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INSIDE RENAMO

As described by ex-participants

William Minter

Introduction

For over a decade the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo, or MNR) has been the principal agent of a destructive war against independent Mozambique. The origin of the group as a creation of the Rhodesian government in the mid-1970s is well-documented, as is the transfer of sponsorship to the South African government after white Rhodesia gave way to independent Zimbabwe in 1980.

The results of the war have attracted increasing attention from the international community in recent years. In April 1988 the report written by consultant Robert Gersony for the US State Department's Bureau of Refugee Affairs documented, on the basis of interviews with refugees and the displaced persons, a systematic pattern of human rights abuses, overwhelmingly attributed to Renamo. International agencies, governments and non-governmental organizations in a wide variety of countries have given increasing support to the relief and recovery efforts of Mozambique.

Renamo itself, however, has remained an enigma. Its president Afonso Dhlakama has rarely met journalists. The exiles and non-Mozambicans who represent Renamo in Lisbon, Washington and other capitals seem to have little direct contact with the situation on the ground in Mozambique. The motives of the Renamo fighters, and the extent of South African involvement in recent years, have been shrouded in mystery and speculation.

As part of a larger research project on insurgency in post-colonial Mozambique and Angola, funded by the Ford Foundation and the Swedish International Development Authority, the author undertook a research trip to Mozambique in November and December 1988, with the objective of interviewing ex-participants in Renamo. This task was made feasible because a large number of Renamo combatants had accepted the Mozambican government's unconditional amnesty in 1988. It was facilitated by the government's increasing openness to independent investigation, and by the precedent of the methodologically sound research strategy of the Gersony report.

Terminology

The *Resistência Nacional Mocambicana* (Mozambican National Resistance) is the name used by the organization itself. The Portuguese-language acronym Renamo was adopted by the organization in 1983, and is now more widely used than the English-language acronym MNR. The Mozambican government, and Mozambicans when speaking Portuguese, generally refer to the group as 'bandidos armados' (armed bandits), 'bandidos', or, sometimes, 'bandos armados' (armed bands). This is often abbreviated in popular speech to 'BAs'. The most

common term used in local languages, and often in Portuguese as well, is 'matsangas', after the first Renamo commander, André Matsangaiza.

This report for convenience uses the term Renamo, although 'matsanga' and 'bandidos' were the terms occurring most frequently in the interviews.

Methodology

The interview subjects included both amnestied ex-participants (*amnistiados*) and combatants who had been captured in battle. Most *amnistiados* were dispersed with their families, but others were located in transit centres administered by the Mozambican Red Cross. Since the author had obtained prior approval at the top levels of the ruling Frelimo Party, local party and government officials helped locate amnestied ex-participants and gave access to prisoners. Selection was on the basis of the criteria the author presented: those who had spent more time as Renamo soldiers, including commanders, people with some education if possible, adults rather than children. In a number of cases, the author asked for specific individuals by name, previously identified from the Mozambican press or other sources. In no case were any of these refused, although a couple were not geographically accessible.

Each interview was carried out individually, out of hearing and sight of officials. The author also made clear that he was not inquiring about their personal guilt or innocence, and would ask questions about what they saw and heard, not what they did. Almost all spoke freely and fluently. They clearly distinguished between their own direct observation, what they had heard from other Renamo combatants, and questions that they lacked information to answer. Their willingness to answer questions with 'No', 'I don't know', or 'I heard about that, but didn't see it myself' gave confidence that the information they provided was genuine.

Interviews were carried out in three separate regions of Mozambique: in Maputo in the south, in Chimoio in the centre, and in Quelimane and Mocuba north of the Zambezi River. Of a total of 32 interviews, nine were conducted in Maputo, ten in Chimoio, twelve in Quelimane and one in Mocuba. The geographical spread allowed investigation of regional variations and stronger verification of information found independently in separate regions. Chimoio, in Manica province, was chosen because Manica was the location of the earliest Renamo actions and because it was the province with the largest number of *amnistiados*. Quelimane is in Zambézia, the most populous province. It was partially occupied by Renamo in 1986-1987, and it also had a large number of *amnistiados*.

The material in this report derives directly from the author's own interviews, except where other sources are explicitly cited. The author had access to several other detailed interviews, including several given by *amnistiados* Paulo Oliveira and Chivaca Joao to Mozambican and foreign journalists, and over three hours of raw television footage of an interview by Mozambican journalists with Colopes Sitoi, an *amnistiado* who served as a military intelligence officer for Renamo in Gaza province, and was interviewed in Xai-Xai shortly after he fled Renamo in November 1988. The author also had access to documents captured when major Renamo bases were overrun in 1981 and 1985, to reports from

amnistiados appearing in the Mozambican press, and to notes from several interviews by US diplomats and by Mozambican journalists.

