

Pretoria under fire

Maputo, Wednesday.

UNITED Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has accused the South African backed MNR bandits of "unspeakable atrocities" and of waging a "reign of terror" in the Mozambican countryside.

In a message sent to the UN-sponsored conference on emergency assistance to Mozambique that began in Maputo yesterday morning De Cuellar said that the causes that gave rise to the 1987 UN emergency appeal to Mozambique still persisted.

"Effective emergency operations must continue on a scale proportionate to the needs of the country", urged the Secretary-General.

"Adequate quantities of food and other vital relief supplies must be provided and delivered to the affected population to alleviate suffering and to facilitate the re-integration of displaced people into society".

Meanwhile, the requirements presented by Mozambique to donors in its 1988-89 emergency appeal "are extremely modest", Abdulrahim Farah, United Nations Undersecretary-General for Special Political Questions, told the conference on emergency assistance to

Mozambique in Maputo yesterday.

Farah, who is co-chairing the conference, along with Mozambican Prime Minister Mario Machungo, pointed out that the food aid requested "translates into a per capita daily caloric intake which is well below the minimum internationally accepted standard".

Sweden pledged its support for the defence of development projects in Mozambique.

Swedish Under-Secretary in the Foreign Ministry Sten Rylander told the conference that "Sweden will take specific measures aimed at strengthening security situation around the projects where Swedish development assistance is involved.

"In the view of the Swedish Government, the international community has an obligation to help protect the on-going aid and development work in Mozambique which is of crucial importance for the survival of millions of people in the country", Ndugu Rylander said.

He announced that the regular bilateral program to Mozambique for the next fiscal year will increase by six million US dollars to 60 million dollars.

He said that Mozambique's present "acute difficulties are primarily caused by the ravages and atrocities committed by the South African-backed bandits of the MNR". The terrorists have forced withdrawal of aid personnel from rural areas, he noted.

Mozambique's Deputy Trade Minister Prakash Ratilal, presenting Mozambique's emergency appeal for 1988/89 to the conference noted that Mozambique's economic and social base had been undermined by "the brutal and deliberately random attacks" of South Africa's MNR bandits.

By the end of 1986, he said, the bandits had destroyed 1,300 trucks, buses and tractors. They had destroyed or forced the closure of 720 health posts. In education, 2,049 primary and 22 secondary schools had been damaged. The bandits had also looted and destroyed 900 privately owned rural shops.

The human tragedy involved could not be reflected by mere statistics, said Ndugu Ratilal. He referred to the children traumatised by the war, to the hideous mutilations of ears, noses or breasts carried out by the MNR thugs, to the splitting up of families.

South African backed terrorism "has claimed the lives of over 100,000 Mozambicans, he said. "About 200,000 children do not know where their parents are, or have seen their parents brutally murdered".

Food aid was needed for 5.9 million Mozambicans, Ratilal said. The amount requested in the appeal for 1988 is 710,000 tonnes of grain and 204,000 tonnes of beans, vegetable oil and other foodstuffs.

The United States accused South Africa's MNR bandits of carrying out "one of the most brutal holocausts against ordinary human beings since World War II".

Roy Stacey, the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, told the conference that the

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MNR "has been waging a systematic and brutal war of terror against innocent Mozambican civilians through forced labour, starvation, physical abuse and wanton killing".

Stacey bore his indictment of the MNR, the sharpest so far made by any of the donor representatives at the conference, on the recent report by a refugee expert working for the US State Department who interviewed 200 Mozambican refugees in neighbouring countries and compiled a picture of mass murder, atrocity and desolation.

Stacey pledged that the USA "will provide both food and financial resources that will in 1988 make Mozambique our largest assistance recipient in Africa".

The Italian Government will spend 47 million US dollars on bilateral assistance programmes in Mozambique, including the emergency programme, the Mozambique news agency (AIM) quoted the Italian Ambassador in Maputo, George Testori, as telling the conference.

Also at the conference, West German Ambassador Helmut Matthes announced that his Government would give 26 million marks (about 15.6 million US dollars) for training and improvement of workers' living conditions in the Moatize coal mining complex in the northern province of Tete.

West Germany will make available another 200,000 marks (about 120,000 US dollars) to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Mozambique.

The British representative announced that his country would provide 10,000 tonnes of products for food aid and five million pounds (about 9.5 million US dollars) for emergency aid in addition to the 500,000 pounds (950,000 US dollars) destined to Mozambique's UNICEF programme.