

BNFA as vanguard of the 2012 BNC Resolutions implementation—current status

By BNFA Publicity Wing

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Barotse National Freedom Alliance (BNFA) also called Namungelele in local language hopes that this Communication will go a long way in enlightening the members of the Organisation, and Barotse nationals at large, on the current status of their organisation with regard to its structure and composition, as well as in the mobilisation of a critical mass of supporters and followers to ensure that more and more people of Barotseland get involved in the liberation of their country. Presently, many people keep asking, “Where are we now?” implying that the onus rests on certain people to fight for Barotseland’s liberation, while they stand on the side-lines and spectate, much like people watching a soccer match. This kind of attitude and approach cannot liberate a country. Everyone ought to play a role. Thus, the NEC hopes that the formation of branches at the levels of *lilalanda*, *lilalo* and regions will generate sufficient membership to result in a critical mass of freedom fighters ready to participate in the civil actions that the BNFA has initiated.

By far the most profound reaction to the brutality of the Zambian government has been the holding of the Barotse National Council (BNC) meeting of 26-27 March 2012. In the recent history of Barotseland this was a really momentous event, perhaps only comparable to the 1991 re-launching of multiparty democracy in Zambia. Indeed, in many ways, the resurgence of the BNC unleashed a lot of new energy among many Barotse, thereby allowing them to find an outlet for many of their thoughts, ideas and feelings which had remained bottled up due to many years of oppression, servitude and denial of fundamental human rights. Of the most significant positions taken at the BNC was the declaration that:

The people of Barotseland are no longer interested in discussing the merits or demerits of restoring the Barotseland Agreement 1964. They have resolved to revert to the status that obtained prior to the Agreement, given the fact that the Agreement was never implemented by the previous Zambian Administrations.

This declaration was then followed by the following resolution:

The people of Barotseland shall 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.

This ground-breaking resolution was taken against the realisation that since the ejection of [the Barotseland Agreement 1964](#) from the Zambian constitution there was, in fact, no legal basis for the Zambian government to masquerade as a ruler and administrator of Barotseland; that, in fact, Barotseland was legally free of the Zambian government influence, except for the fact that the affairs between the two political entities had not been formerly concluded at the termination of the unitary state in 1969. Thus, one of the mandates given to the Barotseland government, acting on behalf of the people of Barotseland, was to formerly conclude the breakdown of the aborted unitary state as well as the break-away of Barotseland from the rest of Zambia. The unequivocal and explicit mandated culmination of this process was to be the re-establishment of a free and separate State of Barotseland.

As head of the Barotseland administration the erstwhile Ngambela, the Right Honourable Mr. Clement Wainyae Sinyinda, found himself as the principal role player with regard to defending the conceptual positions taken at the BNC Congress, as well as the implementation of the [Barotse National Council Resolutions of March 27, 2012](#). Within a very short time, the Ngambela had taken up a number of actions towards the actualisation of Barotseland statehood. These included (a) the submission of an application for membership to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) on behalf of Barotseland, (b) formerly declaring a dispute between the nation of Barotseland and the Zambian government, (c) briefing the UN representative about the BNC resolutions, and (d)

petitioning the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR), beseeching it to declare that the rights of the people of Barotseland to self-determination had been violated by the Zambian government following its unilateral termination of the Barotseland Agreement 1964; that Barotseland had since accepted the repudiation of the Agreement ó meaning that there was now nothing tying Barotseland to the rest of Zambia. The ACHPR was further urged to make a finding that by repudiating this Unity Treaty with Barotseland, the Republic of Zambia had ceased to have power over Barotseland and should, therefore, immediately put in place transitional arrangements for the sovereignty of Barotseland under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union. Soon, there was a very momentous breath of fresh air sweeping across the length and breadth of Barotseland; a dawn of hope had begun to shine on many a face of Barotse nationals. There was definitely something finally coming together insofar as the liberation of Barotseland was concerned ó finally, a glimmer of hope after a long and sustained period of darkness.

However, such was the success of these first actions and initiatives that the Zambian government became anxious and nervous, to the extent that the Ngambela got singled out as an undesirable thorn-in-the-bum of the authorities. He was classified as an undesirable element. Soon, his continued tenure as the Ngambela of Barotseland became untenable ó leading to his untimely and unwelcome resignation.

