

Zambia guilty of gross human rights violations against the people of Barotseland—EU requested to stop funding Zambia

by BNFA Publicity Wing

“As for the European Union, we have made the protection of human rights not only the foundation of our common internal and external policies, but of our Union itself. We view human rights as universal indivisible and interdependent, with no difference between civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The EU will continue to reaffirm its commitment to protect the universality of human rights wherever they are violated or questioned, inside or outside its borders.”

“The European Union will keep being at the side of those who stand up for human rights every day, as human rights defenders face increasing pressure and threats in many countries across the globe. We do not only pay tribute to them, but we actively support their work and will continue to do so, the full respect of human rights is a precondition for any democratic and resilient society, for sustainable development, security and long term peace.”

These words were spoken by Ambassador Alessandro Mariani, Head of the European Union (EU) Delegation to Zambia during the commemoration of the Human Rights Day on December 11, 2017 at Southern Sun Hotel in Lusaka. These words were spoken in the presence of Given Lubinda, Zambia’s Minister of Justice, Mudford Mwandenga, Chairperson of Zambia Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), Clement W Sinyinda, Barotse National Freedom Alliance (BNFA) Chairperson General, Ambassadors and High Commissioners representing European states and other stakeholders, who had attended the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Zambia in Geneva.

Human Rights Day is celebrated annually across the world on December 10 in honor of the United Nations General Assembly’s adoption and proclamation on December 10, 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Sadly, Zambia has never commemorated this very important day because it is notorious for violating and abusing the human rights of the people of Barotseland. Zambia is guilty of gross violation and abuse of the human rights of the people of Barotseand. Since 1969, over 800 Barotse have been brutally tortured and arbitrarily arrested on trumped up charges related to agitating for Barotseland independence, over 60 killed, over 50 sustained gunshot wounds and countless gone missing. This is why Zambia has never honoured the Human Rights Day. It fears to expose its bloody human rights record.

The Barotse National Freedom Alliance (BNFA) is committed not only to ensure full enjoyment of the human rights of the people of Barotseland but also that Barotseland joins the international community of free and independent nations. This is not an easy task but we have the will to achieve it. The people of Barotseland have since Zambia’s independence in 1964 been denied their right to assemble, their right to freely express themselves and their right to politically determine their destiny.

Zambia willfully and **unilaterally abrogated** the **Barotseland Agreement 1964** while knowing very well the consequences of its diabolic actions on the future of the unitary state of Zambia as evidenced by its immediate response of silencing the people of Barotseland through state terrorism. Zambia then went on a scheme to deceive its own people and the international community through a litany of lies and deceptions. The dishonesty and mediocracy of successive Zambian leaderships has now caught-up with them and they have nowhere to turn. In the meantime, the people of North Eastern Rhodesia are

steadfast in support of their government while enjoying the fruits of the deception and pretending not to know what is happening to the people of Barotseland.

Given Lubinda sat stone faced as Ambassador Mariani read out his speech at Southern Sun Hotel. Earlier, in Geneva on December 13, 2017 during Zambia's UPR, Lubinda shamelessly ranted and raved untruths that Zambia was keenly addressing the human rights issues of the Zambian citizenry at the distinguished gathering. Lubinda, who claims to be of Barotse descent, never said anything about the dire human rights abuses and violations his regime has systematically subjected the people of Barotseland to.

However, the BNFA had earlier on October 10, 2017 [submitted to the pre-session of UPR of Zambia](#) on Zambia's unilateral abrogation of the independence unity treaty, the BA'64 and the well documented catalogue of its continued violations of the human rights of the people of Barotseland since the earlier UPR to the shocked UN Human Rights assembly. The assemblage was mortified to learn that a supposedly venerable country could invalidate a unity treaty.

Mr Mwandenga and his staff at the ZHRC were only able to attend Zambia's UPR in Geneva because of the funds from the EU. Yet, the ZHRC is not innocent of human rights abuses of the people of Barotseland. After the January 14, 2011 Mongu killings by Zambia police, the ZHRC came out in full support of the Zambian government and blamed the Barotse youths for nonexistent riotous behavior. By sponsoring the ZHRC and providing aid to Zambia, The EU inadvertently supported and continues to support the atrocities against the people of Barotseland.

After attending the Geneva UPR for Zambia, ZHRC justified the EU funding by feigning country wide UPR sensitisation programme. In Barotseland (*Western Province, and parts of Southern, Central, Copperbelt and North Western Provinces*) ZHRC surreptitiously held their sensitization meeting from January 16-17, 2018 with a carefully selected audience where out of 31 workshop participants only 2 were from Barotseland and rest comprised of Bembas and Nyanjas from North Eastern Rhodesia—heads of government departments and parastatals. The workshop presenters waffled through the contents of the UPR process without bringing out real human rights issues. This was yet another deliberate act of deception.

In Zambia, there is no institution which has been created by government which operates independently. The Ministry of Justice, with the judiciary system, acts together, to violate and abuse the rights of the people of Barotseland. The ZHRC is no exception. The presidency, being the architect of the abrogation of the BA'64, ensures that the voices of the Barotse are not heard. Indeed Zambia is guilty of violations of the human rights of the people of Barotseland. We ask the EU to stand by their word against perpetrators of human rights violations and stop both multilateral and bilateral support to ZHRC in particular and the Zambian government in general. Zambia has eaten its cake but still wants to have it. That is not possible.

Successive Zambian administrations have lacked the moral courage to face the consequence of the decision made by Kenneth Kaunda with the support of the people from North Eastern Rhodesia to **unilaterally abrogate** the **Barotseland Agreement 1964** without the consent of the other party to the agreement. Zambia certainly broke-up when Barotseland was pushed out in 1969 and finally reached a point of no return in 2012 when [they accepted](#) to be out of the wretched arrangement. Instead they chose to bury their necks in the sand like an ostrich. We further ask the EU to prevail on the Zambian regime to vacate Barotseland without any delay.

The people of Barotseland have refused to be arbitrarily deprived and deceived out of their nationality. They have been treated as second class citizens in Zambia. They have been denied the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, the right of association, the right to freedom of opinion and the right of expression. They have been denied the right to employment even in their own territory and forcibly made bystander while their resources are being looted.

Barotseland has reclaimed her full civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. What remains is the actualization of Barotseland statehood.