

JOHANNESBURG, 21 MARCH (AIM) MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY ARE STILL SUPPLYING THE BANDITS OF THE +MOZAMBIQUE NATIONAL RESISTANCE+ (MNR), ACCORDING TO EVIDENCE GIVEN IN THE RAND SUPREME COURT LAST WEEK BY DETECTIVE SERGEANT ROBERT VAN DER MERWE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE.

SGT VAN DER MERWE AND THE FORMER HEAD OF THE HOMICIDE AND ROBBERY DIVISION IN THE EAST RAND, CAPT JACK LA GRANGE, ARE ON TRIAL ACCUSED OF MURDERING TWO DRUG TRAFFICKERS, AND OF THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF A THIRD.

DURING THE COURT HEARING, AND IN STATEMENTS MADE BY THE TWO IN THEIR DEFENCE, VARIOUS INCRIMINATING FACTS, HIGHLY DAMAGING TO THE POLICE, HAVE COME TO LIGHT AND BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS.

ON THE MNR, SGT VAN DER MERWE SAID THAT, ON AN UNSPECIFIED DATE LAST YEAR, HE AND A COLLEAGUE MET A CERTAIN COMMANDER JOHN VORSTER DURING AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE EASTERN TRANSVAAL TOWN OF NELSPRUIT.

+WITH HIM THERE WAS ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL WHO SAID HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LINKS BETWEEN A CERTAIN ORGANISATION - WHICH WE UNDERSTOOD TO BE RENAMO - AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT+, SAID VAN DER MERWE. +RENAMO+ IS THE PORTUGUESE ACRONYM FOR THE MNR,

+AS FAR AS WE COULD DEDUCE, HE WAS INVOLVED IN SUPPLYING THE MOZAMBIQUE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT WITH WHATEVER THEY NEEDED+, ADDED VAN DER MERWE.
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+I SAW VARIOUS WEAPONS OF COMMUNIST ORIGIN IN HIS GARAGE, AND I PRESUMED THAT THEY WERE DESTINED TO THAT ORGANISATION+, HE CONTINUED.

ASKED WHAT HE UNDERSTOOD BY THE TERM +CLANDESTINE+ OPERATIONS, VAN DER MERWE SAID THAT THEY WERE +SECRET+.

+AS I UNDERSTAND IT ONLY THE COMMANDING OFFICER AND THE OFFICER CARRYING OUT THE OPERATION SHOULD KNOW OF IT+, HE SAID. +IT SEEMS TO ME THAT SUCH ACTIONS ARE ILLEGAL IN TERMS OF THE LAW, BUT I CONSIDER THEM LEGAL IN TERMS OF SUPERIOR ORDERS+.

AS FOR THE CRIME OF WHICH HE IS ACCUSED, VAN DER MERWE TOLD THE COURT THAT HE KILLED BERNIE ALEX OGLE, IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE IN ELDORADO PARK, AND THE POLICE INFORMER PETER PILLAY, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED IN COURT AS DRUG TRAFFICKERS, IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER LAST YEAR. HE SAID HE KILLED THEM BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THEY WERE MEMBERS OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT, THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC).

IN HIS DEFENCE HE SAID HE BELIEVED HE WAS CARRYING OUT A +CLANDESTINE+ MISSION ON ORDERS FROM POLICE HEADQUARTERS WHICH HAD BEEN TRANSMITTED TO HIM BY HIS SUPERIOR (AND CO-ACCUSED), CAPT JACK LA GRANGE.
(MORE)

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VAN DER MERWE PLACED IN THE SAME CONTEXT THE MURDER OF THREE ANC MEMBERS IN SWAZILAND LAST JULY, AND THAT OF THREE MEMBERS OF THE PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS (PAC) IN A SHOOT-OUT WITH POLICE IN JOHANNESBURG A MONTH LATER. THESE ACTIONS WERE ALSO +CLANDESTINE+ POLICE OPERATIONS, SAID VAN DER MERWE.

REFERRING TO HIS NOTEBOOK, VAN DER MERWE TOLD THE COURT THAT HE WAS ON DUTY AT THE OSHOEK BORDER POST WITH SWAZILAND ON 8 JULY LAST YEAR.

+WHEN I ARRIVED SHORTLY AFTER EIGHT IN THE MORNING, I TALKED WITH FOUR SECURITY POLICE FROM PRETORIA. I ASKED THEM WHAT THEY WERE DOING AND THEY TOLD ME THEY WERE CARRYING OUT A CLANDESTINE OPERATION+, HE SAID.

+THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT I HEARD THE EXPRESSION+, CONTINUED VAN DER MERWE. +I ASKED THEM WHAT IT MEANT, AND THEY TOLD ME 'READ THE PAPERS A COUPLE OF DAYS FROM NOW AND YOU'LL KNOW WHY WE'RE HERE'+.

TWO DAYS LATER, THE PAPERS CARRIED THE STORY OF HOW THREE ANC MEMBERS WERE SHOT DEAD AFTER THREE WHITE MEN IN A BMW CAR FORCED THEM OFF THE ROAD NEAR MANZINI AIRPORT.

SGT VAN DER MERWE TOLD THE COURT HE HAD NO DOUBT OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE DEATHS AND WHAT HE HAD HEARD ON 8 JULY - INCLUDING A CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO OF THE SECURITY POLICE IN THE BATHROOM IN WHICH GUNS AND A BMW WERE MENTIONED.

(AIM)

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