

# War, 12 Years Long With No End in Sight, Strangles Mozambique

Continued From Page A1

to kill again cost him an ear and several finger tips.

The fortunate ones, emaciated people who sometimes wore tree bark and tattered grain sacks as clothing, walked for several days in the merciless heat to find aid. Beyond this broken-down outpost, other Mozambicans have survived on roots, leaves and even caterpillars.

Tens of thousands of Mozambicans are virtually out of reach of organized aid efforts. In some areas, it is said, only the rats can find nourishment.

Drivers told of relief convoys of trucks and civilian buses, traveling under military escort, running gantlets of rebel attacks that destroyed millions of dollars worth of trucks and supplies and killed hundreds of civilians.

Ernesto Maluzon was driving a truck carrying relief food in October when the convoy he was in, which also included a bus packed with civilians, was attacked by rebels from African Contingents on the road.

"They opened fire together," Mr. Maluzon said. Speaking at a center that

tional food aid, with 3.2 million of them dependent on free emergency food. More than 1.5 million people — they are called deslocados — have been forced to lead a nomadic existence, abandoning their homes and farms in search of safety. At least 350,000 Mozambicans have fled to neighboring countries.

The Government, Western donors and volunteer agencies have put in place a huge relief operation, and thousands of tons of food and supplies have reached people who might have starved to death otherwise.

A Government report presented last month to diplomats and aid agencies said that there had been some improvement in internal food distribution and that the number of deaths had been reduced. While the level of acute malnutrition was not alarming, the report said, "chronic malnutrition is very prevalent."

The study warned that the level of dependence on international food aid remained great. CARE International said that pledges of food for emergency distribution fell dangerously short of requirements last month and that the Government department that oversees calamities had no food reserves to distribute to displaced people in certain provinces' rural areas.

## Some Dying of Hunger

Recent newspaper reports in the country said people were dying from hunger in the provinces of Inhambane and Sofala.

"A lot of people will die if we don't receive support this year and food," said Manuel Jorge Aranda Silva, Mozambique's Minister of Trade.

Officials at CARE, which coordinates logistics for the Government's relief efforts, said rebel attacks on truck convoys transporting relief food was more the rule than the exception. That resulted in situations where deliveries of supplies fall behind schedules at a time when affected areas do not have enough food reserves to cover even short delays, they said.

Most road travel outside of major towns is considered dangerous, and some areas are accessible only by air.

## Natural riches once offered great promise.

But because airlifts are costly and can carry only a limited relief supplies, truck convoys remain the best means of transporting aid.

Even though not more than 15 percent of the movement of food by road takes place without military escort, 25 trucks have been destroyed, 50 others damaged and 15 drivers killed in attacks since 1984, CARE officials said. About 1,000 tons of relief goods have been stolen or destroyed.

About 100 people arrive each week to a camp for the displaced outside Inhambinga, a town in the central province of Sofala whose population has swelled from a few hundred to several thousand since last March.

## Rebels Exploit Villagers

Members of one group said rebels terrorized their village for three years. They said farming was continually disrupted because the rebels, or bandits as they are called in Mozambique, used villagers as porters to carry stolen goods into the bush. Once they unloaded the baggage, the villagers were beaten and made to transport other loads to other destinations.

"If we were trying to plant our fields, the bandits would appear and say give us your food," said Joanna Vasco, seated in the sand under a shade tree and surrounded by scores of listless people similarly affected.

"Not only would they take food away, but utensils and destroy the seeds we had planted," she said. "When the food situation was better, the bandits closed up around our area and no one could es-

cape. Now, because there is no food, the bandits are also searching for food. That gave us an opportunity to escape."

The Government's intention is that rural inhabitants forced to flee their homes be settled as quickly as possible, given the means to return to farming and eventually feed themselves.

The Mozambique National Resistance, popularly known as Renamo or the M.N.R., was created in 1975 by the white authorities in what was then Rhodesia. Its primary goal was to infiltrate Mozambique, which was newly independent of Portuguese rule and was a principal rear base of black Rhodesian guerrillas.

When Rhodesia became independent as black-governed Zimbabwe in 1980, South Africa adopted the insurgents,

using them to undermine Mozambique's Soviet-backed Government.

The rebels, said to include black nationalists along with disaffected Portuguese, appear to have no clearly defined military structure or strategy. They are still seen here as surrogates of South Africa.

The authorities here maintain that Pretoria wants to wreck Mozambique's already crippled economy and show that black African rule does not work. South Africa denies that it is now supporting the rebels, and the Mozambicans have provided no conclusive evidence that it is.

The Government, with the help of Zimbabwean and Tanzanian troops, is trying to end the war with a bedraggled army that is troubled by a severe lack of organization, money, food, ammuni-

tion, boots and morale. It has had some successes in recent months, brought on in part by a shake-up of the country's armed forces, but prospects for a swift end to the conflict look remote.

Fernando Fabien Mapowese said he was 10 when he was kidnapped by the rebels. He was trained for two months to run and use a gun and stayed with the rebels for four years. He took part in the ambush of a convoy about three months ago and killed two rebels, mistakenly thinking they were Government soldiers. He gave himself up to the army that day.

"The bandits say they kill to win," Fernando, who is now at a Government-run social center for children who were once held by the rebels, said. "They say they kill to gain power over the Government."

## Washington Talk: How Government Works

## Survival for millions is tenuous.

provides maintenance for relief trucks, he stood near a truck with bullet holes in the windshield and hood.

"I saw a bandit firing at me, and he blew out my windshield," he continued. "I stopped the truck, jumped down and ran off into the bush. When the firing stopped, I came out of hiding and saw my truck burned and 50 people lying dead on the road. The bandit stole some boxes of oil. They steal as much as they can carry and burn the rest."

## 1,000 Killed in 5 Months

In ambushes and hit-and-run attacks, rebels have cut food supply lines, isolated districts, disrupted economic and social activity and destroyed bridges, rail lines and hundreds of schools and health centers. Government officials and others say about 1,000 people, most of them civilians, have died in the last five months in attacks that the authorities say are made by the rebels.

The rebels, from their exile headquarters in Lisbon, have denied the accusations. They insist that Government troops carried out the civilian massacres, but Western diplomats here say they have seen no evidence of this.

In the view of relief workers, diplomats and others, the rebels have laid waste to great stretches of farmland. Once-fertile provinces have become a bramble bush of chaos, devastation and hunger. At harvest time, the guerrillas are said to take what food they want and set fire to the rest.

"In the guerrilla sense, the rebels are trying to erode the strength of the country," said Melissa Wells, the United States Ambassador in Maputo, whose confirmation was held up for months by conservative Republicans opposed to closer ties between the United States and the Mozambican Government.

"But it raises the issue of what is going to be left of the country should the fighting ever stop," she said.

## Drought Worsens Misery

In some parts of the countryside, drought has become the sullen ally of what is overwhelmingly a man-made calamity. But relief workers and Western diplomats suggest that the effects of bad weather could be tackled if it were not for the insurgency. Even if the rains come in these districts, they say, food would remain scarce because of the influx of hundreds of displaced people running from conflict.

About 6.5 million of Mozambique's 14 million people require some interna-