The author also benefitted from discussions on this topic in 1988 and 1989 with many Mozambicans and others knowledgeable about Mozambique in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Portugal, Sweden, England and the United States.

In this analysis the author sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of the pattern of Renamo operations over the years, rather than simply seeking the most recent 'smoking gun' details. Current intelligence can only be evaluated in a responsible way on the basis of the historical background pattern, particularly in the case of a covert operation which includes at its core the effort to conceal current operations.

Interviewees

The 32 interviewees were all male, with an average age of 27 at the time of the interview. The youngest was 18 and the oldest was 47 years old. Fourteen grew up in northern Mozambique (Zambézia), seven in central Mozambique (Manica and Sofala) and eight in southern Mozambique (Maputo city, Maputo province, Gaza and Inhambane). Twenty-eight were Mozambican, one Zimbabwean, one Angolan and one Australian. One was Portuguese, whose parents moved to southern Mozambique when he was four years old. Twenty-seven of the Mozambicans were black, and one was of mixed race.

The languages spoken in their parents' homes by the respondents included English (2), Portuguese (3), Shona (6), Sena (5), Sena and Changana (1), Changana (2), Changana and Zulu (1), Chitswa (2), Chitswa and Bitonga (1), Lomwe (4), Macua (4) and Chuabo (2).

Twenty-five said they were married, and all but three of these had at least one child. Fifteen were peasants or farmworkers, with four of these having previously worked as miners in South Africa. One was a fisherman, six unskilled manual workers, five office workers and two students. One was a journalist, one a professional soldier and one a missionary. Their parents' occupation included peasants (2), unskilled manual workers (6) and six others.

The average level of education was between third and fourth grade of primary school. Five had no formal education at all, and only four (including the two whites) had more than eight years of schooling.

The earliest participants in Renamo dated to December 1978, and the latest entered in August 1987. Twelve were involved in Renamo operations both before and after the Nkomati Accord in March 1984. Eighteen became involved subsequent to the Accord. Two were in the Renamo ranks until 1983-1984, five until 1985-1986, six until 1987, and nineteen until 1988. Eight were in Renamo until the second half of 1988, three of those until November. On average the respondents had spent 37 months in the Renamo forces.

Sixteen of those interviewed were prisoners, and sixteen *amnistiados*.

Two had been involved in Renamo's external operations in Portugal. Three had spent time with Renamo operations in South Africa. Seven had been involved with operations in southern Mozambique. Fifteen had spent some time with Renamo in central Mozambique, and 15 in northern Mozambique. [The numbers add to more than 32 because several spent time in different areas.]

Four of the interviewees were new recruits (ie, they had not yet been given weapons when they escaped or were captured), and 12 were rank-and-file soldiers. Two were first-aid orderlies, and one a male nurse with the status of leader (*chefe*) in the health sector. One was assigned to administrative duties in a base, and two were *madjiba* (collaborators), one of them responsible for a whole village. Two were *chefes de grupo* or *seccao* (small military units), one a company commander, and two sector commanders (sector being a subdivision of a provision). One, the Australian, acted as a courier for Renamo between Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. One Mozambican translated for South African military intelligence officers interviewing Mozambicans in South Africa. The Angolan was a professional soldier in the South African special forces. Two were members of Renamo's Lisbon delegation, including Paulo Oliveira, who directed Renamo's radio in South Africa before becoming the principal information officer in Lisbon after March 1984.

The interviewees were not a random sample, nor should they be taken as precisely representative of the Renamo forces as a whole. Since the author asked to interview adults and particularly those with greater experience in Renamo, the interviewees are probably older than the average Renamo soldier. Since the author requested interviewees who could understand Portuguese, the sample is probably better educated than the average Renamo soldier (although the 1980 census figures show that over half of Mozambican males in this age range are able to speak Portuguese). Finally, the battle-hardened and most loyal core of the Renamo force are less likely to accept amnesty or be captured in battle, and are therefore probably underrepresented in the sample.

The sample contained significant diversity, however, in terms of geography, social background, previous experience with the Mozambican government and time and place of their experience within Renamo. Their statements provide a coherent picture of Renamo, with variations in details logically consistent with their different access to information.

The author's generalizations about Renamo from the interviews are not based on taking the sample as representative, but on their statements, which refer not only to the interviewees themselves, but also to their observations while in the Renamo ranks.

Recruitment

Before undertaking the interviews, the author's working hypothesis was that there would be considerable variety in the recruitment to Renamo, including forced recruitment, ideological motives and, in large measure, material incentives for a young population with large numbers of people marginalized by the successive traumas of economic collapse, drought and war. The interviews revealed a far more consistent pattern than expected, with forced recruitment overwhelmingly dominant.

