

British military support for peace in Mozambique

Herald Reporter

BRITISH military support to the Mozambican government is meant to frustrate MNR bandit gains and encourage a peaceful resolution of the conflict, the British Secretary for Defence, Mr Tom King, said in Harare yesterday.

Speaking before leaving for Namibia after a two-day visit to Zimbabwe, Mr King said Britain's position all over the world was such that it was against savage violence such as perpetrated by the MNR bandits.

Asked whether by referring to the MNR bandits as "terrorists" he did not recognise them as a political entity he said: "Some people call them bandits; some people call them terrorists . . . call them what you want but they rape, they kill, they maim . . .

"We support the Mozambican government to tackle the savage attacks of terrorism but we would like the parties themselves to come to some form of (peaceful) resolution of the conflict."

Mr King, who was speaking at a Press conference at Harare International Airport, had been in Zimbabwe to see the co-operation between the British Military Advisory and Training Team and the Zimbabwe National Army in training Mozambicans in counter-insurgency.

During the visit he opened a new military training camp for Mozambicans built by British funds in Nyanga on Monday. Yesterday he visited the Zimbabwe Staff College at Army Headquarters and BMATT offices before paying a courtesy call on Acting President Muzenda at Parliament Building.

The co-operation between the ZNA and BMATT would give the Mozambicans the best training in the world in counter-insurgency, he said.

The training was part of Britain's contribution towards peace and stability in the region which he said could be greatly improved by the resolution of the conflict in Mozambique and the eradication of apartheid in South Africa.

BMATT was also involved in the setting up of a national army in the newly-independent nation of Namibia where Mr King went yesterday.

With the Minister of Defence, Cde Richard Hove, at his side, Mr King denied that Zimbabwe had approached Britain two years ago seeking to buy the more advanced Harrier jump jets to improve its air defence capability against South Africa.

Instead, he said, Zimbabwe had, as was well known, bought the British Hawk jet fighter, more of which his country was willing to supply.