

Kidnapping of Foreign Instructors in Mozambique

Maputo home service in Portuguese 1700 gmt 26 Dec 81

Text of report

Lisbon commercial home service 2300 gmt 28 Dec 81

A group of armed gangsters of the so-called MNR [Mozambique National Resistance] (words indistinct) has attacked the main settlement in the national park of Gorongosa at Chitengo and kidnapped foreign teachers at the (words indistinct) school there. This was disclosed to the Mozambican news agency in Maputo today by a spokesman of the Ministry of National Defence. The foreign teachers contracted by the Ministry of Agriculture are John Burlison, the academic director of the school and (words indistinct) mathematics. The attack on the main settlement of the national park of Gorongosa, some 190 km from Beira, took place on 17th December at about 1100 hours [local]. There was no fighting because in Chitengo there is normally no military garrison.

The spokesman from the Ministry of National Defence said that the group of armed gangsters destroyed a great part of Chitengo's installations, including the primary school, the post office and a number of vehicles, as well as taking money and foodstuffs. When they were leaving the place, the gangsters forced the two foreign technicians and some Mozambican workers to go with them. (?Four) of the kidnapped Mozambican workers were able to escape and turn up for work. The armed forces of Mozambique, FPLM, as soon as they received information of the attack organized a hot pursuit operation against the armed group which attacked Chitengo.

Note: Lisbon commercial home service (2300 gmt 28 Dec 81) reported that a spokesman for the MNR in Lisbon had announced that it would be setting the two abducted foreigners free, adding that they had been kidnapped "by mistake".