Of the 32 interviewees, there were three whose motives could be considered ideological. Ian Grey, a conservative young Australian missionary, was persuaded to become a courier for Renamo after meeting in Israel a member of the fundamentalist Shekinah Ministries sect who told him that Christians were being persecuted in Marxist Mozambique. Paulo Oliveira, of Portuguese origin, who

left Mozambique in 1979 and joined Renamo in Lisbon in 1981, was ideologically opposed to the Mozambican government and close to other Portuguese settlers who had fled after independence. Chivaca Joao left the Mozambican security services in 1983 to study in Portugal, joining a support group for Renamo shortly afterwards and later working in the Lisbon office. From Beira, Chivaca Joao sympathized with Renamo's claims that the central part of the country was underrepresented in the government.

Two other special cases were a Mozambican who was recruited in South Africa, and an Angolan who joined the South African army while in Namibia, later being assigned to the Reconnaissance commandos (special forces). The Mozambican was working as an illegal immigrant at an auto body shop in the Transvaal, when he was arrested, interrogated and given the option of working for R370 a month as an interpreter for South African Military Intelligence interrogating Mozambican refugees. The Angolan had been a teenager in a refugee camp in northern Namibia in 1976, when he (and other young males in the camp) were told by South African authorities that they had to join either UNITA or the South African army.

All the other 27 interviewees, that is all those who had joined Renamo inside Mozambique and were combatants in the Renamo army, said that they had entered the Renamo forces after being recruited by force. The word most often used was *raptado*, meaning 'abducted' or 'kidnapped'.

The author was prepared to be skeptical about such claims, given the possibility that the interviewees could be trying to minimize their responsibility to please the interviewer or the Mozambican authorities. The circumstantial detail given in the interviews, along with the fact that the interviewees described the forced recruitment of others in matter-of-fact terms as part of the Renamo military routine, gave grounds to believe that they were telling the truth.

One clue came in one of the early interviews, with Paulo Oliveira. Himself originally an ideological convert to Renamo, he volunteered his estimate that of the approximately 80 Mozambicans who served with him in the Renamo headquarters base in South Africa in 1983-1984, only three had not been forcibly recruited. The staff for the radio, which he directed, for headquarters office operations, communications officers and other similar positions, was made up of Mozambicans, many of whom had been students at one secondary school in Inhambane who were abducted en masse.

The interviewees speaking of their own experiences gave similar details. After getting basic biographical details from each, the author then asked, 'And how did you come to be there in the bush with the *matsangas*?' The replies were almost all very specific, almost all mentioning a specific month and many the day, most frequently saying 'I was *raptado* (kidnapped or abducted)'.

Three, for example, said that they had been abducted (in December 1978, January 1979, and August 1979 respectively) near the Rhodesian border. They were marched on foot to Rhodesia, and then taken by truck to Odzi, the Renamo training base in eastern Rhodesia. Two of these, a Zimbabwean refugee and a Mozambican peasant, said they were captured at night, in their homes. Another was on the way to visit his grandparents, riding a bicycle. Each had arrived at the Odzi base with other captives, 40 in December 1978, 70 in January 1979 and

15 in August 1979. Each said they were taken at gunpoint by groups of armed soldiers. One, in the group of 70, said they were tied to each other during the day of walking to the Rhodesian border.

The same pattern, with minor variations, appeared in the rest of the interviews, with the exception that the captured recruits were marched to training bases inside Mozambique instead of to Rhodesia. Some had first been forced to carry goods for Renamo soldiers or to serve as guides in their home areas before being informed they could not return and would have to undergo military training. Some were abducted alone or with only a few other people, in their fields, while on the way to visit relatives, or at home. One was returning home from a bar in Namaacha, near the South African and Swaziland borders, when three armed men forced him to carry their knapsacks to the base five hours' march away.

Others were captured in large groups, during attacks on schools, villages, plantations, or small towns. One peasant in Nicoadala district in Zambézia, for example, was taken with 200 other villagers to carry food to the Renamo base in 1985. They took everything from the village, he said, all the food, all the clothing, chickens, doves, rabbits. They burned his house down. All the men were selected for military training.

Another was a worker at Sena Sugar in August 1985 when 182 workers were abducted. They walked for three days before reaching the base, after which 80 of the workers, including himself, were forced to begin military training. Another, a school administrator, was abducted during an attack on the school by 150 Renamo soldiers, on Christmas Eve 1985, along with 18 others, including several teachers and students.

After the testimony about their own experience of military training, the author asked each interviewee who had served as a combatant about those who had trained with him. The author asked whether they also had been 'abducted like you', or whether they had joined the Renamo ranks voluntarily. While the interviewee might have some motive to conceal his own voluntary recruitment, the same possible bias would not apply to the same degree to his description of others. In fact, one might expect a bias in the opposite direction, for him to distinguish himself more sharply and appear in a better light. In fact their responses to this question seemed matter of fact, and varied primarily in their degree of confidence in their answers.

