

Amnesty International Officials Continue Visit

Criticize MNR 'Abuses'

*MB1410191688 Maputo in English to Southern Africa
1800 GMT 14 Oct 88*

[Text] The human rights organization, Amnesty International, has expressed deep concern at the horrific abuses perpetrated by South Africa's MNR bandits against civilians. The leaders of the organization's delegation, currently on a visit to Mozambique, Ian Martin, was speaking at a press conference in Maputo today.

During its week-long visit, the delegation held discussions with President Joaquim Chissano and Mozambique's justice minister, Ossumane Ali Dauto, as well as leading officials in the legal, police, and prisons system.

Mr Martin, who is Amnesty International's general secretary, told the news conference that the organization's reports on Mozambique have been used by the MNR and its supporters, but explained that this had never been Amnesty's intention. He said Amnesty's criticisms of the Mozambican Government and security forces should not be used by those responsible for graver abuses.

Asked why the 1988 Amnesty report had stressed alleged human rights abuses by the government, while giving much less weight to MNR's crimes against the civilian population, Mr Martin explained that at the time the report was written amnesty did not have access to information later released by the U.S. State Department.

In April this year, the State Department published the findings of the refugee expert, Robert Gersony. On the basis of that testimony from Mozambican refugees, Mr Gersony catalogued MNR atrocities and estimated that the bandits were responsible for at least 100,000 civilian deaths.

Mr Martin described the report as a very critical account, providing the material that reflects fully the human rights situation in Mozambique.

He said that his delegation has a very positive impression of development of Mozambique's legal system. Mr Martin said that the delegation was given excellent facilities during its visit and that people answered questions very frankly.