

Renamo 'beheaded 1 000' after attack

MAPUTO. — Mozambican rebels rampaged through a small northern town and outlying villages, killing about 1 000 people and beheading them, survivors of the massacre said yesterday.

"The shelves of shops were emptied and the severed heads were put there on display," said one witness quoted by the Maputo daily Noticias.

People who fled Lalaua in northern Nampula province after the June 29 takeover by Renamo

rebels, described horrific scenes after reaching safety in the town of Ribaue, 60km away.

One survivor said the stench of death in Lalaua had become so overpowering that Renamo had abandoned the town centre and set up camp on the outskirts.

Noticias indicated that a possible motive for the brutality was revenge against followers of a quasi-religious cult who call themselves Naparamas.

The Naparamas, led by a Christian mystic named Manuel Antonio, are generally pro-government and fight against Renamo using only spears and bows and arrows.

They believe Antonio's medicine makes them invulnerable to bullets and in the past two years they are reputed to have inflicted heavy defeats on the superstitious Renamo rebels. — Sapa-Reuter