

THE BAROTSE ROYAL ESTABLISHMENT MUST GO

by Sitwala Imenda

I write this article as a concerned citizen of Barotseland. My story is simple. On March 27, 2012 the Barotse National Council (BNC) arrived at far-reaching resolutions regarding the future of the Kingdom of Barotseland. For those who may not know, the BNC is the highest governance structure in Barotseland, especially in the absence of any legitimate government structure in the kingdom since 1969 when Barotseland, once again, regained her sovereignty. At the time [the BNC Resolutions of 2012](#) were promulgated, it was hoped by the delegates and the people of Barotseland at large that the make-shift structure created by the first Zambian president, and nicknamed Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE), would reconstitute itself into an interim Barotse Government and lead the process of implementing the [Resolutions](#) and bring Barotseland to full independence, as was mandated by the BNC. Unfortunately, this structure failed to reconstitute itself and to live up to the expectations of the people ó and it is for this reason that I call for its dissolution.

Effectively, the structure called BRE has no historical existence as a traditional administrative organ within the Barotse jurisprudence. It belongs in the dustbin of history, together with the man who created it. For some time, I have been wondering why [the BNC Resolutions](#) were not being implemented until it dawned on me recently, that actually there is no legitimate body on the ground to implement them. We had all fallen for the trick that the creature called BRE was a legitimate organ of the administration of Barotseland when, in actual fact, it was only a scarecrow (sisusa) created to serve the Zambian government after it destroyed all the legitimate governance and administrative structures in the kingdom. A structure that has no foundation for its formation cannot be expected to do anything for the simple reason that when a structure is established it is usually at that time that the need for its establishment is spelled out, and its mandate outlined. This was never the case with respect to the scarecrow we call BRE. The truth of the matter is that President Kaunda and Mr. Sikota Wina destroyed all the vestiges of Barotse political power and authority, substituting all of them with something of their own creation called BRE ó which was meant to have no teeth and, instead to be an instrument the Zambian government would use and manipulate at any time of day or night to further its wicked intentions and interests. It was never the case, therefore that the BRE would champion the interests and aspirations of the people of Barotseland. A creature can only serve the interests and wishes of the one who created it. So, for the people of Barotseland at large, there is nothing good that we can expect from this evil creature called BRE. It was never created by the people of Barotseland. Surely, had Barotseland had a legitimate governance or administrative structure, such a structure would have taken action:

- when nineteen defenceless Barotse people were killed in January 2011 by Zambia's security forces, did anyone ever hear the BRE condemn those killings? The answer is NO!
- when, in the aftermath of the January 2011 killings, the whole of Barotseland was engulfed in all-round Zambia State-sponsored acts of violence and intimidation against the Barotse people, did anyone ever hear the BRE condemn that spate of violence, intimidation and harassment? The answer is another NO!
- when there many people were reported missing as a result of the State violence of January 2011 ó and are still missing to-date, did anyone hear of the BRE protesting to the Zambian government about its missing citizens? Again the answer is a big NO!
- when so many other people got arrested, prosecuted and persecuted concerning their re-statement of [the BNC Resolutions](#) about Barotseland's total freedom, did anyone ever hear the BRE even just condemn these arrests, prosecutions and persecutions? Again the answer is a big NO!
- when Boris Muziba, Nayoto Mwenda and Sikwibele Wasilota were incarcerated on trumped up charges, did anyone ever hear the BRE condemn these acts of human rights abuses and violations? Again the answer is a big NO!

- when, recently, Boyd Nyambe of Lukulu was arrested, viciously, brutally and mercilessly beaten to near-death and then denied medical treatment, did anyone ever hear of the BRE protesting to the Zambian government about that excessive use of force upon its citizen, and the abuse of human rights attendant to those actions? Again the answer is a big NO! Just in the same way as the Zambian government has not taken any disciplinary action against the policemen who severely assaulted Mr. Nyambe, showing their approval of these actions, the BRE also did nothing about the incident ó suggesting that they, too, approved of the police actions.
- when last year Messrs Afumba Mombotwa, Sylvester Kalima Inambao, Likando Pelekelo and Masiye Masiyaleti were arrested and later transferred to Mukobeko Maximum security prison in Kabwe, did anyone ever hear of the BRE protesting to the Zambian government about their excessive abuse of their courts in dealing with a political matter that can never be resolved in that manner? Again the answer is a big NO! We all know the Zambian government will ultimately release these men on a *nolle prosequi*, so why were they arrested in the first place?
- when last week, Messrs Sinonge Lutangu and Others were arrested after having been lured to the police station by the police under pretences of collecting a stamped copy of the notice to hold a rally that was earlier delivered to them, did anyone ever hear of the BRE protesting to the Zambian government about turning Barotseland into a Police State? Again the answer is a big NO! The BRE also wanted it that way.

