

Mozambican troops kill 160 MNR bandits: AIM

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MAPUTO.
MOZAMBICAN troops killed 160 MNR bandits and captured a further 21 in operations throughout the country in January, according to a source in the Press office of the armed forces general staff contacted by AIM.

A further 12 bandits surrendered to the authorities, and 26 bandit collaborators were taken prisoner. About 12 000 civilians were freed from MNR control.

The general staff also said that Mozambican Frontier Guards had arrested 24 people illegally crossing the country's borders in January.

Two groups were detained, one on the border with Tanzania and one on the border with Zimbabwe.

Meanwhile, about 170 000 Mo-

zambican refugees returned from Malawi to their home areas in Tete, Zambezia and Niassa provinces from 1988 to the present, according to data made available to a meeting in Maputo on Thursday of the tripartite commission between Mozambique, Malawi and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

But there are still about a million Mozambican refugees in Malawi. Most of those who have returned have done so spontaneously, simply walking over the border, rather than through an organised scheme of repatriation.

The Mozambican and Malawian delegation to the meeting agreed to continue a policy of voluntary repatriation, and to improve the repatriation mechanisms.

Among the problems is the lack of basic conditions for housing and

feeding returned refugees before they become self-sufficient. Participants at the meeting called for the building or rehabilitation of social infrastructures, and the provision of medical facilities and water supply in the areas where the returnees would be received. Only by making return to Mozambique an attractive prospect could voluntary repatriation be encouraged.

The UNHCR's regional director for Africa, Mr Nicholas Bwakira, called for further international assistance for the repatriation programme. Last year donors only made US\$2,9 million available. This money was to cover resettlement of refugees not only from Malawi (which has the largest single concentration of Mozambican refugees) but also from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Swaziland and South Africa. — Ziana-AIM.