



President Machel . . . MNR still operates from Malawi.

By Joseph Hanlon,
of The Guardian

MAPUTO — Anti-Frelimo guerrillas have moved into two of Mozambique's northern provinces, Nampula and Zambezia.

These are two of the most populated provinces and provide most of Mozambique's agricultural exports.

Until a year ago they were largely unaffected by the war. Then last year the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), allegedly backed by South Africa, launched an offensive into Zambezia from bases in Malawi.

That assault collapsed in November when the Mozambique army captured the main MNR base inside Zambezia at the same time that Malawi bowed to Mozambique pressure and restricted the MNR's use of bases there.

In April the MNR again swept across Zambezia and by May had advanced further than last year, reaching the coast and moving north for the first time into Nampula province.

Recently there has been fighting only 50 km from Nampula.

Nothing has been said officially about the new MNR of-

Maputo rebels ^{Star} 29/6/83 strike in the north

fensive, but President Machel has admitted that much of Zambezia is now affected and that some residents of Quelimane were asking when the city itself would be attacked.

There seem to be only a few hundred armed men in Zambezia, but they have practically closed the province. The main target is traffic with cars and lorries being shot at and dozens of people killed by mines.

The result is that people are afraid to travel and commerce has collapsed. Traffic to the tea centre of Gurue moves only by army convoy.

President Machel said in Quelimane that the MNR was still operating from Malawi.

The MNR has gained little popular support and seems to make no effort to establish "liberated zones" with an alternative government.

It seems content to destroy economic facilities and to make half the country like medieval Europe in the days of the highwaymen, when travel meant risking life and limb.

The MNR's aim seems not to be to overthrow the Frelimo Government but to paralyse it — and is clearly having some success.