

Hon. Kalima must be released on medical grounds

by Saleya Kwalombota

President Lungu must be petitioned to release Hon. Kalima on medical grounds. Hon. Kalima's ill health, which is due to alleged poisoning within the prison requires independent verification and medical attention outside prisons under the auspices of family members and Barotseland people. It is sad that the Zambian Prison authority has continued to mistreat Barotseland political prisoners. It is also unfortunate that Zambian media is not keen on covering Barotseland related matters.

The truth about the health situation surrounding incarcerated Barotseland political prisoners must be made known. The Prison authority should revisit the medical report and act on his release in the shortest possible time so that his family members, friends and Barotseland citizens can give assistance to him in one way or another. Hon. Kalima's condition is deteriorating and one expects the authorities to release him. One wonders why the Litunga and his indunas remain silent when people are appealing for his release.

The Litunga Lubosi Imwiko II has a cordial relationship with Zambia President Edgar Lungu. We expected him to demand for Hon. Kalima's release, along with his colleagues: Hon. Afumba and Hon. Likando who are all incarcerated in Northern Rhodesia.

The reported behaviour by the Prison authority of denying Hon Kalima access to receive medical treatment is not only tantamount to a breach of his right to access medication but violates the principle of God that life is sacrosanct. It is worth noting that there are set structures that provide for provision of health services to sick prisoners. Unless the Prison authority disputes the popular notion that once an inmate falls sick in Zambian prisons there is no hope of survival, which makes prisons in Zambia a death trap.

In the case of a serious illness like that of Hon. Kalima, an officer in charge should make an order for him to be taken to the hospital as states Article 71 of the Prisons Act CAP 97. The international legal framework that forms one of the yardsticks for effective prison management is the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Article 22. What we establish thus far is deliberate intent of denying medical attention to Barotseland political prisoners, notwithstanding procedures in place which are part of the legal frameworks.

Further, the current state of affairs in Zambia regarding Barotseland political prisoners is not covered by the media due to alleged fear of government. Thus the abuses of Barotseland political prisoners are not being reported.

Bulozi fasi la Bondata luna