

# WAR, FAMINE x EXPORTED TO MOZAMBIQUE

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MAPUTO—Nearly 4 million Mozambicans are facing starvation, largely as a result of the activities of the South African-sponsored counterrevolutionary force, the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR).

Mozambican Minister of Cooperation Jacinto Veloso made an urgent appeal for international food aid Sept. 22 at a meeting here of the country's Natural Disasters Office. Hunger, he said, now affects almost a third of Mozambique's population. According to office director Amos Mahanjane, August figures show 3.9 million people now at risk, as against 1.8 million in March.

This dramatic deterioration is only partially due to adverse climatic factors. The major cause of food shortages in Mozambique today is the war being waged by the MNR, particularly in those provinces bordering on Malawi. South Africa has based much of the MNR operation in Malawi, the only African state maintaining full diplomatic relations with Pretoria.

MNR raids from Malawi have disrupted agricultural production in Tete and Zambezia provinces, cut many roads and driven frightened peasants into the towns. In Zambezia alone there are now at least 270,000 displaced people. The province's agricultural marketing network has been complete smashed by these Mozambican "contras."

The Mozambican government openly accused Malawi of complicity with the MNR this month, after several years of quiet diplomacy. President Samora Machel hoped to persuade the Malawian government of "Life President" Kamuzu Banda that it was in its own best interest to ditch the MNR.

To this end, Machel, together with Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda and Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, journeyed to the Malawian town of Blantyre Sept. 11 and put the case to Banda "in the name of the frontline states." The summit was a failure, however, as indicated by Machel's angry threats upon returning home to close the Mozambique-Malawi border and place missiles along the frontier if Banda did not break with the MNR. Mozambique, said Machel, "will close its borders to Malawian traffic to and from Zimbabwe and South Africa." Trucks to and from Malawi daily cross Mozambican territory.

Malawi's complicity with the MNR, editorialized Zimbabwe's weekly Sunday Mail Sept. 14, "casts an ominous cloud" over that country's future relations with the other eight members of the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC). Malawi, the paper concluded, "can no longer bask in the glory of SADCC benefits while fraternizing with the apartheid rulers in Pretoria, who have consistently sought to endanger the security and well-being of black-ruled independent states in the region."

Landlocked Malawi is bordered by three of the six frontline states—Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania. Currently all of Malawi's trade must pass through either Mozambique or Zambia (usually en route to South African ports). If Machel carried out his threat to close the border, and Zambia followed suit, the Malawian economy would swiftly collapse. At the summit Machel sought to instead convince Banda that Mozambican ports, free of MNR interference, would be the most economical for Malawi to use, stressing both the practical and political benefits of frontline "interdependence."

Encountering an apparent stone wall in Malawi, the Mozambican leader, a few days after the summit, took Soviet and Cuban military experts with him to Tete province to inspect the border and investigate the best sites for placing missiles. (Tete has been particularly hard-hit by the MNR: the railway through the province to Mozambique's key port at Beira is currently out of operation because of MNR sabotage. The country's major coal-mining centers are also in Tete, and with the rail route paralyzed, no coal can be moved to the coast.) During this visit Machel accused Malawi of acting as an "agent of imperialism" and charged that high-ranking police officers and even a Malawian cabinet minister were in Pretoria's pocket. That country, he said, had become an "enclave" of South Africa.