

Mugabe pressured to ^{SAN 7(6)} pull out of Renamo fight ^{10/2} ₈₉

ZIMBABWE PRESIDENT Robert ^{p.12}
Mugabe is under mounting domestic pressure to pull his estimated 20 000 troops out of Mozambique, where they are combating Renamo insurgents said to be backed by SA. In the past two months Zimbabwe has lost 300 troops, according to Zimbabwe sources.

A sizeable number of MPs of Mugabe's ZANU (PF) party have written secretly to him demanding the withdrawal of all troops other than those guarding the Beira Corridor transport link--vital to Zimbabwe's economy as its only reliable, non-SA railway, road and oil pipeline route to the sea.

The MPs said they are under increasing pressure from their constituents over the steadily-rising death toll of their soldier sons.

The letter comes hard on the heels of the resignation of Zimbabwean businessman Eddie Cross, who oversaw the Beira Corridor operation for Mugabe's government. Officially, he resigned for "personal reasons", but reliable sources in Zimbabwe say the real reason was linked to his support for a Zimbabwean military withdrawal.

Cross is also understood to have committed the cardinal sin of advocating direct talks between President Joachim Chissano's Frelimo government in Mozambique and Renamo.