

TOWN IS DESERTED AFTER MNR ATTACK

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Herald Reporter

THE small Mozambican town of Zumbo, which was overrun by the bandit MNR forces on Monday, is completely deserted according to reports reaching Harare.

The town, on the northern bank of the headwaters of Lake Cabora Bassa, is about the size of Mount Darwin and can be seen clearly from the Mozambican border village of Bahwa where Zimbabwean and Mozambican officials talked to survivors of the 5 am attack.

The civilians in the town have run away and some have crossed into Zambia. But by yesterday just seven families had crossed the Zambezi River into Zimbabwe to seek refuge in Chief Chapoto's area.

All families were said to have relatives on the Zimbabwean side of the border having married Zimbabweans.

Zumbo, which is very close to the point where Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique meet, was guarded by just 38 FPLM Mozambican troops when it was attacked by a force of 200 men, apparently very well armed.

Of these Mozambican soldiers only "about 15"

were accounted for at Bahwa.

Resistance of some sort was still going on yesterday as gunfire could be heard by the people at Bahwa.

The Herald reliably understands that the rebel forces were recently boosted by the arrival of several thousand men who had been "expelled" into Mozambique by the Malawian government from the camps they were operating from.

Last month the chairman of the Frontline States, President Kaunda of Zambia, with President Samora Machel of Mozambique and Prime Minister Ode Mugabe flew to Malawi to discuss with President Kamuzu Banda MNR bandit operations out of Malawi.

Although a Mozambique-Malawi joint military commission was set up to study the situation, Malawi decided to "expel" the thousands of bandits instead of handing them over to the Mozambican authorities.

Malawi has consistently denied the presence of bandit bases and military facilities in its soil despite the hard evidence accumulated during joint Mozambican - Zimbabwean operations in Mozambique.

The "expelled" bandits joined others already operating in Mozambique.

