

Mozambique

Attack on Mapai

Following is an excerpt from a report in Mozambique's weekly *Tempo* from Mapai, the village in western Mozambique that was raided and occupied by Rhodesian security forces on May 29. The raid, one of dozens that have taken place in the year since Mozambique closed its border to Rhodesia, prompted Security Council sessions that took place at the end of June.

Mapai is completely destroyed. We had hardly entered the town when we smelled the characteristic odor of rotting flesh, coming from the corrals where more than 100 head of cattle lay dead. When Rhodesian troops occupied the town they machine-gunned all the cattle they found. They also pillaged the people's store and then dynamited it, as well as a granary that held several tons of corn.

Almost all of the houses of the town were dynamited. Nothing remained of the Ngala transport company. The company's garage and about twenty vehicles were completely destroyed, also by dynamite.

Altogether, damage must be more than \$4 million. The people in the surrounding rural area have lost all the services rendered by the town. And the Ngala company was practically the only one carrying passengers in the region.

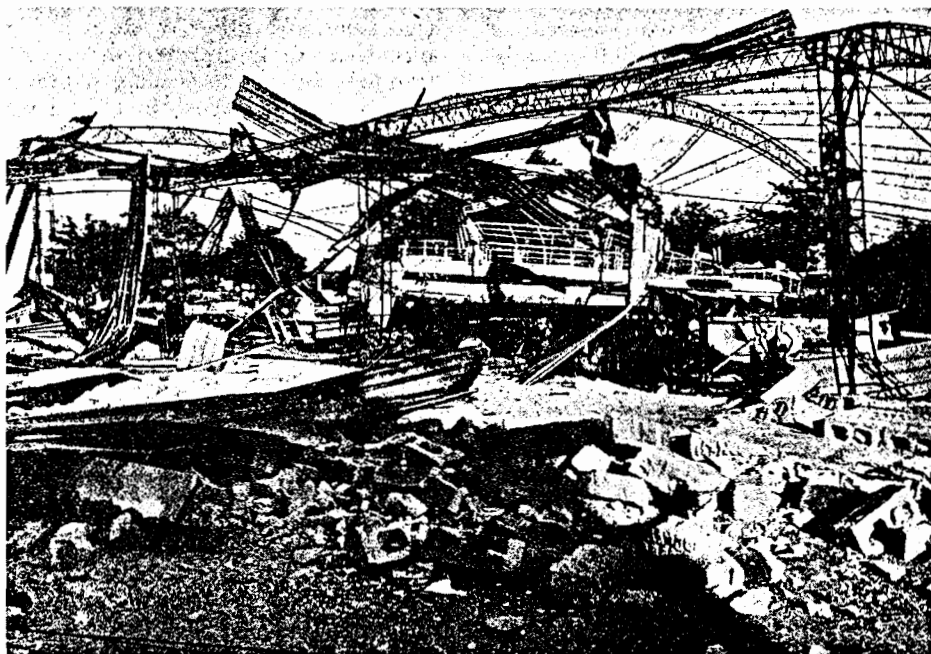
The attack began on the morning of May 29, when about 1,000 Rhodesian soldiers entered Mozambique in the Chitanga zone and advanced along the road linking Mapai to Vila Eduardo Mondlane (formerly Malvern). In spite of being heavily armed and protected by aircraft, the Rhodesians did not escape some ambushes by People's Forces patrols stationed in Vila Eduardo Mondlane. Meanwhile, the Chicualacuala command notified Mapai, and in the two parts of Mapai the People's Forces and the militia organized the retreat of the people to the bush.

After some hours of resistance in Mapai, the railway town was occupied by the Rhodesians, who lost four soldiers by a confirmed count. While

some 200 Rhodesian troops stayed in Mapai station to destroy the railway line, the bulk of the column, preceded by three jet bombers and one Mirage, advanced toward Mapai River with heavy artillery. On May 29 the first two 500 kg bombs fell near the airfield on the bank of the Limpopo River.

