

President on measures to counter MNR menace

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PRESIDENT Mugabe has pledged to deploy more troops in Zimbabwe's north-eastern border area with Mozambique to counter attacks by MNR bandits which have caused general insecurity in the area.

Speaking to hundreds of people who gathered to greet him at the Mary Mount Mission Hospital in Rushinga District, Cde Mugabe said he would soon consult commanders of the armed forces to boost the presence of security forces in the area.

The President, who was beginning his tour of four mission hospitals in Mashonaland Central yesterday, was responding to one of several problems raised by the mission hospital staff as affecting their operations.

A document presented to him after he toured the hospital said serious shortages of staff and

equipment compounded by insecurity caused by the MNR bandits were the main problems.

While it was hoped that the current peace process in Mozambique would succeed, efforts should continue to make people in bandit affected areas live as normal a life as possible.

Run by Catholic missionaries, Mary Mount Mission Hospital, about 270 km north-east of Harare, caters for a population of 60 000 of which 20 000 are Zimbabweans who have been displaced by bandit incursions and now live in 25 security villages in the area.

It also has a responsibility for two Mozambican refugee camps with a total population of 29 000.

However, despite this relatively heavy load, the hospital has no ambulance or telephone link, while very little electric power is generated on site.

It has one doctor, five

nurses and 11 nurse aides. Being only 20 km from the Mozambican border and in an area that has been attacked on several occasions by the bandits there are problems of recruiting qualified staff to the area.

Poor working conditions for medical staff compared to those in Government hospitals was also cited as another reason contributing to the hospital being unattractive to medical practitioners.

President Mugabe concluded his visits to mission hospitals with a tour of the Salvation Army-run Howard Hospital in Chiveshe where he officially opened a new out-patient wing built with funds donated by people from Switzerland.

The Chief Medical Officer, Dr Wayne Alloway, had a list of problems affecting the hospital the main one of which was the lack of enough funds.

In the past financial year the hospital had a

deficit of \$60 000 which was made up by the Salvation Army headquarters.

Cde Mugabe said that the Government will upgrade mission hospitals in the same way it has mission schools, when he visited Karanda mission hospital in Mr Darwin.

He condemned new churches that tried to disturb the smooth running of established institutions. He said the Government regarded mission hospitals as the property of those who started them.

Giving the background to this, Member of Parliament for Mukumbura, Cde Joseph Kaparadza said that the Evangelical Church had wanted to have total autonomy over Karanda Hospital and had been in conflict with the United States-based Evangelical Alliance Mission over who should control the hospital.

Cde Kaparadza said the conflict had been resolved, with the EAM

being allowed to continue to run the mission hospital.

Addressing almost a thousand people at St Albert's Mission Hospital in Centenary, Cde Mugabe said the Government would like to see doctors and nurses working at mission hospitals receiving the same benefits as those in the civil service.

According to a statement outlining the problems faced by St Albert's Mission Hospital, malaria and respiratory infection and tuberculosis were the major health problems faced by the people in the district.

"Though STD (sexually transmitted diseases) and HIV (the Aids virus) infection do not range high statistically, their increasing occurrence is of major concern to us. During the first six months of 1990, 70 percent of those tested for HIV were zero-positive and 40 percent of these had been repeatedly treated for STD."

—Ziana-Herald Reporter.