

Reporter of The Times ordered out of Tete

24/7/73

From Michael Knipe
Beira, July 23

My inquiries into the truth of the Mozambique massacre allegations were cut short today when the Portuguese security police, the DGS, ordered me to leave Tete.

I was told that it was necessary for me to leave the area "for my own safety". Inspector Adjunto Sabino, the district head of the DGS, said there were people who did not want me in Tete. I would be in danger if I stayed.

There had been public demonstrations protesting at *The Times*, for publishing the massacre allegations in Lourenço Marques and Beira last week, he said, and a similar trouble could occur in Tete.

As I had experienced only politeness and help since my arrival in the area last Thursday, the suggestion of danger seemed far-fetched to say the least. I said I would leave but under protest as my inquiries were nowhere near completed.

I pointed out that my enforced departure might lead some outside observers to suppose that the Portuguese authorities were trying to hide something with respect to the massacre reports.

The DGS emphasized that I was not being expelled from Mozambique, and I was given the choice of flying to Lourenço Marques or Beira. However, the inspector was insistent that I leave Tete immediately, even though I pointed out that I had an appointment for a third meeting with the Governor of Tete district on Thursday.

In the event the daily flight to Lourenço Marques was fully booked and even the DGS was unable to get me a seat. I finally left, the lone passenger in a specially chartered six-seater Piper Aztec at dusk having been escorted to the airport.

In Beira this evening a DGS agent turned down my request

to proceed to Nampula, the military headquarters, tomorrow, once again on the ground that my safety could not be assured.

There were groups of people, Africans and Portuguese, who were out to cause me trouble, he explained. Even in Beira I was not safe. I should not leave the hotel without informing him, he said.

My efforts to make an on-the-spot investigation regarding the allegations of Father Hastings that 400 African villagers were slaughtered by Portuguese troops at the village of Wiriyamu, some 16 miles south of Tete, on December 16 were initially delayed when the Portuguese Embassy in Pretoria said that no visas were being made available to staff correspondents of *The Times*.

Then last Wednesday I received word in Blantyre that permission had been granted for my visit to go ahead and I flew to Beira and from there, on Thursday, to Tete.

On Friday morning the DGS asked to examine my passport but returned it to me apparently satisfied. Then this morning they again requested to see my passport and I was escorted to see Inspector Sabino.

My plans today had been to continue my attempts to locate three Catholic missionary sisters who are reported to have been eye-witnesses to the immediate aftermath of earlier massacres by troops at Mucumbura, near the Rhodesian border.

The sisters are said to be in Tete at present and I was anxious to confirm that they had given evidence to this effect at the treason trial of two Burgos fathers. Yesterday the Bishop of Tete who is also reported to have testified at the trial said that he had no idea where the three sisters were. He also declined to comment in any way on the massacre allegations.

I am due to have a further meeting in the morning with the security police when we will presumably decide on where if anywhere it is safe for me to travel in Mozambique.

During my five days in Mozambique my dealings with the Portuguese on both an official and unofficial basis have been extremely courteous. The considerable concern of the DGS for my welfare has been markedly polite as has been my response.