

MOZAMBIQUE: FIVE TOWNS CAPTURED BY OUR ^{Sunday} ^{News} _(B) ARMY ¹⁵ _{2/87}

HARARE — Combined Zimbabwean and Mozambican defence forces have captured five Mozambican towns from the MNR, killed a self-styled bandit signals-general identified as Antonio and captured a battalion commander, the ZBC said last night.

The towns captured are Sena, Mutara, Vila Nova, Baço and Vilacaia which fell to the Mozambique National Resistance bandits last year. The captured battalion commander was in charge of the base at Vilacaia.

More than 100 bandits were also killed during the contacts. The army commander, Lt General Tapfumaneyi Ruzumbu Solomon Mujuru (formerly Rex Nhongo) who visited the troops in Mozambique told the ZBC that he was satisfied that the operation was going on well.

Vilacaia, situated along the Zambezi Valley which passes the railway line to Beira was recaptured on Tuesday morning by airborne troops.

Some of the equipment discovered during the operation included B85 radio communications sets of South African origin, motors and several rounds of ammunition.

Brigadier Mutambara of the Zimbabwe defence forces said that many bandits at Vila Nova had fled to Malawi.

The combined force could not make follow up operations because Zimbabwe would have violated the Malawian territory.

● The Mozambican leader, President Joaquim Chissano, pays his first official visit to Zimbabwe on March 2, the Prime Minister, Cde Mugabe, announced yesterday.

Addressing a delegation of the Zvimba Cultural Association, businessmen and businesswomen, headmasters and members of the ZANU(PF)'s women's league at his residence, the Prime Minister said he hoped they would give President Chissano a rousing welcome.

● Zimbabwe's Director of Information, Cde Ezekiel Makunike yesterday appealed to the army to be more open with journalists by giving them information rather than hiding it.

Speaking at Mermaids Pool, about 50 km east of Harare where the Zimbabwe National Army public relations directorate held celebrations to mark its sixth anniversary, Cde Makunike said it was not always easy for reporters to get information from the army.

Although journalists, especially those who were Zimbabwean, appreciated the "difficult situation in which the armed forces operate", it was necessary for the army to give information to them in order to create rapport between the armed forces and the people.

He pointed out that it was not a desirable situation in which the people of Zimbabwe heard about events in their own country from the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Voice of America when Zimbabwe had its own news media organisations.

"Secrecy is sometimes less powerful than explanation," Cde Makunike said.

The Director of Army Public Relations, Lt-Colonel Clemence Gaza, who spoke at the same occasion told the guests that the Zimbabwe National Army, which was formed from elements of ZANLA, ZIPRA and the Rhodesian Army had managed to achieve unity among its members.

The army public relations directorate had also managed to establish rapport between the armed forces and the masses, so that they were no longer running away from the ZNA's armoured personnel carriers (Pumas) as they did in the past.

Lt-Colonel Gaza also thanked all those who had contributed to the fund for Zimbabwe defence forces guarding the Beira Corridor, and said this showed the soldiers that the masses of the country were solidly behind them. — SN Corr-Ziana.