

# Bandits murder 9 in Chipinge raid

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**NINE people murdered on Friday by South African-sponsored MNR bandits in the Magondi area of Chipinge, near Zimbabwe's eastern border with Mozambique, are to be buried today, police said here yesterday. Seven other people seriously wounded in the same attack are still in Mount Selinda hospital and are all said to be in a critical condition.**

According to the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, one of the nine civilians brutally murdered by the bandits was a nine-month-old baby.

The MNR bandits have been creating havoc in Mozambique, where thousands of people have been displaced from their homes or forced to flee to neighbouring countries. They have also been crossing the border into Zimbabwe and carrying out massacres and other atrocities along the border area.

In many places along the border, Zimbabwean villagers regularly leave their homes to sleep at night at schools, where the army can protect them.

The victims of Friday's attack were due to have been buried yesterday. However, because of heavy rains, the burials had been postponed until today, the police spokesman said.

The spokesman said he was unable to disclose the number of bandits involved in the attack or give further details about the burials.

The meeting in Harare earlier this week of the Organisation of African Unity ad hoc committee on Southern Africa condemned South Africa's continued assistance to the armed bandits in Mozambique.

## Support

A memorandum presented to the committee by the Frontline States — Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Angola, Zambia and Tanzania — said bandits in Mozambique had continued to receive the support of South Africa and had increased their massacres of innocent people, following South African president P. W. Botha's meeting last year with Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano at Songo, at which he agreed to end South Africa's support for the armed bandits.

Sabotage by bandits of railway lines leading to Mozambique's ports and the power lines from Caborra Bassa and the oil pipeline to Zimbabwe had also increased.

"Overall, there is evidence to suggest that South Africa is making no effort to honour the Nkomati Accord and the commitments made at Songo," the Frontline States' memorandum said.

Although many Zimbabweans have been maimed and killed by MNR bandits along the border areas, arming the people in these areas

against bandits is out, the district administrator for Chipinge, Cde Christopher Chingosho, has said.

He said because of intermarriages which had occurred along the border

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areas over the years, it was now very difficult to distinguish between Zimbabweans and Mozambicans.

"In such a situation the question of giving arms or even military training is out because you never know who you will be arming or training," he said. Appeals to local residents to report suspicious people in their areas, Cde Chingosho said, were now beginning to be heeded.

But, he said, the only possible way of protecting peas-

ants against MNR bandit attacks was through the villagisation programme. "Bandits have for a long time taken advantage of the scattered nature of the settlements and terrorised people during the night."

Cde Chingosho said the villagisation programme had been intensified along the border areas and three villages had so far been completed. He noted that if people lived close together it would be very difficult for bandits to attack without being noticed.

Villagisation, Cde Chingosho said, would also help to flush out bandit collaborators as they would be easily identified. However, people in the border areas had since fled from their homes leaving most of their belongings

behind.

"What we are trying to do is to bring the people back to their villages where we settle them properly according to our villagisation programme."

But, he said, the exercise was slow as some of the villagers were refusing to go back to their original homes. "Because of the drought and the intensity of the banditry activities the people are now realising that there is a need to co-operate with the security forces."

Cde Chingosho also said development activities in Chipinge which had been disrupted by bandits would be speeded up. High on the priority list was the improvement of the road network, especially along the border.

— Ziana-Mail Reporter