

## **Territorial government cannot be achieved through arbitrary acts**

by Samaswe

Setting up a territorial government is a serious business that calls for a political process and legal technicalities to be addressed. The government should not be devoid of direct touch with the people, otherwise, people's confidence and hope will be eroded. Here is a rhetorical question, does Barotseland have a civil government in place. If not, at what stage should it be inaugurated? I shall not attempt to address the first question but the second. Inauguration of Barotseland Transitional Government (BTG) or whatever name you prefer to call it must be the last act in liberating Barotseland. It should be preceded by both legal and political actions to usher in a self-governing Kingdom of Barotseland.

At this stage, the people in the struggle should guard against the rise of elitism characterized by individual proclamations which lack popular support. Going by the use of unpalatable sentiments against people with different views, certain individuals especially among the youth personalize the struggle. People void of tangible action are usually the loudest at claiming to champion the liberation but fail in numbers and words to convince the people who find it difficult to accept their much talked about civil government, rendering the whole exercise "Manduwani." The BNFA had made their stand very clear on this issue—the time is not yet ripe for the formation of a transitional government.

With this in mind, formation of a transitional government must be isolated from games of chance. Baroseland is not in a race of forming a government but as collectively as we resolved during our 2012 BNC, so must we collectively participate in setting-up of the transitional government. One of its key characteristics is that it must be a government of national unity, bone out of consensus among the peoples of Barotseland. Any proclamation or proclaimed civil government outside the aforementioned criteria is "Manduwani" and an act of comedy, seeking to cause division and derail the actualization of Barotseland independence while claiming to be part of the struggle. How do you call yourself a government while doing nothing tangible in actualizing Barotseland statehood?

Part of the [2012 BNC Resolutions](#) read as follows, "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 calls for peoples' participation. Therefore, reverting to sovereign state means putting in place modern state organs and running the state apparatus. It requires setting up of effective territorial government institutions not "Manduwani" government. There must be a national consultative process before such a government can be put in place in order to firmly and finally break years of cohabitation with Zambia.

As things stand today, Barotseland is inline with international covenants and international law, for instance the RIGHT TO RETURN (POSTLIMINIUM doctrine). What we need now is to support the work of BNFA in realizing our objectives as enshrined in the [2012 BNC Resolutions](#). This must be comprised of both men and women with the requisite wisdom and flexibility to drive the agenda forward.

Barotseland aspirations of constitutional Monarchy must be at the center as we forge ahead with the democratization and modernization process. In this regard, the Barotse Royal Establishment requires complete transformation out of which shall emerge one modern government. Further, we should always be mindful of the Zambian government's attempts to derail Barotseland independence. At the center of their strategy is to stop the people of Barotseland from holding public meetings or rallies and instill fear in our people. We have seen them work together with the Barotse Royal Establishment whereby the

former put forward a dossier of deceit and the latter withdrew from our case—“the Ngambela of Barotseland and others V. Zambia”—before the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights in Banjul The Gambia, having failed in their earlier attempt to withdraw the case altogether. We have also seen the government of Zambia run away from international arbitration where former and late President Sata and current President Lungu refused to sign the Permanent Court of Arbitration process. Lately, they failed to block the BNFA submission at the occasion of 28<sup>th</sup> session of the Universal Periodic Review for Zambia before the Office of the Commissioner United Nations Human Rights Council, which took place on November 10, 2017. The BNFA is an all-inclusive organization and provides the right platform to coordinate liberation movements and interested stakeholders to work together for the total liberation of our country. **Kopano ki mata** (unity is strength). A dividend nation is bound to fall.