

# Harvest threatened by Mozambique guerrillas <sup>GN</sup> 18/5/82

From Joseph Hanlon  
in Maputo

The Mozambique National Resistance is trying to disrupt the harvest with increased action in central Mozambique, according to recent reports. These indicate that the MNR has abandoned any attempt to create "liberated zones," and is concentrating on terror and pillage.

Since the end of last year, the MNR, which is backed by South Africa, is said to have created chaos in the district of Gorongosa, 100 miles north-west of Beira. According to the Beira daily paper *Diario de*

Mocambique, all seven communal villages in the district, three agricultural cooperatives, a state farm, and a saw mill have been destroyed, and all 31 primary schools and the health posts in the district have been burned. In each attack, villagers are said to have been killed or kidnapped.

Many peasants have fled to the district headquarters in the town of Gorongosa — the only place that is protected. There the Mozambican army claim to have repelled an attack by 300 armed men in February.

But the protection is limited. According to the *Diario* the MNR has attacked the new suburbs built by refugees on

the outskirts by town, and burned all the primary schools within the town. Supplies arrive in army convoys, and the local administrator, Mr Castigo Zandamela, said: "our situation is continually worsening."

Much of Gorongosa district was occupied by the MNR in 1978 and 1979, when it was supplied and directed by the Rhodesians. After that support ended the MNR was cleared out by the army, and the district was rebuilt. Now that the MNR has the backing of South Africa, it has been able to return.

The *Diario de Mocambique* report is unusually frank.

Mozambique has a policy of not talking about the MNR, and the foreign press is usually barred from MNR affected areas. There are even restrictions on where local journalists can visit.

Gaza and Inhambane provinces are said to be facing similar problems. There state-run trading posts have been burned, private traders attacked, and roads mined to disrupt crop marketing. In some areas of these provinces, too, people are afraid to go to their fields to harvest their crops.

In Inhambane, a very dry area with few wells, the MNR is said to have killed villagers

and stuffed their bodies down the wells, in an attempt to poison them and make the area uninhabitable.

In Inhambane and Gaza, only the least populated areas are affected, and the MNR usually attacks only smaller villages.

The army has stepped up the training and arming of village militias in central Mozambique, in an effort to protect villages and peasants gathering crops. This follows President Samora Machel's tour of Inhambane in February when people in several towns demanded arms to fight the MNR.

Meanwhile, it is claimed that all 20 Mozambicans kidnapped

with a British wildlife expert, Mr John Burlison, from the Gorongosa game park in December have now escaped their MNR captors and returned home. However, the Government says it has no information on Mr Burlison, or on the Chilean teacher, Mr Moises Carril, captured with him.

Sources here accused MNR spokesmen in Portugal of releasing statements about Mr Burlison without actually having any contact with the group which captured him. They note that there have been no photographs, tapes, letters, or other direct communication from Mr Burlison.