

SADF men, 'copter landed at border — Mozambique

C.N. 20/9/86

MAPUTO. — A South African helicopter carrying an undetermined number of men landed in Mozambique near a border post on September 12, in South Africa's continuing programme to aid anti-government rebels, a Mozambican military spokesman said yesterday.

The official Mozambican news agency quoted an unnamed military spokesman as saying the helicopter landed near Renamo Garcia, 90km northwest of Maputo.

The spokesman said the military had evidence that members of South Africa's 32 Battalion were operating in the central province of Zambezia. Zambezia borders on Malawi, accused by Mozambique of helping Mozambique National Resistance rebels opposed to President Samora Machel's Marxist Government.

Approached for comment on the allegations, a SA Defence Force spokesman said, "The position of the SADF and

South Africa as far as Mozambique and Renamo are concerned has been explained repeatedly at the highest level . . . this position has not changed.

Mozambique says South African aid to the rebels continues in violation of a mutual security pact signed 2½ years ago. Both South Africa and Malawi deny the charges.

The rebels have repeatedly sabotaged transport routes through Mozambique, which Southern

African states hope to develop as alternatives to the routes now carrying most of their trade through South Africa.

The military spokesman said 35 guerrillas, armed with explosives, knives and axes, destroyed a church on Tuesday in Mangunze village, in the southern province of Gaza.

In the north-western province of Tete, officials of the Chora Bassa district told Mr Machel on Tuesday that 5 000 people were in danger of starving. Mozambique blames widespread rural food shortages on drought, locusts and the disruption of transport routes by the rebels.

The government-run Mozambique Radio said yesterday soldiers killed 19 rebels this month in two skirmishes near the Malawi border. The broadcast said some insurgents fled into Malawi.

The radio quoted military officers as saying 80 rebels were killed in the southern province of Inhambane in July and August. — Sapa-AP.