

Mozambique airlift begins

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OXFAM and other relief agencies have launched an emergency food airlift to the Mozambican province of Zambezia where at least 50 people die of starvation and disease every day in relief centres, housing 20,000 displaced people, that are completely cut off from supplies.

Two or three planeloads of food are flown each day from the provincial capital of Quelimane into the Ile district of Zambezia in a £100,000 airlift organised by Oxfam, Unicef, and the Save the Children campaigns. The airlift is

largely funded by the Comic Relief campaign, which publicised the estimated 1.7 million displaced Mozambicans.

A total of \$352 million (£212 million) was pledged at a UN emergency donors' conference last month, including \$9.5 million from Britain, but donors are increasingly concerned about the sabotage of their aid by Mozambique National Resistance rebels and fresh evidence of direct South African involvement.

In the past few weeks, intensified MNR attacks have halted aid truck convoys and damaged an aircraft.

In a recent five-hour attack at Ressano Garcia on the Mo-

zambican border with South Africa, an estimated 250-strong MNR force killed 10 civilians and wounded 22. Many people were kidnapped as porters to carry food, clothes and other looted goods.

A local businessman, Mr Lucas Chirute, who witnessed the attack, said that South African military vehicles transported the MNR force to the border. Other eyewitnesses said that South African soldiers provided cover for the attack, used their searchlights to illuminate a supermarket that was being looted, and shot at townspeople fleeing over the border into South Africa.