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RENAMO IN THOKOZA

New Nation

More evidence of SADF and police collaboration as residents call for arms

THE carnage that has claimed the lives of 124 people on the East Rand in the past 10 days this week showed no sign of abating despite the visits to the area of ANC and Inkatha leaders.

The visits, by ANC deputy president Nelson Mandela and Inkatha leader, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi did not dampen the tensions that are still running high in Thokoza.

However, for the first time since the violence erupted on Reef townships in

August, the hostel dwellers and residents have pointed at the security forces as the source of the violence.

Previously hostel dwellers claimed that their attackers were Xhosa speaking squatters from the Phola Park squatter camp.

Koevoet

There were renewed fears among residents that the recent deployment of the SADF units, Battalion 32 and possibly also of Koevoet, would lead to more deaths.

Koevoet was a specialised SADF unit that operated against Swapo before independence. This week,

Namibian president, Sam Nujoma charged that the unit had been activated and was operating from South Africa.

Members of both units, residents said, spoke in Portuguese or in a Namibian dialect. NEW NATION reporters also came across Portuguese speaking members of the unit. Residents suggested that these may be advance elements of Renamo, the Mozambican bandit movement.

Residents have said that in the past the attackers, who carried rifles and led the attacks, did not speak to anyone for fear of being exposed as for-

eigners

All these seem to confirm the existence of a third force, although law and order minister Adrian Vlok, remains vehement in his denial.

This week's killings also occurred at the Mshayazafe hostel where more than 13 people died. Other flashpoints were the Phola Park squatter camp.

In most instances attacks were carried out by men armed with AK-47 and R1 rifles.

During Vlok's visit there was tension at the Thokoza police station when hostel-dwellers refuted Vlok's claim that he

had issued specific orders to the police to remain impartial during violence.

A resident, Mandla Maseko, said that in view of the partiality of the police, organisations should try and help in arming the people in order to defend themselves.

He said that for the leadership to come into the township then leave afterwards helped them in no way to curb the attacks.

Teargassed

One of the squatters, William Mdinana, said that on Monday they were teargassed the whole evening by the police and on

Tuesday were attacked by people assisted by police. Among them "whites with black polished faces were seen assisting the attackers", said Mdinana. He added police Casspirs were shooting teargas into shacks. "People who fled their homes because of teargas inhalation were met by a volley of gunfire from mini-buses." NEW NATION interviewed residents after Monday's attack. Most claimed that the attackers operated efficiently and were obviously well trained and could not be mere hostel-dwellers.

The main feature of the attacks were mini-

buses and R1 rifles.

The mini-buses, according to residents, followed them up to the nearby coloured township of Eden Park and tried to block some streets.

Rescue

Police from Eden Park police repelled the attacks by shooting directly at the armed men thus rescuing people from being shot.

As Mandela and the SACC delegation left the area, there were cries by residents who were shouting: "When are we going to get arms to defend ourselves?"