

# Paper blames MNR for Mozambique's high prices

Aug 4 5

**MOZAMBIQUE'S** main newspaper on Saturday described this month's price increases of up to 500 percent on food as a harsh necessity resulting from years of systematic aggression.

The semi-official daily Noticias said in a front page editorial: "We should be aware that Mozambique, devastated by more than 20 consecutive years of war, is one of the poorest countries in the world . . . where millions are threatened with death by starvation."

It asked: "Are we really incapable of governing ourselves, of being independent as the colonialists always said?"

## *Aggression*

"The real reason . . . is the continued and systematic aggression against Mozambique ever since its independence carried out by the racist regimes of the region — first Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and then South Africa," it said.

Last month the government announced it was removing state subsidies on rice, maize and sugar costing 32 billion meticals (US\$71) a year as part of an economic recovery package backed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The price of rice rose last Friday from 105 meticals (23c) to 271 meticals (60 cents), that of maize flour

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## MAPUTO

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jumped from 60 meticals (13c) to 145 meticals (32c), and the price of sugar went up from 50 meticals (11c) to 264 meticals (59c).

"The problem is not so much that these prices are high: it is that the country's economic situation does not allow wages to be higher," Noticias said.

Maputo has been battling Mozambican National Resistance bandits, since shortly after independence in 1975.

The MNR, formed by the rebel white Rhodesian government of former prime minister Ian Smith and taken over by South Africa in 1980, has been blamed by the government for wrecking Mozambique's economy and displacing millions of people.

● Mozambique and China have signed an agreement that will provide Chinese cuisine for Mozambican hotels.

Under the accord, Chinese cooks will work in Mozambican hotels for two years, bringing their gastronomical delights to Maputo's residents. — Ziana-Angop-Reuter.