

# FACT SHEET

October 22, 1987

## RENAMO: Rural Terrorism at Work

### What is Renamo?

In 1975, Portugal ceded power to Mozambique's single overwhelmingly popular independence movement, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) following a military revolt in Portugal precipitated by over a decade of successful armed struggle by FRELIMO. The new Frelimo government soon agreed to allow the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), one of Rhodesia's two main liberation movements, to

operate from bases in Mozambique. In 1976 Ken Flower, Director General of Rhodesia's Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), formed the Mozambique National Resistance, known as Renamo or the MNR, to "provide the opportunity for Rhodesia to deal with Zanla (ZANU's military wing) in Mozambique without doing so directly, and to perpetuate or create instability in areas of Mozambique."

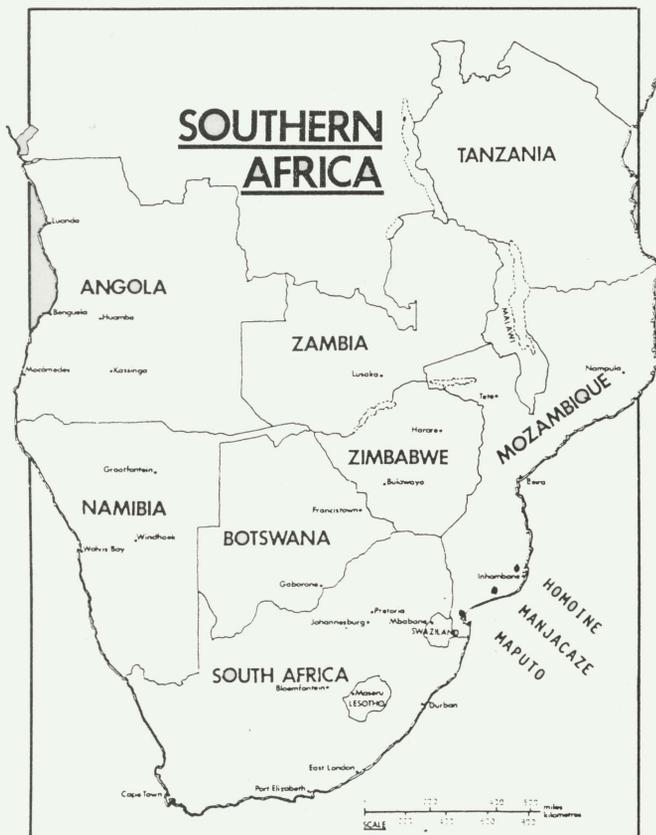
Flower hired Andre Matzangaiza to lead Renamo, and provided Matzangaiza and his recruits with food, housing and equipment. During the late 1970s, the CIO attributed a number of attacks it made on Mozambique to Renamo, and directed Renamo's infrequent military operations. Renamo gained little experience in battle, and Matzangaiza was killed in 1979 during one of Renamo's few attempts to attack the Mozambican army. Flower replaced Matzangaiza with Afonso Dhlakama, who today is still the nominal head of Renamo.

Despite Renamo activities, FRELIMO allowed the Zimbabwe African National Union to operate bases in Mozambique, and was instrumental in helping Zimbabwe achieve independence in 1980.

### The Renamo/South Africa Connection

In 1980, Robert Mugabe, leader of the newly independent Zimbabwe, gave Renamo 72 hours to leave the country. Most of Renamo's 500 to 1,000 recruits surfaced in South Africa, where in March 1980 the South African Department of Military Intelligence gave them weapons and vehicles, and encouraged them to begin a campaign of bombings to cripple Mozambique's ports and railways. Without the access these railways and ports provide to the sea, Mozambique's neighbors would be completely dependent on South African ports and vulnerable to South African sanctions.

In a desperate effort to stop Renamo's South African backed destruction, Mozambique signed the Nkomati Accord with South Africa on 16 March, 1984. The Accord stated in part that



Map: COSAWR

Mozambique and South Africa would not allow groups to utilize their territories to launch attacks against each other.

