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# Protected villages for MNR victims

MORE than 6 700 people in Zimbabwe's north-eastern border areas have been moved into protected villages because of increasing brutal attacks by South African-sponsored MNR bandits.

Mashonaland Central Governor Joseph Kaparadza said yesterday that the people started being moved on Independence Day, April 18, and the exercise was expected to be completed by June.

Attacks by the bandits have been so bloody that provincial authorities and most of the people living in the affected areas have agreed on the need to set up protected villages.

The bandits last Thursday axed nine people to death at Chinyamunda village in Rushinga. Hospital authorities in the area said cases of bandit victims were on the increase and banditry was now the sixth out of about 20 main causes of death in hospitals.

Cde Kaparadza said the 6 721 people had been moved into nine planned village settlements in the Rushinga administrative district.

He said 50 planned village settlements had been identified from Mukosa, in Rushinga district, to Kanyemba in the Chapoto communal lands, a distance of about 175 km. Other villages would be in the border

districts of Mount Darwin, Centenary and Guruve.

Cde Kaparadza said the planned village settlements, which were different from protection camps set up by Rhodesian authorities during the liberation war, were guarded by security forces round the clock. Unlike the Rhodesian camps, the settlements had residential and farming areas and woodlots "to preserve the environment".

"In fact, we will always try and ensure that the planned village settlements are not very far from the people's old homes so they can always walk back to their fields during the day," he said.

But one of the setbacks was the shortage of transport and he expressed hope that the Government would act soon to improve the situation.

MNR bandits cross into Zimbabwe in search of food and clothing and, in the process, kill villagers, commit arson and rape and sometimes kidnap their victims.

People in areas without planned village settlements abandon their homes at night to sleep at schools or other properties where they can be protected. — Ziana.