

## MOZAMBIQUE

Cabora Bassa power supplies to South Africa have been cut. Sections of the Beira-Umtala pipeline have been blown up. Travelling on the Beira-Maputo road is often a passport to death. Now, at a secret meeting in Lisbon, top leaders of the anti-Frelimo movement Resistencia Nacional Mozambicana have vowed that soon they will be in Maputo. They do so in an exclusive interview with Johannesburg-based foreign correspondent José Ramalho.

# Rebel plan 'to march on Maputo'

About 20 km out of Lisbon, the picturesque little fishing village of Cascais boasts the world's largest population of deposed kings and princes. Between the royal mansions nestle the fabulous houses of a different type of royalty — the moneyed kind.

At the top of the hill overlooking the red-tiled roofs of the sprawling palaces—here "the beautiful people" live and play, stands the plush Hotel Cidadela.

This is where friends had told me were staying some visitors I would find

more than worthwhile meeting. No names were mentioned, but knowing the type of activities of the people who had invited me I had a pretty good idea it would have something to do with the situation in Mozambique.

## Camouflage

Sitting in the soft light of the fading sun in an upstairs suite, three smartly dressed black gentlemen were awaiting my visit.

When I crossed the room to shake hands with them I did the biggest double-take of my life. The men in the expensive three-piece suits were the same I had met a few months back in the forbidding Mozambique

bush, their camouflage kits turned stiff by layers of dust and sweat.

Whimsical smiles playing on their faces, there stood before me the Mozambique National Resistance leader and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Afonso Jacamo, and his top aides, commanders Raul Manuel Domingos and José Domingos.

There was an inescapable feeling of confidence in the air. For the first time in the four years since the opposition took up arms against Frelimo and a few score men started carrying out daring raids against military and economic targets, the RNM top leaders had

ventured out on an overseas mission.

They obviously felt things were looking bright enough at home for them to leave their 10 000-strong guerrilla army for a short while to plead their cause in the major European capitals.

## Statement

Jacamo (or Dhlakama, as he wishes to be called) showed a dry sense of humour when he told me: "I would like you to make known abroad how thankful we are to Samora Machel for lending us the credibility that had been denied to us for so long."

And he explained: "Regularly, Frelimo has kept announcing that the Resistance had been

wiped out from the face of the earth. Lately, after each such statement Machel rushes to see his friend and colleague Robert Mugabe to beg for help to annihilate us all over again."

He recalls that it was Sebastiao Mabote, recently catapulted from the ranks to lieutenant-general, who first made the final victory announcement after a clash with a guerrilla group at Macate in August 1979.

Apparently, the victory had not been so final, as Frelimo was compelled to launch an all-out attack on the RNM's main stronghold in the Gorongosa mountains in October 1979.

Then came the "total annihilation of the enemy" at Citatonga, in June of this year. Frelimo's reports wounded very much like a replay of Vietnam's biggest battles. They claimed to have killed more than 300 guerrillas and captured some 400.

The operation was described as a total success in which the Frelimo forces stormed the "enemy positions" supported by an immense armada of heavy bombers and gunships while batteries of Stalin organs and heavy field guns pulverised everything in sight.

Dhlakama claims that he now has 10 000 well-trained and equipped men

on the field and that a further 3 000 are about to finish an intensive training course.

According to RNM sources, the new "liberation movement" is practically in control of four key central and southern provinces — Manica, Sofala, Inhambane and Gaza. Three strong columns have crossed the Save River to open up the southern front as a prelude to the march on Maputo.

## Support

Time was running short as the three leaders were due to leave in a few hours on the first leg of their whistle-stop tour of Europe. With them were two long-serving

members of the RNM leadership: the movement's secretary-general Orlando Cristina and Dr Eze Fernandes, who represents it in Europe.

Jacamo makes a last point: "We are now strong militarily but our real strength comes from the good people of Mozambique without whose loyal and courageous support we would not be able to survive. On our march to Maputo the population provides us with food, intelligence and, more important still, moral encouragement."

Orlando Cristina, one of the RNM founders, adds: "Frelimo are definitely showing signs of panic. They are seriously worried by the growing

strength of our forces and the importance of the successes achieved.

"Faced with an ever-increasing stream of defections to our side, they are now issuing only small quantities of ammunition to their troops to minimise the losses when they cross the line."

Before leaving to reassure European leaders that the RNM wants more than anything else to free Mozambique from the marxist yoke and to give it a Western-style government, Afonso Dhlakama (Jacamo) told me: "Believe you me, before the year is over the Resistance will make the world aware that we really mean business."



A group of Mozambique resistance fighters in the bush. Arrowed is their commander-in-chief, Afonso Jacamo.