The Birth of the Barotse National Freedom Alliance

The pressure that was put on the Ngambela, occasioning his resignation, was a well-orchestrated plan to neutralise the push that was steadily building up towards Barotseland's liberation and statehood. Fortunately, forcing the Ngambela to resign was a miscalculation because the Ngambela was not working alone nor pushing a personal agenda. His, was a people's agenda. In fact, the civil society organisations that started working with him in organising the BNC had continued working with him in the implementation of the resolutions that had emerged out of the Congress. Thus, the birth of the Barotse National Freedom Alliance (BNFA) was a direct result of the Ngambela's resignation, aimed at galvanizing both domestic and international support in the implementation of the [BNC Resolutions](#). It was established in March 2013 as an umbrella organisation, comprised in several Barotseland-based civic organisations which had earlier acted as part of the critical stakeholders during the planning and convening of the BNC. So, sensing the need for unity of purpose following the Ngambela's resignation, a committee of representatives drawn from the Barotse Freedom Movement (BFM), Linyungandambo, the Movement for the Restoration of Barotseland (MOREBA), the Barotse Imilemas (BIs) and the Barotse National Youth League (BNYL) met on 3 February 2013 under the aegis of the Groups Liaison Committee to address urgent matters affecting Barotseland, and came up with some resolutions on the way-forward. Shortly after this meeting a concept paper to actualise the establishment of an umbrella, stakeholder-based organisation was developed. A National Executive Committee (NEC) of the BNFA was established, comprising representatives of the sub-units that made up the body, with Mr. Clement Wainyae Sinyinda as its National Chairman-General. The NEC was supported by a diaspora-based Executive Committee, chaired by Prof. Sitwala Namwinji Imenda.

At the time of the establishment of the BNFA the Barotse issue had gone past the determination of ówhat must be done.ö This had already been done by the BNC. Therefore, the primary aim and purpose of the BNFA was simply to advance the implementation of the [BNC Resolutions](#), after it had become clear that the government of Barotseland had developed very heavy and cold feet to discharge this role.

The Transformation of the BNFA

Certainly, in its relatively short time of existence, the BNFA has achieved a lot, particularly in two respects ó first, in challenging the Zambian government to prove its legal claim to have legal jurisdiction over Barotseland, in view of its unilateral abrogation of the Barotseland Agreement 1964; and secondly in lobbying and publicising the Barotseland issue, both within and outside Zambia. At this point, the BNFA has come to the realisation that much more needs to be done on the ground to complement these legal challenges; that there is need to mobilise the people inside Barotseland alongside mobilising the international community so that more and more people at the grassroots level

get to play an active role in the struggle; that continuing to function as a stakeholder-based organisation would limit the spread, uptake, participation and ultimate growth of the organisation ó unless the constituent stakeholders took a leading role in recruiting members for the organisation rather than for their individual organisations. However, such an approach was bound to bring about conflicts of interest. So, realistically, the ultimate decision was to simply grow and expand the membership of the BNFA directly through the formation of branches at the levels of *lilalanda*, *lilalo* and *regions*.

So far, ten regions have been identified and branches are currently being opened in all the ten regions. At the centre is the National Executive Committee (NEC) which is based in Mungu. It presently comprises nine NEC members led by Mr. Wainyae Sinyinda as National Chairperson, Prof. Imenda as his Deputy. It is the wish of the NEC that some of the people who have previously played very important roles in the BNFA and its NEC, but are currently not accommodated within the complement of the national executive, can still make their services available to the Movement so that they can continue to render their invaluable contributions towards the total liberation of our country. Certainly, there is enough room and scope of work for all of us in the Movement as we continue to run shifts in leading the organisation.

Going forward, the NEC is being expanded to include the ten Regional Chairpersons and Committee Chairpersons. Already, the BNFA is a formidable force to reckon with insofar as the struggle for the total liberation of Barotseland is concerned. It should always be remembered that the most important resolution of the [BNC Resolutions](#) was that Barotseland must separate from the rest of Zambia. Thus, the main objective of the BNFA still remains the facilitation of the implementation of the [BNC Resolutions](#), given that there is presently no popularly appointed Ngambela of Barotseland, or *Katengo*, to advance the wishes and aspirations of the people of Barotseland as contained in the [BNC Resolutions](#).

Name Enhancement

The conceptual change from a stakeholder-based organisation to a mass-based movement has been made while maintaining the same name Barotse National Freedom Alliance (***Namungelele***). The -BNFAø has been retained because under this -brand nameø the BNFA is now known both locally and internationally. Thus the BNFA brand emphasizes both the historical antecedents of the organisation as initially comprised in all the main civic formations found in Barotseland, as well as the new direction of recruiting everyone interested in joining this legitimate struggle. This is a clarion call to every Barotse national wherever they are to actively get involved in the liberation of their motherland, Barotseland.

Mufana saye ni muteeba.