

PRESS STATEMENT

As **Mbunda** speaking peoples (Luvales, Chokwes, Luchazis and Mbalangos), we wish to break our silence and state that we refuse to be part and parcel of the 2012 Barotse National Council (BNC) resolutions which seek the secession of Barotseland, in particular the Western Province from the Republic of Zambia. Our disassociation from the 2012 BNC resolutions is based on the following historical facts and experiences:

- (i) As Mbunda speaking people, we migrated like every other tribal group did, from the Congo through today's Republic of Angola into what is now known as Western Province in the Republic of Zambia in 1795.
- (ii) The Mbunda speaking people being historically men of war and conquest, signed the Mulambwa/Chiyengele Treaty of friendship with King Mulambwa Santulu after we fought and won their battles, being historically fighters and experts in the use of the bow and arrow in four (4) historic battles namely:
 - (a) Halting the Luvale incursions into Barotseland led by Chiyaze Ngombe in cattle raiding operations to rob the Lozis of their cattle wealth.
 - (b) Their war of conquest against the Tonga – Ila which they lost in the first instance until they sought help from us as masters of war, we conquered the Tonga – Ila and helped them occupy parts of now Southern Province so that Livingstone is today populated by Lozis and this act of solidarity led them into a **Chimbuye** relationship with the Tongas even to this day.
 - (c) We beefed them up in their war as Aluyi (now Lozis) against the Makololo in the Aluyi – Makololo war and helped in the restoration of the Aluyi Monarchy which was earlier dismantled due to the Makololo invasion. With our fighting skills at the bow and arrow, we rescued them.
 - (d) At another occasion, the Nkoyas and the Lozis had ventured into attacking the Kaondes as a combined force. They had under-estimated the Kaondes and ended up being battered severely until they fled and again sought the help of their Mbunda *comrades* who repelled the Kaonde threat and to secure the territory, established a chiefdom today known as **Chief Kasimba** in Kalumwange area 88km north of Kaoma.

Because the Lozis lack fighting skills, they are good at issuing threats which they are never able to carry out hence the signing of the Treaty already referred to above which was in essence a **Defense Pact**. This led to the Mbunda speaking people to settle and occupy five (5) major districts in Western Province namely: Kalabo, Mongu, Kaoma, Lukulu and Senanga. As a result, we constitute the majority of the over-all population in Kaoma, Mongu and Kalabo.

Despite an existing **Treaty of friendship and solidarity** unifying us, our brothers, the Lozis reward us by addressing us as Angolan refugees as well as the use of various derogative remarks in interpersonal relationships and we remain subject to tribal segregation. We are daily threatened with deportation back to Angola whenever we have personal differences.

Our Chiefs in Western Province have since been relegated to the status of **Indunas** (Headmen) while two of our Chiefs, Mwene Chiyengele and Mwene Kandala are deliberately gazetted as Lozi chiefs.

There are reports of an attempt to deport the Mbunda speaking population back to Angola way back in the time of the late UNIP Prime Minister, Nalumino Mundia.

There was also a circulation of fliers prior to the 14th January, 2011 **Mongu Riots** to the effect that all Mbundas vacate Barotseland before the 14th January, 2011 or face bloodshed, (copy attached).

Therefore if the 2012 BNC resolutions were allowed to be implemented, we are afraid as Mbunda speaking people, we will be compelled to fight an all-out bloody war of liberation as Lozis are bent on either colonizing or enslaving the other tribes in the Western Province going by how they are proceeding from the disputed Barotseland Agreement of 1964.

In conclusion, as a result of the historical experience alluded to above, we wish to categorically state that as Mbunda speaking people of Kaoma district in particular and Mbundas in general, we are in total disagreement with our Lozi brothers in regard to **secession** of Barotseland or indeed Western Province from the rest of the Republic of Zambia, rather we wish to advocate for fast – track development in the Western Province to mend up potholes in the Barotseland Agreement of 1964 in terms of road infrastructure such as the tarring of the Kaoma – Lukulu road, Kaoma – Sesheke road called **Machile** road, Kaoma – Kasempa road and the Mongu – Kalabo road up to the Zambia/Angola border in line with **SADC** recommendations, a provincial university, a provincial referral hospital, water and sanitation, a nursing school in Kaoma – the most populated district in the Western Province.

Kaoma Cheke Cha Mbunda Cultural and Writers Association

Do Shefu Mbandu

District Vice Secretary

Dated: 02nd April, 2012.