Twelve unhesitatingly said that all those who trained with them had also been abducted. One, who had been in Renamo since August 1979, added, 'The matsanga take you, you can't say no'. Another, in Renamo from June 1982 until February 1987, said, 'In general, all the regular soldiers (*soldados simples*) were abducted'. Another dryly commented that he never heard much talk about voluntary recruitment. Another, with Renamo in Zambézia province from April 1984 through to July 1987, said that in Zambézia even the commanders had originally been abducted, but that he didn't know about (Renamo president) Dhlakama himself.

Three others said 'almost all' had been abducted, one who had been with Renamo only briefly before escaping said he did not know. Twelve others were more hesitant about summary judgments, making comments like 'I didn't have a chance to count', or 'I really didn't talk to everybody'. In follow-up questions

the author asked whether those abducted were 'many' or 'a few', and they uniformly answered 'many'. The author then asked if those who joined voluntarily were 'many' or 'a few', their answers ranged from 'a few' to 'very few'.

The highest estimate of voluntary recruitment came from a Zimbabwean who served as a Renamo sector commander in the Mavonde area. From his zone he sent 70 to 90 recruits each six months to the central base for training, he said. As many as 15 to 20 might be volunteers rather than forced recruits, he estimated.

Additional evidence for this pattern of forced recruitment is the fact that the interviewees when describing military operations systematically included 'kidnapping people' (*raptar pessoas*) as one of the tasks which might be assigned to a military unit.

Another aspect supporting the validity of the interviewees' description of forced recruitment is that as a group they did not show a common attitude towards the Mozambican government, or towards Renamo. Prior to their recruitment to Renamo, some had been affiliated with the Frelimo party at a local level. Others had specific complaints about the government: one had not received pay he said he was promised as a member of the militia in Maputo, another had been arrested on a vague suspicion while he was a government soldier. Some described their period in Renamo bitterly and with a sense of indignation and horror, and several had made repeated attempts to escape. Others seem to have accepted their situation with little resistance.

Their present attitudes differed with their positions, as prisoners or as *amniatiados*. Most of those who were prisoners when interviewed complained that they did not know when the government would release them. Several who had been imprisoned for more than one year said they had been tortured after being captured, although they said this did not happen any more. Several prisoners felt they also should be amnestied, claiming they had turned themselves in voluntarily rather than being captured. Others, who admitted being captured in battle, nevertheless wondered whether the amnesty would apply to them.

Several of those who were amnestied were impatient to be given agricultural tools and seeds they had not yet received, and several were still awaiting transport to their home areas or news of their families. Several who had been reunited with their families were optimistic, speaking of new fields planted and one of a church he was helping to build.

But the dominant stance - with respect both to their past involvement and their present situation - seemed to be fatalism, as if the idea of choice was not particularly relevant. And in fact the only common factor which seems to have determined their entry into Renamo was the bad fortune of being in an area vulnerable to attack, not any communality in ideology, class position, ethnic group or political attitude.

Recruitment by means other than kidnapping presumably takes place. One interviewee said that in Morrumbala he had talked to some of the early recruits who said they had been seeking jobs in Malawi when offered employment by whites who took them to Rhodesia. Only after arriving at the Odzi camp did they find out what the employment was.

Other sources as well cite specific credible examples. In 1985 an *amniatiado* in Inhambane province told Mozambique's *Tempo* magazine (29 December

1985) that he had been recruited in 1982 while unemployed, on the promise of being paid 2500 *meticaïs* a month (about 4 US dollars at early 1988 exchange rates; close to \$60 at the inflated pre-1986 official exchange rate). In 1988 an *amhiistiado* in Tete province said he had deserted Renamo after not being paid the 300 *meticaïs* (about 70 US cents) a day he had been promised (*Africa News*, 18 April 1988). Both the South African and Mozambican press have reported specific incidents of illegal Mozambican immigrants in South Africa being offered 'employment' by Renamo while in police custody (*Weekly Mail* [South Africa], 19-25 August 1988; *Mozambique Information Office News Review*, 19 January 1989).

Recruitment for the Renamo external offices is also apparently a special case, as is the top military leadership of the movement inside Mozambique. (Each of these will be discussed in later sections.) But the pattern revealed in the interviews, fully consistent with numerous other word-of-mouth reports, interviews by US diplomats, State Department researcher Robert Gersony, and Mozambican and foreign journalists, makes it probable that at least 90% of the Renamo rank-and-file are recruited by force.

