

B. AFRICA

Mozambican Newspaper Says Malawian Officers Aiding MNR

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Text of report:

Members of the Malawian armed forces integrated into gangs of the South African-sponsored MNR [Mozambique National Resistance movement] bandits are taking part in attacks against the central Mozambican province of Zambezia. In its front page lead article of today, the Mozambican daily paper, 'Noticias', cites the administrator of the Zambezia district of Namarroi as saying that high-ranking Malawian officers take part in bandit raids. He said that three bandits captured in upper Zambezia, although they carried no identifying documents, appear not to be Mozambicans. They expressed themselves not in Portuguese or in one of the vernacular languages mostly spoken in central Mozambique, but in English or in Chichewa, a major language in Malawi. Combat rations and other military equipment of Malawian origin have been captured by Mozambican troops in Zambezia.

There are also strong suspicions of direct South African participation in the war in Zambezia. 'Noticias' states that in one clash in upper Zambezia three white men fighting for the MNR were killed. They carried no documents and are believed to be members of the South African armed forces. The administrator of Ile district told the paper that a captured MNR spy confessed of being a group of five men integrated from Malawi with the mission of reconnoitering Mozambican troop positions and important economic targets in the districts of Ile, Gurue, and Namorroi. The same spy said that bandit gangs entering Zambezia from Malawi go back to transit camps in the border district of Milanje. These camps are named (?Nanfuto) and (?Marrituro) and in November they received 5,000 bandits who were then sent on raiding mission throughout upper Zambezia.

The administrator of Nogela district in the centre of the province told 'Noticias' that the MNR had destroyed (?80) primary schools and the only secondary school in the district. The school network in Nogela has been reduced to five primary schools.

There are now some 5,000 displaced people in the northern part of Nogela who have fled from the MNR. They are seriously short of food, clothing and medicine. Similar dramas face displaced people in many parts of Zambezia. According to Mozambique's national disasters office, there are at least 270,000 displaced people in Zambezia. But there is also popular resistance to the MNR and 'Noticias' cites occasions on which local peasants, sometimes armed only with spears and arrows, have attacked bandit camps.