

Portugal to launch an investigation

From Jose Shercliff
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The Portuguese Government is holding an inquiry into the alleged genocidal massacres in Mozambique, reported in *The Times* yesterday.

All rumours of irregular behaviour by troops, which have been reported, have been investigated and the culprits punished when their guilt was established, according to a statement by the Ministry of Information published in all newspapers in Lisbon this morning.

The statement says: "The case reported in the London newspaper with the obvious aim of starting a scandal on the eve of the visit of the Portuguese head of Government and smirch the nation and people he represents, will not fail to be the subject of inquiry in the established way, if the spot where the events are said to have occurred can be found, since this name is ignored on the map of Mozambique."

The statement accuses various European countries of having exploited accusations of violence by Portuguese troops in Mozambique, "based on assertions of the missionary who left the province after proof of complicity with Frelimo" (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique).

"In his hatred of Portugal this priest has published articles and given lectures in which he

seeks to defame our country, attack its overseas policy and insult the armed forces. His assertions have been refuted publicly various times.

"In spite of the extremely suspect source of the assertions, the Portuguese Government gave at the time instructions to the Commander-in-Chief in Mozambique to make rigorous inquiries whenever there were rumours of any irregularity in the thousands of operations which the armed forces carry out each year in the province.

"This has been done, and most of the inquiries have shown the inanity of the accusations, the offenders being punished when guilt was discovered, which was rare. . . ."

An official spokesman in Lisbon today stated that there is no change in the planned visit of Dr Caetano, the Portuguese Prime Minister, to London from July 16 to 19 as arranged.

All reference to the Mozambique report was censored in yesterday evening's newspapers. However, today's morning press gives it front page prominence with the full text of the statement by the Portuguese Embassy in London repudiating the allegations of massacres and of the statement by the Ministry of Information in Lisbon.

Editorial comment is sharply critical of *The Times*.