

PETITION AGAINST 2017 TEACHER RECRUITMENT IN WESTERN PROVINCE AND RELATED MATTERS

28th November 2017

The Permanent Secretary
Mongu

PETITION

We are appalled by, strongly protest and reject the naked systematic impoverishment and denial of employment and business opportunities for the people of Barotseland by the successive Zambian regimes.

The recently released list of 2017 recruited teachers, whereby out of the national figure of 3,148 only 300 Barotse nationals have been engaged. We, as Barotseland nationals, can no longer tolerate this injustice. What is most hurtful is that out of the 427 targeted recruitment from the sixteen districts of Western province, less than 242 are indigenous to the territory while our people are not given the same opportunity in other provinces. This means that 185 recruited teachers do not speak Silozi, the language of instruction in lower primary school. This scenario has disastrous effect on the foundation of the education of our children. We demand that the 185 new teachers be redeployed to their indigenous regions; and that they be replaced by teachers of Barotse origin who speak the local language. Already, we have too many teachers in Barotseland who are defying learning Silozi in defiance of the Education policy where a child should be taught in Silozi from preschool to grade 4.

Further, the people of Barotseland are not proportionally represented in all sectors of government as can be seen from the following;

1. Cabinet has only one Barotse national, that is, Her Honour, Vice President Inonge Wina, while Mr Nathaniel Mubukwana, Provincial Minister, does not sit in cabinet.
2. Mr Mwangala Liomba is the only Permanent Secretary of Barotse descent.
3. Mr Likando Mukumbuta is the only Chief Executive Officer of a State parastatal company.
4. A number of Barotse nationals have been systematically purged from the civil service and private sector jobs.

The people of Barotseland are disproportionately represented within Barotseland, as follows;

1. The policy making body, the Provincial Development Coordinating Committee with over 150 delegates has less than 20 Barotse nationals. How do you expect any development?
2. Out of 16 Council Secretaries or Town Clerks in Western province only 2 are of Barotse descent while there are none in the other provinces.
3. Our hospitals, clinics and health posts are heavily staffed by people who cannot communicate with the people they are supposed to serve.
4. The cashew nut project has been hijacked. The top five directors and most of the middle managers as well as lower level positions are filled with people from other regions while our people are not given any employment opportunities outside Barotseland.
5. Our forests and fish stock have been looted due to poor policies and lack of monitoring mechanisms.

We trace this diabolic scheme to 1965 when the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) contract with the South African mines, which was bringing in an estimated £250,000 to Barotseland treasury every year, was abruptly closed using the Employment Act to 'punish' the people of Barotseland. This was also meant to inhibit Barotseland to proceed to independence on its own after the Northern Rhodesia government realized that it was financially viable to stand on its own. A policy that continues to this very day in order to keep our people in perpetual poverty and dependence on Zambia.

In conclusion we demand that:

1. the recruitment that was done should be declared null and void to pave way for the recruitment of indigenous people of Barotseland;
2. all those providing essential services like health and police but not conversant with the local language should be redeployed elsewhere;
3. the right to gainful employment of the people of Barotseland be recognized by Zambia; and
4. Barotseland should not be used as a recruitment center for Zambian job seekers.

We thank you,

SIGNED BY THE PEOPLE