

Barotseland independence resolve is not equivalent to secession

by Saleya Kwalombota

It is argued by certain quarters that Barotseland's independence is tantamount to secession. However, the argument of secession does not arise. On a serious note, what will Barotseland be seceding from? The push for Barotseland's independence is one that has been misunderstood by many Zambians either deliberately or out of ignorance about facts on how Barotseland came to be part of Zambia. From both legal and practical viewpoints, Barotseland has never been part of Zambia and the reason is because the **Barotseland Agreement 1964 (BA'64)** has never been honored by the Zambian government. This Agreement in fact epitomized the amalgamation of Barotseland and Zambia. Its non-recognition by one party (Zambian government) affirmed that the union between Barotseland and Zambia was null and void. This formally came to pass in the 1969.

It should be recognized that Barotseland came into union with Zambia as an equal partner and not as an underdog or province. Further, realities on the ground show Barotseland's servile status in Zambia. A pre-requisite that facilitated the independence of Zambia as a unitary state was Barotseland's assenting to the **BA'64**. Otherwise, Northern Rhodesia would not have proceeded to independence in 1964 as one entity but as separate entities because the treaties that held Northern Rhodesia together were due to terminate. Just like Northern Rhodesia, the treaty which should have held Zambia together was the **BA'64**, which the government of Zambia did not honor but unilaterally terminated.

Barotseland's right to self-determination is unquestionable and is on similar lines with other nations which proceeded to self-determined when the union that held them together became untenable like the Czech and Slovak Republics of former Czechoslovakia, Eritrea with Ethiopia, and Serbia with Kosovo, to name but a few.

The **BA'64** treaty was entered into as an honorary and legal document. Our forefathers signed the aforementioned treaty so as to safeguard the future of their children, Cf **BA'64** preamble; "... It is the wish of the Government of Northern Rhodesia and of the Litunga of Barotseland to enter into arrangements concerning the position of Barotseland as part of the Republic of Zambia...". It was a government to government negotiated agreement, not persons of the executive. The **BA'64** primary theme in its preamble is about the POSITION OF BAROTSELAND within independent Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), not of the Litunga. This simply entails that the Litunga's interest is subservient to Barotseland interests as a nation. Barotseland is above the person of the Litunga not the other way round.

But what is obtaining today is to the contrary whereby a person of the Litunga is busy trading the illegal administration of Barotseland by Zambia for financial handouts to himself and job handouts to his children against the **Barotse National Council Resolutions of 2012** of the only surviving institution of Barotseland governance—the Barotse National Council (BNC)—since Zambia's unilateral termination of the treaty in 1969. It will be interesting to which name the Lungu-Imwiko agreement would be styled, if at all the sneer succeeds, likely title is "The Lubosi Imwiko Agreement 2017". The purported agreement has got nothing to do with the nation of Barotseland. The Litunga does hold absolute authority in Barotseland.

I may state here that treaties are not frivolous pieces of papers for one party to violate, treaties are sacrosanct. This fact is underscored by the reversion of Hong Kong to its original position. This is because civilized parties viz: Great Britain and China, had signed a treaty that leased Hong Kong to Britain. This

treaty is being honored today by each party. If such governments can honor such agreements, who are these uncivilized Zambians who have the audacity of charging us with treason over our birth right and even going as far as legislating against their own obligations? Little did they know or understand that they have in effect set in motion the process of dissolution of the unitary state of Zambia.

Barotseland has reverted to its former political status and by so doing brought to naught Zambia government's efforts to destroy Barotse governance, cultural and social structures, which they tried so hard to erase. It's a well-known fact that the Zambian government has had unwritten systematic and deliberate official policy to under develop and eventually destroy Barotseland, its people, culture, language, heritage, tradition and natural resources. This has been on-going for more than five decades now. Alas, the agenda has failed following the [BNC resolutions of 2012](#). Thus, Barotseland is now proceeding to a fully-fledged state.

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