

# Anti-Machel resistance movement is far from dead

The day Robert Mugabe won a landslide victory in the Zimbabwe elections there was general consensus that the anti-Frelimo guerrilla movement Mozambique National Resistance (RNM), allegedly backed by the Muzorewa regime, was all but dead and buried. Now, the RNM military high command says, "This in no way indicates a reduction or cessation in our activities against Machel's Marxist regime." Re-opening the file that had been dumped into our library's "morgue", TO THE POINT's José Ramalho reports:

Since the end of January, evidence that Samora Machel was having it all his way seemed overwhelming. A top level Frelimo delegation dispatched in great haste to Salisbury had extracted from Lord Soames a promise that the Rhodesia-based "Voice of Free Africa", the mouthpiece of the anti-Machel resistance, could be stopped. And off the air came the indistinct broadcasting station.

I wondered what future, if any, was in store for the veteran bush-fighters I had met last July at a secret guerrilla base deep inside Mozambique (TTP, July 13 1979). At that time, the RNM commander-in-chief André Matsangaisse told me that his deputy Afonso Jacamo was somewhere in the Save river area gathering his troops to open the Maputo front".

There were too many highly motivated, well armed and trained guerrillas on the field between the Zambezi and the Save rivers for the armed struggle to fizzle out overnight as most observers seemed to believe.

It came as no surprise when on March 17 an anonymous caller came through on the phone: "This is the Voice of Free Africa. We are back on the air. Tune in every day on 62 metres short wave from 0600 to 0700 hours and 2030 to 2130 hours." Most of the air time was taken up by cryptic messages in military code instructing the men in the field to regroup at certain bases and assigning to the units the targets to be attacked.

On April 10 the evening broadcast was interrupted by loud explosions and bursts of machinegun fire. "We will be back on the air soon," a flustered announcer stammered before the station went dead. There were no further explanations. Listeners could only assume that the RNM was telling the truth when it claimed that the "Voice" was being broadcast from inside Mozambique.

Out of the blue came this week's communique from the RNM high command which opens with an understatement: "Due to circumstances no communique has been issued for some time." Received from the Lisbon's movement representative, it confirms Frelimo's announcements that the Mozambique army has been engaged since the beginning of February on a general offensive to wipe out the anti-Frelimo guerrilla army.

The communique says: "Machel's military commanders have deployed two infantry brigades supported by motorised infantry de-



André: legendary fighter is dead

tachments, artillery and tanks into the Inchope, Gorongosa and Muda area in an endeavour to regain control of the territory from the Mozambique National Resistance."

The communique claims that over the period of five weeks the guerrillas have inflicted "crippling defeats" on the FPLM (Mozambique army) forces: "Eight heavy vehicles, two armoured personnel carriers and three light vehicles were destroyed and two tanks put out of action."

The rugged mountainous terrain of the Gorongosa hills, long known as the guerrillas' stronghold, was the scene of the Frelimo main onslaught. The RNM communique calls it a "set piece battle in which the FPLM commanders committed all the manpower and equipment at their disposal". Although the RNM is essentially a guerrilla-type army trained for hit-and-run attacks, we, in this first large-scale battle achieved a resounding victory, the high command claims.

According to the communique the tide has been reversed and the guerrillas have moved on to the offen-

sive against Frelimo positions. They claim to have destroyed a number of FPLM bases including the ones on the Save, in the Massurize district; Samatere, north-west of Doroei; and Rotanda, in the Manica hills.

Through underground channels, TO THE POINT has managed to re-establish contact with the RNM leadership. Two months after I visited the guerrilla camp inside Mozambique, my host, the legendary bush-fighter André Matsangaisse, overall commander of the guerrilla forces, was killed in action while leading his men in a pre-dawn charge against a squadron of Cuban-manned heavy tanks.

None of his men had ever believed he would live to fulfil his vow of taking them all the way to Maputo. I remembered what his men had told me: "When we go back into action he is way out in front. His courage is unbelievable."

His second-in-command Afonso Jacamo is now the commander-in-chief of the guerrilla army. Like André a former Frelimo commander Jacamo shared with him a burning hatred of the Marxist dictatorship imposed by Machel on Mozambique after the collapse of the Portuguese administration. But while André was a purely military leader, Jacamo is both a superb fighter and a shrewd administrator whom Frelimo had been grooming for a high post in the military hierarchy.

Jacamo enjoys the advantages of a higher education than André. In his early thirties he was educated at a mission school and the Zobué seminary before joining the Beira Commercial School. Conscripted into the Portuguese army during the war against Frelimo he deserted to join the "liberation forces".

After the Portuguese handover to Frelimo in 1974, Jacamo underwent a military crash course and was promoted to quartermaster at Beira HQ. There he met André, who was in charge of the engineering division of the army. Strongly opposed to Machel's Marxist policies they defected to join the resistance ranks.

Jacamo now finds himself in overall command of some 5000 battle-hardened guerrillas who, despite the drastic changes brought about by the emergence of the new state of Zimbabwe, are more determined than ever to carry on the fighting until Mozambique is "liberated" from the Marxist yoke.

Jacamo: in André's shoes

