

Mozambique Radio's Answer to Listeners' Questions on Terrorist Operations

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Text of broadcasts:

Now we have "Postbox 2000" - a weekly programme in which we answer your questions about Mozambique. This week we are looking at the question of terrorist operations against Mozambique. We have a number of letters about this from different persons. We now have a whole series of questions. One listener in Natal in South Africa wants to know whether these terrorists have bases in South Africa [passage indistinct].

To understand the background to this you have to look back to the time of Mozambique's struggle for independence from Portugal. During that struggle, the Portuguese began to recruit Mozambicans to fight in their army. The situation was that there was a lot of unemployment. So it was not too difficult. [Words indistinct] Mozambicans were put into a number of special military groups to carry out particularly brutal attacks and espionage missions. For example, they were trained to carry out atrocities at remote villages. They would be wearing Frelimo uniforms and carrying the same weapons as Frelimo used. The idea was that Frelimo would get the blame. These black soliders in the Portuguese army were given special brainwashig to turn them into dehumanized mechanical killers, who were hated by the Mozambican people, and they knew it.

At the end of the liberation war, when the Portuguese were defeated, many of these Mozambican traitors decided to run away rather than to answer for their crimes. The easiest place to run to was Zimbabwe, or Rhodesia as it was then. When in Rhodesia they were eagerly recruited to form part of the illegal regime's offensive against Mozambique. They were sent into Mozambique to try to cause problems. They would burn down shops, cut off people's noses and ears and gather information for the Rhodesian army to get information about Mozambican military installations - suitable places to blow up bridges amongst other things - but most of all to get information about refugee camps where Zimbabwean refugees were living. Sometimes the Rhodesians would attack and destroy these camps using the information that they had obtained. Hundreds of defenceless refugees were killed as a result.

This aggression ended like Mozambique's [words indistinct]. Mercenaries from several countries were actively recruited and some of them were Portuguese who formerly lived in Mozambique. Among those who provided the money for the operations were Portuguese big businessmen like Jorge Jardim who owned many factories and a newspaper in Mozambique. With the money that people like Jardim were able to provide, a handful of Mozambican traitors were bought and

paid for after independence. Some of them were captured and they admitted that Jardim was their chief. The money that Jardim paid did not, however, give him complete control of the terrorists. They were under the control of certain senior officials of the Rhodesian armed forces, such as Ron Reid-Daly of the Selous Scouts. Other Rhodesian officers, who are today a part of the Zimbabwe armed forces, were less involved in the day-to-day running of these operations. With the end of the war in Zimbabwe these terrorists had a serious problem. Their supply lines were cut. The [words indistinct] guns, ammunition and food to them in the bush in Mozambique could no longer do so. They were finished and they knew it. But this was only the beginning of the end, it was not the end.

One month ago the British newspaper, the 'Guardian' took up the trail. The 'Guardian' reported (?from Zimbabwe that) Mozambican terrorists were using bases and supply lines through Zimbabwe, with the backing of the South African Government. But of course this is not with the approval of the Zimbabwean Government. Prime Minister Robert Mugabe summoned the head of the South African mission in Salisbury and told him frankly what he thought. Afterwards Mr Mugabe told a press conference that his Government would not tolerate this. The 'Guardian' reporter wrote that the South African Government were given small airfields in south-eastern Zimbabwe to supply the terrorists and, he said, Pretoria had also sent aircraft into Mozambique to drop weapons and ammunition to these men. Mr Mugabe [words indistinct] the Zimbabwean armed forces into action against the South African backed terrorists if they (?go) against Mozambique from bases in Zimbabwe. He said that Zimbabwe had the right to clear these gangs from Zimbabwean territory. According to the Mozambican news agency, the gangs are trained and camped in the northern Transvaal, south of Beitbridge, but the authorities in Pretoria have neither confirmed nor denied this.

The trouble is of course that it is possible to (?operate) bases in other people's countries without the governments of these countries approving, especially in Africa where there are very remote bush regions. But Mozambique and Zimbabwe have agreed to co-operate in dealing with the problem. And, as Mr Mugabe said at the beginning of this week - solidarity week between Mozambique and Zimbabwe - his Government considers that it is its duty to stand fast with Mozambique for joint defence. The independence of Zimbabwe, he said, is inseparable from that of Mozambique.

One final point: a number of listeners have complained about the way Mozambique is described in the South African newspapers, (?which) say that the rebels control half of Mozambique. The point is that we have no control over what the South African newspapers say. If they want to publish nonsense like that there is nothing we can do about it. In fact the entire territory of Mozambique is controlled by the people of Mozambique, under their Government and their party, Frelimo.

That is just about all from this edition of "Postbox 2000".