

Chiredzi progresses despite banditry

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By Elliot Mahende

ALTHOUGH there have been several acts of banditry by the MNR in the south and south-eastern parts of Chiredzi, this has not hampered development projects in the area, reports the district administrator.

Cde Lenon Pfumojena said last week the security situation in the district had been relatively calm of late despite the latest attack by the South African-backed bandits in which two people were murdered in Matibi Two communal lands on Wednesday night.

"We can never know when they are going to strike again but we know that when they strike in Chipinge they are likely to strike in Chiredzi," Cde Pfumojena said.

He said the district was

having problems with people illegally crossing the border to visit relatives or to look for work in South Africa. Many people living along the border areas had relatives either in Mozambique or South Africa and they do not see why they should not go to South Africa.

"If we tell them of Zimbabwe, they don't see the map in their heads and some of these people end up being used by South Africa for military intelligence purposes."

He said cattle were being brought in from Mozambique to be sold in Zimbabwe and the Mozambicans would do their shopping in the southern parts of Malipati and Dumisa areas. He said this had affected efforts by Agritex to control foot-

and-mouth disease.

On the recurring drought in the area, he said the people were gradually shifting towards growing "drought tolerant" crops such as sorghum although some still resisted change because of what he called "a vicious cycle of poverty and ignorance".

This problem extended to some communities which were refusing to send their children to school. "We have to force them. We have to threaten them with arrest if they don't send their children to school. We also tell them that their children will become Matsanga (MNR) if they don't go to school". Cde Pfumojena said the district needed more boreholes and dams to ease the drought problem and several non-governmental organisations were willing to fund such projects.

● Two people were murdered on Wednesday night by South African-backed MNR bandits at Masuvamele, Matibi Two communal lands in Chiredzi, sources in the district said.

The bandits, believed to have been seven-strong and including a woman, hacked to death a 55-year-old man and a three-year-old child at a place 500 m from Binya Road which runs from Gonarezhou National Park to Sengwe communal lands.