

PRESS CONFERENCE
ON GORONGOSA DOCUMENTS

Maputo, 30 September 1985

Ladies and Gentlemen of the press

On behalf of the Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique, thank you for coming to this press conference.

The mass media are a powerful weapon in the struggle for peace, democracy and justice. In holding this press conference our government wishes to make public important matters that have been jeopardising the peace and stability of our region.

The purpose of our meeting is to make public some of the documents that were found in the central camp of the armed bandits in Gorongosa, which was captured on 28 August by joint Mozambican and Zimbabwean forces.

In their rush to escape the armed bandits were unable to remove their material. They therefore tried to destroy it, in particular by burning documents. Our forces, however, attacked in time to recover large quantities of documentation.

We have in our possession many dozens of kilos of documents intact, and others partially destroyed that we are piecing together.

The documents we are publishing today are extracts from three notebooks that were written up by secretaries of the bandit chief. These documents are entitled :

DESK DIARY - 1984

CADERNO N° 2 (notebook N° 2)

CADERNO N° 3 (notebook N° 3)

and cover the period from the end of December 1983 to the beginning of July 1985.

The DESK DIARY is a diary starting on 26 December 1983 with regular entries up to 14 October, and scattered entries up to December 1984.

It has notes of meetings, and entries about movements in which the author was involved. It also has some personal notes, and information on the behaviour of the bandit ringleaders within and outside the country. There is a record of various messages from a Commandant Charles, who is identified in the same documents as being Colonel Charles Van Niekerk of Military Intelligence.

The spelling of names is often wrong and corresponds to a crude phonetic transcription into Portuguese.

The Diary mainly records relations with South Africa.

This is also the case for Notebooks 2 and 3. The Diary is used as such and also as a notebook. Sometimes, therefore, the date of the event does not coincide with the date of the respective column of the Diary, but in these cases the author writes the date of the event.

Notebook 2 contains essential points from the meetings of the commission for implementation of the declaration of 3 October 1984, and from meetings between the bandits and the South African side charged with implementing the declaration.

It contains messages of 1985 from the bandit boss to Colonel Van Niekerk, always addressing him as "Friend Commandant Charles".

It also contains notes about the various meetings held in Gorongosa between this boss and South African representatives, including the then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Louis Nel.

The final entry in this notebook refers to a meeting on 3 July 1985 with Deputy Minister Louis Nel.

Notebook 3, by the same writers, contains transcriptions of some parts of Notebook 2. The two books repeat each other in many respects. There are many messages abroad, particularly to South Africa.

The documents we shall give you at the end of this introduction are facsimiles of relevant and revealing extracts about violations.

Another volume has transcripts in Portuguese and English of some passages to which we should like to draw your closer attention and whose context can be studied in the facsimiles.

A "gentleman's agreement" was established and constantly reaffirmed in talks between the People's Republic of Mozambique and the Republic of South Africa in Mbabane, Pretoria, Maputo and Cape Town, with variously the Defence Minister, General Magnus Malan, the Commandant General of Police, General Coetzee, and the then Prime Minister P.W. Botha.

It was agreed that neither party would use the period between the Mbabane meeting in December 1983 and the signing of the Agreement to infiltrate men and equipment or carry out reprisals.

As is chronicled, this "gentleman's agreement" was violated by circles that are clearly identified in the document. Precisely during this period they :

- reorganized the bandits for the post-Nkomati phase
- rearmed and supplied the bandits "for six months"
- trained bandits, including parachutists, instructors, radio specialists, etc. and infiltrated them in massive numbers
- organised clandestine liaison between the bandits and South Africa, and between the bandits and abroad via South Africa.

It should be recalled that acts of terrorism in Maputo Province began in January 1984.

This phase shows how the South African military prepared the transition of the bandits from being an organic extension of the SADF into a force apparently independent of South Africa. And how they organized the transition from overt leadership and support to covert leadership and support.

More than breaking a "gentleman's agreement", more than breaking their word of honour, these facts reveal premeditation and organization in order not to observe the Agreement.

Turning to the Desk Diary 1984, let us now consider some revealing extracts about these activities :

1. Reorganizing the armed bandits for the post-Nkomati phase.

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2. Rearming and supplying the armed bandits to ensure six months' self-sufficiency in weapons and ammunition after the signing of the Agreement.
3. Training the bandits in parachuting, wireless telegraphy, heavy weapons, sabotage, instructor training.
4. Largescale infiltration of bandits and their leaders.
5. Organizing clandestine liaison between the bandits and South Africa and between the bandits and abroad via South Africa.

