

## **Rebel Town Recaptured**

Government troops, mounting a major push in central Zambezia Province, have retaken a town held by MNR bandits for almost two years, the *Portuguese News Agency, LUSA* reported on March 11th.

Citing military sources, *LUSA* said in a despatch from Maputo that Luabo, centre of an important sugar-growing region, fell to government forces on March 9th. No details were given.

Bandits of the South African-backed MNR seized Luabo in July 1985 when they attacked the sugar estates, burning down a mill and taking foreign hostages. Most of the hostages were freed in December (pp. 7753A, 8326B).

The sources added that land travel between the north and south of the country through Zambezia was possible for the first time in four years, according to the agency.

They were quoted as saying that trucks with foreign relief supplies were now able to reach remote areas stricken by the famine which has swept Mozambique following a four-year drought.

Both government and bandit sources have reported recent heavy fighting in Zambezia.

*LUSA* also quoted military sources as saying that 18 people were knifed to death by the bandits three weeks previously, in the village of Mafuiane in the southern Province of Inhambane and that a Portuguese contract worker died in a bandit ambush on March 11th, in the northern Niassa Province.

(DNS 12/3)