

Massacre during new offensive in Mozambique

Maputo, JULY 25. The guerilla movement Renamo has, according to the government press in Mozambique, brought about a massacre last week in the Northern town of Lalaua. Refugees said that Renamo soldiers killed more than one thousand inhabitants and exhibited severed heads in the shops in town. Surrounding villages were set on fire. Local authorities in the [nearby] town of Ribaua [in Nampula province], have asked for international assistance to save the lives of more than four thousand starving refugees in the North.

Renamo started an offensive three weeks ago in the Northern provinces of Zambezia and Nampula. The offensive is said to be a punitive expedition against the Napramas, a religious popular movement under the leadership of 28 year old Manuel António. Only armed with spears and knives the Napramas have been combatting the heavily armed Renamo troops for some time.

Manuel António, who claims to have risen from death, tattoos his followers with a medicin that is supposed to make them invulnerable for bullets. Initially the Napramas were able to put to flight the superstitious Renamo fighters, but according to refugees Renamo now has started the hunt for their tattooed opponents. Renamo, a creation of [Rhodesian and] South African special forces, is waging a bloody war against the left wing Frelimo government in Mozambique. The Lalaua massacre is believed to be the first large scale act of terror since negotiations started with the government at the end of last year.

The negotiations, held in Rome, are in a deadlock now. Both parties claim to strive for free elections, but have not reached an agreement on the legalisation of political parties, neither on the composition of an interim government. Discussions on the agenda took more than a year already. (Reuter, UPI)