



BAROTSE NATIONAL FREEDOM ALLIANCE

March 14, 2020

STATEMENT ON COVID-19

As the Barotse National Freedom Alliance (BNFA), an organization dedicated to actualizing the BNC 2012 Resolutions, we're closely monitoring the spread of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic worldwide and Africa. We feel it is in the best interests of our constituents' well-being to remain at home during the upcoming Kuomboka ceremony. This is especially, given the poor health facilities available.

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is characterized by mild symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever. Illness can be more severe for some people and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties. More often, the disease can be fatal. Older people, children and people with other medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease, HIV), may be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill.

Here are some of the reasons why Barotse need to stay away from large gatherings until we know more about the pandemic:

1. The risk of COVID-19 into the immune systems of our weakened populations of young and old is too high. The old are our archive and the young are our future. The pandemic has not hit the African continent as the virus has an incubation period.
2. Even though many of us live rural lifestyles and are not packed in urban areas like the northern hemisphere, it's wise to continue to practice safe hygiene as is our custom.
3. Reconsider travel to crowded urban areas and abroad due to the global impact of COVID-19. Many areas throughout the world are now experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks and taking action that may limit traveler mobility, including quarantines and border restrictions," the US State department said in a statement. "Even countries, jurisdictions, or areas where cases have not been reported must restrict travel without notice." Therefore planned trips overseas should be cancelled or reconsidered at the moment.
4. The World Health Organization has declared the virus a pandemic, with more than 1,200 cases in the US.
5. BBC News declared Europe now the epicenter of the pandemic, the World Health Organization stated, with Italy recording over 250 deaths in the last 24 hours making it having the highest fatalities in Europe. Travel there is completely restricted in northern Italy. Spain is the next worst affected country with a reported 50% jump in fatalities to 120 on Friday. Infections increased to 4,231. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez says the state of alert will come into effect there on Saturday for two weeks.
6. There are 118,000 cases globally -- including more than 1,200 in the US -- and more than 4,000 deaths, according to the WHO. The virus has found a foothold on every continent except for Antarctica.

7. We are not taking chances at BNFA and hope we can take care of each other with this pandemic to please report any symptoms to your local hospital, clinic or health practitioner.

We intend to maintain our strength as a civic organization dedicated to the wellbeing and safety of Barotseland and keep our community safe. If there are more ways for us to help, we'll take action.

We'll continue to keep you informed of the global situation. We have the communication infrastructure to rapidly spread key information about the spread of COVID-19 in our region. We're using our memories of past epidemics, purges and natural disasters that impact our community more diligently to influence this decision to share information with our people.

Wishing you all good health. Ku tapa kwa mazoho kinto yende.

Signed
Mukwae Wabei Siyolwe
Acting BNFA Chairperson General