The interviews did not deal systematically with the additional question of the recruitment of children, since that has already been extensively reported (see *Washington Post*, 5 January 1988; *US News & World Report*, 16 January 1989) and is being investigated by psychiatrists and other specialists. But the interviews did contain some relevant information. Those who were captured in large groups said that of those captured the males were selected for military training; the age range mentioned was generally from 12 to 30 or 40. Several said that those too old or young for actual combat were used for other tasks, such as portage, servants for the officers, or messengers. Several interviewees, particularly those who had spent many years in Renamo in central Mozambique, stressed that children were rarely used in combat. Most of those in Zambézia made the same point. Others, however, including ones who had been in Morumbala, Caia, Inhanga and particularly in Gaza and Maputo provinces in the south, referred to significant numbers of boys of 15 and under being given arms and sent into combat.

The most detailed information about the use of children came from the interview with Colopes Sitoi, who was with Renamo in Gaza province from August 1987 through to early November 1988, acting most of that period as a Renamo military intelligence officer. He said that in his area there was a systematic preference for getting children because it was easier to keep them from running away than to control adults. Children as young as 10 were used, he said, and more than half of the armed soldiers were children (roughly 15 or under). This is consistent with some eyewitness reports of attacks in recent years in southern Mozambique, which have cited the presence of significant numbers of children in Renamo attack units.

Although it would require more systematic data to verify the hypothesis, it seems probable that the differences in reports reflect actual differences between time periods and geographical areas. In most areas of Zambézia, for example, which has little tradition of migratory labour, there is no shortage of adult men. In much of southern Mozambique, in contrast, a century-old pattern of migrant

labour to South Africa has resulted in a scarcity of adult men in the countryside, a situation which has intensified under war conditions. Since adult men are less likely to be present, and more likely to succeed in escaping, Renamo might be more inclined to use children to reinforce its ranks.

Another issue which the author was not able to investigate in detail was the presence of women soldiers in the Renamo ranks. Several reports the author heard in Maputo suggested that women soldiers had been seen in attacking Renamo units. The interviews do not confirm this, although it could certainly happen in some areas without being known to the interviewees. Most said women were not given military training or incorporated in the Renamo military structure, but were part of the civilian 'population', a clearly distinct category who were not allowed to enter the military bases. Several, who had spent time in the Gorongosa headquarters area, did refer to small numbers of trained women soldiers, but said their duties were mainly in the bases, not in combat.

On 30 November 1988, 19-year-old Isabel Jorge told a Radio Mozambique journalist that she had been a soldier in Renamo's women's section, in the Gondola district, before her escape the week before. She had been abducted in 1982, given military training at Gorongosa by South African instructors in 1983, and eventually rose to become a commander, she said. She said the women's detachment's tasks included cooking, tending the wounded, having involuntary sex and carrying military equipment.

In the Garagua documents captured in December 1981, minutes of a meeting between Renamo and South African officers say the South African officers suggested that in order to discourage the soldiers from leaving there should be a women's detachment in the Renamo training camp in South Africa in order to 'entertain them'.

Control mechanisms

It is on first thought difficult to understand how an army composed primarily of forced recruits can function. It is true there are historical precedents such as pressganging for the British Navy. Some recruits in any guerrilla army probably join under some level of coercion. And conscription, as practised by most governments in the twentieth century, is in essence a legalized and bureaucratized form of forced recruitment. In the Renamo case, however, the interviews reveal what seems to be an extraordinarily high level of involuntary recruitment. Accordingly, the question of how the recruits are prevented from escaping or rebelling is a critical one.

From the interviews it appeared that one of the most important controls is the threat of execution or other severe punishment. Thirteen of the interviewees said they had personal knowledge of executions of soldiers who tried to escape, that their commanders had threatened them with execution, and that they believed this was the normal penalty they could expect. Six others said that the ordinary punishment was not so severe, mentioning such measures as 90 days 'in prison' (in a hut or hole in the ground, sometimes tied up, sometimes deprived of food), beatings, floggings or 'torture'.

Second-hand reports in Maputo often refer to executions for demonstration purposes among abducted Renamo recruits, to discourage the others from

resisting. None of the 32 interviewees gave specific examples of this. Colopes Sitoi, however, describing his abduction with some 200 others from Manjacaze on 10 August 1987, said several who could not keep up the pace were killed during the first night, and sixteen Muslims who protested that they wanted to return to the town were executed the next day.

Another threat used, but mentioned by only one of the interviewees, was the threat of violence against the recruit's family. He accompanied two Renamo commanders, in civilian clothes with false documents, on a regular plane flight from Maputo to Quelimane. He said he was told that if he said anything, his family would be killed.

