

President Machel of Mozambique has asked the SA government to send troops to help in the defence of his capital, Maputo, against increasing attacks by guerrillas of the MNR, it was claimed yesterday. Senhor Evo Fernandes, secretary general of the rebel movement, told me that the rebel forces were now only 25km from the heart of Maputo.

'Electricity and water supplies are reaching the city only intermittently, rail communications have been cut and it is unsafe to travel to the suburbs because of our attacks.' He claimed that 20 SA military advisers had been in Maputo since May 10. 'Machel has asked for urgent reinforcements to defend Maputo and we believe that SA is planning to send the Portuguese-speaking 33rd and Buffalo battalions from Angola to Mozambique.' These battalions were recruited by SA from former Portuguese colonial troops ... He also claims that SA helicopters were flying ammunition and food supplies to the 5,000-strong Mozambique force deployed along the Cahora Bassa power lines which supply electricity to SA.

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