

Mozambique Accuses Pretoria

For nine months, Mozambique refrained from openly admitting South Africa's non-compliance with the Nkomati Accord. Now the truth is inescapable.

By Augusta Conchiglia

On the eve of the signing of the non-aggression pact at Nkomati, almost a year ago, the Mozambican authorities stated that the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) was likely to continue its operations for another one or two years. In their view, it would take that long for the stocks of arms supplied to the mercenaries by South Africa to be exhausted. This assessment also took account of possible complicity in certain official circles in South Africa, where the Maputo government believed—and still believes—that there are differences of opinion over the extent to which the Nkomati Accord should be respected.

To infiltrate several thousand men and large quantities of military equipment into Mozambique only a few hours before the signing of the pact was hardly the best way to turn a new page in relations between the two countries, in the "spirit of good neighbourly relations" which was supposed to underpin the agreements. On the contrary, ever since the accord was signed last March, the MNR has been able to launch offensives on a scale never previously attained. As representatives of Mozambican workers in South Africa pointed out at a recent ceremony held in Maputo in the presence of President Samora Machel: "The apartheid regime has never stopped providing support for the armed bandits." A few days beforehand, during a visit to Maputo, Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos had joined Machel in acknowledging that South Africa had respected neither the Lusaka agreements nor those of Nkomati. In fact, not a single MNR training camp in South Africa's Transvaal province has been closed down, and infiltration from South Africa has continued apace.

Moreover, can it really be believed, as Pretoria claims, that there are differences of opinion between the South African government and the most prominent MNR leader, Evo Fernandes, who passes himself off as the head of the "hard core" of the organization—its "Portuguese" element? Fernandes has laid down extraordinary terms for ending the war against Maputo. He

wants to share power with the government and hand back land to Portuguese ex-colonists! The "historical" relationship between the MNR and the former colonial power is no secret. As President Machel recently declared, "The bandit leaders are Portuguese, one-time PIDE [Portuguese secret police] agents and defenders of colonialism and fascism who dream of returning to Mozambique today." It was this very same Portuguese element of the MNR, represented by Evo Fernandes, which Pretoria "invited" to take part in the joint commission set up by the South African and Mozambican governments on October 3 last year to supervise the ending of hostilities, or, in other words, the total implementation of the terms of the Nkomati Accord—hitherto rigorously applied only by Mozambique.

In forcing the Maputo government to sit down at the same table as the MNR, South Africa had two objectives: to set itself up as a "neutral" mediator in this conflict "between Mozambicans" and to give the MNR a chance to present its terms to the government. The Mozambican government's refusal to talk to the MNR about anything other than the technical aspects of ending the war led to the departure of the MNR representatives from the commission, just two weeks after it was formed. Evo Fernandes then made serious threats to "intensify terrorist operations, even in urban centres."

Against the background of a supposed squabble with the South Africans, who, according to Foreign Minister "Pik" Botha, respect the commitments made at Nkomati both "in the letter and the spirit," Evo Fernandes publicly announced his autonomy and referred to his close relationship with the government and businessmen in Portugal. "Do not let that deceive us," said President Machel, speaking at a public meeting near Maputo at the end of December, in reply to statements by certain members of the Mozambican government, who saw the "Portuguese element" in the MNR as "the principal obstacle to peace."

"The prime responsibility for this armed banditry," Machel declared, "lies with South

Africa. It is that country which has created, equipped, trained and infiltrated the armed bandits among us. It is South Africa which has sent planes, boats and helicopters to resupply them." The Maputo Noticias revealed on January 5 that in December military equipment had been parachuted into Sofala province, thus supplying MNR bands in regions where they had been under heavy pressure from the Mozambican army.

While such operations are probably still being carried out by the South African army, Pretoria has set up a veritable international network with centres in Africa to provide aid to the MNR. In the same way as it operates through Zaire to supply the Unita bandits in Angola, South Africa has established an airlift from the Comoros Islands to deliver arms to the MNR, as well as establishing bases in Malawi apparently for the training of new recruits by Israeli instructors.

In fact, the MNR is by no means ready to break away from South Africa, which has set up its complex supply and training network in order to pursue its objective of overthrowing the Maputo government while protesting its innocence. In minimizing South Africa's involvement in the war led by the MNR—until President Machel made his remarks at the beginning of the year—the Frelimo regime has run the risk of playing into the hands of its enemies. ▲▲▲

¹ See "Mozambican Terrorism's Lisbon Connection," AFRICASIA N° 13, January 1985.

MNR Murders

The MNR has won itself lasting international notoriety for the cruelty of its actions against foreigners as well as against the people of Mozambique. In September, two Italian cooperation experts were found decapitated; seven East German technicians and one Yugoslav were brutally murdered in December, and two weeks later a Swede and a Portuguese were killed, along with nine other people.

Even the Nicaraguan traitor Eden Pastora, who has proposed that Unita, the so-called Afghan resistance and the MNR join in a "revolutionary and democratic" Third World International, reportedly told the MNR (during his meeting with its representatives in Portugal) to polish up their image!

Eden Pastora took this initiative with the blessing of Portuguese personalities close to the government, and under the influence of the "Internationale de la résistance" set up by several right-wing forces in Paris in 1982. His position at least has the merit of avoiding any possible confusion: the groups he intends to bring together are all working for interests foreign to their countries.