

Chissano hails British stance on MNR SM 2/4/89

MAPUTO.

MOZAMBIKAN President Joaquim Chissano has praised Britain's understanding of the true nature of the MNR bandits, "particularly of the acts it perpetrates against the Mozambican population".

He was speaking to Mozambican journalists after his return from Zimbabwe, where, on Wednesday, he had met his Zimbabwean counterpart President Mugabe, and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher at Nyanga, where British instructors are training Mozambican troops.

At Nyanga Mrs Thatcher had pledged continued British support for Mozambique, and said it was vital that the bandits be defeated. She attacked the "brutality" and "terrorism" of the MNR.

"It is very important that Britain has taken this position," said Cde Chissano. "It results from an understanding of the nature of this so-called Renamo."

But he added that the British position was "not new". The training camp at Nyanga was opened in 1985, and since that date Mozambique has also been sending cadets to

the British military academy at Sandhurst, near London.

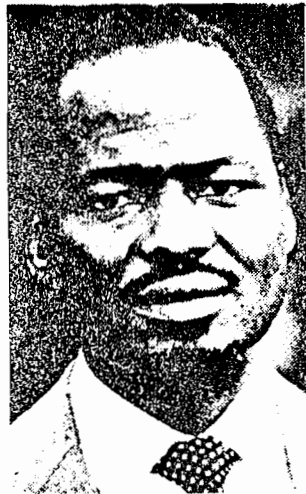
Britain was interested in defeating the MNR to ensure improved economic activity in Mozambique, particularly in those sectors where Britain is involved, said the president.

Cde Chissano was referring in particular to the Limpopo railway line which links Zimbabwe to the port of Maputo. Britain has so far committed US\$50 million to the upgrading of this line, which can serve not only Zimbabwe, but also Botswana, Zambia and even parts of Zaire, and can

drastically reduce the region's dependence on transport routes through South Africa.

Meanwhile, the number of deaths from starvation in the Northern Mozambican district of Memba this year has now risen to 5 200, a Catholic church source has told the Nampula provincial station of Radio Mozambique.

The previous report from Memba was that up to March 14, 4 810 people had died. This implies that currently people in Memba are dying at a rate of over 20 a day. — Ziana-AM-Pana.



PRESIDENT CHISSANO