

Mozambique

DEATH FOR SABOTAGE

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When Mozambique became independent in 1975 a number of dissidents fled to neighbouring Rhodesia and South Africa from where they launch attacks on the Machel Government forces. Stiff penalties have been introduced for Mozambicans perpetrating anti-state crimes

STILL at the receiving end of persistent Rhodesian attacks Mozambique has introduced stiff penalties for persons convicted of crimes against the state.

The law passed by the Permanent Commission of the People's Assembly calls for the death penalty in cases of high treason and for jail terms ranging from eight to 30 years in some cases. The death penalty is still mandatory in cases of high treason and attempted murder of the Mozambican President or any visiting head of state.

Under the law prison terms of 12 to 30 years or the death penalty can be applied in cases of espionage, air or naval piracy, mercenarism, sabotage against military installations or equipment and crimes against war prisoners, the sick or the defenceless, as well as attacks against ships, planes, trains or vehicles providing medical services, transporting prisoners, the sick or the wounded.

Terrorist activities or sabotage

including armed bank robberies which endanger the economy and security of the state are also punishable by 12 to 30 years imprisonment or the death penalty in cases of death or permanent incapacity of the victims.

The use of illegal associations in the perpetration of the crimes and contacts with foreign-based organisations bent on destabilising the state are equally punishable by 12 years imprisonment. Also facing the death penalty or 12 to 30 years jail terms are the founders, organisers and leaders of these associations.

Provincial courts have been set up to try crimes against the state but the death penalty can only be applied after confirmation by the supreme court in Maputo, the capital.

The passing of the new legislation follows increased acts of terrorism by Rhodesian-based anti-Frelimo Government elements. Over recent months a number of Mozambicans trained in

Rhodesia have carried out attacks on Mozambique. One Mozambican captured in the act a few months ago admitted taking part in an attack on a passenger bus. Some 14 passengers including women and children died in the incident.

Only two months ago a series of demonstrations took place in several parts of the country in which people demanded the introduction of the death penalty for crimes against the state. A few weeks later a Mozambican admitted at a press conference in Maputo to taking part in the attacks on civilian installations. He also said he had been trained in Rhodesia and Malawi.

Meanwhile the underground Mozambican movement, the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MRM), has claimed its forces are intensifying their operations against the Mozambican regular army

inside the country. MRM says it is concentrating on communication installations and that the regular troops are now abandoning the rural areas for the urban areas. According to a statement issued by the MRM several Mozambican army vehicles have been destroyed and a number of regular soldiers killed in the MRM offensive.

However there are doubts about the veracity of the MRM claims. It would appear the MRM, which is sponsored by Mozambican dissidents based in either South Africa, Rhodesia or Malawi, resorts to acts of banditry and other cases of terrorism rather than actual forays with regular troops. Despite claims by the MRM that between October and December last year it destroyed 38 Mozambican army vehicles and killed more than 200 regular soldiers over a

large region of the country in Tete, Manica and Sofala Provinces, the attacks seem to be the work of terrorists hellbent on creating chaos in the country.

Ever since Mozambique became independent in 1975 there have been persistent attempts to destabilise the Machel Government. Most of these have been the work of people who left the country at independence and went into the neighbouring states from where they organised terrorist activities against Mozambique. Now the Machel Government has had to deploy its scarce human resources to defend the country against its external enemies. Because they have the backing of countries such as South Africa and Rhodesia these anti-Frelimo government elements will probably succeed in harassing the Mozambican forces for some time yet ●