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OPEN LETTER

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His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa LUNGU,  
President of the Republic of Zambia  
State House

LUSAKA

*Your Excellency*

**THE BAROTSELAND AGREEMENT 1964 and THE "NEW" CONSTITUTION**

Firstly, compliments of the season and wishing you the very best for the coming year!

I am writing to you this open letter firstly as a son of the soil of Barotseland, now nicknamed "Western Province" having been born in Senanga many years before the birth of Zambia in 1964 and secondly as a strong proponent of a solution to the issue of Barotseland through formal, legal, peaceful and non-violent means, so therefore please note my interest.

Recently Mr. President, you assured the nation that you will assent to the Constitution Bill early in the New Year 2016. It is glaringly apparent that the so-called "New Constitution" makes no reference to the Barotseland Agreement 1964 (BA) – or rather to its abrogation. As Your Excellency is well aware, the BA was a "conditional marriage certificate" between Barotseland and what was then North - Eastern Rhodesia to form one country, namely Zambia, which marriage was broken in 1969 by the Zambian Government of the day.

It is not my intention to bore you with the historical facts surrounding the signing of the Agreement in London, United Kingdom in 1964 and its' subsequent abrogation through

unilateral Constitutional amendments without involving the contracting party, the Litunga on behalf of Barotseland. Constant and persistent calls and appeals made to successive Governments to restore the Agreement, to reinstate the marriage with Barotseland have yielded nothing. If anything, they have been met with high-handed actions including detentions, imprisonment, incarcerations, beatings and torture and even killings of unarmed and defenceless citizens. Mere mention of the BA is often taken to be seditious and a treasonable offence when the opposite is the truth.

The Barotse National Council of March 2012 resolved to, amongst other things, accept termination of the Agreement and that its restoration would no longer be pursued. Further, Barotseland would exercise its' right to revert to its' original status of Statehood and self-determination as provided for in the Agreement in a PEACEFUL and NON-VIOLENT manner. It must be well noted that according to a Press Release issued on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015 by Barotse Royal establishment, The Litunga fully supported the Resolutions and directed the Kuta to implement them.

So as Your Excellency prepares to assent to the Constitution Bill, please bear in mind that the signing will effectively put a final nail in the coffin, so to speak, over the issue of Barotseland. This is contrary to Your Excellency's assurance when responding to international press queries at the African Union (AU) Heads of State Summit in Addis Ababa in January 2015 that you were firmly committed to finding an amicable solution to the Barotseland Agreement 1964 by engaging in dialogue with people of Western Province. This assurance has also been repeated at various fora here at home. Omission to provide for the Agreement in the Constitution Bill now only gives credence to the Barotse National Council (BNC) Resolutions indicated above.

Interestingly, the signing of the Constitution Bill comes barely weeks ahead of the African Union (AU) Heads of State Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia end January 2016. The issue of Barotseland is expected to be high on the agenda and needless to mention, the International Community will no doubt be watching and listening with keen interest. The theme of the Summit is appropriately "THE YEAR OF HUMAN RIGHTS". We expect the rights being demanded by the people of Barotseland to be considered with the seriousness they deserve in the interest of sustainable peace.

Yours faithfully,

W. HARRINGTON

1<sup>st</sup> Trustee and Treasurer General - BNFA