

# MNR causes untold suffering

**SOLDIERS** found her badly injured two months ago and brought her to the nearby Chokwe Hospital. On her arrival she said her name was Satinha Wathe, and after that she has not said a word.

She has lost one leg which had to be amputated and there are bullets remaining in her legs. She starts to cry every time she is asked where she came from and what happened to her.

The nurses at the hospital have described the 11-year-old Satinha as one who constantly has nightmares, always suffers from headaches, gets easily startled and often fearful — particularly of men.

This is an example of the many children in Mozambique who are living with the harsh realities of MNR banditry in that country.

Cde Graca Machel, widow of the late Mozambican president Samora Machel, last year told a conference on Child Survival on the Frontline that at least one child died every four minutes in the war-torn countries of Angola and Mozambique.

She said that because of the war in Mozambique, 200 000 children had been left without parents, and 250 000 others had been separated from their families or traumatised due to their encounters with MNR banditry.

Many more live as refugees in neighbouring Zimbabwe, Malawi and Tanzania.

A study carried out last year by an international seminar of doctors and psychologists on war-traumatised children in Mozambique showed that the war has caused untold suffering to these children, leaving them displaced and orphaned, and most of them have been traumatised beyond therapy.

The seminar interviewed 50 children from different parts of the country and found that at least 42 of these children had experienced the loss of their family or separation from their family. The children were in the

seven to 15 years age group.

Eleven of these had witnessed the murder of a parent, 12 the murder

## By Fortune Ncube

of a family member, 23 the murder of a non-family member. Twenty-six had witnessed atrocities — atrocities such as mass murder of people in MNR raids.

Thirty-five are now living with their extended families, six in foster homes, six in a hostel or home, and one in a house with no adult.

The study on these children categorised them as markedly moderately or minimally affect-

ed. Only 20 percent were classified as minimally affected by the horror they experienced.

Almost 25 percent were markedly disturbed and the remainder were classified as moderately affected.

The study further found that in varying ways all the children traumatised are afraid of loud noises and strangers, they suffer nightmares, sleeplessness or body pains.

The plight of children in Mozambique still remains unclear, with the MNR employing unnecessary delaying tactics which have dragged the process by over a year now, delaying the day the children will live as nor-

mal citizens of a sovereign nation.

The MNR has undoubtedly and deliberately broken the peace accords with the Mozambican government a countless number of times, and it is hoped that the recent October agreement will hold if the MNR does not back down like on the previous occasions.

International organisations have tried their level best to assist the suffering children in Mozambique. These organisations include the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), which works jointly with or in co-ordination with other United Nations agencies, the League of the Red Cross, Save the Children Fund and the Zimbabwe

Child Survival and Development Foundation.

Unicef injects an estimated annual average US\$20 million into development programmes aimed at children and other emergency relief programmes.

The Zimbabwe Child Survival and Development Foundation, resources permitting, have assisted in addressing the needs of the Mozambican children in refugee camps in Zimbabwe and the Frontline States.

The foundation has provided food, clothes and blankets to the children at these camps in the hope that their motto of "Every child must live and not die" is upheld at all costs.