Mozambican forces kill thirty-six MNR bandits

MAPUTO.

UNITS of the Mozambican armed forces killed 36 bandits of the South African-backed MNR on January 1 in a clash in the Mapulanguene area, 170 km north of Maputo, a spokesman for the FPLM general staff announced yesterday.

The clash took place when a large bandit group tried to assault the village of Macaene before dawn on New Year's Day.

When they retreated the bandits left behind six mortar shells and bazooka rockets, 35 light weapons of various kinds, 48 ammunition clips, six rucksacks, a medical kit and a large quantity of explosives.

The Mapulanguene administrative post is located less than 20 km east of the border with the South African province of Transvaal.

Meanwhile, MNR bandits kidnapped a Portuguese Roman Catholic priest, Fr Fernando Simoes Carvalho e Silva, last Sunday, Aim reported yesterday.

It quoted Portuguese missionary sources as saying the 39-year-old cleric was seized as he was driving back to his home at Moamba, about 50 km north-west of the capital, after celebrating mass at Ressano Garcia border post, 80 km from Maputo.

The bandits set his car on fire.

President Joaquim Chissano met with four bishops of the local Roman Catholic Church in Maputo on Thursday night.

Church sources said that the meeting was a continuation of one held last November between the president and the Catholic church.

Among the matters discussed at Thursday's meeting was the visit of Pope John Paul II to Mozambique, scheduled for September this year. — Ziana-Aim-Reuter.