

# War Puts Aid Projects Behind Barbed Wire

MESSICA, Mozambique—Swedish aid personnel are finishing construction of a lumber mill that is a rarity in the world of international assistance—the \$46 million project is being completed under armed guard.

Working in the midst of a war zone in this central Mozambique village, 50 Swedish engineers and technicians have been forced to live a drastically circumscribed life. Most of them live in a camp guarded by hundreds of Mozambican soldiers.

There are good reasons for the restrictions. Manica Province, where the project is located, has been one of the hottest areas of the hidden war being waged by South African-backed insurgents against the Mozambican government.

Work on the project was suspended for three months last year and all foreign personnel were moved to Zimbabwe temporarily after a Portuguese and a Mozambican working on the sawmill were killed in a highway ambush by the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) last May.

Work was resumed on the Forestry Industry of Manica project (known by its acronym Ifloma) in August after the security arrange-

ments were established and a Swedish major was brought in for liaison with the Mozambican Army.

Some other major international projects have been delayed or stopped because of MNR activity, including Swedish coal and iron-ore prospecting in Tete Province and a French-Italian scheme to help electrify the northern provinces by using power from the giant Cabora Bassa Dam, the largest dam in black Africa. Work stopped on that project when two French engineers were kidnaped but they were later released in Malawi and work resumed.

The MNR has disrupted daily life and the economy in the port of Beira where electricity is often cut off, sometimes for weeks, because of sabotage of power lines in remote areas which are impossible to defend.

In the central provinces of Manica, Sofala and Inhambane, about half the stores in the rural areas have been burned down by the MNR, according to Aranda da Silva, the minister of internal commerce.

Evaluating the economic prospects for Mozambique, a Swedish aid official said, "They have a lot of plans that cannot be pursued for the time being. Peace would make all the difference." — *Jay Ross*