

Mozambique's Allegations

The Mozambican Government claimed that its army killed 29 Rhodesian soldiers, including nine officers, on June 26th, during a series of counter-attacks, in the border area north-east of the Kruger Park, South Africa's game reserve in the eastern Transvaal, bordering Mozambique and Rhodesia. A communiqué issued by the Ministry of Defence in Maputo, and broadcast on June 30th by Radio Mozambique, also claimed that, during one of several attacks by Rhodesian forces against localities in Mozambique, 16 Mozambican civilians were killed, and seven injured, and that, during the operations, Frelimo forces lost three men killed and seven injured. It was also claimed that, two days later, Frelimo action "razed to the ground" the Rhodesian village of Vila Salazar, in reprisals for an attack by Rhodesian Security Forces on the nearby Mozambican border town of Malvernia, 50 kms (30 miles) north-east of Pafuri.

According to the communiqué, Rhodesian aircraft attacked the Mozambican town of Mapai at dawn on June 26th killing 16 civilians and three soldiers. Mapai is 55 miles from the border making the raid the deepest Rhodesian penetration into Mozambique to date.

A second Rhodesian attack, on Malvernia, was repulsed by Frelimo troops who killed 29 Rhodesian troops and injured 11, the communiqué claimed. Finally, the Frelimo forces "razed to the ground the Rhodesian village of Vila Salazar" across the border, as a reprisal for the Rhodesian attacks.

In Salisbury, the Rhodesian Government officially dismissed the Mozambique claims, and a government spokesman described the claims as "absolute nonsense, and so outrageous as to be considered laughable". To refute the claims, journalists would be flown to the border area on July 1st, the spokesman said, adding that journalists "may wish to ask the Mozambique Government if they are prepared to do the same".
(See pp. 4048B, 4073BC) (NA 30/6)

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