

SADF denies new Renamo link claims

Pretoria Bureau

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Renewed allegations of SADF collusion with Mozambique's rebel Renamo movement and a plot to overthrow the Mozambican government have been dismissed as nonsense by the SADF and other parties mentioned as being involved.

In an interview with the official Mozambican news agency AIM, two men, identified as former members of the SADF, have alleged that SADF elements continue to supply weapons to Renamo.

Former sergeant Felix Ndimene, who recently alleged SADF involvement in Reef train massacres, has been joined in his claims by Carlitos Joao Maria, who has claimed he was kidnapped by SADF commandos while on holiday near Ponto da Ouro at the southern tip of Mozambique in 1987.

Both men told AIM this week that they became members of Five Reconnaissance Regiment, based at Phalaborwa — which they say is the source of South African assistance to Renamo — in defiance of the Nkomati Accord between South Africa and Mozambique.

AIM reports that Mr Maria said a Portuguese-born sergeant-major in 5 Recce, whom he named, is the conduit for the resupply of Renamo.

Mr Ndimene also told AIM

that an alleged plot to overthrow the present Mozambican government uncovered in June this year had had the support of the Conservative Party, the AWB and the Palabora Mining Company.

All three of these parties have denied the allegations.

The CP and AWB said they were interested only in politics inside South Africa.

AWB spokesman General Con Stucki dismissed the claims as one of many rumours designed to undermine the organisation.

Human resources manager at Palabora Mining Company Neels Barkhuizen retorted: "It's totally ridiculous — total junk.

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"We are not remotely involved in politics."

An SADF spokesman said the defence force had already denied previous allegations by Mr Ndimene, and the latest allegations were also denied.

He added that the police wanted to interview Mr Ndimene, but that the Soldiers for Peace organisation was preventing him from coming forward.

The spokesman reiterated an invitation to anyone with specific allegations of this nature to come forward, especially in the light of the State President's announcement this week that a commission would be formed to

investigate such claims.

Both Mr Maria and Mr Ndimene told AIM there were many other Mozambicans in 5 Recce, some of whom had been press-ganged and some of whom volunteered, and that Renamo maintained a "training and support" base near Phalaborwa, on the Olifants River, that was "protected" by the regiment.

Mr Ndimene said that as late as February this year South African police had rounded up Mozambican refugees at Luke-lane in Gazankulu and handed them over to Renamo at their base — presumably for incorporation into the organisation.

He told AIM that he believed the 5 Recce operations against Mozambique were continuing and that members of the unit were involved in an attack against the Mozambican border town of Ressano Garcia in April, saying that a group from the regiment had left the base before the attack on an "outside" mission, returning two days after the attack.

In reply to a question on the death of Mozambican President Samora Machel in a plane crash in October 1986, he said he had been told by a Zimbabwean member of 5 Recce that he (the Zimbabwean) had been "in the operation to liquidate your president".