

## **MNR Platoon Surrenders**

An entire platoon of South Africa's MNR bandits, consisting of 26 men, surrendered to the authorities in the southern province of Gaza on 27 June, using a well-known traditional healer named Mungoi as their intermediary.

Mungoi, who comes from a village of the same name in Manjacaze district in eastern Gaza, is a powerful figure in the area. He has been suspected of links with the bandits in the past, but relatives of people abducted by the MNR have asked him to intercede on their behalf.

In Gaza it is said that Mungoi on several occasions spoke to the bandits to prevent them from committing atrocities in his zone.

The group that surrendered consisted largely of young boys aged between eight and 14

(pressganging children into their ranks is a common MNR recruitment policy). Led by an 18-year old, Joaquim Romão, the group left an MNR base at Chococha in Inhambane province in order to hunt for food in nearby villages.

Instead they headed across the provincial boundary and sought out Mungoi.

"We were tired of suffering in the bush," Romão told AIM, "so we decided to surrender".

They arrived at Mungoi's house, and asked him to contact the armed forces. They told him they wished to take advantage of the amnesty law passed by the Mozambique parliament, the People's Assembly, in December 1987.

Mungoi collected their weapons and sent a messenger to Manjacaze town to contact military units stationed there.

Originally there were 27 in Romão's group "but one of our colleagues ran away when he saw that the troops were coming," Romão told AIM.

Mungoi presented the other 26 to the troops, and handed over all the weapons the group had been carrying.

The army then took the surrendered bandits plus Mungoi first to Manjacaze, and then to the provincial capital, Xai-Xai. Here Mungoi met with provincial governor Francisco Pateguana and promised to bring in a further 60 bandits "within a few days".