

THE PARADOX OF BAROTSELAND STATEHOOD—RESOLVED

by Maoyo Mukasambizi

After a brainwave, I must assert my political probity to the Barotseland paradox. Yes. In 2016, Barotseland just needs a bold patriotic Litunga who would just decree at Lealui thus, “Effective this Day/Month/ 2016, Barotseland is a free nation state”. Just like that! In as much the same way Kaunda had decreed in 1969, at Lusaka, that Barotseland was no more. The Litunga CAN dissolve the Republic of Zambia. Barotseland shall so easily shake off the servitude and bondage its people have endured for over five decades. The Barotseland statehood shall thus be accomplished without shedding further blood.

I have often wondered why, the attainment of the independence of Barotseland, has remained so elusive for so long, given the clarity and straight-forwardness of the case. In 1964, Barotseland voluntarily chose to integrate into Zambia, when it could have become an outright independent sovereign state. The idea of one Zambia, two states, appeared to have appealed to the Barotse at the time. They trusted that Kaunda would be true to the text and content of [the Barotseland Agreement 1964](#), which promised them preservation of their tradition and heritage in a multi-ethnic Zambia.

It did not take long for a calculating Kaunda to show his true despotic colours. Using the indignant and callous brothers—Sikota and Arthur Wina—whose father had been disgracefully removed from the office of the Ngambela of Barotseland, who saw their chance to get even with Litunga Sir Mwanawina III. Kaunda immediately set out to dismantle the very foundation of the Republic of Zambia. The invincible Kaunda had by 1969 obliterated [the Barotseland Agreement 1964](#). Further, by 1973 he had stripped the Litunga of all his residual powers, much to the disorientation of his loyal subjects. To stem any rebellion from the injured Barotse, Kaunda imposed a perpetual state of emergency throughout his regime, from 1963 to 1991.

Successive presidents after Kaunda, used the same oppressive tactics to keep Zambia glued together, but for how long?

The terms of [the Agreement](#) were simple and straight-forward—Barotseland was to remain a state within Zambia. Zambian authorities have always known that they are standing on quicksand. They do not have any legitimate claim over Barotseland, without [the Agreement](#). Kaunda must be spending sleepless nights because he now knows that he actually wiped out his own legacy in 1969 when he unilaterally abrogated [the Barotseland Agreement 1964](#). Indeed Kaunda has been much of a despotic dictator as was Adolf Hitler to whom he had likened himself, Stalin, Idi Amin and Saddam Hussein.

The Kaunda schemes and authoritarian tactics of the 1960s and 1970s cannot work without restraint today. Prying eyes are everywhere. However, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu and the embattled Litunga Lubosi Imwiko have found themselves ensnared into acts which do not help to resolve the Barotseland impasse and much less their individual egos.