

Shuwanga on MOREBA—A case of siwawayi

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Reasonable people are not easily moved by happenings around them, taking action only when there is absolute need and not regretting it afterwards. But in society there are other people who are naturally unsure of themselves and these are prone to move with the wind, which ever direction it blows. A clear demonstration is found in harvested grain, such as maize, which is normally mixed with some remnants of off cuts of maize stock leaves or cob covers, otherwise known as *biwawayi*. When the wind blows the maize grain, on account of its high value, does not move or shake but the *biwawayi* will always manifest movements, depicting their unstable character.

The recent Barotse Post [article by Shuwanga](#) containing rumblings against the Movement for the Restoration of Barotseland (MOREBA) and its alliance partners in [the Barotse National Freedom Alliance \(BNFA\)](#) calls for comments because it is a follow-up on a number of other postings by him, which have been ignored for their inconsequential content, thereby raising need for the writer to be made aware of his error lest he is carried away with the mistaken belief that his performance is anything to write home about. Meanwhile, it should pointed out, from the outset, that each and every time members of [the BNFA](#) have had to debate an issue with anyone on this forum it has been in form of a response to attacks on either the organization in general or specific individual members of the organization. Surprisingly, some contributors to the debate who bemoan the fact that the matters arising from the ensuing exchange constitute washing of dirt linen in public only come up with their wise counsel after those who were on the receiving end of the barrage of attacks have responded, forgetting the much more wise adage that prevention is better than cure. It is with this background that the following comments on Shuwanga's recent effort at painting red [the BNFA](#) and, through it, MOREBA, are made:

1. Meaning and Purpose of an Organizational Alliance.

Clearly, Mutompehi Shuwanga has a very misleading understanding of not only the functioning of an alliance of organizations but also that of groupings of individuals. It appears, from the disappointment he displays on seeing MOREBA's characteristics emerging in [the BNFA](#), that his expectations were that the organizations that formed the Alliance would cease to exist and a completely new set up devoid of any semblance of the partners will emerge. This is a very poor interpretation of the word 'Alliance' as a noun, and he would be better advised to pick up the ELD (English learners dictionary) to acquaint himself with the correct meaning of the word so that he performs better next time he grapples with this subject.

[The BNFA](#) is an umbrella organ through which the programmes of the member organizations are channeled and coordinated, nothing more and nothing less. While it is expected that the Alliance partners will influence and even modify each others programmes and outlook, the major objective is that of coordinated effort and thus enhanced action on issues and not annihilation of member organizations of the Alliance. This is the basic ingredient of any Alliance or partnership, whether at individual or organizational level, and this extends even to amalgamation of nations into federal or unitary states. The reason the unitary state of Zambia has failed is that the characteristics of Barotseland as a partner have been suppressed by the governing authorities and this is a recipe for breakup of any such partnership. It is assumed herein that Mutompehi Shuwanga is married, and an examination of his family unit will show that the characteristics of both himself and his spouse are

not only reflective in his homestead but the offspring of the marriage as well. Anyone who finds fault with such a revelation does not know what they are dealing with.

As for the complaint about MOREBA altering its colours to embrace total independence of Barotseland contrary to its original stance, this is a contradiction of the assertion that the same MOREBA has high jacked the Alliance. The truth is that MOREBA and its Alliance partners as well as those outside the Alliance were participants in the historic [Barotse National Council Resolutions of 27 March 2012](#). The Chairperson of MOREBA was appointed to preside over the Resolutions Committee of the Conference and went on to present the resolutions to the Plenary Session of the Conference for their adoption. How then can MOREBA be expected to work contrary to its own resolutions? The fact is members of MOREBA are good at executing that which they commit themselves to, the only difference being that they do so in a reasoned, well thought out and coordinated manner as opposed to *'ku tulatula fela wa simbotwe sesi yambilwe ki sului'*.

2. Report to Kuta on Meeting with President Sata.

Shuwanga alleges that MOREBA high jacked the presentation of the report on the meeting with President Sata. This is twisted story telling. The fact is that at the time of that encounter with State House no established liaison arrangements were made among the organizations that had been invited, and the said organizations were invited in their individual capacities. As a matter of fact the representatives of Linyungandambo and BFM at that meeting did, immediately on their return to Mongu, present a verbal report to the Kuta and this they did without the involvement of MOREBA. The latter, on their part, decided to file in a written report which was copied to President Sata and the Cabinet Ministers who had been part of the State House meeting. When Shuwanga and his friends got sight of the report they were infuriated, not by its contents but the fact that they were not part of it. In their blind fury they forgot that they had already presented their own verbal report to which they did not invite MOREBA and the latter had no issues with this fact. In an attempt to make up for what they considered inadequate performance on their part they set out to produce their own written report, in which they copied everything from the MOREBA report, including commas and full stops. When MOREBA followed up with a visit to the Kuta on its report which had gone in advance, Shuwanga and company also chose to present their own written version at the same time. The Kuta was naturally amused by their action, after listening to the reading of the report and realizing it was a reproduction of the MOREBA paper.

