

MALAWI

Young Pioneers 'flee to Renamo bases in Mozambique'

*SouthScan v. 9, n.1
7/1/94, p.6*

An undisclosed number of Malawi Young Pioneers have fled into Mozambique where they are reported to be regrouping at Renamo bases.

The Young Pioneers, the paramilitary force behind the ruling Malawi Congress Party, were forcibly disarmed by the Malawi army in actions last month (*SouthScan* v8/46 p358).

A mission of Mozambican military, police and immigration officials arrived in Malawi this week to discuss the matter with the government.

Opposition papers' reports had been vigorously denied by Home affairs minister Gwanda Chakuamba, but following expressions of concern from the Mozambican government, President Hastings Kamuzu Banda announced the arrival of the mission in his New Years' address.

Banda noted "precedents" during the Mozambican war, when Mozambican soldiers who crossed into Malawi "were always handed back formally to the authorities in Mozambique".

In fact there were constant complaints from the Frelimo side that Malawi was

harbouring Renamo fighters.

Meanwhile campaigning for the May elections has begun in earnest.

The major opposition parties held their congresses in December: the Alliance for Democracy (Aford) and the United Democratic Front elected delegates, endorsed their election manifestoes and leadership.

Chakufwa Chihana of Aford and Bakili Muluzi of the UDF won overwhelming support in the vote for the presidency of their parties.

During the UDF congress Fred Nseula, a leading member of one of the smaller opposition parties who rose to prominence as chairman of the National Consultative Council for the month of December, announce his defection to the UDF, which he called "the only party strong enough to form the next government".

The possibility of a merger between the two parties now seems to be ruled out.

Pressure has now been relieved from the Malawi economy by the agreement by donors to give \$305 million in aid.