

Train ambushed by Mozambique rebels

From Paul Fauvet,
in Maputo

South African-backed rebels of the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) attacked a goods train yesterday as it was crossing the Mozambique-Swaziland border.

According to a spokesman for Mozambique railways "half the train was in Swaziland, while the front half had entered Mozambique."

An apprentice driver was killed in the ambush and the train's fireman was slightly injured. It is not clear whether the MNR group opened fire from Mozambican or from Swazi territory. The MNR has made use of Swaziland in the past and there have been

reports of some local Swazi chiefs working with the MNR.

There is a substantial community of Mozambican agricultural workers in Swaziland, many of them there illegally. This has formed a useful pool of recruits for the MNR, who can blackmail them by threatening to report their presence to the authorities.

This is the second ambush this year on this line, which is landlocked Swaziland's only route to the sea that does not pass through South Africa. In January the line was put out of action for several days when the MNR loosened the rails 15 miles outside Maputo.

MNR groups have also continued sporadic raids into outer Maputo suburbs.