

# HOMOINE MASSACRE: MNR MUST PAY FOR THE CRIME

By Our Own Correspondent

Just before dawn on July 19, the small farming town of Homoine in southern Mozambique was attacked by a group of MNR bandits leaving hundreds of people dead or wounded. "They came in one group, with a bearded man in front leading and directing his people down different streets", said Mark van Koevinger, a 30 year old aid worker from America. "They were shooting every person and building in sight".

The attackers, estimated more than 100, smashed doors and put whole families to the knife. They hacked their way through the local hospital, shooting pregnant women and bayonetting newborn babies. Scores of others were marched away, some to be killed later as the bandits fled government troops. "It was a massacre, killing for the sake of killing", Mozambique's Prime Minister-Cde. Mario Muchango told reporters who reached the area shortly after the event.

Cde. Muchango put the death toll at 386, a figure which was likely to go higher. Seventy six people, many of them children, were wounded. It was the bloodiest episode yet in the 10-year-old MNR bandit campaign which has devastated Mozambique, leaving at least 100 000 dead and more than 1,5 million refugees.

As news of the Homoine massacre circulated around the world, searching questions are being asked about the MNR: Who are these bandits? Who is behind them? What are they fighting for? Below we show clearly the origins of the MNR as a bandit organisation used by the Rhodesian security forces; and later handed over to the South Africans, for the purpose of advancing the interest of the Boers and the Boers alone. It has nothing to do with the Africans of Mozambique. Its leaders were paid agents of the Rhodesian regime of Ian Smith, and they are now paid agents of South African Boers. They are neither nationalist nor patriots. They have no credentials of any kind in Mozambique; no Mozambican spirit of nationalism or pride of nationality.

## MNR Bandits And Their Backers

The so-called *Resistencia Nacional Mozambicana* (MNR), traces its origins to a meeting of Rhodesian and

Portuguese security chiefs held in Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) in March 1974 — little more than a month before the Portuguese *coup d'etat*.

The meeting was convened by Major Silva Pais, head of Portugal's notorious secret police, the General Security Directorate (DGS), more commonly referred to by its previous name, the International Police for the Defence of the State (PIDE). In attendance were Antonio Vaz, DGS head in Mozambique, Sao Jose Lopes, DGS head in Angola, and Mr. Ken Flower, director-general of Ian Smith's Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO).

At that meeting it was agreed to start a clandestine movement directed jointly by the CIO and DGS to operate against Frelimo and guerrillas of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) — the military wing of ZANU. The idea of starting this movement had originated from Ian Smith's Government which had been convinced that it was necessary to operate a clandestine movement inside Mozambique as its forward intelligence "eyes and ears" against ZANLA guerrillas.

Ken Flower wanted the new movement to be modelled on the "special forces", *Flechas*, in Angola, which came under the control of the DGS. Logistical details were finalized in Lisbon when Flower met Silva Pais and Portuguese military commanders in April of the same year.

After the Portuguese coup, as Flower later recounted, "the entire control and command of the resistance came across the border and offered their services to us". This was an overstatement for there had not been time to set up any structures after Flower's last meeting with Silva Pais. But the group which crossed the border, numbering about 40, did provide the CIO with a nucleus to begin operations against FRELIMO and ZANLA. They were almost all members of the DGS or Special Groups, some black and some white. Their commander was Major Oscar Cardoso, an officer who had been with the Angolan *Flechas*.

The Cardoso group went operational against ZANLA twice inside Rhodesia with the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI). They then left in 1975 to join Holden Roberto's National Front for the Libera-

tion of Angola (FNLA) which, with plentiful funds from America's CIA, could afford to pay mercenaries better wages than the Rhodesian CIO.

