

## AFRICA

Weekly Mail — 3 APR 1992

# SA 'still giving Renamo support'

*Several sources have uncovered evidence of continued South African support for Renamo.*  
**By RACHEL WATERHOUSE**  
*in Maputo*

EVIDENCE is mounting in Mozambique that Renamo continues to get support from South Africa. New accounts from refugees, a United States intelligence report and the high concentration of Renamo attacks along Mozambique's border with South Africa all point to the conclusion that support for the rebels is still coming from its southern neighbour.

Frontline diplomats say if Renamo's support is not from the South African government itself, then it is from the South African Military Intelligence unit which has funded other covert operations throughout the region.

Mozambique's Foreign Minister, Pascoal Mocumbi, is hopeful that with the success of the referendum, President FW de Klerk will take steps to end South Africa's support for Renamo, no matter where it comes from.

"The yes vote is a positive sign for peace in our country," said Mocumbi. "The very forces against change in South Africa are the same ones supporting violence and destabilisation in Mozambique."

Officially the De Klerk government claims it no longer has anything to do with Renamo. But Mocumbi charges that "small and isolated" conservative groups within the South African military establishment remain Renamo's lifeline. He said it is incumbent for De Klerk to root out these cells of support for Renamo.

The government adamantly asserts that South Africa cut funding to Renamo long ago, but US military intelligence sources claim otherwise. According to a report by the US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), Renamo was getting arms and training from the South African Defence Force at least until February last year.

The US report includes testimony from an 18-year-old rebel deserter, called Macuacua, who

gave details of arms supplies to Renamo from South Africa. Macuacua said he was part of a Renamo group which was trained at a military camp near Kruger Park.

Macuacua's is one account among many suggesting South Africa fails to honour the Nkomati Accord. In 1980, the SADF took over control of Renamo from the Rhodesian government which had formed the rebel group in 1976 and supplied it until the Ian Smith government fell with Zimbabwe's independence.

The South African military greatly expanded Renamo's destructive capabilities within Mozambique, giving Renamo training, supplies and payments to destabilise that country's formerly Marxist government. In 1984's Nkomati Accord, the South African government pledged to end all support for Renamo, but documents captured from Renamo's Gorongosa headquarters conclusively proved that official South African support continued.

Much of Mozambique's southern border region with South Africa is now under Renamo control. Recently refugees from the area have reported seeing helicopters fly in over the frontier which have dropped weapons to the rebels.

More Renamo deserters, interviewed over the past two weeks by Radio Mozambique, have added their voice to Macuacua's allegations.

This February, 31-year-old Renamo deserter Vittorino Fernandes claimed South Africa was not only training specialists in urban guerrilla warfare, but supplying them with toxic chemical weapons. When he gave himself up in January, Fernandes told journalists in Mozambique that 50 men arrived that month at his base in Matchitche, 30km from Maputo.

Fernandes said the men told him they were trained at a camp near Phalaborwa. He said they all had gas masks and carried oxygen supplies, and they showed Fernandes poison-filled pellets they said were stored at Ngungue, another Renamo-held area on the Mozambican border that regularly trades with South Africa.

Fernandes' account was borne out by the gruesome report of a cloud of poison gas which felled several Frelimo men in a skirmish with Renamo near the South African border. An army commander for Maputo Province, Lieutenant-Colonel Musa, claimed five of his men were killed by a

poison chemical during a Renamo attack on Macaene, along the South African border, on January 16.

The Chissano government had scheduled a press conference on March 13 to publicise this proof of chemical weapons being supplied by South Africa, but called it off at the last minute. Apparently the government decided that such allegations might weaken De Klerk's campaign for a yes vote.

Apart from evidence of South African military support, Renamo is held to be closely linked with Portuguese ex-colonials who, fleeing Mozambique at independence from Portugal in 1975, now live in South Africa. They are called Renamo Brancas (white Renamo). Some Mozambican observers fear the Branca faction could be getting desperate, as democratic change hits their new home. If South Africa proceeds to majority rule, they say, the Portuguese may want to come back to Mozambique — on their own terms, dictated to Mozambique through the violent methods of Renamo.

Other groups bolster the military support that Renamo is believed to receive from South African sources. The *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, published in Paris, has identified a number of rightwing religious groups with ties to Renamo, including the South African-based Frontline Fellowship, the Shekinah Ministries in Malawi, and the US-based Food for Africa, World Relief Services and Jimmy Swaggart Ministries.

External support for Renamo is permitting the rebels to continue spreading destabilisation throughout Mozambique and is slowing the peace talks in Rome to a snail's pace.