

# US leaders urge UN probe on MNR abuse

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**THIRTY-FIVE** United States senators have signed a petition asking the United Nations to investigate Renamo violence and brutality in Mozambique and the subsequent rise of Mozambican refugees in Southern Africa.

The petition follows a recent report by the US State Department's bureau for refugees programmes' consultant, Mr Robert Gersony, in which he said that more than 100 000 Mozambicans had been murdered by MNR bandits during the past two years.

The report also told of hundreds of cases of forced portering, beatings, rape, looting, burning of villages and mutilations at the hands of Renamo, an organisation established by the Rhodesian regime of Ian Smith to destabilise Mozambique. South Africa took over its sponsorship after independence.

Renamo activities in Mozambique had been described as "one of the most brutal holocausts against ordinary beings since World War Two", by the US Deputy Secretary of State for Africa, Mr Roy Stacey.

Addressing a UN-sponsored conference in Maputo, Mr Stacey accused Renamo of "waging a systematic and brutal war of terror against

innocent Mozambican civilians through forced labour, starvation, physical abuse and wanton killing".

Mr Gersony interviewed refugees in Mozambique and neighbouring states including Zimbabwe for three months and was told of shootings, executions with knives, axes and bayonets, live burnings, fatal beatings, asphyxiation, forced starvation and drownings at the hands of the bandits.

The 20 Democrat and 15 Republican senators, led by two members of the US Senate's foreign relations committee Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum and Senator Paul Simon, have written to the UN Secretary-General, Dr Javier Perez de Cuellar, urging him to instruct the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Human Rights Commission to investigate the reasons for the increase in Mozambican refugees and the human rights situation in that country.

"Our concern has been prompted by the release of a

report on Mozambican refugees by the US State Department Bureau for Refugees Programmes last week," said the letter dated April 29 1988.

"The report states that hundreds of thousands of civilians have fled from Mozambique in the last two years after being subjected to systematic violence and brutality by Renamo forces fighting the Mozambican government."

The letter said the current estimate of Mozambican refugees was about 870 000.

Said the letter: "The US State Department investigation of the causes of this exodus from Mozambique is the first lengthy review to take place.

"We urge that the UN undertake a similar review of not only refugees but also the human rights situation actually inside of Mozambique. A comprehensive UN review can only help mobilise the international community in its response to what appears to be a very serious crisis."