The Rhodesian CIO continued recruitment efforts for its dissident force, concentrating on Africans. After many failures, in June 1976 the CIO recruited Andre Matade Matsangaidze who had served in the FRELIMO forces from 1972 to 1974 without distinction. He was acknowledged as a brave fighter but never attained a command position. After Mozambique's independence in June 1975 he had worked in the quartermaster's stores at Dondo, north-west of Beira. He was brought before a military tribunal for the theft of a Mercedes car and items from the quartermaster's stores; he was convicted and sent to Sacuze "re-education centre" in Sofala province. From there he escaped to Rhodesia to become the first leader of what was to become known as MNR or Renamo.

In 1976, after Matsangaidze's arrival, the CIO decided to establish a permanent training camp on a tobacco farm outside Odzi near Mutare. The trainees came under the control of the CIO's operations desk headed by Eric 'Ricky' May. The CIO seconded a senior instructor and three others, former members of Rhodesia's SAS, to train the MNR at Odzi.

The senior instructor subsequently described their strategy in this period. "To start off with it was sabotage, to disrupt the population and disrupt the economy which really comes under sabotage, to come back with decent recruits at that stage and hit any Frelimo bases they came across. And if they came across ZANLA they were to take them on".

They were equipped with captured weapons originating from Eastern block countries and China, initially dressed in blue boiler-suits like the police reserve and later in olive-green uniforms. All of their basic requirements, such as food, were taken care of by the CIO and Matsangaidze was paid \$75 per month. His deputy, Afonso Dhlakama, who served in the Portuguese colonial army fighting against Frelimo was paid \$65; and ordinary recruits received \$20.

"The objectives of the MNR were essentially to provide the opportunity for Rhodesia to deal with ZANLA in Mozambique without doing so directly, and to perpetuate or create instability in areas of Mozambique", said Mr. Flower. Another of the CIO officers involved said, "The MNR gave a cover for Rhodesian operations and, from initial intelligence-gathering operations, moved on to getting recruits and then on to the offensive, disrupting road and rail links and making it harder for Frelimo to support ZANU".

Reactionary White Portuguese have always been prominent in the activities of the MNR. Two of the most prominent of these Portuguese whites are Orlando Christina, a former DGS officer who was the liaison in Tete with the CIO in the late 1960s, and Evo Fernandes, a Goanese businessman. Fernandes has admitted that the MNR were no more than a Rhodesian fifth column. He has claimed that six people met at Christina's suburban Salisbury home on 1 May 1977 and were responsible for giving the MNR its name. He said the six were Christina, Matsangaidze, Dhlakama, Armando Khembo dos Santos, Leo Milas and himself.

Fernandes, a lawyer by training, worked for the Portuguese judicial police in Beira during the colonial era. Frelimo says that, like Christina, he worked for the DGS. He became administrator of Jorge Jardim's newspaper, *Noticias de Beria*, before being ousted by the journalists some months after the Portuguese *coup de'tat*. He fled to Portugal on 23 September 1976 after he says, receiving a warning from Christina "that some military action may start and it would be safer to get away". Fernandes is currently

the most active spokesman of the MNR from distant Lisbon.

In 1978, with the MNR numbering about 500 and the Rhodesians confronted by increased ZANLA infiltration along the entire 800-kilometre border with Mozambique, the CIO decided to step up banditry. They set up an MNR base inside Mozambique on top of Gorongosa mountain, 100 kilometres north-east of Beira. As fighters they suffered a range of setbacks, the first of which came on 17 October 1979 when Matsangaidze was killed in a foolhardy attack on a well-fortified Mozambican army position at Vila Paiva de Andrade (now Vila de Gorongosa).

On Matsangaidze's death, his deputy Dhlakama immediately took over MNR leadership, although the organisation's sponsors had little respect for him and preferred Mhlanga. A great deal of infighting followed with the MNR leading to assassinations of many of its leaders like Mhlanga, Christina and the Bomba brothers.

The biggest blow for the MNR came on 21 December 1979 when the Lancaster House agreement was reached leading to Zimbabwe's independence on 18 April 1980. The CIO were convinced that ZANU (PF) could not win a majority of the 80 African seats at stake in the election and so, on 4 March, when it was announced that Comrade Robert Mugabe was to form the government, it came as a major shock to white Rhodesia and thus to the MNR.

