

'Things only got worse'

Ernst Schade who worked in Mozambique's most fertile province — Angonia, talked to Julie Frederikse about his impressions of the MNR war, the Malawian connection and the future, based on what he has seen first-hand in the country.

Frederikse: *There has been speculation that arms are being supplied to MNR via Malawi. Have you seen any evidence to support these claims, and who do you think is supplying MNR? What do the people think?*

Schade: In Angonia there are first-hand stories from people who were at road construction camps on the Malawian border at night in the area. These people heard helicopters coming and two hours later there was a big attack on the camp; the helicopters then went off in the direction of Malawi.

People also come into the district from Malawi supplying lifelines to the MNR camps in the district. Once our domestic worker was kidnapped and forced to carry supplies to MNR by people who had come over from Malawi.

Malawi is used as a step by the main supporters of MNR. The Malawian government is not fully aware of what's happening but at the moment they are on line with South African policy. Also, Israeli intelligence is very active in Malawi. It is like a lion out of control.

Frederikse: *What is MNR strategy? How has the war changed?*

Schade: MNR now is much more focused on every single thing that moves, whereas in the past MNR focused on projects and government institutions. Hardly any cars pass now on the roads.

There is massacring and slaughtering of the villagers. They come into the villages and announce that they are MNR and that the villagers must abandon Frelimo structures; they also tell the people not to go into Malawi. As a warning, they kill a complete family with knives.

The people are absolutely flabbergasted and don't know how to interpret this whole thing. These indicate an enormous change in tactic.

The people in Angonia now flee to Malawi. Some are well-received by the Malawian village headmen but criticized by the Malawian party structure. The Malawian government is resettling the Mozambicans in new constructed villages and they are also used as cheap labour force. But the people will move back into Angonia as soon as possible.

Frederikse: *What did you expect? Were you nervous when you went back?*

Schade: There was enormous hope when I left because of Nkomati but this has now gone. It is more difficult now to see any hope, especially among people with good intentions. The government people have slowed down too in the villages, as they see how the MNR war is gaining strength. So they do their main task and leave the rest. For our work we could no longer go to the cooperatives because they were abandoned and are in MNR areas. □