

Note: This is not a complete listing of South African backed MNR bandit attacks, Mozambican forces' offensives, people killed or acts of sabotage that took place in late December 1988 and in January 1989.

December: The Mozambican armed forces captured a top collaborator with South Africa's MNR bandits in the district of Marromeu, in the central province of Sofala. Torres Campira, 38, ran nine "control centres", which formed a network to inform the bandits of the approach of Mozambican troops, and to ensure that peasant families living under MNR control could not escape.

According to Campira, the control centres operate for 24 hours a day, and whenever they notice troop movements they alert the bandits through whistles, drums and other noises. The collaborators in the centres also oblige the population living nearby to flee rather than to escape to the side of the armed forces.

Campira claimed he did not know about the amnesty offered to bandits who surrender. He had heard "something superficial" about the law from a nephew, "but I thought he was telling me lies". "If I had known for sure about this law, then I would have run away a long time ago," he claimed.

31 December: The Mozambican armed forces killed 66 MNR bandits when a large raiding party attacked the town of Namarroi in the central province of Zambezia. The Zambezia provincial military command estimated the size of the attacking force to be over 500. The fighting lasted for more than three and a half hours.

When they withdrew the bandits left behind them 24 AK47 assault rifles, a light artillery piece, and a large quantity of mortar shells and other ammunition.

16 January: An MNR gang murdered a Portuguese Roman Catholic priest, 29-year-old Antonio da Rocha, in an ambush near Metoro, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. Metoro is about 60 km east of the provincial capital, Pemba. A second priest travelling with Mr da Rocha escaped the ambush and fled to the town of Chiure.

19 January: Four people, including a child, lost their lives, and a further 14 were injured when the

train in which they were travelling hit a mine. The incident took place in the area of Movene, about 15 km east of the South African border. The train was travelling on the railway from South Africa to Maputo.

Survivors said that after the explosion "bandits opened fire on the train, and then looted the possessions of the passengers".

19 January: A gang of MNR bandits murdered five people and wounded a further five in an attack against the Metuchira agricultural and livestock company in the central province of Sofala. The bandits burnt down 119 houses, sacked two local shops, and destroyed poultry sheds.

The Metuchira complex is owned by LOMACO (Lonrho-Mozambique Agricultural Company), a consortium formed by the Mozambican state and the British multinational corporation, Lonrho.

19 January: MNR bandits murdered at least five people in an attack on the sugar centre of Xinavane, about 100 km north of Maputo. During the night raid, which lasted into the small hours of the following morning, the bandits burnt down 15 houses and kidnapped an unspecified number of people.

In an earlier attack, on 16 December, the MNR had wrecked the local hospital, destroyed sugar equipment and killed 13 people.

22 January: The MNR returned to Xinavane, destroyed 12 shops, and looted four houses belonging to the Incomati Sugar Company, the major employer in the town. In fighting that lasted until 6 a.m. the following morning, the bandits made repeated attempts to attack the sugar factory itself, but were driven back by the protection force stationed there.

31 January: An MNR gang killed at least five people, and seriously wounded another five in a pre-dawn raid against the Mali Communal Village in Michafutene locality, 20 km north of Maputo.

The bandits burnt down 20 houses, and the offices of the village secretary, thus destroying all the documentation on the village.

"The bandits surprised us while we were sleeping," said Mario Fonda, secretary of the local Frelimo Party cell.