

Mozambique, With Cuban Help, Is Shoring Up Its Internal Security

By JOHN DARNTON

MAPUTO, Mozambique — An American wandering through Maputo on a recent Saturday came upon an unexpected sight. In a small park, not far from Ho Chi Minh Avenue, a group of soldiers in T-shirts and khaki pants were caught up in a lively game of baseball.

Baseball is not customarily played anywhere in Africa, so the American joined a curious throng of onlookers. The riddle was soon explained: The soldiers tearing around the bases and belting long line drives were Cubans.

Cuban military advisers, who number between 200 and 300 and are helping to train a new national militia, are only one sign that Mozambique is building up its defenses and tightening security in response to the ever-widening war in adjacent Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

The Government, on the lookout for enemy agents, periodically conducts bed checks in major hotels across the country, rousing guests and demanding identity documents. Policemen frequently perform the same function at impromptu roadblocks.

Soldiers Guard Ministries

Soldiers also stand guard outside Government ministries, but they are not conspicuous enough to lend a martial air to this easygoing capital, which has broad tree-lined boulevards that end in a magnificent view of the Indian Ocean. However, the soldiers were not there a year ago.

Inside the ministries and in most other offices are bulletin boards with photographs of some employees on display. The pictures are of "comprometidos," collaborators who served in the secret police or some other colonial apparatus of the former Portuguese regime. Under a campaign that began last November, they are not to be punished but will work under the close scrutiny of their colleagues for the next two years to prove their loyalty to the revolutionary Government that came to power in 1975.

"Vigilance groups" are being formed in factories and other strategic centers throughout the country. As of last August there were 17,000 volunteers in 546 such groups in Maputo Province alone. Their function is to "watch out for and prevent attempts by the enemies of the Mozambican revolution to disrupt or paralyze" economic activities.

In perhaps its most far-reaching decision this year, the Government decided in February to introduce capital punishment. So far 23 persons have been sentenced by a revolutionary military court and executed by firing squad for crimes such as treason. Few here doubt that the condemned men were guilty, and most believe that the executions were justified, because the men were charged with overt acts of sabotage, some of which involved bloodshed.

Death Penalty Defended

Still, for a country that fought a 10-year guerrilla war and then achieved independence without the bloodbath that had been feared, the death penalty is an acknowledgment that the Government has enemies inside as well as outside, and is prepared to adopt drastic measures to

deal with them.

President Samora Machel, in a May Day speech at Independence Square, defended capital punishment as a "just, necessary, popular and revolutionary demand." He warned of mercenaries, traitors and "class enemies" who he said were out to destroy the revolution, and vowed that they would be liquidated. "They are coming to hunt gazelles in Mozambique and they will be caught by the buffalo," he said.

On the surface, Mozambique's Government seems to have little to fear from internal subversion. Frelimo, the liberation movement that fought Portuguese colonialism and now rules as a single party guiding the country along Marxist-Leninist lines, appears to have involved many of the nation's 12 million people in a sense of national life.

Even Frelimo's critics here agree that its educational and health programs have touched the lives of thousands of peasants and workers. The Government, and especially President Machel, they concede, has a secure base and widespread popular support. At the same time, Mozambique's economy has not recovered from the dislocations that resulted from the flight of 250,000 Portuguese and the transition to socialism. There are still shortages of capital, skilled manpower and goods, epitomized by long lines outside grocery stores.

The Government's concern for security is not unfounded. In the curious political juxtaposition of southern Africa, Mozambique, one of black Africa's most radical states, abuts the white redoubts of Zimbabwe Rhodesia and South Africa. The

Maputo regime has struck a modus vivendi with South Africa, but it is a sworn enemy of the Government in Salisbury. Mozambique, as the most effective staging area for nationalist guerrillas of the Patriotic Front alliance, has been vulnerable to reprisal attacks.

Zimbabwe Rhodesian security forces have been crossing the border for years, striking not only at guerrilla bases and refugee camps but also at vital installations. In 1977, according to the Government, there were more than 140 attacks from Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

The threat has forced Mozambique to turn increasingly to the Soviet bloc for weapons, and military spending here doubled between 1977 and 1978 to about 30 percent of the \$360 million budget. With the country's borders newly fortified, the Government believes that Zimbabwe Rhodesia's forces can no longer sweep in for extended ground operations as they did two years ago.

But a new type of incursion has begun: paratroop raids by Mozambican dissidents, including some who had served with Portuguese paramilitary units and fled into Zimbabwe Rhodesia at independence. The dissidents are organized into two groups, the National Resistance Movement and the United Mozambican Front, known as Fumo, with headquarters in Lisbon.

Western diplomats believe that the Resistance Movement, the more active of the two, is funded and trained by Zimbabwe Rhodesia, and acts as an adjunct to the Salisbury forces. Every day a radio station calling itself "Free Africa" broadcasts anti-Government propaganda in Portuguese and vilifies President Machel.

The raiders have struck at power substations and railroad lines, and have attacked Government troops. Last year a bomb exploded at a downtown cafe here, and in March, the country's major oil depot at Beira was attacked, sustaining \$3 million in damage. A South African firefighting team had to be called to extinguish the blaze.

But so far the raids are more of a harassment than a real threat to the stability of the Government. One question in the minds of some European and American sympathizers who have come here to work, attracted by the country's emerging ideology, is how far the Government will go in curbing civil liberties if the pressure mounts.