

# Horror of Casa Banana

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OUR report yesterday that Mozambicans are dying at the rate of five a day at refugee camps at Casa Banana in Gorongosa from disease and starvation inflicted by MNR banditry is deeply distressing.

The MNR's vicious acts of brutality against a defenceless rural population confirm, as never before, that the MNR are nothing more than murdering thugs with no cause other than furthering South Africa's efforts to destabilise the assault on apartheid.

But the pictures accompanying the report told more of the suffering inflicted by these killers without conscience than words could ever do. No reader could fail to be horrified by the sight of men, women and children — the sick, malnourished and crying children — reduced to living skeletons because of bandits — with no popular support of their own — healthy crops represent organisation and order and, therefore, strength that cannot be allowed to flourish.

But the deeper horror of Casa Banana is that the shocking scenes at the camps are repeated in other war-torn rural areas where, without a massive international effort on the scale of that given to Ethiopia, up to 4.5 million people could perish.

The Zimbabwe Mozambique Friendship Association has made constant appeals for world help, as well as having done a great deal to help alleviate the suffering. Our security forces, too, have lent a hand with shelter, food and medicines and so have a number of aid agencies. But, as our report and pictures showed clearly, much more is needed.

But beyond the immediate call to save the starving, which must surely be answered in full, is the need to attack the source of the suffering: South African-backed MNR banditry.

There will be no end to the misery until enough international pressure is brought to bear to force South Africa to withdraw its support for the MNR without which the bandits face certain defeat.

When will the world come to its senses and get off the costly treadmill of alleviating human suffering directly caused by its lack of resolve in dealing with those who inflict it?