

Malawi Hands Over Mozambican "Soldiers" to Mozambican Government

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Text of report (ME/8385/B/4):

The Malawian government has handed back this month to the Mozambican government more than 1,500 Mozambican soldiers who fled into Malawi after reported heavy fighting against MNR bandits in Mozambique. According to the Malawi news agency, Mana, the handover exercise took place at the Malawi-Mozambique border of Mwanza-Zobue.

Mana says the first [words indistinct] was held on 1st October when a senior Malawi police officer handed over 400 Mozambican soldiers together with their weapons. The regional army commander of Zobue, Mr Amos Sekulay [phonetic], who was accompanied by an official of the Mozambican embassy based in Lilongwe, received the soldiers on behalf of the Mozambican government. Similar ceremonies were held at the same venue on 3rd October when 700 soldiers were handed over, and today when another 416 soldiers were taken back to Mozambique.

Meanwhile, Mana reports from Nsanje and Mulange districts say that a number of soldiers are still trickling into Malawi. The soldiers, once in Malawi, surrender themselves to village headmen, party officials and the police. The reports add, apart from soldiers there is an influx into Malawi of civilians. A Malawi government spokesman was quoted as saying, within the framework of Malawi's policy of good neighbourliness, the Malawi government is continuing its programme of handing over to the Mozambique government any soldiers who flee into Malawi.

[Note: The South African agency (in English 0752 gmt 10 Oct 86), citing the Zimbabwean newspaper 'The Herald', reported that the Mozambican town of Zumbo was "virtually deserted following an onslaught by hundreds of Renamo rebels recently expelled from Malawi". 'The Herald' reported that following sporadic gunfire on 9th October, more than 500 civilians had fled the area.]