The other reason for not escaping given most frequently was the soldiers were told by their commanders that if they did succeed in escaping, the government would kill them. Several reported speeches by Renamo President Dhlakama in 1988 saying that the government's amnesty program was a lie, and that if they turned themselves in, they would first be interviewed on the radio and then shot.

One, a prisoner, said that he knew of Renamo soldiers who had fled and then been killed by government forces. Mozambican government officials confirmed to the author that, particularly in earlier years, there had been a number of cases of mob violence against Renamo soldiers or summary executions by local commanders. Government and non-government sources unanimously asserted that these incidents had become much less frequent with the amnesty program widely publicized by the government in 1988, and continuing in 1989.

Within Renamo ranks, however, the access to radios or other sources of information is limited, and it is likely that a large number do believe that they might be killed if they turn themselves in. The rank-and-file Renamo soldier is then faced with a difficult choice: if he tries to escape and fails, he may well be executed, and, as far as he knows, if he succeeds in escaping he might be killed by the government. One of those the author interviewed said he had debated with himself for months which side was most likely to be lying before he finally decided to try to escape from Renamo. Given this fear, most observers believe that a significant proportion of escapees from Renamo simply blend in with the local population or flee as refugees to neighbouring countries, rather than present themselves directly to the amnesty program.

The final form of control is a systematic process of transferring recruits away from their home areas. While a few may be kept in their area of origin to serve as local guides, almost all described marches of at least two days from the point of capture to the training base. Most reported being transferred to other bases immediately after training, or sometimes before. With very few exceptions, they were posted as soldiers in districts other than their home districts, and some to other provinces. They all described their military units as very mixed in origin, and said they were not with people who they had known at home or who had been trained with them. One commander in Manica province specifically said that they had a policy of transferring soldiers in order to make it harder for them to run away.

This strategy seems to have been particularly effective in areas such as Zambézia province, where there is little tradition of migration, many peasants have never left their home districts, and language differences may make it

difficult to communicate even 100 km away from home. Having to learn both the geography and local language before making an escape effort is a major obstacle. One who was abducted in Nicoadala district, Zambézia province, a peasant who had never left his village before, was sent to Niassa province for over a year. After being retransferred to the Zambézia central base, he heard one day of a company of soldiers being sent to Nicoadala and surreptitiously mixed himself in with the group. As soon as he reached his home district, he escaped and turned himself in to local authorities.

This kind of obstacle is less significant in the southern part of the country, where the migratory tradition and communality of languages have generated a broad cultural unity and familiarity with a wider range of territory.

Most transfers appeared to be within the same region of the country (the southern provinces of Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane; the central provinces of Manica and Sofala; the northern provinces of Zambézia and Nampula, for example). But the interviewees in each region also reported the presence of significant numbers of soldiers from other regions, with the Gorongosa headquarters area bringing recruits from all over the country.

It is important to stress that despite such obstacles large number of recruits do manage to escape. The 3 000 who formally accepted the government amnesty in 1988 probably is a minimum figure for that year. No total estimates for earlier years are available. But radio message diaries captured in 1984 from Paulo Sitole, a Renamo sector commander in Maputo province (and published in *Tempo*, 28 April 1985) referred to 69 desertions from his forces in the period September 1983 through to April 1984, out of an estimated February 1984 strength of 425 men.

Sitole also referred to the difficulties in recruitment in a message sent on 17 November 1983: 'Recruitment here in Region Number 1 is very difficult because in the zones we operate in there are no young men, they have fled to [work in] South Africa. The other reasons is that when they hear we are in the zone they flee to the bush, one doesn't get anyone at home, because they have the bad habit of beating the drums when they hear us coming. But we will try to recruit'. In different messages he referred to the execution of at least six recruits for attempted escape.

Training, political mobilization and rewards

The pattern of training described by the interviewees was quite consistent. The three who had been trained in Rhodesia said the course took six months. They said some of the instructors were Mozambicans, but that there were also Portuguese and other whites who spoke English. They could not specify whether these other whites were Rhodesian, South African or American. The published house history of the Rhodesian Special Air Services (Cole, 1984) makes it clear that these trainers included Rhodesians as well as an American mercenary who was an officer in the SAS, Robert McKenzie (aka McKenna, aka Jordan). [McKenzie is currently associated with *Soldier of Fortune* magazine and with a Renamo support group called 'Freedom, Inc.'].

For those trained later in Mozambique the standard basic training was two to

three months. Only four cited shorter time periods, and two longer periods. The content of the training was mostly weapons-handling, and on completion of the course they were given an AK-47. Some received additional training, one in artillery, one in anti-aircraft, one in communications and three in first-aid. Because of his educational qualifications, Colopes Sitoi was given military intelligence training, principally map-reading and report-writing. He said the detailed maps used were South African, not Mozambican.

