

BRE's kunjongoloka over 2012 BNC Resolutions

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Preamble

It is an irrefutable fact that Barotseland was integrated into Zambia as a result of a sovereignty power sharing agreement—the [Barotseland Agreement 1964](#). Unfortunately, the [Agreement](#) did not see its day as the Kaunda regime unilaterally abrogated it with impunity through constitutional amendment [Act 33 of 1969](#) but the Barotse Royal Establishment remain inconsistent over Barotseland statehood demands to this day.

Demands for self determination

Unfortunately, the [Barotseland Agreement 1964 \(BA'64\)](#) did not last. It was unilaterally terminated in 1969 and the territory of Barotseland was infringed-on and converted into a mere province of Zambia. Following the imposition of One-Party-State by the UNIP government of Kaunda, resistance to the unilateral termination of the [Agreement](#) was silenced, aside from some vocal opposition by local Barotse elites. The Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE) remained mute, despite remaining largely outside the fusion of Zambian elites until the appointment of Litunga Ilute Yeta IV to the Central Committee of UNIP in 1988 as wind of change threatened the Kaunda regime. Unfortunately, several prominent Barotse elites remained active in the administration of Kenneth Kaunda, notwithstanding the abrogation of the [BA'64](#).

Flip-flop of the BRE

With the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1990s, demands for [BA'64](#) restoration resurfaced, which gave MMD an overwhelming vote in 1991 in the hope that the party would restore the [BA'64](#). However, the MMD and its President Frederick Chiluba turned out to be rather unsympathetic to the [BA'64](#) but instead adopted policies favoring the President's Bemba tribe. After two years of misunderstanding and standoff with the Chiluba government, a group of 5,000 Barotse royalists gathered in Limulunga royal village in July 1993 and resolved for the territory's independence through the international courts (Daily Mail 1993). These events marked the beginning of a sharp rise in tension between the government of Zambia and the BRE, which escalated in 1995.

In 1994, for example, Litunga Ilute Yeta reiterated that, "We shall not secede from Zambia" while simultaneously expressing his grievances at the government of Zambia for its "perpetual enslavement" of his region (The post 1994). In the same year, Chiluba's motorcade was stoned upon visiting Mungu, the commercial capital of Barotseland. In fear of Zambian government retaliation, an "Army of 3000" Lozis organized itself to offer protection to the Litunga, an act which was deemed treasonable by the government of Zambia.

In 1995, relations further deteriorated when the government of Zambia passed a new Land Act, meant to remove from the Litunga a prerogative he had over Land, despite non implementation of the [BA'64](#). In November 1995, the BRE made its strongest ever public pronouncements through the Barotse National Council resolutions which stressed Barotseland's right to reverting to its original status before 1964 if the [BA'64](#) demand was not considered (the office of the Ngambela 1995). This event prompted the Litunga to travel to London in 1997 to seek British support over the issue and for the restoration demand.

Earlier, in 1991, Prince Imasiku Mutangelwa returned to Zambia from abroad and became a member of the Barotse Cultural Association in 1992 and founded the Barotse Patriotic Front in 1996, which became the most radical of the movements, having threatened military conflict in 1998 if Zambia did not yield to Barotseland independence demand (Mutangelwa interview 2003). In 1997, after the failed coup attempt in October, Princess Nakatindi was arrested. Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta was also arrested on suspicion of involvement in a stage managed bombing campaign claimed by a group called Black Mamba (Minorities at Risk 2003).

Throughout these periods, however, the BRE continued to publicly reject the independence call by the people of Barotseland while claiming on one hand that Barotseland had a right to separate from Zambia but on the other hand dissociated itself from the demands of "Barotseland loyalists". This was, despite all injustices perpetuated by the Zambian government against the people of Barotseland, the BRE continued hiding behind the thin layer of restoration while distancing itself away from Barotse nationals arrested and imprisoned!

Summary

Despite being extremely explicit about the BRE's grievances vis-a-vis the Zambia state, the BRE continued its chorus of "right to an independent state and restoration demand of the Agreement". This demand is still on its agenda to date, notwithstanding the popular [2012 BNC Resolutions](#). What is stunning is the BRE's continued preference to the restoration of [BA'64](#) than full independence. One would conclude that under the current BRE stance, the Litunga derives some pecuniary advantage over the territory's resources and income from the oppressive regime of Zambia, which turns out to be beneficial to himself as an individual. This is exacerbated by lack of public accountability at BRE as compared to a constitutional system of civil government that would allow checks and balances on the use of public resources.

This explains the BRE's departure from the [2012 BNC Resolutions](#) implementation to focus on their old-age pretense of restoration of [BA'64](#), which neither the government of Zambia nor the people of Barotseland are interested in. Can the current person holding the position of the Litunga be trusted in this regard? We will keep-on singing LITUNGA NI LYETU but His heart is far away from the genuine demand of independence of his people and even prays to God for more days of living in order to destroy the voices calling for Barotseland independence.

Bulozi fasi la bo Ndata luna