

MNR Force Children to Murder

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Leaders of the South African backed MNR bandits believe that it is easier to turn children into murderers than adults, according to a 14 year old child bandit captured by the Mozambican armed forces in the southern province of Gaza. According to a report in the Beira paper 'Diário de Moçambique', the boy, named as Felisberto Chilengue, admitted "I killed many people while I was in the bandit ranks, in compliance with the orders that were given to me". He said that the local bandit chief, 'Commander Gomes', considered that "children can be made into good soldiers, but the adults should be killed because they are no use as soldiers."

A conscious MNR policy of abducting young peasant boys and obliging them to undergo military training has been noticeable for several years, and the average age of the press-ganged recruits into the bandit ranks has dropped.

Felisberto was unable to say how long he had been with the bandits. He told 'Diário de Moçambique' that he had been kidnapped with his mother, and "I grew up there, in the bandits' central base." Felisberto said that after raids on villages, the bandit who killed the most people, and succeeded in bringing "something nice for the Commander" would be promoted. He said there was tight security in the MNR camps, and that anyone caught listening to the radio would be killed. "They would cut him into pieces bit by bit in front of everybody", he stated.

The bandit chiefs held meetings at which they scoffed at the amnesty law passed by the Mozambican Parliament, the People's Assembly, said Felisberto. They claimed that anyone accepting the amnesty would be killed by Mozambican soldiers - unless the MNR caught them trying to escape from the base, in which case the MNR would kill them.

According to Felisberto, the self-styled 'General' Gomes told his young recruits they were fighting for 'independence'. He described practices which seem to be the administering of drugs to MNR recruits: "they always give us injections, and some things to smoke when we go out on attacks", he said. "They tell us it's so we will not be afraid of Frelimo.". Felisberto was captured in Djavanhane in the district of Chibuto, in eastern Gaza, during an abortive MNR raid. "We wanted to steal cattle from the local people, and recruit more children and soldiers", he said.

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