

Rebels claim ^{RDM} SA aided fight ¹⁴ against Maputo ⁷ ₈₁

MAPUTO. — Former members of the Mozambican National Resistance, an anti-communist group fighting the government of Mozambique, have said that South Africa has provided arms and training to the organisation.

Five RNM guerrillas spoke to the Press in Maputo after defecting and surrendering to Mozambican security forces.

Antonio Joaquim Caliche, 21, Henrique Fabio Sitol, 28, and Jose Martins Gilberto, 27, said they were kidnapped during an attack on a re-education centre in 1979 and taken to Rhodesia for military training before infiltrating back into Mozambique.

Caliche said his group recruited members by force and shot those who refused to join.

Food and arms came from Rhodesia until it became independent in 1980, and thereafter from South Africa.

Orlando Julio Inancio, 28, said he was picked up in 1978 by Rhodesian Security Forces after he crossed the border. He was sent to a training camp for the RNM where there were South African and Portuguese instructors.

Petro Constantino Perino, 24, said when the Mozambican army captured the main RNM base in June 1980, in the Sitatonga mountains 50km from the Zimbabwe border, South African and Portuguese instructors left by helicopter as the army closed in.

A South African Defence Force spokesman in Pretoria yesterday dismissed the allegations as an "obvious propaganda attempt".

He said the statements were either made by people under pressure from their captors or those who had decided to leave the RNM to better their position in Mozambique.

"This sort of propaganda is unfortunately not going to help Mozambique solve its internal problems." — Sapa.