

Huge oil losses after MNR bandit attack on pipeline

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Feb.

ZIMBABWE lost almost 1,3 million litres of petrol and diesel fuel in three separate attacks on the Beira Corridor pipeline by the South African-sponsored MNR bandits between January 13 and 16 this year.

According to a report released in Harare by the Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre, the amount of fuel lost so far represents 47 percent of the total of 2,628 million litres lost in similar attacks for the whole of last year.

The first attack on the pipeline this year which happened on January 13 caused a 15-hour interruption in pumping and the loss of 380 000 litres of petrol. The second attack was on January 16 and it resulted in the loss of 567 910 litres of diesel fuel and interrupting operations for nearly 17 hours.

Pipeline

And within the next 24 hours the MNR sabotaged the pipeline again in another place, resulting in the loss of 300 000 litres of diesel fuel. This attack happened at night 159 km from Beira Port.

"The last attack brought total fuel losses during the first two weeks of the year to 1 261 465 litres or 47 percent of the total losses from sabotage during 1989.

"These attacks by the MNR on an obvious eco-

nomie target are typical of the sabotage carried out since the organisation, created by Rhodesian intelligence in 1976, was inherited by South Africa in 1980 on the eve of Zimbabwe's independence," the report said.

Lifeline

Attacks on the pipeline, which is Zimbabwe's lifeline and which is owned by a British multinational corporation, Lonrho, be-

as its only alternative fuel supply route, the report says.

The report chronicles other "coincidences" including railway congestion at Zambia's southern rail route at Victoria Falls, the only alternative fuel route if all fails and the damage by fire of its Kafue Gorge power station last year.

In view of all these incidents which include open attacks, analysts in

Herald Reporter

gan in 1981 when efforts were being made to resume pumping along the line.

Put against a background of recent incident related to energy supplies to both Zambia and Zimbabwe, the recent attacks on the Beira Corridor pipeline have intrigued regional analysts who have begun to notice a "cycle of coincidence."

In April last year a fire broke out at the Zambian Indeni Oil Refinery at Ndola and disrupted fuel supplies. A year earlier another fire at the same plant caused it to close for two months. In December last year a fire broke out at neighbouring Tanzania's fuel tank farm in Dar es Salaam and is now the subject of an official inquiry.

Route

The fuel incidents in both Zambia and Tanzania puts Lusaka in a continuing fuel crisis and leaves the Beira pipeline

the region have posed a question: "Is Zambia, as host to the ANC of South Africa, being put under overt pressure at a critical moment in the region's history?"

Affirmative

SADCC does not explicitly answer the above question in the affirmative but firmly rebuts the view held in some circles that destabilisation of the Frontline States by South Africa has ended.

Sabotage of the landlocked countries' routes to the Indian Ocean has continued with a total of six attacks on the routes to Beira between December 1 and January 11 in which two people died and another was injured.

Murdered

There were 33 MNR cross-border attacks on Zimbabwe between November and January in which 22 Zimbabweans were murdered, all but two of them being civilians. A further 25 were

wounded, eight abducted and a large quantity of goods stolen.

The MNR also made several incursions into Zambia during the past few months and 12 civilians were killed, 10 wounded and one abducted.

Botswana has been subjected to bomb scare destabilisation tactics which resulted in productivity losses and the marshalling of bomb disposal experts at considerable costs.

Such methods of destabilisation had not been considered before and it was only when regional authorities were asked that a general pattern emerged with one such scare in Zimbabwe only a few days ago and several in Angola, the report said.

Angola and Mozambique are the principal victims of destabilisation and because of their circumstances of total war, the quantification of casualties, attacks and costs is much more difficult.