

# Mozambique closes border with Rhodesia

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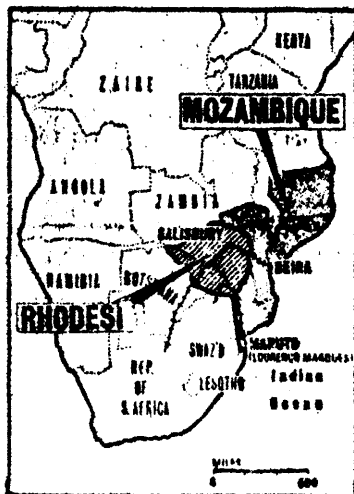
MOZAMBIQUE yesterday closed its borders with neighbouring Rhodesia, announced the imposition of full economic sanctions, seized all Rhodesian assets in the country and banned all communications between the two countries.

This follows the escalation of border incidents between the neighbouring States in which Rhodesian troops have crossed into Mozambique in "hot pursuit" of black nationalist guerrillas.

In an emotional radio broadcast President Samora Machel called on Mozambiquans to dig air raid shelters, and said all production had been placed on a war footing. He accused Rhodesia of bombing border villages, and claimed his forces had shot down Rhodesian aircraft involved in the raids.

In Britain the decision was welcomed by the Government as a major step in the economic sanctions battle against the illegal white regime in Salisbury. But reports that the announcement constituted a full-scale declaration of war were discounted both in London and Salisbury.

In Rhodesia the move, which cuts the railway lines which carry an estimated 40 per cent. of the country's exports, was deliberately played down. In



the Government's first official reaction.

President Machel's broadcast, made from the Presidential palace in Maputo (formerly Lourenco Marques), finally closes the Mozambique connection which has helped keep the Rhodesian régime economically afloat since its unilateral declaration of independence.

It is known that the decision to impose sanctions, which is likely to affect adversely the Mozambique economy as much as it hurts Rhodesia, was finally agreed at a meeting of the Presidents of Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique and Botswana held

in Mozambique in early February.

President Machel appealed to socialist nations for support, and ordered a total ban "on any form of communication with the territory controlled by the racist regime. The agricultural and industrial sectors are placed on a war footing."

He said Mozambique was being attacked by "Rhodesian troops who have killed and maimed men, women and children." He added: "Fighters of the Mozambique Liberation Army, you will defeat the enemy and crush the aggressor who is violating the peace."

Rhodesia last month launched a "hot pursuit" raid into Mozambique, and its forces killed 24 guerrillas at their camp. President Machel identified the area as the village of Pafuri, on the south-east border, and claimed that the attack was an act of war. Rhodesian aircraft had crossed South African territory in the course of the attack, he said.

In London British Government officials said the imposition of sanctions by Mozambique is bound to have grave implications for Rhodesia. But an increasing amount of Rhodesia's exports have been diverted to the two remaining railways linking it with South Africa, since Mozambique's independence last

June. President Machel's move has been on the cards ever since his Frelimo movement took over the Government, but he has apparently not felt economically capable of carrying it out until now.

The closing of two rail lines to Beira and Maputo, will cut off one of Mozambique's most important sources of foreign exchange. But Commonwealth Governments have promised Mr. Machel's administration up to £15m.

The principal Rhodesian exports hit will be agricultural crops and minerals, especially maize and chrome, which South African ports have up to now been unable to handle. Rhodesian exporters may have to decide their priorities for exports in the future, because there is doubt as to whether the remaining rail lines are capable of carrying all the goods which have been sent via Mozambique.

Whether Rhodesia can find an alternative route for its goods depends now on South Africa which finds itself in a serious dilemma.