South Africa's violations of the treaty have been numerous. Since signing the Nkomati Accord, the South African military has launched commando attacks against Mozambique, including one against Maputo in May 1987. Evidence of continuing South African support for Renamo is so strong that South Africa has been forced to admit to the violations, which it alternately calls "technical violations," "humanitarian aid" and the work of "elements" in South Africa which the government cannot control.

Some of these "elements" were the South African military and government ministers. In August, 1985, Zimbabwean and Mozambican soldiers captured Renamo's headquarters at Gorongozo. Among the documents they discovered were desk diaries kept by Dhlakama's secretary, Joaquim Vaz, detailing the dates and purposes of meetings between Dhlakama and South African envoys. One entry reads "[On] 13 Aug, 1984 we had the expected meeting with the South African Government delegation headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Pick (sic) Botha and including the Defence Minister, General Magnus Malan, the military Intelligence General Van Der West Huizen and Colonel Vanikerque (sic)." The diaries also record a promise by the South African military to provide Renamo with AK-47 ammunition and "war materiel."

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker acknowledges that South African support for Renamo still continues. "There is credible evidence that South Africa remains a reliable supplier of high priority [military] items that Renamo is not able to acquire on its own."

## Recent Renamo Massacres

In 1987, Renamo stepped up its long standing policy of brutal attacks against unarmed Mozambican civilians. Just before dawn on July 18, 1987, Renamo bandits attacked the village of Homoine in southern Mozambique. According to relief workers, eyewitness and press accounts, they killed 386 villagers, many of them bedridden hospital patients, kidnapped hundreds more, and forced over 3,000 to flee. Although the attack was the most dramatic Renamo has staged, it was just one of a steady barrage of attacks on transportation routes, farmers, schools, health clinics, and foreign relief workers, the keys to Mozam-



Photo: AIM

*Victim of Homoine massacre.*

bique's economy and future development. On August 10, 1987 Renamo attacked a nearby city, Manjacaze, scattered booby traps, destroyed the city's water, electric and gas supplies, and killed 72 civilians. A favorite tactic of Renamo is to mutilate civilians by cutting off their noses, ears, hands and lips. On October 19, 1987 Renamo attacked a truck convoy, killing 51 people and burning buses packed with civilians. The effects of Renamo's attacks have been devastating. By late 1986, 325,000 of Mozambique's children were killed, 42% of its health posts and 1,800 of its schools destroyed, 4.6 million of 14 million civilians were on the brink of starvation and 3.5 million displaced. Mozambique is now one of the poorest countries in the world.

### Background Information on Mozambique

Official Name:	People's Republic of Mozambique
Capital:	Maputo
Independence:	1975
Area:	301,543 square miles
Population:	14 million
Adult Literacy:	Males 44%, Females 23% (1983)
Life Expectancy:	45 years (1986)
Infant Mortality:	325-375 per 1,000 (1984)
GNP:	\$3.6 billion (1985)
Per Capita Income:	\$230
Total Debt:	\$2.6 billion (1985)
Major Exports:	Prawns (30%), Cashews (15%), Tea (11%), Cotton (8%), Sugar (6%), Refined Oil (5%)
Deficit with South Africa:	None (1982)

## U.S.-Mozambique Relations

Since independence in 1975, Mozambique has faced drought, repeated military attacks from South Africa, and the economic and political destabilization wrought by the Rhodesian and South African-backed Renamo forces. Despite these set-backs, the government of Mozambique remains committed to the economic development of the country, and to a non-aligned political stance. In recent years, Mozambique has seriously worked to improve its relations with the U.S. and the West, and has signed agreements with the World Bank and the IMF. The U.S. State Department has recognized the Mozambican government's genuine commitment to development and non-alignment, and thus far the Reagan Administration has refused to grant Renamo the political legitimacy and military support which it seeks from the United States. In his October 5, 1987 meeting with Chissano, President Reagan expressed his firm support for the Mozambican government.