

SALISBURY — Four years after starting its military activities the Mozambican National Resistance Movement (MNR) has finally produced a political programme.

The programme, broadcast on the rebels' "Voice of Free Africa" radio station, monitored here last weekend, says the main aim of the movement is the "extinction of the communist system" in Mozambique and the formation of a government of "national reconciliation" which will be charged with organising elections.

It adds that all nationalisations carried out by the Frelimo government will be reviewed and that the private sector must be "the dynamising sector of the economy."

Observers here say the publication of the programme is an attempt by the rebels to create credibility, because since 1977 the aims of this previously unheard of movement have been obscure.

The MNR cannot claim a past of nationalist struggle against Portuguese domination, as is the case of Unita which is fighting the MPLA government in Angola.

Unlike Unita's Jonas Savimbi, the MNR leaders are practically unknown and the movement itself was regarded as an extension of the Rhodesian Army until Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

Confusion

The lack of any programme, political organisation and defined aims contributed to this point of view and there is no evidence that the rebels enjoy any international support, although "The Voice of Free Africa" boasts about "wide support in international spheres."

There is still confusion over whether the MNR has links with or is the same organisation as an insurgent group calling itself the "Free Africa Organisation" and reportedly operating out of Malawi. Some well-informed sources have asserted that the Free Africa Organisation is an entirely separate body operating independently of the MNR in the Tete area.

MNR in bid to ^{Star Weekly} counter (J6) the Reds 29/8/82

By Joao Santa Rica for The Star's Africa News Service

The Free Africa group is said to have been responsible for sabotaging the power lines from the Cahora Bassa dam to South Africa depriving the Republic of much-needed power during the peak winter demand. It is argued that the MNR would not have taken an action as damaging, allegedly backed as it is by South Africa.

A Mozambican official source told The Star's Africa News Service the improvement of relations between Mozambique and Malawi "has probably finished any actions from Malawi."

The source added that in Maputo "people talk of The Resistance and Free Africa as one and the same organisation."

Secret Service

The Mozambican National Resistance (Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana) started its activities in 1977 after Mozambique had closed its borders with Rhodesia and had decided to give full support to the black nationalist guerrillas fighting to overthrow the white minority regime of Mr Ian Smith.

The Mozambican authorities claim the MNR was organised by the Rhodesian Secret Service and that the bulk of its forces were former black members of the Portuguese elite army units who had fled to Rhodesia following Mozambique's independence in 1975.

They acknowledge that in the MNR there are some former Frelimo army commanders such as the rebels'

present president and commander in chief, Afonso Dhlakama. Mozambican official sources say Mr Dhlakama fled the country after being involved in a corruption case for which he faced arrest.

The movement's first leader, Mr Andre Matsangaiza, was also a former Frelimo army commander. He was stationed in Beira before fleeing Mozambique to what was then Rhodesia.

Mr Matsangaiza was killed during a battle by Mozambican forces in 1979 in the central Gorongosa mountains.

The Mozambicans claim this event served to show the close links between the MNR and Mr Ian Smith's forces. They say Mr Matsangaiza was mortally wounded in Gorongosa and taken back by helicopter to Rhodesia before the Mozambican troops could enter the Gorongosa MNR base. He later died in Rhodesia.

Other known leaders are commanders Raul Manuel Domingos, Jose Domingos and the movement's secretary general, Orlando Cristina.

Mr Cristina is said to have been a close associate of Mozambican millionaire, Mr Jorge Jardim, who is now operating in the West African state of Gabon.

Mr Cristina travels frequently to Lisbon where the MNR has an unofficial representative, Mr Evo Fernandes, a man also linked with the former colonial government.

Mozambique claims the movement is now being supported by South Africa.