

War will escalate despite accord — MNR

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Despite the Nkomati Accord the war in Mozambique would reach unprecedented levels in the next six months, sources connected with the Mozambique National Resistance have said.

They are confident the non-aggression treaty between Mozambique and Pretoria will have no immediate effect on their struggle and are hoping the Nkomati agreement will not save President Machel but rather contribute to his downfall.

The Mozambique Government blames the latest increase of anti-government activity on a massive guerilla infiltration on the days that preceded the signing of the agreement. They say the MNR's show of force is an act of desperation by the guerillas left inside Mozambique and now without a rear-guard for support.

"That is not the case. The MNR is going to increase its activity to levels never seen before and they will be there for a long time," a Lisbon source connected with the movement said.

The same source said the MNR leadership had tried to diversify its source of support as soon as it became clear that South Africa was going to sign a peace treaty with Mozambique.

The movement's secretary-general, Mr Evo Fernandes, who is based in

Lisbon, visited the United States shortly before the Nkomati ceremony.

The Lisbon source said several MNR leaders had also had meetings in the West German city of Cologne where they had found support among right-wing circles.

In Africa other sources well connected with the movement said the rebels had enough arms and ammunition to last for two years.

The rebels also have a sophisticated communications system which allows them to monitor Frelimo army communications and to relay messages to its units throughout the country. An African country bordering northern Mozambique was also used as part of the communications network.

"The MNR is no longer what it was during its Rhodesian times when its forces were almost totally controlled by former Portuguese Army people. Its cadres inside Mozambique are Mozambicans, some very well trained with good equipment. In central Mozambique they are entrenched in mountain areas which are virtually inaccessible.

"The fact is that this right-wing guerilla army which was created to serve foreign interests has now a momentum of its own which cannot be stopped from one day to the other," sources said.

It is understood that by increasing

the acts of sabotage and terror some MNR leaders hope to create serious internal difficulties and embarrassment for President Machel, a driving force behind the Nkomati agreement.

Some resistance leaders are hoping that by intensifying the war, post-independence army cadres not so strongly linked with the pre-independence Frelimo guerilla hierarchy will start questioning the whole Nkomati agreement which was intended to save Mozambique from collapse.

They hope that if President Machel cannot produce peace by the end of the year he will be in serious trouble.

"They are hoping for the traditional African coup, which could open the way to direct negotiations between the army and the guerrilla leaders inside Mozambique, even if that would mean the sacrifice of MNR political leaders strongly linked with the colonial past," sources told me.

The prestige and charisma enjoyed by President Machel inside the country is a serious obstacle to these rebel hopes.

And the lack of any known political leaders and realistic political programme on the part of the MNR contributes to the scepticism with which some quarters receive MNR claims.

However, continuing attacks confirm that the war in Mozambique is still far from over