

Renamo supply I trail begins ^{24/2}₈₈ in South Africa

EVIDENCE abounds of South African government assistance to Renamo between 1980 and 1985.

According to Patricia and Derek Hanekom, two African National Congress spies who penetrated South African Special Forces operations, Pretoria's military intelligence service produced programmes for Renamo's "Voice of Free Africa" radio station, which broadcast from Hillbrow Post Office tower in Johannesburg.

The couple said that at least once a month supplies of AK-47 rifles were airlifted from Voortrekkerhoogte barracks near Pretoria to Renamo units in Mozambique. Military intelligence paid cash for pencils, medicines, fertilizers, agricultural tools and headscarves for a Renamo rally inside Mozambique.

A firm called Frama Intertrading, based near Johannesburg, used to transport officials and materials for the Mozambique operation, which was called Operation Mila.

Documents captured from Renamo at Gorongosa, the National Park which serves as a base for its guerrillas, show that for nearly a year after the signing of the Nkomati accord South African military agents maintained contact with the rebels, arranging supply drops.

Diplomatic sources say that R. F. "Pik" Botha, the South African Foreign Minister, called in Renamo representatives after the Nkomati accord and told them to lay down their weapons but, with the support of senior South African army officers, the rebels ignored his request.

George Shultz, the US Secretary of State, said recently that South Africa still gives assistance to Renamo, but Britain refuses to name Pretoria as its backer. It is

possible that private individuals and organisations, particularly among the large Portuguese community in South Africa, may also be giving Renamo support.

The only recent physical evidence of foreign support is three US-made parachutes found in the middle of last year near Inhambane. They appear to have been used for a supply drop.

Renamo has support at a senior level in Malawi, which is the usual entry route for visitors to Renamo-held territory in Mozambique. Jorge Jardim, a leader of former white settlers in Mozambique, set up the contacts in Malawi soon after Mozambique became independent. Malawi has recently showed more official solidarity with the Maputo government, but the guerrillas still enjoy regular access.

In Portugal only Manuel Bulhosa, a wealthy industrialist, openly admits to having given financial support to Renamo. Renamo's main foreign representation is based in Lisbon. Despite recent upsets which left him temporarily out in the cold, Evo Fernandes, a young Mozambican of Goan extraction, is back as the effective external spokesman.

In the US the Heritage Foundation, the right-wing think tank in Washington, has given Renamo office space and it has many supporters among conservative groups and rich Mozambican exiles. Many of them also support Unita, the Angolan rebel group, although Unita itself will not be associated with Renamo.

There have also been reports of Saudi Arabian money being channelled to Renamo. The Saudis give money to movements in Africa they believe are fighting Marxist oppression of Muslims. There are many Muslims in northern Mozambique.