barotseland, which they call western province. we responded that those were wild allegation as we had made it clear the police force was non factors in as far as the issue concerning the actualization of Barotseland statehood and, therefore, killing police officers was completely irrelevant. We also emphasized that the Barotse people are not prone to criminality as criminal activities are prominent the rest of Zambia not Barotseland. For the past half century Barotse Nationals have been brutalized by state machinery of successive Zambian regimes. They have been wrongly arrested, maimed, and killed on fake and trumped up charges and at no time have they been prompted to respond by violence or fight back, not because they are cowards or weaklings but simply because they are peace loving by nature and decided to pursue the actualization of Barotseland statehood by legal and political means.

On planning to set ablaze some government infrastructures within Barotseland, we responded that to that was equally outlandish. Despite that we were merely

youths, we were well aware of the fact that through the fifty years of Zambian domination of Barotseland, the territory has deteriorated from the most affluent and advanced territory to the most poverty ravaged in the former unitary state of Zambia. It would be utter madness for the BIs to plan on destroying any of the few remaining dilapidated infrastructures that exist in Barotseland. After all, much of what is referred to as Zambian government infrastructure in Barotseland was property of the Barotse government, which was grabbed by force. Destroying any of the infrastructure in Barotseland is like poking ourselves in the eye as we say in Silozi, *-ku iswala mwa lito*. These infrastructures in actual fact belong to the Government of the Kingdom of Barotseland.

On forcing the Litunga to sign independence documents, we enjoy a very cordial relationship with our Litunga, His Majesty Lubosi Imwiko II, and we do not need to force him to do anything. The Litunga from time to time gives the BIs assignments, which we gladly execute. To suggest that we have to force the Litunga to sign any papers or even further that we plan to kill him is perpetration of *-divide and rule* tactics, which successive Zambian regimes have used in futility. Further, the issue of Barotseland self-determination and self-rule was settled at the Barotse National Council (BNC) of March 26-27, 2012 whose resolutions are binding on the Litunga, all the Kutas and indeed all loyal citizens of Barotseland. There are no additional independence papers that need signing.

On planning to destabilize the forth-coming presidential by-elections by ensuring that people in Barotseland are deterred from taking part in the election by not voting, we clearly pointed out that we do not have such plans because presidential election in the failed unitary state of Zambia are of no consequence in the oppressed Kingdom of Barotseland. The future of Barotseland has already been determined by the of mentioned BNC resolutions of March 27, 2012 As is already known, the resolutions simply accepted the Zambian government's repudiation of the Barotseland Agreement 1964, which means that the union between Barotseland and the rest of Zambia was now null and void because the only legal instrument on the basis of which the two territories agreed to proceed to independence as *-one country and one nation* was trampled upon and no longer in existence. Consequently Barotseland resolved to exercise its right to self-determination and self-rule thereby putting in motion the separation process of the Kingdom of Barotseland from the rest of Zambia. Therefore, presidential elections in the former unitary state of Zambia do not excite or interest us in anyway. To us, it is a foreign issue. We tell whoever emerges winner that the people of the Kingdom of Barotseland are no longer part of the rest of Zambia

The way forward

We made it clear to the police officers that were aware that the so-called Zambian security agents have turned the Barotseland impasse into a money spinning exercise whereby some Barotse nationals have been arrested, maimed and killed on cheap rumour mongering and manufactured stories. We warned the police officers and other security agents that they are carefully being monitored and their activities shall land them at The Hague.

We wish to make it also clear to your government, that for as long as you do not withdraw your illegal administration in Barotseland, peace cannot be guaranteed in the failed unitary state of Zambia because **PEACE CANNOT BE GUARANTEED IN THE ABSENCE OF JUSTICE.** Being 21st century youths, we will not allow aliens to trample upon our 500 year old history of the Kingdom of Barotseland just because of the 50 years of forced domination by Zambian successive regimes.

We have faith in the efforts of our leaders in the BNFA who are doing everything possible to ensure that the actualization of Barotseland statehood is achieved in a pacific manner, yet no one can guarantee that this patience will last forever because even patience has its limits. We urge you and through you your government and the international community that:

1. the Zambian government should refrain from all acts of provocation on Barotse nationals and all such related obscenities;
2. the Zambian government should unconditionally release all Barotse prisoners in Zambian jails arrested and convicted on trumped up charges and also remove the Nolle Prosque that has been placed on those that could not be successfully prosecuted and/or convicted;
3. the Zambian government should with immediate effect allow Barotse nationals enjoy the universal Human Rights that all other Humans enjoy: freedom of speech, assembly and association as well as access to mass media reporting and coverage in order for us to openly communicate with the masses and
4. The incoming-Zambian government should engage Barotse activists and the BRE on the disengagement process, sharing of assets and payment of overdue obligation.