

Top MNR base is overrun

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SERRA DA GORONGOZA.

A JOINT force of Zimbabwean and Mozambican units has destroyed the MNR's main headquarters in Mozambique.

The base, in the foothills of Gorongosa mountain in Sofala province, was taken by storm on August 28 in a five-hour attack.

Zimbabwean and Mozambican aircraft bombed the base from about 5 am. Then paratroopers were sent in and by 10 am the entire base had been overrun and the bandit chiefs were fleeing northwards.

The base, called "Casa Banana" was known as the bandits' "supreme command base".

"Hundreds" of bandits have been killed in this and other joint operations launched against the bandits since July 1, Mozambican officers told AIM journalists.

Also overrun was a base called Muxamba, which the bandits called their "central regional command" south of Chimoto city in Manica province.

It was from this base that the bandits launched sabotage actions against the Manica-Beira high tension line as well as against the Beira-Mutare pipeline and the rail line linking Beira to Machipanda on the Zimbabwean border.

An 800 m-long landing strip, where planes used to land bringing fresh weaponry to the MNR,

was also taken.

Another base taken by the joint forces was Gogogo, 40 km west of "Casa Banana", well within Gorongosa mountain. This base the bandits called the "military academy".

Fighting is continuing around another important base called Bunga, 20 km south of "Casa Banana".

A military source told AIM that in all operations already launched "hundreds of bandits have been killed".

Apart from weaponry and other material captured in the various bases, the joint forces recovered documents which reveal "bandit connections with various countries".

The base at Gorongosa was the nerve centre for banditry in Mozambique. Here the bandits had their main communications centre in contact with bandit groups elsewhere in the country and with South Africa.

Despite the Nkomati agreement signed between Mozambique and South Africa in March 1984, testimony of MNR deserters makes it clear that radio contact between rear bases in the Transvaal and Gorongosa continued until at least July 1984.

The MNR evidently had not expected the attack and abandoned the base in great haste.

Figures on bandit casualties are not yet available. One Zimbabwean parachutist, when asked how many bandits had been killed, shrugged his shoulders and said: "I don't know. But there were many, many." — Ziana-AIM.