

Nkomati — a year of disappointment

The Mozambique government has marked the 16 March anniversary of the signing of the Nkomati security pact with South Africa with an admission that it has been a failure. A ministerial session of the joint security system set up to monitor the implementation of the pact was held in Maputo on 14 March amid South African fears that the agreement could founder.

At a front-line summit in Lusaka on 8 March President Machel concurred with his fellow leaders that Pretoria had failed to honour its side of an agreement designed to end the increasingly crippling guerrilla war against the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), and to open the way to South African participation in the resuscitation of the economy.

Mozambique has kept to its side of the bargain, curbing African National Congress activity in the country. A recent assessment by the government in Maputo has led to the inescapable conclusion that the pact has failed to deliver on either front; a view Maputo has made increasingly plain to Pretoria in recent months. South African Foreign Affairs & Information

Minister Roelof 'Pik' Botha claims Pretoria has gone out of its way to honour the accord but concedes that "diverse elements" in South Africa are working against it.

Despite increased activity by the Mozambican army — over 1,000 MNR guerrillas are estimated to have been killed in the second half of 1984 alone and more than 100 bases destroyed — large parts of the country remain subject to terrorist attacks. In the latest attack at the beginning of March, MNR guerrillas killed 16 villagers in northern Zambezia province. Rail and road links with Malawi and Zimbabwe continue to be disrupted. Rail links with Swaziland have only recently been restored after a bridge was blown up in January.

With the security situation failing to improve, South African industrialists' enthusiasm for doing business in Mozambique has also dimmed. Maputo hotels, crowded with businessmen in the immediate aftermath of Nkomati, are now empty again and Mozambique has little to show for 12 months of business contacts. A \$20 million project to rehabilitate Beira's water and sewerage system, involving the

South African office of West Germany's **Freidrich Krupp**, set to begin in February, has so far failed to materialise.

Rennies has been involved in rehabilitation of Maputo port, particularly the coal terminal, but **Sun International's** ambitious plans to develop tourist facilities around Maputo await a more conducive investment and holiday environment than the capital can provide at present.

Mozambique's experience has helped other neighbours of South Africa — Botswana and Lesotho — resist pressure to sign similar accords, although Swaziland is continuing to strengthen its political and economic ties. For its part, Mozambique has been forced to look elsewhere for assistance. It has turned to the West — joining the EEC's Lome Convention as well as the IMF and World Bank, a move which brought increased US aid — but also, according to South African press reports, to the Soviet Union for extra military aid in the fight against the MNR. Instead of solving some of the region's security problems, Nkomati could well prove to have helped increase tension.

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