How could the BRE condemn all these actions, when they are part of the Zambian State establishment ó and could even have sanctioned some of these terrorist actions against its own people? It is very clear, therefore, that the BRE and the Zambian government are on the same side. The same human rights violation charges that we have brought against the Zambian government should also be brought against the BRE. This way, we shall find our salvation quickest. Both are equally guilty and must ultimately be taken to the International Criminal Court when we finally secure our independence.

Today marks a turning point in our struggle, let us call a spade a spade. We stand at the cross-roads; we must stop treating the BRE as if we need them in this struggle when all that they have done so far is to sabotage every move that we have made. They do not deserve us. **They now must go!** By their own recent admission, it is no longer a secret or a matter of speculation, Induna Katema has unequivocally admitted that the BRE does not support [the BNC Resolutions](#) to accept her sovereignty back from the failed Zambian unitary state; the decision which the BNC took in 2012 by endorsing the Zambian government's abrogation of [the Barotseland Agreement 1964](#) ó which action irreversibly and irrevocably set the process rolling for Barotseland to pursue her self-determination and self-rule. So, since the BRE is clearly not working for, and with, the people of Barotseland, this means their rightful place is the dustbin of history. No one has ever seen the founding document/constitution of the BRE; no one knows the terms of reference of the BRE--nor their term of office (i.e. how long they serve on this body); no one knows the process of appointment/election of members to the BRE; no one has ever produced the composition of the BRE (i.e. how many people and the positions they occupy), nor an outline of the office bearers. Why have we all been taken for a ride for such a long time? The so-called BRE does not have any legitimacy to even pretend to have the people's interests at heart; members of this body are all but completely compromised and cannot be trusted because they clearly have a corrupt relationship with the Zambian government, their Master. They have betrayed the trust of the people. Our struggle must now be heightened and elevated to crash everyone who stands in the way, including and especially the BRE. As I have already stated, the BRE was established by the Zambian government to serve the interests of the Zambian government. It is not, and has never been, an instrument of the Barotse people. It is, therefore, time we took action to dismantle it, piece by piece, as part of our march to total independence.

We established the BNFA in March 2013 to accommodate all the civic society movements that were fighting for the total liberation of Barotseland (Moreba, Barotse Freedom Movement and Linyungandambo), when we realised that the BRE could not be relied upon to implement the 2012

BNC Resolutions. It was only when we started operating from outside the influence of the BRE that we started making progress. This is why getting rid of Ngambela Wainyae Sinyinda had no effect on the Banjul process, or on the other actions that the BNFA initiated and championed ó such as membership to UNPO, the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) Submission Agreement, and others. So, realistically, **we do not need the BRE** to fight for the freedom of our Motherland, our Fatherland, Grandmotherland, Grandfatherland, our Ancestorland. The BRE is actually, our number one problem. When Imutakwandu MWANAWINA LEWANIKI III, KBE, signed the Barotseland Agreement 1964, he did NOT do so as the head of something called BRE, he did so as the legitimate Litunga of Barotseland, In Council. ðIn Councilö means he did not act alone, but as advised by the Barotse National Council. **There was no BRE.** Not to forget, and more importantly, that in signing [the Barotseland Agreement 1964](#), he did so ðacting on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors, his council, and the chiefs and people of Barotseland.ö This point is very important because the Litunga is a trustee, and not a personal legal entity when he acts on matters pertaining to Barotseland. He cannot commit Barotseland to any deal without the concurrence of all these other entities named in [the Barotseland Agreement 1964](#). In the present case, the mandate given to the Litunga is encapsulated in [the Barotse National Council Resolutions of March 27, 2012](#). This means that as the Litunga of Barotseland, Litunga Lubosi Imwiko II cannot have a mind of his own outside these [Resolutions](#). He is tied to them by superglue. Acting outside these [Resolutions](#) will amount to his abrogation of the throne. So, in case President Edgar Lungu has been misled to believe that the Litunga can arrive at an Agreement with any individual about Barotseland (as reported in the media recently), this serves as notice to him that such an agreement between himself (or his government), on one hand, and any individual from Barotseland, on another, shall never measure up to the status and integrity of [the Barotseland Agreement 1964](#), in which the individual and collective rights of the people of Barotseland currently remain vested ó as the only legitimate Agreement to which the people of Barotseland as a whole, through their Council, gave their hand and seal.

