

●Mozambique. Fighting in Mozambique is now almost entirely between RENAMO and Zimbabwean troops, the Mozambican troops of the FRELIMO Communist regime being virtually useless in action. In desperation FRELIMO put 22 of its own troops before a firing squad in December for fleeing from a RENAMO attack in the Beira corridor between Chimoio and Tete. They were even more vicious toward suspected enemies; on November 26 seven people in the capital city of Maputo were tortured and then burned alive on suspicion of being members of RENAMO. This ghastly execution was carried out under the personal supervision of Communist Interior Minister Manuel Antonio. (The event was reported by the Portuguese news agency as well as by RENAMO.) Well might RENAMO Information Minister Francisco Nota Moises say: "Let those champions of the FRELIMO cause in the West, particularly the United States, such as Chester Crocker, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and his friends in the State Department in Washington, D.C. and others like them elsewhere in the West find out whether those seven people had been through due process of law and whether it is civilized, Christian, and justified to support a government like that of FRELIMO which burns its own people alive."

Airborne Zimbabwean troops were used in an unsuccessful attack on RENAMO headquarters at Gorongosa February 11. Responding promptly and skillfully, RENAMO troops surrounded and killed 120 of the paratroopers and completely frustrated their mission.

In the Beira corridor in mid-February, Zimbabwean paratroopers were sent to the towns of Caia and Sena in Sofala province and Mutarara and Vila Nova in Tete province. They are now pinned down in Caia, Sena, and Mutarara, while the force at Vila Nova has fled to nearby Malawi. The strategically important bridge across the broad Zambezi River from Mutarara to Sena was partially destroyed by misdirected Zimbabwean bombs. On February 19 RENAMO blew up the pipeline from Beira to Zimbabwe between Machipanda and Bandula, also severing corridor communication at five other points. Beira itself was attacked from within between February 17 and 20, killing 27 and destroying a number of buildings. The city remains without electricity or water.

RENAMO also maintained pressure on the Communist regime close to the capital of Maputo, routing a FRELIMO military unit at the town of Manhica just 20 miles north of Maputo on February 13. Twenty-one FRELIMO troops were killed in the attack including two Cubans, one of whom was an intelligence officer.

Intelligence estimates are beginning to confirm RENAMO claims that FRELIMO chief Joaquim Chissano is on the verge of opening negotiations with RENAMO, knowing that neither his forces nor the Zimbabweans can win a military victory over the freedom fighters. On February 8 RENAMO President Afonso Dhlakama renewed his call for negotiations, emphasizing that his previously announced prior conditions would be firmly maintained: all foreign troops must be withdrawn from Mozambique and an unbreakable commitment made to "free and democratic elections for the establishment of a constitutional government for freedom and democracy." Unless and until these conditions were met, Dhlakama declared, the war would go on and the Beira corridor would remain, as it is now, totally blocked.

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Bridge in the Beira corridor destroyed by RENAMO

In February RENAMO first demonstrated anti-aircraft missile capability by shooting down a Zimbabwean Dakota DC-3 on a supply mission east of Vila Machado in the Beira corridor.