

MNR bandits attack displaced

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MAPUTO.

A GANG of South African-backed MNR bandits attacked a centre for displaced people at Cutuche, in the northern Mozambican province of Nampula early on Thursday.

The bandits burnt down three homes, looted 25 and stole money, clothes and chickens. They abducted four women and five children on their withdrawal.

Three of the women and one child returned after a clash between the bandits and local militiamen.

"It was thanks to the militia that we managed to escape near the Muecate

River at around 11 am. The bandits beat me up and said they would take us to a base called Ampua," Santos Alfredo (14) said. His two sisters are still in the bandits' hands.

Cde Ermelinda Pauleque, one of the women escapees, was also beaten up by her captors because she had been unable to keep up with them on the march.

Authorities at the Cutuche Centre said that in the clash with the militia, two bandits died.

An estimated 30 bandits, armed with firearms and machetes, attacked the centre where about 1 800 displaced people are currently living. — Ziana-AP.