

Must we remain silent while Barotseland goes down the drain—God forbid

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PART ONE

The big question is MUST WE REMAIN SILENT while Barotseland is going down the drain? The obvious answer is, God forbid! Well, as Martin Luther King Jr said, “Our lives begin to end when we remain silent about things that matter”.

On 27th Lungu (April) 2016, Edgar C. Lungu (ECL) visited Barotseland for the first time— exactly fifteen (15) months after he ascended to the highest office in the failed unitary state of Zambia. During which visit he made some utterance over the Barotseland issue for the first time since he spoke last year (2015) on the sidelines of the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa in response to the Barose National Freedom Alliance (BNFA)’s letter delivered to him on 26th January 2015, a day after he was sworn into office. He promised then to engage the Activists on his return from the Summit, a promise he has shamelessly failed to fulfil. Mr. Lungu sounding quite bullish and overly confident at Mungu air strip stated that “Whoever wants to discuss with me the issue of Barotseland should come to me through the Litunga and Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE). The only parties recognized in this matter are the BRE and Litunga in council on one part and the President of the Republic of Zambia on the other that is all.” We are told that ECL repeated the same sentiments in the Kashandi in response to Induna Mukulwakashiko’s welcoming remarks.

This ill advised statement, which obviously must have been agreed upon by the Litunga and the so-called BRE, has ruffled quite some feathers in Barotse circles at home and abroad as well as caused concern even among non-Barotse followers of issues surrounding Barotseland. We are further informed that while in the Kashandi, ECL stated that “the [Barotseland Agreement 1964](#) is a real issue that he is prepared to tackle as head of state” in response to Induna Mukulwakashiko’s plea and lies that the people of Barotseland desire the restoration of the Barotseland Agreement. ECL’s promise to tackle the issue is an overused tactic by Zambian politicians to gain political mileage in Barotseland during elections. When Kenneth Kaunda (KK) saw that his grip on power was waning in 1991, he tried to use it by promising Imutakwandu Ilute Yeta IV a thorough revision of the [Barotseland Agreement 1964](#) once he is re-elected President.

However, it was too late for KK because the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) manifesto already promised the same and with the strong wind of change blowing through Zambia he lost the 1991 Multi-Party elections. He tried the Magic trick in 1996 again and gathered such overwhelming momentum and promised some key members of the Barotse Cultural Association (BCA)—the key proponent of Barotse self-determination then— adoption to stand on the UNIP ticket. Had it not been for UNIP’s boycott of elections, the political landscape would have been completely different because MMD had lost all popularity in Barotseland for having abandoned the promise to redress the [Barotseland Agreement 1964](#) issue and called the Agreement stale.

Michael Chilufya Sata’s inroad into Barotseland in the 2011 elections was largely attributable to his declaring himself as Linyungandambo member number one. He promised

to honor the [Barotseland Agreement 1964](#) within 90 days of taking office. It is that gimmick that literally handed him the Presidency. ECL's statement on his recent visit to Barotseland was simply electioneering but unfortunately the gimmick he is trying to use has been overused and is now completely worn out. It cannot work this time round unless the people of Barotseland are dumb. Worse still, ECL is trying to use the embattled Litunga and his BRE stooges who have already lost credibility.

The Litunga and his BRE are playing very dirty tricks over the Barotseland issue. For example, we are told that Induna Mukulwakashiko in his welcoming speech to ECL said that, "Barotseland craves the restoration of the [Barotseland Agreement 1964](#)" and went further to implicate the Regional Kutas to have been sensitized over the same. The truth on the ground, however, is that the Regional Kutas rejected the proposal during the tour conducted by the Three Indunas more commonly referred to as 'the Three Iscariots'.

We are also aware that their Royal Regional Highnesses and Indunas who were gathered for the function of welcoming ECL were promised audience with the Litunga for the purpose of agreeing on what should be said to ECL but were duped and kept waiting until ECL arrived. The gimmick was clearly to parade them before the cameras as the speech was being read so that they are implicated and framed to have been part of the speech when it was clear that they were in disagreement with that position. BRE was banking on the assumption that they would not be in position to rebut or issue statements later to disassociate themselves with the statement. Well, the Litunga, BRE and ECL can deceive distant onlookers into thinking that Regional Highnesses and their Indunas are in agreement with the stated position but the people of Barotseland know too well, who is standing with them and that it is only a clique of a few BRE stooges who are trying to bulldoze everyone against the wishes of the people as expressed in their [BNC Resolutions of March 27, 2012](#).

The well established consultative process through which major decisions are arrived at in Barotseland, which culminated into the Litunga to ascend the decision provides protection to the Litunga from criticism and antagonism because the people own the decision making process. The emerging syndrome where the Litunga seems to be in the fore front exposes him to abuse and antagonism against his own people. We will soon see a scenario where even the Regional Kutas will openly challenge the BRE because obviously they are not amused with being paraded before cameras and being made to appear to support a position that they do not subscribe to. While the Barotse of all shades, cherish and pride themselves in their tradition, culture and heritage, this immense deception BRE has the potential to lead to the collapse of what our forefathers fought so hard to preserve. All indications are that the 'BRE Castle' is cracking and destined to crumble to a total crush under the weight of their own national betrayal. The disintegration is proportionately greater than that of the Titanic shipwreck.