

'SADF' supplied Renamo last year'

The South African Defence Force delivered weapons to Mozambican guerillas and brought rebels to South Africa for training last year, possibly without the approval of President de Klerk's Government, according to a report by the US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA).

South Africa has repeatedly said its support for Renamo was wound down after the Nkomati accord with Mozambique in 1984.

The US Defence Department concluded that arms were still being shipped to Renamo by the SADF after interrogating a

rebel deserter in March 1991, who laid out details of weapons drops and his own training in or near the Kruger National Park.

In its assessment of the interrogation, obtained by The Independent, the DIA also paints a pitiful picture of a child brought to South Africa at the age of 10 to learn to kill.

The deserter, identified only as Macuacua, is now 18. He fled Renamo during an attack along

the Limpopo corridor, where a ceasefire is supposedly in effect.

The DIA begins its report with a simple summary: "As late as February 1991, South African helicopters delivered arms and ammunition to Renamo in southern Mozambique".

The drop was made to a Renamo base at Mapulanguene in Gaza province.

"The equipment delivered by

the helicopters included small arms and ammunition for AK-47s, FN rifles with ammunition, 60 mm mortars with ammunition, and grenades.

Unnoticed

"Macuacua said the grenades had some type of throwing device.

"The helicopter was an unmarked civilian helicopter piloted by two white pilots. The

helicopter also picked up Renamo members who were going for special commando training in South Africa ... Macuacua said that because of these deliveries, his base did not have material or ammunition shortages," the DIA says.

The DIA questions why the SADF still arms Renamo, and how this could go unnoticed by a higher authority. It does not offer answers but said that

while Mozambique says it accepts the South African Government's good faith in claiming it does not support Renamo, Maputo believes the SADF, ignoring the politicians' peace with Mozambique's once-Marxist government, continues supplying the rebels.

The DIA interrogator, identified as RO, describes Macuacua as an unassuming boy, and a simple but sincere footsoldier.

"Macuacua did not strike RO as a boy with a vivid imagination who would dream up stories of South African support to Renamo, or who could be coached into telling the story he told," the report said.

Macuacua was brought to South Africa in 1984 aged 10, with about 70 boys of the same age, in a camouflaged military helicopter mounted with machine guns. He was turned into a boy soldier.

"Looking into his mind was like trying to piece together a complicated jigsaw puzzle ... And it is evident he has led a sheltered but violent existence," the DIA report says.

"Macuacua himself explained the utility and rationale of why Renamo uses young boys as footsoldiers when RO asked Macuacua if his father had also been a soldier. He answered that Renamo does not use many adults to fight because they are not good fighters. He said kids have more stamina, are better at surviving in the bush, do not complain and follow directions." — The Independent News Service.