The Kuta, in its wisdom, decided that what was to be presented to the Kaongolo ka Nyambe would be the MOREBA report but that all who had presented themselves for the occasion would be allowed in the Kashandi to witness the same. Shuwanga and company readily accepted this decision and this is how they formally adopted the MOREBA report for the said presentation. What is evident in all this is that while Shuwanga and his likes detest the existence of MOREBA they, on many occasions, have had no problems associating themselves with its products. The issue of holding the BNC came up during both the Kuta and Kashandi sessions and all were agreed that the matter was urgent. The liaison meeting which followed was suggested to the rest of the entourage by Mutompehi Mukubesa Ilukena, the representative of Linyungandambo, and Shuwanga was in attendance at the time of the proposal which was made immediately after the Kashandi session. The MOREBA party accepted the suggestion and requested Ilukena and his Mongu based friends to arrange for the venue so that the liaison meeting could be held the following day. As matters turned out it took the initiative of the MOREBA side to secure the venue at Lyambai hotel because those

who had proposed for holding of the meeting could not do so. This was the birth of the Liaison Committee for the groups, and MOREBA cannot claim to have initiated it and has never done so.

3. BNFA as an Exclusive and Elitist Body.

As a background, it must be established that MOREBA was born out of efforts by organizations that existed prior to its formation, to create a joint front for securing Barotseland emancipation. Shuwanga is very much aware of those efforts as he was personally involved in recruiting would be member organizations and individuals. However, it turned out that some of the targeted groups and individuals chose to shun the meeting that was held at Mongu's Mumwa Crafts Center to launch the new organization and its objectives, but Shuwanga was in attendance and ended up as a member of the Steering Committee of what emerged as the Movement for the Restoration of the Barotseland Agreement, abbreviated as MOREBA. He was to pull out shortly thereafter. Nonetheless, the organization persisted in its endeavours, through the petitioning of the National Constitutional Conference, the Roger Chongwe Commission whose recommendations tied up with the MOREBA presentation but was spurned by President Sata, right up to the holding of the BNC.

It must be emphasized, for the sake of clarity, that it was Sata's u-turn on his promises with regard to Barotseland and, most importantly, his refusal to accede to the findings of the Commission of Inquiry which he voluntarily appointed, that precipitated MOREBA's review of its strategy on Barotseland and the fate of the organization in this respect was sealed at the [BNC of 26-27 March 2012](#).

The Groups Liaison Committee (GLC) which led to the formation of BNFA was chaired by Mutompehi Mukubesa Ilukena of Linyungandambo. MOREBA missed most of its meetings, attending only two out of six and those missed include the last meeting which resolved to form BNFA. The targeted member organizations were called upon to nominate five members each to form the Executive Committee of the Alliance which, by decision of the Groups Liaison Committee, was to invite Mutompehi Wainyaye Sinyinda to head it as Chairman-General. MOREBA, alive to the factors that had ensued at its own formation, where those who had initially been in the forefront withdrew at the last minute, took its time in formally joining the Alliance. Linyungandambo members, led by its Secretary General, Samuel Kalimukwa and Mukubesa Ilukena having been the Linyungandambo representative on the GLC, which he had also chaired, as well as the BFM members were the first to enter the Alliance Executive Committee. However, the inaugural meeting was delayed by MOREBA's late entry but this eventually took place. Nonetheless, it is a notorious fact the Afumba Mombotwa led Linyungandambo turned their back on [the BNFA](#) the moment it was formed, despite having held the position of Chairperson of the GLC whose activities caused the birth of the Alliance. To this end, their Secretary General, who had occupied the same position in the Alliance, attended only the inaugural meeting and was to disappear immediately thereafter, amidst statements of condemnation of the new Alliance by his Linyungandambo leadership. Those who had accompanied him in the Alliance were also eventually forced out by their leadership.

