

MNR bands 'fighting each other in Mozambique'

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18/5/88

Mozambique rebel bands are fighting each other inside the country, according to a senior Frelimo figure, Jorge Rebelo.

There were conflicts between Mozambique National Resistance factions centred in Washington and Lisbon, he said, and cited the recent killing of a former secretary general of the MNR (Renamo), Evo Fernandes, as well as other killings in Malawi, and the defection of a leading figure, Paulo Oliveira.

Inside Mozambique there were "at least two" groups fighting each other said Rebelo on Wednesday at a conference on vigilantism in London, organised by the Catholic Institute for International Relations.

In the period from February around 1,000 'bandits' had taken advantage of the government's amnesty offer, said Rebelo, who is a member of Frelimo's political committee.

Their reintegration into

society was very difficult, he said. When they came out of the bush many were suffering from diseases, including Aids, he said.

Tens of thousands had been kidnapped, often as children, and then forced to kill. They were deeply traumatised.

*Other speakers from southern African included the South African civil rights lawyer Peter Harris, who described the activities of Inkatha.

He said that the violence in and around Pietermaritzburg had come about as a result of a long process in which "Inkatha-supporting vigilante groups have escalated their activities in response to organisational challenges to their self-proclaimed supremacy".

The conflict there was "a battle for the political soul of Natal and one which has immense consequences for Inkatha and for the broader democratic movement in South Africa", he said.