

Priest says he spoke to survivors

From Harry Debelius
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A Spanish missionary in Madrid today named the nun who is reported to have seen the results of the Wiriyamu massacre in Mozambique, and said he had spoken to relatives of the victims.

The nun is Mother Lucia, a Spaniard from the Basque country, who is still serving at the provincial hospital in Tete, according to Father Vicente Berenguer Llopis, aged 36.

Father Berenguer left Mozambique last April to return to Spain on leave. Enlarging upon a written statement he made last weekend, he told *The Times* today that on December 17, 1972, a Sunday, he was travelling by bus from Changara to Tete. This was the day after the massacre is said to have taken place.

The priest said the bus stopped about 10 or 11 miles from Tete, in the vicinity of Wiriyamu. "There was a large group of people on the road, mostly women and children, carrying all kinds of belongings. Some were half naked. All were excited and distressed.

"The bus stopped for a long time. There was a discussion because the driver wanted them to pay. Eventually some of them came on board. They told me and the others on the bus of great destruction in their area. They spoke of many missing relatives.

"It was not only Wiriyamu

which suffered. That is why there were so many refugees. Wiriyamu is in the territory of the San Pedro Mission at Tete. It is a village which, like others there, is somewhat dispersed. It is part of the regulo (a territorial division) called Gandali, and Gandali surely must appear on some Portuguese maps.

"This regulo includes other villages besides Wiriyamu and some suffered in the same attack. Among the villages which I recall in that regulo are Chawola, Joao and Chenga. Several thousand people live in this regulo."

Fr Berenguer added that when the bus arrived at Tete, another crowd of refugees was waiting. "There was a lot of excitement, with everybody asking everybody else about missing relatives or friends. Many people were crying.

"And before we reached Tete, I saw many burned huts by the roadside. But the massacre did not take place there next to the road. Most people living there escaped. It took place away from the road, in and around Wiriyamu.

"I did not see the destruction at Wiriyamu myself. But that Sunday and later I talked to people who told me their sad stories. When we say there were 400 killed, it is because we know who they were.

"There were probably more. The parents, children and wives of some of them are alive in Mozambique today. I know some

of their names, but I cannot name them. They are afraid:

"We [missionaries] wanted to go there, but the bishop said to wait. We were not given permission. The massacre was so great that it was widely known in Tete, and there was even some dissent among the authorities and among some army offices about the horror of the affair.

"Perhaps for that reason a committee of observers was allowed to be formed, and this committee flew over the area about a week later. Mother Lucia was aboard the helicopter."

Priests of the Spanish Foreign Missions Institute pointed today to the arrest of two of their fellow missionaries as evidence of close cooperation between Mr Ian Smith's regime in Rhodesia and the Portuguese authorities in Mozambique.

According to priests at the institute's headquarters in Madrid, their two colleagues, Frs Martin Hernández and Alfonso Valverde, who have been in prison in Lourenço Marques for 18 months, were arrested in Mondarwin in Rhodesia and were taken to Salisbury on or about January 1, 1972. They were then flown to Mozambique and turned over to the Portuguese authorities.

Lord Mayor's apology, page 9; Parliamentary report, page 14; Diary, page 16; Leading article 17.