The foregoing is a presentation of the attitudes of some of our compatriots to the idea of unified front over Barotseland. Their idea is that an alliance should be based on their partners discarding of their principles in favour of theirs or, indeed, they and only they should lead. When they do not get these conditions they cannot accept the alliance, even if they are the ones who initiated it in the first place. As for MOREBA, they will invite it along but the moment it makes its entrance they will be so petrified that they will immediately shoot up '*niku lusikisa lubilo kuli mane abayo yema ki kwa*

buse bwa Windhoek'. Now Shuwanga is yet again inviting [the BNFA](#), in which MOREBA is comprised, to join the so called Transitional Government. Does he want to start another long run to Windhoek? It is nonsensical to invite partnership from someone whose ideals and work methods you do not agree with. Indeed, it is a reflection of low level thinking to insist on such deals when they cannot work. Meanwhile, the idea that Barotseland independence can only be achieved when all political organizations merge is utopian. A look around SADC, Africa and the world proves that the general rule is that of multiplicity of liberation movements in countries which attained independence from oppressors, whether foreign or local. Mergers may have their advantages but they cannot be forced and, in this respect, it is important to recognize the inevitability of diversity and learn how to manage it.

4. The Transitional Government.

This illusive government of Barotseland has changed nomenclature each time its existence is questioned. It started as the '*government-in-waiting*' but when we questioned if it was to wait forever it quickly changed to '*government-in-place*'. We then questioned how a government in place can tolerate the arrests and trial of its people and leaders by foreign forces within the territory in which it is in place. This question arose in our response to unfair attacks over the proposal for the establishment of the Barotseland Transitional Authority (BTA) submitted to the Kuta. We note that following that question and the issue of BTA the government-in-place became the *Transitional government of Barotseland*. This tells a lot about knowledge of what constitutes a government by the people concerned, the bottom line being that it is nothing but very big *mandwani*. Of late we have heard that this government had approached the BRE to give it a letter authorizing it to fund raise among the people of Barotseland in aid of legal fees for Botswana and South African Lawyers who should take the issue of Barotseland independence to the International Court of Justice. It boggles one's mind to hear of a government of a territory seeking someone else's authority to raise funds from its own citizens. The BRE, of course, did not take the issue seriously. Meanwhile, elements of this same government had poured scorn on the initiative by [the BNFA](#) to engage the African Commission of Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) and The Hague based International Court of Arbitration, and their reasoning is that Barotseland is already independent and does not need court processes to get what it already has. This is infantile delinquency at its very best.

5. Rumour Mongering and the Specter of 'Educated Illiterates'

There is a very bad element of easily being carried away by rumours, mostly generated by those who wish Barotseland ill. This unfortunate situation thrives on failure to counter check information and swallowing anything that paints the opponent black. Most unfortunately, even those better placed in terms of exposure and formal education fail to use their acquired attributes because they are too lazy to interrogate information being fed to them, to the total detriment of society. The specter of educated illiterates manifests itself in people who are gifted with the ability to read and interpret information being drawn into conclusions from loose and idle talk and even acting on it without taking the trouble to examine the relevant documents for guidance. This is what happened with the AGAPE Associates letter which was projected by rumour mongers as a letter from GRZ inviting the BRE and [the BNFA](#) to discussions on the issue of Barotseland. A lot of opponents of [the BNFA](#) went into a battle cry calling for the blood of Hon Sinyinda and his lieutenants, without seeking to read the letter first. This was an act of illiteracy on the part of these people, notwithstanding whether or not they are literate whenever they decide to be. When you are educated but fail to read literature to help society you are as good as the one who can't read, and if

you fail to correctly interpret information because you are too lazy to read a document critically then you are semi-illiterate, notwithstanding the fact that you have ability to understand the written word if you really cared to do so, by reading instead of just glancing at the document.

It is noted that Shuwanga has persistently brought up the phrases of 'semi-illiterates' and 'picking wrong end of stick' that were used in the article defending [the BNFA](#) against unfounded attacks on alleged invitation to a meeting by government on account of the AGAPE letter, which allegation continues to this day under a different form with different accused persons. But allegations are just that, ie, allegations. Nonetheless, Shuwanga's obsession in this respect arises from the fact that he is one of those who had swallowed the bait and sees the 'semi-illiterate' phrase as having been aimed at him. As has been said by the wise, the guilty are always afraid, meaning that *mu ipilaezi kiyena sifosi*.

Conclusion

The Barotseland struggle is a long and tedious undertaking, requiring the contribution of all who care. However, as we rise from time to time to put in whatever we can, we should at all times strive *kuli lube limbonyi, lusike lwaba siwawayi*.