With few exceptions the instructors in the courses inside Mozambique were Mozambicans, identified by the interviewees as 'veterans' with greater experience. The exceptions, each mentioned in more than one interview, were the presence at times of white and black South Africans in the Gorongosa headquarters camp (the dates were not specified) and the presence of both black and white South African instructors in Zambézia during the period of the 1986 Renamo offensive. One of the soldiers trained in first-aid also said a Mozambican doctor came from Europe to give a special course at the hospital base near the Gorongosa headquarters.

None of the Mozambicans the author interviewed had received additional training in South Africa, but almost all said they had seen or heard of other Renamo soldiers who had. One specifically referred to a group of 20 to 25 Renamo soldiers trained as paratroopers who passed through the base he was at in Manhica district, Maputo province, in November 1983. Another spoke of groups leaving Gorongosa to be trained in 1982 and 1983, when he was there. In November 1988 a recently arrived *amniestado* told journalists in Manica (in a taped interview made available to the author) that he had been trained for nine months at the Phalaborwa special forces base in South Africa in 1982, along with 97 others.

An Angolan who was in the South African special forces at that time provided additional details. The first large group taken to South Africa for training was in 1982, he said, a total intake of 230 men selected from different areas in Mozambique. Ninety of them were sent to Namibia for paratroop training. In late 1982 and early 1983 they were reinfilitrated into Mozambique, some by sea on the coast north of Beira, others by parachute. According to this source, in 1983 there were 400 of them, some of whom were given specialized sabotage training, others trained as paratroopers, and others as officers. The standard pattern was one group a year, but he had no details on subsequent training in South Africa since he was transferred to another commando unit assigned to actions against exiles of the African National Congress.

Notes in the Gorongosa diaries, for December 1983, also suggest this pattern. They mention 'soldiers to be evacuated from the interior to take Conventional Forces course ... 100 from the North, 250 from the Centre, 250 from the South ... with at least second grade, from 15 to 30 years old'. And the radio message diaries of Paulo Sitole refer to the arrival in Maputo province on 6 March 1984 (ten days before the Nkomati Accord) of '64 paratrooper specialists'.

None of the interviewees referred to regular political meetings, discussions or courses, and they were clear that they regarded themselves as part of an army, not a political movement. Only two said there were regular political meetings with the civilian population. Colopes Sitoi, however, cited the presence of José

Fumane, a distant relative of his, who had the title of Renamo Political Commissar in the area where he was. Fumane, who as a Portuguese secret police agent had infiltrated Frelimo in the 1960s and was imprisoned after independence, had voluntarily joined Renamo after being released from prison. Fumane had personal conflicts with the Renamo military commander, Sitoi said.

The nine interviewees who did refer to political meetings said these were occasional gatherings of the soldiers to hear speeches. Two referred to visits to their base by President Dhlakama, and one said they were gathered in front of a radio to hear Dhlakama over a loudspeaker. All said Dhlakama, as well as other commanders who occasionally spoke, stressed themes such as 'we are against communism, we are against socialism, we are for capitalism, we are against (communal) villages and want to live individually in the bush'. They also said they were promised that the war would be over soon and they would go to live in the city. In 1988, several mentioned, the speeches stressed that Frelimo's amnesty program was a lie. Several said that they didn't know whether others believed the speeches or not, but said they listened because they were expected to listen. 'They didn't explain anything, they only gave orders', one said.

At the rank-and-file level the question of ethnicity did not seem to be of major importance. All stressed that the soldiers came from all parts of Mozambique, and that men from any ethnic group had a chance to move up the command ladder. They uniformly said that the majority of the commanders were Shona-speakers, but said that the language spoken in any particular unit depended on the ratio of different groups. [Interviewees from central Mozambique distinguished between different Shona dialects, such as Ndau and Manica, but those from elsewhere in the country referred to all Shona-speakers as Ndau.] It may be that longer questioning on this point would have revealed different results, but it is notable that both Shona-speakers and non-Shona-speakers made similar comments about participation from a variety of ethnic groups. At the leadership level (to be discussed later) the ethnic issue seems to have taken on greater salience.

The interviewees provided no clear evidence one way or another with respect to rural support for or alienation from the Frelimo government. Lack of support for Renamo or for Frelimo does not mean support for the other, because there is the third alternative of passivity or of support for neither. What did emerge from the interviews was an apparent variation in the level of passivity with which the recruits confronted their situation in Renamo. Some were clearly hostile to their commanders and had actively sought opportunities to escape. Others seem to have accepted the situation as something that happened to them, which they adapted to without much consideration of the possibilities for resistance.

