

South Africa still supplying Renamo

The South African armed forces (SADF) continued to supply Renamo up until at least February 1991, despite the Nkomati non-aggression accord signed between Mozambique and South Africa seven years earlier.

That is the assessment of the United States Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) in a report cited on 24 February by the London newspaper *The Independent*.

The DIA report states "as late as February 1991, South African helicopters delivered arms and ammunition to Renamo in southern Mozambique", citing an airdrop made to a Renamo base in the Mapulan-guene area near the border with the South African province of the Transvaal (this is probably the base known as Ngungwe, which is a vital link in the logistical chain whereby South Africa supplies Renamo units in

the southern third of the country).

The DIA's main source was a Renamo deserter, identified only as Macuacua. This youth, now 18 years old, is one of the children turned into killing machines by Renamo.

He told his American interrogator (whom the report refers to simply as "RO") that he had been brought to South Africa in 1984, when he was just ten, along with 70 other Mozambican boys of the same age.

"Macuacua himself explained the utility and rationale of why Renamo uses young boys as footsoldiers when RO asked Macuacua if his father had been a soldier", said the report. "He answered that Renamo does not use many adults to fight because they are not good fighters. He said kids have more stamina, are better at surviving in the bush, do not complain and follow directions".

The material delivered in February 1991 "included small arms and ammunition for AK-47s, FN rifles with ammunition, 60mm mortars with ammunition and grenades".

Macuacua said these were delivered by "an unmarked civilian helicopter piloted by two white pilots". The same helicopter picked up Renamo members "who were going for special commando training in South Africa".

The DIA found Macuacua a credible witness. The report says "Macuacua did not strike RO as a boy with a vivid imagination who would dream up stories of South African support to Renamo, or who could be coached into telling the story he told".

The American report queried the SADF's motives in continuing to arm Renamo, and asked how this could go unnoticed by the South African government.