

# Civil war survivors fight bankrupt economy

MAPUTO — When civil war came to the De Sousa farm north of Maputo, the Portuguese settlers decided to stay and fight.

Zeca de Sousa trained and armed a militia of 90 men, got help from neighbours and staved off attacks on the family's 22/230 hectares for more than

five years. *DGuz.*

He was killed in an attack on his car two years ago, but the farm remained intact and his brother Luis survived the war.

Now there is a new foe: A bankrupt economy has forced the government to favour imports over local production in feeding mil-

lions of people left helpless by the war and drought.

"In my opinion, all the money that is being poured into Mozambique is not being used to develop a basic infrastructure — it's just being spent," said Mr De Sousa (36) a soft-spoken, wiry man.

His companion, Mr

Lys Gulbride, translated from Portuguese as Mr De Sousa told of his father, Ignacio, who started the farm in the 1940s, and how Zeca protected it during the war.

"There was a death penalty for any civilian carrying a weapon," he explained, but Zeca decided the government was unable to protect the farm and took the risk of creating his own armed force.

Rebels began over-running the area but were never able to take the De Sousa property. A standard attack involved about 150 rebels and left a few rebels and local residents dead, Mr De Sousa said.

Although the government initially refused permission for Zeca to organise a militia, it did not try to stop him. Eventually, the army decided to help the De Sousas and supplied them with arms, including two tanks.

Farming stopped on some of the family land but was never interrupted on a 800-hectare tract that grew food for sale locally. A small supply shop also brought in money.

When the war ended, Mr Luis de Sousa reduced the militia by half, but still runs armed patrols because there will continue to be bandit activity.

Resuming full-scale farming will be difficult, he said, because of the war's destruction and a severe drought.

Heavy taxes on fertiliser and pesticides, along with high transportation costs, hinder domestic producers while the government exempts import duties to get food into the country, Mr De Sousa said.

He complained that foreign financial aid pays for imports instead of reconstruction. — Ziana-AP