

MNR bandits kill 22 in train ambush

MAPUTO — Mozambique National Resistance bandits attacked a passenger train on Thursday, killing 22 people and wounding 72, the country's Noticias newspaper said yesterday.

The paper said that the 1 500-passenger train was turned over by three landmines laid by South African-backed bandits near the border with South Africa.

The train hit a mine near Pessene, about 35 km northwest of the capital, Maputo, on the line from the South African border town of Komatipoort.

AIM, the official news agency, reported on Friday evening that the explosion derailed part of the train. In South Africa, Foreign Minister Pik Botha said the

government learned with "deep regret and alarm" of the attack and extended its condolences to relatives of the victims.

Meanwhile, President Joaquim Chissano has accused South Africa of turning "every Mozambican citizen indiscriminately into a target for murder, massacre or mutilation". In his New Year message to the nation, broadcast by Radio Mozambique on Thursday night, he said South Africa's war "is characterised by transforming thousands of Mozambicans into instruments to commit these repugnant and barbaric acts".

Cde Chissano praised the participation by Zimbabwe and Tanzania in the defence efforts of his country in the face of South African aggression. — Ziana-AIM-Xinhua.