

Presence of troops in Maputo defended

HARARE — The Defence Ministers of Zimbabwe and Tanzania have reaffirmed their countries' continued military presence in Mozambique for as long as South Africa remained a threat to regional peace, security and stability.

Zimbabwe Defence Minister Cde Enos Nkala on Thursday night hosted a dinner for his visiting Tanzanian counterpart, Cde Salim Ahmed Salim at which he defended the presence of troops of the two Frontline States in Mozambique where South African sponsored MNR bandits are wreaking a trail of murder of innocent civilians and destruction of property.

"We have the right to exist and determine our future come what may. We may have no food, may go hungry, we may die, but we won't

surrender. We will win or lose together and never allow ourselves to be torn apart," said Cde Nkala.

He said the role of the Frontline States was to bar South Africa from taking over in Mozambique, thereby preventing the apartheid Pretoria regime from taking control of the Southern Africa region.

He said Zimbabwe and Tanzania's military presence in Mozambique was to ensure democracy in the region as opposed to South Africa's policy of apartheid.

"We will maintain democracy in the region as defined by us and not as defined by other people," Cde Nkala said.

Cde Salim Ahmed Salim, who is also the Tanzanian Deputy Prime Minister, said he was in Zimbabwe in his capacity as the chairman of the Inter-State Defence and Security Commission of the Frontline States to exchange

experience on the struggle in Southern Africa and on the destabilisation in the region by South Africa.

"Our strength lies in our unity. A threat to one of us is a threat to all of us. We have the right to defend ourselves and so we have to work together and we refuse to be reconquered."

"We wish that no one soldier of Tanzania or Zimbabwe stays in Mozambique but as long as South Africa remains a threat to regional peace and stability, we will continue to be in Mozambique in accordance with our obligation," Cde Salim said.

He commended Zimbabwe for its commitment to the total liberation of Africa.

Cde Salim's two-day visit to Zimbabwe is part of a three-nation tour which has already taken him to Botswana. He was due to leave for Mozambique yesterday. — Ziana.