6. Assurance given the bandits by the South African military of non-observance of the Agreement.

The violation of the "gentleman's agreement" preceding the signing of the Agreement gives a new dimension to a study of violations of the formal Agreement. Violation of the "gentleman's agreement" clarifies the decision of certain South African circles at the moment of signing the Agreement: not to observe it, but to maintain a climate of instability and war in the area. Non-observance of the Agreement signed at Nkomati is thus a premeditated act.

The period after the signing of the Nkomati Accord.

After March 1984, at successive meetings of the Joint Security Commission established by the Agreement, the Mozambican side constantly asked the South African side where they had put the many bandits to be found in their territory, and where they had dropped and disembarked the material.

The South African side always refused to give any explanation, but merely said that it had parted from the bandits on not very friendly terms, had cut all and any links with them and was observing the Agreement.

In May, June, July and August 1984 the Mozambican side, both in the Joint Commission and through special envoys, denounced violations that had taken place, and that are now in part chronicled by the bandits.

A propos it will be recalled that the South African armed forces, in order to conceal the violations they were committing, made a public show of installing radar on the frontier with the People's Republic of Mozambique to prevent violations of Mozambican air space from South Africa. It will now be clear to public opinion that the same institution as installed the radar violated the Agreement, despatching aircraft and building landing strips in the People's Republic of Mozambique.

When the People's Republic of Mozambique was denouncing maritime violations, the South African side, while denying them, offered to patrol even Mozambican territorial waters so as to prevent sea borne landings. It will now be clear to public opinion that the same institution as proposed patrolling our territorial waters was sending submarines and assault ships to supply and transport the bandits. When the Mozambican side was constantly asking the South African side why and in whose name the bandits were still murdering our people, in the name of what and of whom they were still dying, we now find that the bandits murder and die by direct order of the circles indentified in the documents.

When the Mozambican Government, accepting a South African Government request, agreed to offer an amnesty to and rehabilitate bandits who renounced their crime, we see the response of these South Africa circles. They sought to transform the 3 October declaration into negotiations between the Mozambican Government and the bandits and did all in their power to distort and nullify the declaration.

What violations can be noted from the documents?

1. South Africa continues to direct the bandits.

It decides on war strategy.

It decides the strategy and methods aimed at transforming the granting of amnesty to penitent bandits into political negotiations leading to the Mozambican Government's destruction.

It decides the strategy of trying to present banditry as a respectable political organization, as an opposition.

It guides and supports the bandits' political and diplomatic activity.

2. South Africa continues to train, equip and support the armed bandits and for this purpose violates our territory with ships and aircraft and clandestinely sends personnel into our country.

3. South Africa guarantees communications between the armed bandits and the exterior via South Africa.

4. This leadership and support to the bandits was crucial in saving them from the desperate plight in which they found themselves in the second half of 1984. The messages from the armed bandits asking for ammunition give a clear picture of their despair at the prospect of imminent collapse.

The responses of the South African circles to these appeals are revealing :

- . about military tactics and strategy

- . about the definition of targets

- . about supply

5. In their strategy for war and the destruction of Mozambique the South African circles supporting banditry do not spare even South African interests as targets for criminal actions. They demand that economic agreements between the People's Republic of Mozambique and South Africa, which are beneficial and necessary to South Africa, be suspended as long as they fail to place bandits in the Mozambican Government.

We should like to leave here this partial enumeration of violations of an agreement that is decisive for peace in Southern Africa, for peaceful coexistence between the Republic of South Africa and the People's Republic of Mozambique.

These facts are extraordinarily serious. More than a violation of the Nkomati Accord they reveal a decision not to observe it, above all they reveal direct opposition to a policy of peace and detente in Southern Africa.

Adventurist and belligerent policies, gross and brutal disregard for International Law, and for norms in relations between civilized nations, are an expression of the fascist and racist policy of forcible domination of peoples.

It is not by chance that the bandits murder and mutilate children, massacre women and the aged, pillage and burn villages, buses and trains, destroy schools, hospitals and production centres. In doing this they are merely carrying out the orders of their foreign mentors. The scorched earth policy is a policy dictated by the foreigner, a policy which refutes the patriotism of these who execute it.

These documents reveal the pressing need for vigorous action by all men of honour and good will, and all countries, to prevail on the South African government to behave seriously and responsibly in respect of its obligations.

This demand is made in the fundamental interest of peace for the peoples of Southern Africa and the world.

Thank you very much.