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Maputo claims proof of major SA aid for rebels

MAPUTO. — Mozambique claims documents seized in a raid by government forces show South Africa is deeply involved in the activities of the anti-Frelimo Mozambique National Resistance (MNR).

The official Mozambican news agency, AIM, said the evidence turned up in records found after a raid last week on the operational headquarters of MNR at Gara-gua in central Mozambique.

It said the documents included reports and minutes of meetings between the rebel movement leader, Afonso Diakama, and South African military officers, and also chronicled frequent visits by Diakama to Portugal, France and West Germany.

One report, AIM said, dealt with discussions between Diakama and a "Colonel Van Niekerk" of South African Military Intelligence, at Zoabostad on October 25 last year.

Blame

According to AIM, this report says Col Van Niekerk gave Diakama a South African-drawn plan of action for 1981, including acts of sabotage on roads, railways and the Beira-Umtali pipeline, and action to incite unrest in Maputo and Beira.

Asked to comment, a South African Defence Force spokesman said last night that the Mozambican charges followed the "established Marxist pattern" of blaming South Africa for all Africa's problems.

AIM said that the report of the October 1980 meeting quoted Col Van Niekerk as saying South Africa could no longer afford air drops of arms and ammunition

supplies to the MNR and that it would be necessary to switch to sea transport, AIM said.

"One of the reasons given by Van Niekerk for this switch was the fact that the South Africans lost many parachutes when they dropped supplies by air. He complained that each parachute cost R500, and that most of them were never returned."

The mouth of the Buzi River, in Sofala province, was mentioned as a possible supply drop site.

AIM charged that this was corroborated by people living along the coast of Sofala province who had reported the presence of submarines in the area in recent months.

"This has led to the hypothesis that the recent sabotage of navigation buoys at the entrance channel to the port of Beira was carried out by a team operating from a South African submarine," AIM claimed.

Col Van Niekerk guaranteed Diakama logistical support, particularly supplies of weapons, ammunition, and radios, it said.

According to the AIM, the colonel suggested Diakama pass on news about MNR's activities as rapidly as possible so that the South African and international Press could be fed reports.

The two men were also claimed to have agreed to arrange for "groups of women" to be sent to "entertain the troops".

AIM said the captured documents also detailed Diakama's visits to Portugal and other Western European countries for financial and religious aid to the areas of Mozambique said to be under MNR control.

According to AIM, all such aid was to be channelled through the movement's European representative, Mr Evo Fernandes, who lives in Cascais, near Lisbon.

Escape

But a pencilled note on the report charged Mr Fernandes pocketed all MNR funds for his personal use, the agency said.

Mr Fernandes could not be contacted for comment yesterday.

Diakama and his command reportedly escaped before the government forces launched the attack on his headquarters which was said to have completely destroyed the base.

AIM said troops also discovered two South African passports, both belonging to the same person, the passport of a Portuguese citizen, and one Malawian passport.

Investigations were continuing to see what links, if any, the passport holders had with the MNR. — Own Correspondent and Sapa.

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