

MNR bandits surrender

By Lucas Liganga

ABOUT 200 bandits of the so-called Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) have surrendered to the Mozambican Government since the Law of Amnesty became effective in the country last December.

In addition, some 200 persons who were serving prison terms for violent crime had their sentences reduced since the Mozambican Government introduced the Law of Pardon last December.

Briefing newsmen at the end of a week-long official tour of Tanzania, the Mozambique Minister for Justice, Ndugu Ussumane Aly Dauto, said in Dar es Salaam yesterday that the two laws became effective last December and would remain in force until December 31, this year.

Ndugu Dauto said at the Mozambican Ambassador's residence at Msasani that most surrendering bandits had come from central provinces, including Manica, Zambezia and Sofala where military activity was intensive.

The Mozambican Minister said 600 other violent crime cases were being analysed under the Law of Forgiveness which was exclusively for Mozambicans and foreigners who were jailed for committing crimes while in the country.

Speaking in Portuguese through his interpreter, the Minister explained that the Law of Amnesty was exclusively meant for Mozambicans living inside and outside the country, who had engaged in armed banditry.

"The Law (Amnesty) is a chance for all Mozambicans who have found themselves into a wrong position. And it is encouraging that initial results show that the law is welcome", he said.

Explaining that the southern part of Mozambique still had many armed banditry activities because of the border situation with the Pretoria regime that supports the MNR bandits, Ndugu Dauto said surrendering bandits were free to choose where they could reside.

"The laws are in conviction of the Frelimo Party that a man can be transformed. So we welcome those who want to quit criminal life voluntarily", stressed the Minister.

He condemned the racist regime in Pretoria for using MNR bandits to commit a rail track of crimes against their

brothers. The acts of armed bandits had been characterised by massacres of civilians, including women, the elderly and children, the Minister said.

"Today, we're witnessing one of the most terrifying acts of bandits who recruit our children to kill their brothers. The children are not conscious of the acts. They are just being used as mere instruments", Ndugu Dauto explained in sorrow.

Explaining on damages inflicted by the MNR bandits, the Minister said they were in millions of US dollars. He also said that some 350,000 children were yet to start going to schools because almost all the schools had been destroyed by the bandits.

Ndugu Dauto, who during his visit paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister and First Vice-President, Ndugu Joseph Warioba, left yesterday afternoon for home.