



## Nkomati Accord

# Evidence of violations mount up against South Africa

**The signing of the Nkomati Accord has brought little change to MNR activities in Mozambique. The MNR has intensified its campaign, and many Mozambican government officials point accusing fingers at South Africa. Paul Fauvet reports.**

AS 1984 drew to its close, it became clear that the Nkomati non-aggression accord between Mozambique and South Africa was in serious difficulties.

Despite a string of promises made by South African President P W Botha and Foreign Minister 'Pik' Botha, it was evident that South Africa had systematically violated the accord in an attempt to push Mozambique into direct negotiations with the rebel "Mozambique National Resistance" (MNR). The level of South African logistical support for the MNR had been scaled down somewhat after Nkomati, and much of it had been re-routed (mainly via Malawi), but the South African government had no intention of allowing the MNR to wither and die.

For Pretoria, Nkomati was just the first step. The continuing war could now be presented as a "civil war", which, logically, could only end in a "ceasefire" between the Frelimo government and the MNR. This in turn would lead to "a government of national unity" in which the MNR leadership would hold ministerial positions. Mozambican socialism would effectively be dead, and South Africa would control the country.

Perhaps, this was Pretoria's dream which was very much in Pik Botha's mind when he negotiated the Pretoria declaration on 3 October, in which South Africa pledged to play an "active role" in ending the violence in Mozambique.

But, the Mozambican delegation refused to play Pretoria's game. The Mozambican team, led by Economics Minister Jacinto Veloso, steadfastly refused to enter into any political dialogue with the MNR. But the South Africans, through the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), presented the Pretoria Declaration as some sort of ceasefire signed through Botha's mediation.

The Mozambicans insisted, however, that what the South Africans had agreed to was the dismantling of the MNR, which was not looked favourably upon by the MNR's masters in South African Military Intelligence. Therefore, it came as no surprise



**Hats off for Botha's treachery — ten months after Nkomati, South Africa continues to violate the Accord**

Picture by Sergio Sanhmanob (AIM)

when the whole operation collapsed in mid-October.

Since then anger at South Africa's behaviour has mounted in Maputo, although the Mozambican government will still not denounce South Africa publicly for violating the Nkomati Accord (in private, however, top officials show no such reticence).

In fact, there is now an impressive catalogue of violations. Airdrops of material to MNR bands have been verified in the southern province of Inhambane, in June and September, and in the central province of Manica, in November. A leading MNR officer, Constantino Reis, who surrendered to the Mozambican army in July, said that the Nkomati Accord had made little or no difference to the MNR's military communications with their rear in the Transvaal. He testified that such communications had continued without interruption until at least the time of his defection from the MNR.

In early December, Maputo was blacked out, as an MNR gang sabotaged the transmission lines carrying electricity to the city. A statement put out by the military blamed "a recently infiltrated group". Diplomatically, it did not say where they had been infiltrated from, but the damaged pylons are only a few kilometres from the South African border.

On 15 December two foreigners and nine Mozambicans were murdered in an ambush against four cars travelling on the Maputo-Swaziland road. According to local peasants, the MNR group responsible had entered from South Africa, and returned to South Africa after the murders.

The following week, Jacinto Veloso gave an interview to the Portuguese weekly *O Jornal* in which he said that "certain organisations and individuals" were still using South African territory to channel support to the MNR. It is, of course, impossible to believe that, nine months after Nkomati, the South African government is unable to put a halt to the operations of such "organisations and individuals" (especially since the main "organisation" spoken of in this context is the regime's own Military Intelligence body).

At a rally in the town of Manhica, 70 kilometres north of Maputo, on Christmas Eve, President Samora Machel declared that, although the MNR had its "publicity headquarters" in the Portuguese capital of Lisbon, South Africa remained "the key" to the problem of banditry in Mozambique.

This caused something of a flurry in Pretoria, and Pik Botha said that he would study the President's speech. Having done so, which must have required transcription from a tape, since the President's speech was

made without notes, and translation from both Portuguese and the local language Ronga, Botha announced triumphantly that Samora Machel had not accused South Africa of violating the Nkomati Accord. Which, strictly speaking, was true; Machel had not used those actual words. But the implication of his speech was clear.

Botha did not comment on the most damning part of the Manhica rally. Machel interrogated a number of recently captured rebels, and one said that he had received military training in South Africa in October — a full seven months after the signing of the Nkomati Accord.

At a reception on 29 December, Machel did not mention South Africa by name, merely saying that certain forces in “neighbouring countries” were involved in logistic support for the MNR and in “infiltrating terrorists, saboteurs and mercenaries”.

Others were less diplomatic. Two days earlier Machel received a delegation of Mozambican migrant workers, mainly from the South African mines. In a message read

to the President they accused South Africa of bad faith over the Nkomati Accord from the very beginning. Whereas Mozambique had signed the Accord in a sincere attempt to establish peace in the region, South Africa had other ideas, they said. It was now obvious, argued the migrants, that South Africa had never intended to implement the Accord, and the violations of Mozambican airspace by South African planes flying supplies to MNR units had never stopped. The President did not disagree with the migrants’ harsh criticism of Pretoria’s behaviour, and the story was given enormous prominence on the front page of the semi-official paper *Noticias* the following day.

Despite the soothing noises made by the SABC for the benefit of South Africa’s white electorate, the truth is that there has been a substantial hardening of Mozambique’s position towards Pretoria. This indicates that the future of the non-aggression accord is now in some doubt. The Nkomati Accord compromised Mozambique’s image in the eyes of many of its friends; and so far, it has brought the embattled Frelimo government very few benefits.

However, Mozambique is unlikely at this

stage simply to tear up the Nkomati Accord. Instead it seems intent on bringing diplomatic pressure to bear on South Africa to cut, once and for all, the ground from under the MNR’s feet. In this, it will work together with the Angolan government whose own deal with South Africa, the Lusaka Understanding signed last February, has also been violated by Pretoria. Under the terms of the Lusaka Understanding, all South African troops should have been withdrawn from Angolan territory by 31 March. Nine months later, several thousand still remain.

In late November, Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos visited Maputo for talks with Samora Machel aimed at working out a joint strategy for the two countries to follow in their dealings with South Africa. No details of this meeting have been released, but it is likely that one of the first steps will be to confront South Africa’s Western allies with the evidence of Pretoria’s violations of the Lusaka Understanding and the Nkomati Accord. The West will then be asked how it can continue to support a regime whose promises are not worth the paper they are written on. □