

# Bandit terror in Mozambique

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## DAVID GREYBE reports from the Beira corridor in Mozambique

A MOZAMBICAN woman, with death staring from her eyes, told visiting West European parliamentarians here on Thursday how apartheid-backed MNR bandits forced her to cook and then eat her own child.

Two men with wide, frightened eyes, and bedraggled clothes told of how they had recently fled to Dondo to escape the terror they had suffered at

the hands of the South African-backed bandits.

It included having to watch as their wives were raped repeatedly by the bandits, only then to be robbed of all their belongings.

After hearing gruesome details of the atrocities, while on their visit to victims of the apartheid bandits at Dondo in the Beira Corridor, shaken par-

liamentarians demanded that Western Europe must assist the Frontline States to defend their peoples.

Our group, escorted by Mozambican troops, a tank and army ambulance, was led to the displaced persons' camp in the South of the Corridor, by the President of the Association of West European Parliamentarians For Action Against Apar-

theid, Jan Nico Scholten.

We had earlier flown in to Beira from Harare.

"People in Western Europe are just not aware of these beastly atrocities being perpetrated by the South African regime and its agents - and I must, and will, make them aware of it," declared a shaken Mr Scholten,

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who clenched his fists in anger after hearing these stories, tears forming in his eyes.

"We have to fight against the racist regime which is making all these people so unhappy – and that word does not express the situation in full," he stressed.

Dondo, once a guerilla camp during Zimbabwe's liberation war, now houses 3,112 people who have fled MNR atrocities.

And their blank, hopeless and broken expressions and furrowed brows are ample testimony to the misery that they have suffered at the hands of the bandits.

### Important

Less dramatic, but just as important, was our visit to the Port of Beira.

The Beira Corridor is one of the five "freedom routes in the Frontline States aimed at reducing dependence on South Africa," pointed out the Director of the Beira Port Authority Rui Fonseca.

Mr Scholten said that it was obvious how important the Beira Corridor was for the development of the whole region.

However, because of Pretoria's aggression, the railway link to Malawi, for example, cannot be used at the moment.

"This highlights the need for donor aid to increase the Frontline States' defence capabilities, as well as building roads, railways and bridges," said the AWEPA president.

### Defend

"This is one of our deepest wishes after our visit here," Mr Scholten emphasised.

"Western Europe must also accept its responsibility to help you defend yourselves against the aggressive destabilisation policies of South Africa," he declared.

The Governor of Sofala Province Francisco Masquil said that apart from rehabilitating the Beira Corridor to take more regional traffic, attention was also being paid to the rehabilitation and development of the city.

In this, it was hoped to involve local businesses too, especially in the provision of services.

### Destroyed

"Over the last two years we have achieved, despite some adversity, a qualitative change



● **WAR VICTIMS:** The death toll in Mozambique's war is 400,000 – at least half of them children under five. Even in displacement camps, children need protection from MNR bandits.

The children above are pictured being given a daily meal at a refugee camp in Zambesia province. The Mozambique government soldier was protecting them and encouraging them to eat up.

in the security situation here because of the hard work of the armed forces and of the people, who are determined to fight the armed bandits of South Africa," said Mr Masquil.

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Separately, three MNR bases, one a regional headquarters, were destroyed last week in a joint operation by Mozambican and Zimbabwean forces in Mozambique's Gaza Province and 177 bandits were killed.

The bases in Gaza, which borders on the South-East of Zimbabwe, had been set up with the aim of disrupting the rehabilitation programme along the Chicualacuala to Maputo Railway.

They were also being used as launching pads for attacks across the border into Zimbabwe where bandits have committed atrocities, announced a statement from the Zimbabwe Ministry of Defence.

The joint operation ran from Friday March 18 to Wednesday last week and was conducted in the Mabalane area of Gaza.

The principal MNR bandit base destroyed in the operation was the regional headquarters of Pretoria's bandits, known as Central Base.

Another, a logistic supply base, was known as Maginge and the third bandit base destroyed was still under construction, said the Zimbabwean statement.