

Time to hit MNR

H. 4/12/87

THE actual number of our men, women and children so far butchered by MNR bandits for no other reason than being Zimbabwean is not known. But reports from along our border with Mozambique point to scores of casualties, dozens of them murdered in the most gruesome fashion, such as the five school children from Jersey School.

Like the dissidents in Matabeleland, who, according to eyewitnesses seemed to have enjoyed hacking to death the 16 innocent whites near Esigodini, the MNR is not interested in fighting our armed forces. They want to instil fear in the civilian population and generally create a sense of insecurity among the people.

That policy has worked for the MNR in Mozambique where its terror tactics have disrupted rural life. The morale of Zimbabweans has always been high because of the successes of the army and the airforce in Mozambique in keeping our routes to the sea open. The only way that morale could be shaken would be if the gruesome murders were exported to Zimbabwe.

Our operations in Mozambique are still as successful as before. But while the man in Harare and other urban and rural centres may echo that statement, it is unlikely that the people along the border, who have witnessed the MNR terror tactics, would agree.

There is no doubt that the MNR is attempting to stretch us. It is how we react that is important. Let us start seeing the dead bodies of armed bandits along the border and our people in those areas will have fewer problems of morale.

Some of the so-called refugees in the area have been used by the enemy to collect information on Zimbabwean targets and they also act as couriers for looted booty. The MNR is testing the waters with dead-of-night cross-border terrorism.

We have the military capability to deal with the MNR. We have one of the best armies and most efficient airforces in Africa. We have the equipment and the firepower. A decisive response that will not compromise our operations inside Mozambique is what we now require.