

Mozambique to get tough with rebels

RDM.

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PRESIDENT Samora Machel of Mozambique said this week that a major military offensive, led by veteran Frelimo guerrilla veterans, will soon be launched against the so-called Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) in the strategically-important province of Zambezia.

The Mozambican President made the announcement at a mass rally in Quelimane, capital of Zambezia province, on Monday. He also gave details of a shake-up of the local military leadership.

The new provincial military commander and the man who will lead the offensive announced by President Machel is Brigadier José Ajape, who commanded Frelimo forces that fought alongside Zania guerrillas in the Rhodesia war.

His second-in-command is Joaquim Maquilavale, who is political commissar for the province.

The third senior military figure in the province is Colonel António Chicusse. He was the commander of the Mozambican artillery unit which fought with the Tanzanian troops during the war between Tanzania and the Idi Amin-led Ugandan Army,

which resulted in the overthrow of the Ugandan dictator in 1979.

The strategically important Zambezia province which, with nearly 3 000 000 inhabitants, is the most populous in Mozambique, has been badly affected by the activities of MNR rebels.

Zambezia is a major producer of tea, sugar and coconuts and generates about half of all the foreign exchange earned by Mozambique.

It is also through that province that the powerline runs carrying electricity from the Cabora Bassa Dam to South Africa. The vitally important highway linking the southern provinces to the north of the country, at present under construction, also runs through the province.

In his speech President Machel said the military situation in Zambezia was delaying the major industrial project in the province, the construction of a giant textile mill at Mocuba.

The largest textile factory in the country, it should have come into operation this year, but will now not only be completed in 1985.

President Machel said MNR activities had also endangered transport in the province, making it difficult to move consumer goods from Quelimane. And without those consumer goods,



PRESIDENT MACHEL launches major offensive

peasants in the fertile district of Gurué were unwilling to part with their surplus crops, and food was simply rotting.

He said the new command was formed "because Zambezia is currently the province most seriously affected by banditry, causing great damage to our economy.

"I came here to understand the phenomenon of banditry in Zambezia, to see with my own eyes how the bandits act."

President Machel also attacked several young officers sent from Maputo to Zambezia last year to head operations and to train local soldiers.

Some of these officers had not participated in a single action against the rebels.

They were "occupying houses illegally, receiving

their wages and being fed by the army".

He said the officers had been demoted and were being handed over to Frelimo's Political Bureau in the province.

They would be sent to do productive work in agriculture and industry.

The President also ordered that members of the army and police forces should vacate apartment blocks in Quelimane which they had taken over for accommodation.

Instead, they should restore the old Portuguese military installations that had fallen into decay and use them as quarters for troops and policemen. This should be done by September 30.

He also called for the weeding out of "the negligent, the corrupt and the incompetent" from the state apparatus, and attacked "nepotism and favouritism" in government departments.

President Machel said the army's guns should be turned not just against the bandits, but also against "these reactionary chiefs who rob the population and give food to the bandits".

He added: "We shall turn this situation on its head. As from now, the consolidation of the revolution in Mozambique will be made with the blood of the reactionaries."