

Red Cross in bid to free MNR abductees

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THE International Red Cross is trying to secure the release of the seven foreign aid workers kidnapped by MNR bandits near the Mozambican central town of Gondola more than six weeks ago.

According to reports this week by Argus Africa News Service, the International Red Cross had got in touch with MNR officials to secure the release of the six adults and an 18-month-old baby girl.

The kidnap victims are American volunteer nurse, Ms Kindra Bryan (28); Australian, Mr Roy Perkins (36), who together with his wife Trish (33) had been running a clinic at a farm inside Mozambique.

Others who were taken away by the bandit gang were Mr Philip Cooper and his wife, Victoria, and their 18-month-old daughter, Abigail; and

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Ms Joan Goodman, a nurse from Zimbabwe.

The abductees were working for three volunteer organisations in Mozambique — Youth With a Mission, Mission to Mozambique and Shiloh Shalom.

In an interview with Argus Africa News Service, the managing director of the Beira Corridor Group, Mr Eddie Cross, is quoted as saying that nothing had been heard from the kidnap victims a fortnight after their capture.

He said there was concern about the health of baby Abigail and the condition of Ms Bryan, who

suffers from a blood disorder and needs a constant balanced diet.

Mr Cross discounted claims by a "Lisbon spokesman of the MNR" who last week was reported as saying that the bandits had shelled Beira, cut rail and road links to Zimbabwe and blown up the pipeline.

"The security situation in the 300 km corridor from Zimbabwe to the port of Beira was the quietest it had been for some time," he is reported as saying.

All routes were operating normally and commercial companies reported that their traffic was flowing without trouble, said Mr Cross.