

H.E. Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu,
State House, Independence Avenue,
Lusaka, Zambia

Brussels, 27 November 2015

RE: Open Letter Concerning the Arrest of Five Barotse Youths and the Confiscation of the UNPO Flag on 29 October 2015

H.E. Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia,

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), an international, democratic and non-violent human rights organization, would like to bring to your attention a matter of great concern to us. Barotseland is a member of our organization, represented by the Barotse National Freedom Alliance, and we support their struggle for human rights and self-determination. With this letter, we hope to shed light on the unfortunate pattern of violations of freedom of expression and assembly in the region of Barotseland, and to find solutions to these problems.

On 29 October 2015, during a peaceful fundraising mission in Mongu and Limulunga, **five Barotse youths were arrested** under allegations of “seditious practices”, as reported by The Barotseland Post. This was a demonstrably unfair accusation, given the peaceful and open nature of their gathering. An equally worrying aspect of the affair is the fact that Zambian police then attempted to **destroy the UNPO flag being displayed by the Barotse men, and subsequently confiscated it**. The five youths, named Sinonge Lutangu, Saviour Mumbela, Siyunyi Mendai, Jeff Aongola Mwinga and Muyapekwa Kutoma, **are still in jail, and the police remain in possession of the UNPO flag**.

UNPO is increasingly concerned about a trend of excessive use of force by the Zambian police in the Barotseland region, silencing peaceful voices of dissent, suppressing legal assemblies. and unjustly persecutes its citizens simply for having an alternative political view.

Therefore, UNPO urges the Zambian authorities, under the government of President Edgar Chagwa Lungu, to:

1. Release the five Barotse youths who were unlawfully detained on 29 October 2015;
2. Return the UNPO flag to these men, its owners;
3. Respect the rights of Barotse people to freedom of assembly and expression.

Yours sincerely,



Marino Busdachin
UNPO General Secretary