On May 30 the Rhodesians reached the second airfield, about 7 km from Mapai. There, the People's Forces ambushed the enemy, killing three of them. Mapai was occupied on May 31 amid constant aerial bombardment and heavy artillery fire.

Also on May 31 a Rhodesian transport aircraft landed on the runway at Mapai. Among the trees on the side of the field were three members of the People's Forces who waited until the aircraft loaded up. When the plane was taking off one of the three fired his bazooka at the airplane, totally destroying it. The soldiers still at the field fled. The three People's Forces soldiers fired mortar shells at them, but were unable to tell if there were any casualties.



Wreckage of the Mapai bus depot and regional maintenance garages after the latest Rhodesian attack.

Altogether, three members of the People's Forces were killed in the fighting.

The United Nations Security Council met late in June to take action on the continuing raids into Mozambique by military forces of the Ian Smith regime. On June 30 the council unanimously condemned "the illicit racist minority regime in Southern Rhodesia for its recent acts of aggression." More important, the council's final resolution called on all nations to give "immediate and substantial material assistance" to aid Mozambique's defense.

The immediate cause for the sessions was Rhodesia's May 29 seizure of Mapai, a Mozambican village some 50 miles from the border between the two countries. Termed the largest of many so-called "hot pursuit" efforts since combat with Zimbabwean nationalists was stepped up four years ago, the raid included the use of 500 kg fragmentation bombs, napalm, and—apparently for the first time—French-made Mirage jets. The Mirages were part of a group of six fighter jets Rhodesia has received from South Africa.

But throughout the three days of debates, which were attended by numerous high African officials, speakers in the Security Council drew repeated attention to the continuing pattern of Rhodesian incursions into Mozambican territory in pursuit of Zimbabwean nationalists. Such attacks have apparently increased drastically since March 1976, when the government of

Samora Machel closed its borders to Rhodesian import and export activity.

That move has proven costly in the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe—for both sides. Rhodesia lost what had been one of its principal commercial routes to the outside world when Mozambique was under Portuguese colonial domination. It also lost millions of dollars worth of rolling stock stuck in Mozambique when the closure was declared, together with the cargo the rail cars carried.

On the other side, one thousand four hundred thirty-two people have

been killed in Mozambican territory by Rhodesian forces since the closure—1,001 Zimbabwean refugees—and over 400 Mozambican citizens. These figures were cited in the speech by Marcelino dos Santos, Mozambique's minister of economic planning and development, at the start of the debates. Rhodesian security forces have destroyed Mozambican villages, health and educational facilities, precious cattle, and transport and communications links.

The Mozambican position taken at the debates was simple and straightforward. "If we look at the pattern of aggression we see that during the period of the application of [UN economic] sanctions [against Rhodesia], the People's Republic of Mozambique has suffered an average of more than one attack every three days. An average of three civilians per day were murdered during this same period," Dos Santos said on opening the debate June 28.

Accordingly, Rhodesian aggression is not simply a matter of Mozambican concern, he argued. It is "above all, a challenge to the international community." And he added: "The People's Republic of Mozambique is being attacked because the Mozambican people have assumed the commitment of supporting without reservation the struggle for liberation of the people of Zimbabwe. The People's Republic of Mozambique is being attacked because it is fully implementing the sanctions determined by this Council of the United Nations."

Before a final resolution was agreed upon June 30, there was some argu-



Refugees at Chibabava carry cooked food for distribution

UNHCR

ment both on and off the Security Council floor regarding the wording of an acceptable document. Western officials, claiming their reluctance to support a resolution that could be construed as an acceptance of direct foreign military involvement, sought to weaken considerably the draft advanced by members of participating African delegations. "Material," there-

fore, became the key word describing the support called for. And the resulting ambiguity was reportedly intentional.

For Western officials, such wording was considerably more restrictive than the original call for "practical" aid—which could include direct military involvement. And US representative Andrew Young said outside the council

that along with other Western council members he interpreted the resolution to be limited to a call for economic aid. But as one Western official was quoted as saying, the resolution's final language was widely taken to include "money, schoolbooks, tanks—anything but troops." And this was apparently a compromise with Western officials won by African delegations. □