

«Foreign Broadcast Information Service»

Interviews Security Prisoners

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[Text] A delegation from the human rights organization Amnesty International, currently visiting Mozambique, has interviewed three prisoners sentenced under Mozambique's security legislation.

All three were sentenced by the Revolutionary Military Tribunal, the only court empowered to hear cases under the 1979 law on crime against the security of the people. One of those interviewed, Finlay Hamilton, is a British citizen sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for his part in sabotage of fuel tanks at Beira in 1982. According to the communique from the tribunal, he had advance knowledge of the sabotage, and on the day of the attack, he attempted to leave Beira for South Africa. When his house was searched, he was found to be in illegal possession of walkie-talkies, pistols, grenades, and other military equipment.

The other two men with whom the Amnesty delegation spoke, Carlos Gambua and Pedro Jose Goncalves, were sentenced to 20 and 30 years, respectively, in a December 1979 trial. Gambua, a citizen of Sao Tome, was found guilty of organizing a clandestine counterrevolutionary group inside Maputo Central Hospital. Goncalves worked with the MNR bandits at the time they were running from Ian Smith's Rhodesia. He also made clandestine visits to Malawi, and he wrote documents that defamed the government, the Frelimo Party, and the late President Samora Machel.

These prisoners all had their sentences reduced by the pardon law passed by the Mozambican parliament, the People's Assembly, in December last year. This cut the jail terms of most of those sentenced under security legislation.

The Amnesty delegation led by the organization's general secretary, Ian Martin, has also met officials from the prison's directorate and the re-education directorate, with whom they discussed the Mozambican prison system, the philosophy underlying it, and the treatment of prisoners. They also discussed the procedures followed under the security legislation with the investigation department of SNASP, the People's National Security Service. The delegation also held a meeting about police methods with officials of the Criminal Investigation Police.