Beyond the BRE, it is also clear that following the recent confirmation by President Lungu that he has offered the Litunga's son a job in Zambia's foreign service, this means two things: that the Litunga is not in support of [the BNC Resolutions of 2012](#) to accept the rest of Zambia's abrogation of [the Barotseland Agreement 1964](#) and, therefore disengage from the rest of Zambians; and (b) that there is a corrupt relationship between the Litunga and President Lungu. It is unlikely that President Lungu would have offered the job to the Litunga's son without mutual consent. Corruption takes place when someone accepts gifts in exchange for favours (imaginary or real). Barotseland is not on the market for sale to the highest bidder, and no individual owns Barotseland. Certainly, the President believes that by offering gifts to the Litunga, then the Litunga can influence the people of Barotseland to alleviate the pressure that the Zambian government is currently experiencing emanating from the Banjul process, SADC and other world bodies ó such as the IMF and the World Bank. Last year, the BNFA served the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone with the same dossier of human rights abuses and violations which we had earlier submitted to Banjul. So, undoubtedly, the biggest crisis facing the Zambian government today is the Barotseland matter; not 2016 elections; not anything else.

WAY FORWARD

Seeing that the BRE is nothing but an enemy of the people of Barotseland, and that it is irrelevant to the people's struggle, it is now up to civic society organisations to take up the challenge of implementing [the Barotse National Council Resolutions of 2012](#) ó as we have so far been doing. Let us bury this imaginary body calling itself the BRE. It should be completely isolated, dismantled and rendered obsolete. As a creation of the Zambian government, it is a creature that has no power and authority over the people of Barotseland; it is a sham and bogus double-headed creature. One head looks to the West in the direction of Barotseland, while the other head feeds from the crumbs falling off the table of its masters to the East.

The immediate actions which the civic society organisations, acting under the leadership of the BNFA, which is the umbrella body housing all the three civic organisations in existence at the time of the Barotse National Council of 2012 (Moreba, Linyungandambo and BFM) should:

- 1) Take the lead in assisting the people of Barotseland to exercise their right to revert Barotseland to its original status as a sovereign nation, so that the people of Barotseland shall determine their political, cultural, social and economic development. (BNC Resolution Number 6).
- 2) Take decisive action regarding the Litungaship, with a view to ensuring that the person who is, for the time-being, the Litunga of Barotseland acts in line with the commands and prescriptions of [the Barotse National Council Resolutions of March 2012](#). (BNC Resolution 2).
- 3) Take steps to put in place a transition process leading to taking over all government functions in Barotseland and the election of the KATENGO Legislative Council within the next 30 days. (BNC Resolution 8).
- 4) We note that the BNC Resolution 5 has already been discharged. [That is, to formalize the DECLARATION OF DISPUTE with the Zambian Government on the basis that the Zambian Government has violated and unilaterally abrogated the Unity Treaty whose purpose was to bind the two territories of Barotseland and the rest of Zambia, and also notify the SADC, AU, Commonwealth and United Nations of that fact.]
- 5) We note, further, that the remaining Resolutions will be addressed once there is a Transitional Authority in place in line with the BNC Resolution 8.

CONCLUSION

It is my hope that now, with the BRE out of the way, we can continue to make progress towards the realisation of our total freedom so except we can now proceed at a much faster pace. We are also aware that the only Kuta which is not working for, and with, the people is Namuso at Lealui/Limulunga. So, we appeal to the remaining Kutas to continue working with the people until the Litungaship issue is decisively and conclusively dealt with, whereupon the Siikalo and Saa Kutas will also come on board.

Bana ba hesu, kopano ki maata, lineki!!