

## **Which way Barotseland regarding the upcoming Zambia presidential elections?—as HH de-campaigns himself in Barotseland**

by Wamuwi Mukunda

There are eleven (11) presidential candidates offering themselves to lead Zambia, including to continue to illegally occupy Barotseland come 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and beyond with the exception of only one candidate. The million pound question is, should Barotseland participate in these elections, which is tantamount to voting for continued illegal occupation of Barotseland? To me, Barotseland seems to have two options: (i) to have nothing to do with the elections of another country (Zambia), that is, a total election boycott in Barotseland and (ii) to participate and support a user-friendly candidate. From what is happening on the ground, any of these alternatives have more questions than answers. On the election boycott do our people understand the meaning of participating in Zambian presidential election? Are they ready for an election boycott itself? Can they successfully monitor an election boycott? On participating in the election, can our people be objective enough to support a user friendly candidate as the regards the issue of Barotseland statehood or blindly jump and allow themselves to be blown by the wind thereby be caught-up in the 'vote for the winner syndrome' that shall even derail their own cause by voting for a candidate who does not even support their cause.

For purposes of this article I have decided to just look at seven (7) of the 11 candidates, namely: Chipimo E (NAREP), Hichilema H (UPND), Lungu E (PF), Miyanda G (HP), Mumba N (MMD), Nawakwi E (FDD) and Sondashi L (FDA), using simple considerations. Ever since these candidates kicked-off their campaigns, Chipimo, Lungu, Mumba and Nawakwi have been mute on the Barotseland issue. Miyanda is notorious for rubbishing the Barotseland Agreement 1964 (BA '64) many years ago, calling it statute stale. Hichilema campaign is dubbed 'united Zambia campaign'. The question is on what basis when the BA'64 that brought about that unity is no more? A clear statement of deceit, can the Bartose not see through this deception? This puts Hichilema in the same category like Miyanda in rubbishing the BA'64. In sharp contrast, Sondashi devoted half of page 19 of his party's manifesto to what he calls the Barotseland Question. It states, "*We recognise that Barotseland was a separate protectorate country before Northern Rhodesia became an independent state of Zambia. We also recognise that Barotseland joined Northern Rhodesia at independence freely to become the Republic of Zambia. We further recognise that the Barotseland Agreement of 1964 exists in perpetuity until it is withdrawn and no one has the right to abrogate it or bring it to an end without the consent of the Litunga and his Council and the people of Barotseland.*

*FDA will reinstate the Barotseland Agreement 1964 and be prepared to allow Barotseland people to decide their destiny. When FDA becomes government, it will immediately engage the Litunga and his Council and the people of Barotseland to discuss the way forward with regard to this contentious Barotse question with a view to ending the political tension in Barotseland, which has threatened the security of Zambia and Barotseland. FDA party recognises and supports the principle of unitarism of states for enhancing state security and peaceful existence while at the same time recognising the principle of self determination in*

*certain exceptional cases that meet the international standard of genuineness.” This makes Sondashi the exceptional candidate out of the 11.*

### **My Way forward**

In addition to what Sondashi’s manifesto says on the Barotseland question, I have had the opportunity to watch him on television as he addressed Indunas at Namuso, at a rally at Mulalmbwa Primary School during his recent visit to Mungu and to listen to him when he spoke to the leader of the Barotse National Freedom Alliance (BNFA), he was categorical in recognizing the people of Barotseland’s right to self-determination and self-rule as well as recognizing Barotseland as a nation, which agreed to proceed to independence with the rest of Northern Rhodesia on the basis of the BA’64. Here is a user friendly candidate who can be held accountable for his words. On this principle, I support Sondashi—win or loss. Dr. SONDASHI HAS MY VOTE. Therefore, I will boycott the elections of president of Zambia by giving my vote to this Kaonde candidate, the only honest candidate regarding the Barotseland issue.

It is, further, my considered view that as far as the Barotseland statehood is concerned, Hichilema is in actual fact de-campaigning himself in Barotseland with his ‘united Zambia campaign’ strategy, crowned by his party’s slogan of: Zambia Forward because they are built on the deceit copied from Kaunda and successive Zambian regimes. I strongly believe that he is aiming at amassing more votes from the north of Zambia (Muchinga, Northern and Luapula provinces). In past elections, his party’s performance in those areas has been very dismal to say the least. Given this precedence, I can safely predict that this time round, he will again receive fewer votes from these places as compared to what he is likely to reap from his deceit in Barotseland. **Kono ha utwahali ku ba nitaba ni za Bulozhi.** Further, how can one vote for Lungu, when his PF government pardoned thieves—Masumba (Mufumbwe MP) and Mpombo (former Minister of Defence in the MMD government later turned PF) on Christmas day but still incarcerate Barotseland nationals—Mombotwa, Pelekelo, young Sikwibele et al—for simply advocating for the emancipation of Barotseland, which is one of their basic human rights.

I conclude by stating that the coming election is very crucial for mother Barotseland. Yes; the election will be crucial in the sense that the outside world, to whom Barotseland has always turned and continue to look to for assistance concerning the Barotseland-Northern Rhodesia/Zambia impasse will be keen to see how the Barotse will vote this time round, following the famous 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 Barotse National Council Resolutions. Simply stated, the election will be a political barometer. Whether Barotseland votes for PF, HP, NAREP, MMD, FDD, FDA or UPND will have a telling effect on what we expect outsiders to do in assisting us to actualize Barotseland statehood. For the sake of mother Barotseland, rightly or wrongly, I urge ALL voters in Barotseland to turn out in great numbers on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015 to VOTE for Dr. SONDASHI of the Forum for Democratic Alternatives (FDA). This will be the best New Year gift we can all give to our nation of Barotseland. So send a word to your neighbour, yes to all Barotseland people to:

**VOTE FOR SONDASHI an advocate for a free Barotseland**

**VOTE for FDA**

**With God on our side, Barotseland shall be free**