

Defector Says South Africa Backs Renamo

By Margaret Knox
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MAPUTO, Mozambique, March 23—A defector from the right-wing guerrilla group fighting to unseat the Mozambican government gave a detailed account today of what he said was South Africa's continuing support of the organization.

Paulo Oliveira, who defected earlier this month from the Mozambican National Resistance, or Renamo, described bases inside South Africa where he said rebels are trained, and forays from South Africa into Mozambique in violation of a 1984 nonaggression agreement between the two countries.

South Africa denies any link to the rebels.

Oliveira said the rebel group is so closely linked with Pretoria that it knew within hours about a 1986 plane crash that killed Mozambican president Samora Machel, and was advised by South Africa to be prepared to take responsibility for the crash. Such an order never came, he added.

Oliveira, Renamo's former spokesman in Western Europe, arrived in Maputo March 14 under a government amnesty offer, and was immediately denounced by rebel leaders in Lisbon as a double agent. Mozambique is a former Portuguese colony.

Oliveira said he left here in 1979, five years after Mozambican independence, and made his first contact with rebel leaders in Lisbon two years later. In 1983, he said, he moved to South Africa to take charge of a Renamo radio station, Voice of Free Africa.

At a farm 20 miles from Pretoria, and later at a base in the northern Transvaal called Phalaborwa, Oliveira said he met Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama. He said South African troops of the 7th Infantry Regiment and the 5th Reconnaissance Battalion trained and supplied rebels at the base.

Although Oliveira returned to Portugal in 1984, he said he maintained contact with the rebel bases in South Africa. On June 24, 1987, he said South African Brigadier Charlie van Niekerk came to Lisbon to install a facsimile machine and a coder-decoder.

"Until this day, their system continues to send messages between Phalaborwa and Lisbon," he said, "and there's another system in the Renamo office in Bonn."

Oliveira said he grew disillusioned with Renamo and with South African influence in the movement.

"The South Africans' object was not to put Renamo into power but to create maximum confusion for the Mozambique government and continue the war," he said. He said the strategy led to massacres and "gratuitous violence" in Mozambique.

Separately, an Australian missionary, Ian Grey, 27, was sentenced to 10½ years in prison here today after admitting he had carried messages from Renamo to its Washington lobbying office. He said he had been "duped and deceived" by Renamo lobbyist Thomas W. Schaaf Jr., according to his lawyer, Australian Geoffrey Robertson.

[In Washington, Schaaf said he had never met Grey, and he called the charges "absolutely" untrue. "Who knows what methods [the Mozambicans] used to put words in his mouth?" Schaaf said.]