

Witnesses tell ^H of gunned men _{7/10/98} in pool of blood

Court Reporter

TWO State witnesses told the High Court in Harare how they had seen two of their workmates lying in a pool of blood after being gunned down allegedly by John Mataveya of Mozambique at a Chipinge tea estate in April last year.

Mataveya (22), an alleged MNR bandit, has pleaded not guilty to two counts of murder, three of armed robbery, one of attempted murder and one of possession of arms of war.

A State witness, who was a foreman at Ratelshoek Tea Estate at the time of the offences, said that he had seen Mataveya firing shots in the premises and described how he had taken cover.

He had later seen Cde Elias Mahemu (45) and Edward Maphosa (15) lying in a pool of blood.

Another State witness, employed as a clerk at the estate at the time, said it was just after 5 pm on the day in question when he had heard a burst of gunfire before diving for cover under a table.

A few moments later, a

gunman had entered his office, pushed him to another office and ordered him to hand over money which was to have been given to tea pluckers as wages.

The witness said he had seen the gunman running down a valley towards the border with Mozambique after he had collected the money.

The gunman had been armed with a rifle "similar to those used by freedom fighters during the liberation struggle"; said the witness, adding that he had later been shown an AK rifle which he identified as being similar to that the gunman had used.

In the trial, which is being held under tight security, Mr Ray Goba of the Attorney-General's Office is appearing for the State while Mr Bruno Mugabe of Mugabe, Mutezo and Partners is representing Mataveya.

The trial, before Mr Justice Ebrahim, sitting with Mr Patrick Msengezi and Mr Mischeck Nyandoro as assessors, continues today.