

PRESS STATEMENT ON PUBLIC RALLY SLATED FOR FRIDAY  
2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2015 AT THE BLUE GUMS GROUND IN  
MONGU DEFERRED—AS THE OCCUPYING ZAMBIA REGIME  
CONTINUE DENYING THE BAROTSE THEIR RIGHT TO  
ASSEMBLE

by BNFA Executive Committee

The Barotse National Freedom Alliance (BNFA) wishes to announce to the Barotse patriots and other stakeholders that the public rally dully scheduled for today Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015 has been deferred to a later date, soon to be communicated. A brief background to the circumstances leading to the decision by the BNFA Executive to defer the long awaited and much anticipated public rally is as follows:

- While our representatives dully notified the Police on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015, seven days prior to the date of meeting in accordance with the legal requirements of the occupying Zambian regime, the police officers kept asking them to come back for a response and in the process were tossed from one office to another as the Police officers frantically looked for ways of denying the Barose the right to assemble and association, including consulting higher authorities probably as high as President Edgar Chagwa Lungu himself who is currently in the United States of America for United Nations related engagement.
- Our representatives started making announcements on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015 informing the public about the rally following our compliance with the legal requirement to give notice to the police. Earlier on the same day The BNFA Chairman General was summoned by police and among other things requested to call off the Public Rally because the issue of Barotseland was being discussed at a higher level in Lusaka. The Chairman General demanded that the police put that in writing while wondering who was involved in those discussions as BNFA, a key stakeholder in the matter, was unaware of the discussions. He pointed out that rally shall go ahead and police should put their objection in writing, which BNFA would then accordingly consider.
- On Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September the police summoned Mr. Sinonge Lutangu and some members of the Barotse Imilemas (BIs) who were involved in the public announcements. Mr Sinonge was informed that the rally was not authorised and given a copy of the notice letter accordingly endorsed while the other BIs were warned and cautioned for making public announcement for an unauthorised meeting. They were also asked to pay some money as admission of guilt. The BIs questioned the legality of a permit and disputed the issue of admission of guilt as the law simply required giving the police seven days' notice prior to holding the rally. Consequently, tension mounted such the BNFA Chairman General had to be called in to come and help calm the situation. However, the police assaulted the BIs in a frantic effort to stop them from organizing the rally who had no option but try to defend themselves. The police arrested, severely beat and tortured the BIs in custody whereby one of them had to seek medical

attention. At the end of the day seven BIs were remanded in custody, including Mr Sinonge.

Putting the above issues into consideration and the fact that the police command was widely reported on some local radio stations claiming that the planned public rally was illegal and appealing to people to stay away from the same; the BNFA Executive has decided to defer the rally to a date to be announced soon after taking measures to protect its members from further police harassment. BNFA is aware that it has the option to defy the police and go ahead with the planned meeting because the people have the moral strength to do just that since it is there HUMAN RIGHT and nowhere in the whole world do the police have the mandate to ration people's RIGHTS, nowhere, not even in the failed unitary state of Zambia. However, it is felt that such a move at this juncture would deprive the planned public rally of the National and noble character it is intended to have.

Clearly it can be seen that this is a pure case of the Zambian police breaching the constitutional right of freedom of assembly and thus a strategy of police inciting violence so as to find an excuse to incarcerate unsuspecting, peaceful and innocent people for violent behaviour. We do know that this is disheartening to a lot of our people some of whom have already travelled hundreds of miles from far and wide to attend this historic public rally. We can only encourage all to hold on but not for long because the actualization of our aspiration is much nearer now than ever before. This long walk to freedom which has not been easy is about to be accomplished. It is a MUST that we will have the long awaited public rally in the Blue gum grounds very soon. The only way this cannot be is if someone can convince us that we are not human beings because Freedom of Assembly is a HUMAN RIGHT. We will demonstrate that we are human beings by holding this public rally and we will roll this out to all parts of this beautiful Kingdom. TUKUONGOTE FEELA, WA MWANA NONGOLO KAPA WA MWANA MUKA IF NEED BE. ISIÑI WA MWANA NALUKAPWA.