

## Mozambique claims heavy rebel toll

MAPUTO, Mozambique, July 10 (AP)—Mozambican forces have attacked and occupied the main camp of a rebel group, killing 272 rebels and capturing more than 300 in mountains near the border with Zimbabwe, the Army said today.

The announcement, broadcast over Radio Mozambique, did not say when the attack on the Sibatonga mountain base occurred, but said it followed a series of military operations launched by the Mozambican forces against rebels of the National Resistance Movement. The area in western Manica Province is about 30 miles from Zimbabwe.

The Army is continuing its operations; some rebel groups have dispersed and others surrendered to the authorities, according to reports from Manica Province, the official news agency, AIM, said.

The rebel group emerged after Mozambique's independence June 25, 1975, when an army of some 4,000 men pledged to overthrow the Marxist government of President Samora Machel and free political prisoners.

The rebels are mostly dissident former guerrillas of Machel's Frelimo army, who fought the Portuguese colonial rulers for 10 years until this East African nation achieved independence, or black soldiers who fear reprisals for having fought for the  
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Portuguese against the nationalists.

The Mozambican Army said it captured from the rebels a variety of war material made in South Africa, recovered goods stolen from private traders in the region and freed people who had been abducted by the rebels to work for them or undergo military training.

According to statements made by captured rebels, the government news agency reported, "South African elements have been involved in giving logistic support to the groups operating in Mozambique."

During the Zimbabwe independence war, it was frequently said that forces of the white-minority Rhodesian government dropped arms and supplies inside Mozambique for the rebels to use against Mozambican government troops and undermine support there for the Zambabwean guerrillas.

The agency said such support came mainly after the end of the seven-year guerrilla war that led to the independence of Zimbabwe — formerly Rhodesia—on April 18.

The rebels also reportedly used sanctuaries inside Zimbabwe to launch attacks on Mozambican forces. Robert Mugabe, the former guerrilla leader who is Zimbabwe's prime minister, met with Machel in Mozambique May 23 to discuss the problem.

Mugabe later told a Salisbury news conference that Zimbabwe was "duty bound to get rid of" the rebel forces. Machel provided bases and logistical support for Mugabe's forces during their war for Zimbabwe independence.

Although the dissidents' renewed activity earlier this year led some observers to suggest that South Africa might have changed its policy of non-interference with Mozambique, South African Prime Minister Pieter Botha has said several times that South Africa is not harboring or assisting any Mozambican antigovernment guerrillas.

Sources in Zimbabwe, nonetheless, told The Washington Post in May that the dissident movement's backup personnel, its top white military trainers and its clandestine broadcast unit, Radio Free Africa, had all been transferred to Pretoria.

Prisoners taken in the Mozambique attack, according to the government news agency, said there were South African and Portuguese military instructors in the camp and mercenaries of other nationalities. The agency said "the foreigners abandoned the camp soon after the encirclement operation was launched by the Mozambican forces."

The news agency said the rebel units included former black commandos and paratroopers of the former Portuguese colonial army and individuals recruited in Manica and Sofala provinces. It said residents of the provinces reported the rebels had operated "essentially as bandits killing people and stealing food to live."