Soon after ZANU (PF's) victory was announced, Flower began to put into operation long-time contingency plans. Because of his own budget limitations he had sought South African involvement in

MNR activities since 1976. South Africa started supplying MNR with weapons and vehicles around 1978. A colonel Charles van Nickerk became the liaison officer to the MNR for South Africa's Military Intelligence Directorate (MID), headed by General Pieter van de Westhuizen. Colonel van Nickerk visited Odzi on a number of occasions during 1979.

So the South African Connection had been firmly established in the 12 months or so preceding Zimbabwe's independence.

Dealing through South African army commander, General Magnus Malan, Van der Westhuizen and van Nickerk, Flower arranged the transfer of the MNR, their equipment and vehicles, and the personnel of the bandit radio *Voz da Africa Livre*, to South Africa.

The transfer to South Africa was carried out in three phases. The first group to be moved were the staff of *Voz da Africa Livre* who, unconvincingly, announced they would be off the air for some time while they transferred their "mobile transmitter to a new location in Mozambique". They were flown out to Waterskloof military base just outside Pretoria on a South African air force C130. A team of SAS personnel driving seven MNR vehicles from the Odzi base followed in the next stage of the transfer. They went to Voortrekkerhoogte military barracks in Pretoria.

Finally, over a period of one day and one night a shuttle of South African air force C130s landed at Grand Reef air base near Odzi. They airlifted out about 250 MNR personnel and their armaments. They landed at Phalaborwa in the eastern Transvaal. From there they were moved in a convoy of trucks to the edge of the Lutabo river, near the Kruger National Park. Lutabo then became the new MNR base. About ten days later the South Africans began supplying equipment, ammunition, mortars and webbing, and it was immediately apparent that Pretoria intended to continue using the MNR.

## Nkomati Accord

Following the signing of the Nkomati Accord between South Africa and Mozambique on March 16, 1984, the apartheid regime was meant to have cut off support for the MNR. But it is clear that to this day South Africa has continued to sponsor MNR banditry.

On August 28, 1985, the MNR headquarters at Gorongosa was attacked and overrun by Mozambican and Zimbabwean forces. Documents recovered at the base revealed the extent of South African duplicity before and Nkomati.

A portion of the "Gorongosa

documents" made public by Colonel Sergio Vieira, Mozambique's Minister of Security, revealed massive and premeditated violations of Nkomati. They also revealed some of the principal names involved in the violations: Luis Neil, General Viljoen, chief of the South African Defence Forces (SADF), Lieutenant-General Andre Liebenberg, head of SADF "Special Forces", van der Westhuizen, van Nickerk and Brigadier van Tonder of MID.

Reliable accounts of night parachute drops of supplies have elicited from eyewitnesses at many places, and there have been reports mentioning sightings of South African submarines in Mozambican waters. Just before Homoine the Mozambican press reported that MNR

bandits had received guns, mortars and ammunition in a May 8 parachute drop by the South African Air Force near Lake Chitipe and that local people were forced to carry the weapons. Members of the Mozambican News Agency (AIM) saw one of the parachutes which was inscribed "U.S. HUDCO-63". In all, the MNR is supported by South Africa, Israel and certain rightwing elements of Portugal, West Germany, America and a number of other countries.

## No Political Aims

**T**he MNR has no known political agenda or set of political proposals which they wish to implement in Mozambique. MNR bandits are the

"fifth column" of South African and other interests being used to destabilize Mozambique in the same way as Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in Angola.

Recently these bandits murdered innocent villagers in north-west Zimbabwe and blew up a tea factory at Katiyo tea estate in Manicaland, suggesting that their pay-masters may now be wanting them to play a larger destabilizing role in this area than before.

The countries of this region should increase their military co-operation to make the MNR and its backers pay for their crimes.