

Mozambican troops killed 14 bandits of the South African backed MNR on 25 September in the district of Manjacaze, in the southern province of Gaza, according to local military sources. In the clash, two bandits were captured and seven assault rifles were seized.

On the same day, 25 captured bandits, including five women, were presented to the residents of the 'Marien Ngouabi' Communal Village, on the outskirts of Gaza' provincial capital, Xai-Xai, during a rally held to mark the 24th anniversary of the start of Mozambique's Independence war on 25 September 1964. The rally, attended by about 4,000 people, was addressed by Provincial Governor Francisco Pateguana and by Provincial Military Commander Lt-Col Agostinho Mahanjane.

One of the captured bandits, Felisberto Chilenga, who is only 14 years old, told the crowd that he had witnessed a plane dropping supplies of military equipment to a bandit base in the district of Mabalne in the north of the province but he could not specify the exact date when this had occurred. Material captured from the bandits including light arms, hand grenades and mortar shells, was also displayed to the crowd at 'Marien Ngouabi'. The village has been raided twice by the MNR in the past three months.

According to the Head of Operations of the Provincial Military Command, the Mozambican armed forces killed 651 bandits in the first six months of 1988. During the same period, 29 bandit camps were destroyed in the province and a substantial quantity of military equipment was captured. Sixteen bandits surrendered to the authorities. Over a hundred people kept captive by the MNR in Gaza were set free as a result of Mozambican military action, and a further 82 escaped from the bandits and handed themselves over to the authorities. The bandits murdered at least 42 civilians in this six month period, usually stabbing or hacking them to death.

The military source pointed out that the bandits had not been able to destroy any of Gaza's communal villages, usually a favourite MNR target, thanks to speedy response from local militiamen and army units.