

Wife is left to her fate

Mozambique soldiers flee rebel forces

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BLANTYRE. —Some 1 500 Mozambican soldiers fled into Malawi from recent fighting with Right-wing rebels of the Mozambican National Resistance (MNR), Malawi's official news agency Mana reported.

Civilians, including the families of the Mozambican soldiers, also fled across the border, the agency said.

It quoted a soldier as saying: "I managed to escape into Malawi with only my 18-month-old son, Antonio.

"I left his exhausted mother behind to her fate because she could not keep up with my pace."

Mana said Malawi handed 400 of the soldiers back to Mozambique on October 1, about 700 on October 3 and another 416 on Thursday.

It said the Mozambicans entered Malawi still armed with machine guns, rocket launchers and ammunition.

The MNR has been fighting the Maputo Government since independence in 1975, and Mozambique charged last month that the rebels operate from bases in Malawi.

Malawi denies it and recently established a joint security commission with Mozambique to probe border problems.

The small Mozambican town of Zumbo, close to the border with Zambia and Zimbabwe, was reported to be virtually deserted following an onslaught by hundreds of Renamo rebels recently expelled from Malawi, a Harare report said.

The Herald says the fall of the town on Monday follows President Kamu-

zu Banda's order to rebels to leave cross-border hide-outs in Malawi.

At a summit in Blantyre last month with the leaders of Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, late President Banda faced demands to curb the use by Renamo of Malawian soil, or face a possible blockade by his Black neighbours.

Situated near the water of Lake Cabora Bassa, Zumbo, with a population of about 3 000, had a garrison of just 38 troops when several hundred well-armed rebels attacked on Monday, says the Herald.

About 15 of the defenders reached another border village along with fleeing civilians.

More than 500 civilians from the area are reported to have fled into the Zambian border district of Luangwa, but only seven families had crossed the Zambezi to make their way to Zimbabwe. All had relatives by marriage in this country.

The Herald again questions the extent of President Banda's compliance with the demands of the Front Line leaders. The expulsion of the rebels, who left with their weapons, took place despite the establishment of a Mozambique-Malawi joint security commission, the report says. — Sapa.