

Bandits resort to smuggling food and drugs

11/3/92 MUTARE.

AMID the current drought which is affecting the whole of Southern Africa, MNR bandits have now resorted to large-scale smuggling of food, illicit drugs and weapons with Zimbabweans along the eastern border with Mozambique.

In its latest issue of Zimbabwe Defence Forces

magazine, the Zimbabwe National Army reports that several border jumpers had been arrested by security forces along the border areas with goods such as sugar, salt, clothing and soap.

"Top brass bandit leaders are now engaged in sending their juniors into Zimbabwe in search of food," said the magazine.

According to sources, the bandit leaders order their juniors to cross the border into Zimbabwe pretending to be civilians in search of food.

"They sneak through secret crossing points into Zimbabwe to exchange bags of mbanje for foodstuffs, soap, clothes and money. Some bring firearms in exchange for food and money," says the magazine.

The largest cache of 120 bags of mbanje and a number of axes were recovered after clashes with the bandits at a place which security forces suspected to be a temporary trade base inside Mozambique.

The magazine quotes Lt-Col Sango, Commander of the ZNA 61 Infantry Battalion, whose deployment stretched from Nyamapanda to Kanyemba, as having said that now that MNR bandits had been defeated in combat action by the Zimbabwe defence forces, they resorted to smuggling along the border. — Ziana.