

# SECURITY FORCES STEP UP PATROLS IN MANY AREAS— DEFENCE MINISTRY

**Crime Reporter**  
SECURITY forces have intensified their operations in all bandit-affected areas and the Ministry of Defence has reassured the nation that it will enjoy the festive season in peace and happiness.

The Secretary for Defence, Cde Willard Chiwewe, told a Press briefing in Harare yesterday on the security situation in bandit-affected areas, that in recent months Zimbabwe had experienced some border violations perpetrated by MNR bandits, especially along the north-eastern, eastern and south-eastern border with Mozambique.

He said it was regretted that such border violations had resulted in some brutal and gruesome murders of innocent civilians, including schoolchildren and infants by the bandits.

Accordingly, the Zimbabwe Defence Forces had intensified its operations along the border and had been ordered to be ruthless with the bandits.

The defence forces would remain in this state until the MNR bandit menace was eliminated and peace returned to the affected border areas.

Cde Chiwewe added that the bandits had been on the run since the offensive started resulting in fewer incursions across the border.

On the situation inside the country, he said the nation had been shocked and horrified by the murder and mutilation of defenceless civilians including missionaries, farmers, civil servants and supporters of the Government by bandits in Matabeleland and the Midlands.

A few districts in Mashonaland West and Masvingo provinces were also affected, but the defence and security forces had accounted for most of the bandits' leaders and their gangs.

The present offensive by the security forces in the affected areas had been "quite pleasing" as evidenced by the killing of notorious bandit leader Richard Gwesela and some members of his gang.

Cde Chiwewe added that the public was being urged to be more vigilant, especially with the coming of the rains and the festive season.

"People are advised to avoid employing aliens whose life history they cannot easily establish.

"We are under instructions from the Prime Minister to try and reduce the inflow of aliens through our borders," he said.

Also at the Press conference was the acting army commander, Major-General Sheba Gava, and the deputy secretary for defence, Cde Charles Kuwaza.