

Massacre reported in Mozambique

South African-backed rebels kill 380 villagers, state says

MAPUTO, Mozambique (AP) — Guerrillas massacred 380 people at a coastal town in Inhambane province after receiving a parachute drop of arms and ammunition from the South African air force, the official news agency AIM said Tuesday.

It said official reports from the area around Homoine, 300 miles northeast of the capital, indicated the townspeople were marched along a road and killed as they walked.

Few details were given and there was no way to check the report independently.

Guerrillas received guns, mortars and ammunition in the parachute drop May 8 near Lake Chitipe and peasants were forced to carry the weapons, AIM reported. It quoted a member of the armed forces general staff, whom it did not identify.

"The South African Defense Force used five parachutes made in the

United States of America to deliver war materiel for the bandits in the southern province of Inhambane," the Marxist government's news agency said.

AIM staff members saw one of the parachutes Tuesday at army headquarters in Maputo and it was inscribed "US HUDCO-63," according to the report. The U.N. Security Council imposed an arms embargo on South Africa in 1977.

"South African-backed Mozambique National Resistance bandits"

did the killing, the agency said in one of its references to the organization that has spent a decade fighting the government.

South Africa says it stopped helping the rebels in 1984 when the two countries signed a non-aggression pact, but Mozambique claims South Africa continues the aid covertly.

Mozambique radio's station in Inhambane province quoted district administrator Eduardo Gimo as saying the massacre occurred Saturday and at least 155 bodies were removed by Sunday.