

Rural Shops Hit Hard

The number of privately owned shops in rural Mozambique that were marketing peasant surpluses dropped by 65 per cent between 1981 and 1987, due mainly to the war waged by the South African backed MNR, Maputo's daily *Noticias* reported on 6 June.

The number of private shops buying and selling to peasant families fell from over 5,000 in 1981-82 to 3,000 in 1985, and to just 1,800 in 1988. The number of cooperatively owned ventures also fell, from 1,000 in 1985 to 580 in 1988.

Some of the shops were destroyed by the MNR, while in other cases, their owners fled from areas heavily affected by bandit raids.

As for the state-run agricultural marketing board, Agricom, from 1982 to the present, bandits have wrecked 35 of its warehouses and destroyed 130 of its vehicles. The number of Agricom fixed posts and marketing brigades has dropped from 253 to 200.

In spite of this, there was an overall increase of 11 per cent in the marketing of the country's crops in 1988: from 151,720 tonnes to 168,160 tonnes. The increase is linked to sharp increases in the prices paid to peasants, and to the availability of large quantities of consumer goods that farmers could buy with the proceeds from sales of their surplus crops.