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War 'affecting one-third of Mozambicans'

By Michael Holman

MORE than one-third of Mozambique's 14m people have either fled the country, been displaced from their homes, or directly affected in other ways by the war waged by the South African-backed Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), says a report published in London today by the British charity Christian Aid.

The report, "Mozambique: Caught in the Trap", describes a systematic campaign of destruction in which villages and crops have been destroyed, livestock slaughtered, and civilians massacred. "Conditions in areas attacked by the MNR are horrific," Jenny Borden, head of the organisation's Africa section, said yesterday.

The description of the rebels' tactics is corroborated by an analysis of the war released last month by the US State Department. At least 100,000 civilians have been killed by the MNR in the last two years, says the analysis in a carefully-researched indictment. A further 1m have fled to neighbouring countries.

The rebel body was created in 1977 by the white Rhodesian government. South Africa took over the MNR after Rhodesia became Zimbabwe in 1980, and has continued to support the rebels.

"Mozambique: Caught in the Trap", Third World Publications, 151 Stratford Road, Birmingham B11 1RD. £2.95.