

MNR bandits violate partial ceasefire agreement

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MNR bandits have violated the partial ceasefire agreement it entered into with the Mozambican government, less than a month after the signing.

The violations took place on Tuesday last week when they attacked the Limpopo line near Chokwe. On Thursday and Friday the bandits made more attacks along the Beira Corridor, killing seven civilians, just as Zimbabwe was completing its redeployment of troops.

Observers said yesterday that the attacks appeared to confirm that MNR leader Afonso Dhlakama had lost control of his members and that many were in fact being directed by some South African elements.

Senior military officials of the Zimbabwean and Mozambican armed forces on Saturday confirmed the attacks on the Beira Corridor, which they condemned.

They said that on Thursday at 2 am, the bandits used TNT to blow up the rail line at Muda, a small village 74 km west of Beira. One person was shot and killed and a note in Portuguese was left pinned to his chest.

At Mafambisa, another village near the town of Dondo, the bandits looted the village and killed six people before disappearing into the night at about 3 am.

The commander of the

Zimbabwean Special Task Force along the Beira Corridor, Colonel Clever Chiramba, told Zimbabwean journalists at Chimoio that the attacks clearly violated the Rome accord under which the MNR pledged not to attack Zimbabwean forces or carry out military operations against ci-

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vilians in the corridors.

According to intelligence reports, Dhlakama ordered his men to carry out offensive military operations on the corridor and attack ZNA planes landing at Chimoio.

The attacks were deliberate attempts to provoke the Zimbabwean troops into pursuing the bandits out of the 3 km zone required by the accord as the area of confinement for the troops in the corridors of Beira and Limpopo, said Col Chiramba.

Col Chiramba said the MNR had wanted to blow up the pipeline at the end of December but had been frustrated by ZNA troops. Even during the redeployment of the troops to the Beira Corridor, the MNR had violated the accord by mining routes used by the troops and carrying out attacks.

Other radio signals intercepted indicated that the MNR was planning to destroy economic plants, mine routes linking Chimoio and shoot down planes landing at

the town. Chimoio is the headquarters of the STF in Mozambique.

Meanwhile, heavy fighting has been reported between Mozambican forces and the MNR in strategic positions formerly held by Zimbabwean troops. At one such position, Casa Banana, the fighting was so fierce that some people were saying it had already fallen to the bandits.

However, a senior Mozambican Armed Forces official denied that Casa Banana had fallen. The officer was confident FAM forces would contain the situation, adding that the MNR had underestimated FAM forces.

The acting director of the ZNA public relations department, Major Charles Mugari, told journalists at Chimoio that the MNR had carried out attacks on civilians and the rail line on the Limpopo Corridor last week. No further details were given.

Meanwhile, Ziana-AIM reports that MNR bandits destroyed two vehicles in an ambush on Wednesday, 16 km outside Maputo on the road from the Mozambican capital to Swaziland.

Quoting yesterday's edition of the Sunday newspaper, Domingo, the news agency said nobody was killed in the attack, but the car and the minibus ambushed were burnt down and the goods belonging to the passengers were stolen.