

Renamo abducts kids for military training

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CHIBUTO

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(Mozambique).

THE Renamo bandits are continuing to abduct children aged between 10 and 15 in the southern Mozambican province of Gaza.

These pressganged boys are then given military training and forced to commit atrocities.

Several of these children, captured by the Mozambican army in recent operations against Renamo, told AIM in the Gaza town of Chibuto that they had been given a month's training in bandit camps and then sent out to attack villages.

"These children have been brutalised," a Mozambican military source told AIM. "They have murdered people, robbed and destroyed property under the guidance of older bandits."

Twelve-year-old Alexandre Mutombene told AIM that he had been kidnapped by Renamo in March 1991 on his way from his grandmother's home in the coastal area of Chonguene to his school.

He was taken to a bandit

base at Guambe, in the district of Manjacaze, where he was taught how to handle firearms. After a month's training he was sent into action.

"I took part in several attacks in Chokwe district," he admitted. "I didn't try to run away from Renamo because I was afraid they would kill me."

Eleven-year-old Daniel Dzimba was forced to take part in bizarre and horrific ceremonies in Renamo camps. He was made a member of a "choral group" set up by the Renamo Gaza provin-

cial commander, known simply as "General Gomes".

The voices of young peasant boys drowned the screams of those whom Gomes had decided to murder. "He always told us to sing whenever he ordered the death of anyone," recalled Daniel.

"I was often sent out to take part in groups whose task was to steal food," added Daniel. "I want to see my parents again."

Gomes was killed when Mozambican troops overran his headquarters at Nhanala on April 22. — Ziana-AIM.