

MNR bandits sabotage Inhambane water supply

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INHAMBANE.

INHAMBANE city has been hit by an acute shortage of water, following sabotage of the pumping station by MNR bandits in January.

MNR bandits broke into the pumping station and dynamited most of the equipment.

Currently the population of Inhambane city and the outlying areas (more than 100 000 people) are being supplied with water by a much smaller pump installed by the local water company. Where the sabotaged pump had a capacity of 160 cubic metres of water per hour, this one can pump just 50 cubic metres an hour.

The water company currently guarantees water for just three short periods a

day. Most of the city's population relies on public standpipes, and there are very few of these. The result is that thousands of people queue up for hours in order to obtain the minimum amount of water for their needs.

Many people find themselves forced to purchase water from private standpipes. A 30-litre bucket of water costs 25 meticals.

A team of three Australian experts visited the sabotaged pumping station on March 7. They were visiting the province to study the possibility of the Australian government financing water supply and sanitation projects there.

The bandits cut their way through a barbed wire fence more than two metres high. They entered the building

sheltering the equipment, placed the explosives, and then detonated them from a distance.

According to Cde Belmiro Nhassengo, director of the Inhambane Water Company, the bandits made an earlier raid on the station, on July 22, 1988, but were driven off by Mozambican troops.

The company hopes to resolve the shortages with new equipment purchased in Maputo last month.

Meanwhile MNR bandits killed three people in an attack on Tuesday night against the locality of Matola-Rio, in Boane district, 25 km west of Maputo, the daily paper "Noticias" reported yesterday.

The three victims were workers at a local bakery who were on night shift. — Ziana-AIM.