

Mozambican reporter's account of the fighting in the Gorongoza mountains

Maputo in Portuguese 1830 gmt 28 December 1983

The Gorongoza mountains which are 1,863 metres high and stretch 60 km from north to south, are today regarded as the centre of armed bandit activities in our country [...] Our correspondent, Marcelino Odze [phonetic] has recently been only a few kilometres from the war zone and has sent the following report:

[Recording] The Mozambique armed forces are involved in intensive operations against the armed bandits in the Gorongoza region of Sofala province. These operations, which began in early September of this year, are regarded as large-scale operations. [Actuality insert.] Gorongoza is regarded as a key zone for the Boers who train, supply and launch the armed bandits from there to different strategic zones of our country [...] It is the centre of support for the actions carried out by the bandits both on the Beira-Manica axis and the Beira-Tete link. Important roads, railway lines and power lines [words indistinct] in addition to the Zimbabwe pipe-line are situated in this area. It is from there that the armed bandits organize themselves to operate in the provinces of Manica, Tete, Zambezia and Inhambane [...] Because of its geography, agriculture and fauna, Gorongoza is also suitable for the continued survival of the armed bandits; they leave their main camps to establish dozens of small posts [...] In September our armed forces launched a series of operations and the enemy began abandoning the small camps to gather together at one point to repel our attack. However, following the first clashes, the bandits changed their minds, leaving dozens of dead and wounded and a considerable quantity of weapons on the battlefield. Now they move from one area to another in small groups [...] This new conduct by the bandits puts them in danger, because it has forced them to abandon the people whom they have terrorized and obviously, the South African racists are having more difficulties in supplying the small roving groups [...] After the independence of Zimbabwe, the armed banditry surfaced in our country in the very Gorongoza area which was also a part of the war against Ian Smith; it is the same bandits who serve the same boss, although the manner in which they operate is slightly different [...] [end of recording.]

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