The reward for Renamo soldiers were also quite limited, although access to food, loot and a gun might well be considered privilege in the context of much of rural Mozambique. Commanders in some areas, particularly the border with Malawi, were said to profit from the sale across the border of goods looted from attacked villagers, towns and cars. Ian Grey commented that the Renamo personnel he met in Malawi seemed well supplied with South African currency.

Mozambicans from Renamo being trained in South Africa received regular salaries as members of the South African Defence Force, one *amniado* told

journalists in Manica in November 1988. Associates of Roland Hunter, a South African draftee who was assigned to the Mozambique operation and until recently was serving a prison term in South Africa for passing information to the African National Congress, said he paid monthly salary checks in 1982-1983 of R500 to R700 to Renamo officials in South Africa (*Africa News*, 21 December 1987). Constantino Reis, a Mozambican student who joined Renamo voluntarily in September 1982 and served as a radio announcer in South Africa, told Mozambican journalists in 1985 after deserting that he had received R400 a month, while President Dhlakama got R800 a month and Renamo Secretary-General Orlando Cristina R1500 a month.

Another benefit for the soldiers was what seems to be a relatively well-organized system of first aid. Each military unit had one or more first-aid orderlies, and there was a central hospital in Gorongosa.

Food supplies and relationship to civilians

For several reasons, the author collected only limited data on the relationship of Renamo to the civilian population. Given the previous reports of large-scale atrocities against civilians, the author did not think that the combatants themselves would be likely to speak frankly about this within the scope of a short interview, and that pressing these questions would make it unlikely that they would talk freely about other less sensitive subjects. The author therefore refrained from asking questions about human rights violations by Renamo soldiers. For such data interviews with civilians themselves, such as those described in the State Department report, are likely to be more reliable. In-depth understanding of the complex interaction between Renamo, Frelimo and the civilian population would require longer-term studies in particular local areas.

The information in the interviews, however, was fully consistent with that cited in the State Department report and with the observations of others familiar with rural Mozambique. All of the interviewees agreed that there was a strict separation between the Renamo military structure and the civilian population, and that very rarely was anyone from the civilian population permitted closer to a Renamo base than a control point 100 to 200 metres distant. They described the primary relationship with civilians as centred around obtaining and transporting food for the Renamo soldiers, and on transporting goods looted in attacks on villagers and vehicles.

In some areas - apparently the same that were labeled 'tax areas' by Robert Gersony in the State Department report - the soldiers were sent out in groups to collect food, or the people organized by *madjiba* (collaborators, often directed by a village chief or elder) to bring food to the control point near the base. Some mentioned that groups of women or old men were specifically assigned to cultivate fields for the base. The interviewees differed over the degree of force involved. The three who had been in Renamo since 1979 said that the people had enough food and gave voluntarily from their excess. Another who was with Renamo from June 1984 through to November 1988 said the people gave voluntarily at first, but not later. All four who mentioned these voluntary contributions were from Manica province or Zimbabwe, including three Shona-speakers and one Sena-speaker.

The majority, however, described the food contributions as involuntary. One said, 'There was a team to go ask for food from the people. They arrive, ask for it; if the people refuse they take it by force, maybe all their food'. Others explicitly said they stole the food from the people. In attacks on villages or cars, several said, the local people would be used as porters to carry food and other goods back to the Renamo base.

Most said the food situation in the base was adequate but not good, and many said the commanders ate the same food they did. Several complained that the commanders got better food, canned goods brought from Malawi or South Africa, or beef from slaughtered cattle. One volunteered that they ate 'only the skins' of cattle, while the commanders ate beef. One, who apparently was located in an area where local peasants owned many cattle, said there was never a problem. They would send out a group every few days to kill a cow, and there was always meat on the grill for everyone. But that was apparently a rare situation. Others talked of food shortages for both soldiers and civilians, particularly in recent years.

In conversation with local government officials in Zambézia province, the author was told that in some areas local people had at first welcomed Renamo, disillusioned with the economic and political policies of the government. But, within a few months, they said, the same people were criticizing Renamo as no more than thieves and murderers. The interviewees generally described a situation in which some local chiefs, whether traditional authorities or Portuguese-appointed, as well as traditional healers (*curandeiros*) and magicians (*feiticeiros*), cooperated with Renamo. A variety of reports have suggested that such leaders, deprived of power by the Frelimo government, provided significant support to Renamo in some areas of Mozambique.

The interviewees were clear, however, that neither chiefs nor healers were part of the Renamo structure, but part of the subject civilian population. Several said that the Renamo soldiers 'went to the healers' for treatment just as the civilians did. And several commented that most of the chiefs had no choice about collaborating when Renamo came into an area. One of the interviewees, who had been a prominent farmer and elder in his village, had been appointed by Renamo to direct the village as chief *mudjiba* (collaborator). He said he was forced to do this while they occupied his house, sleeping on the veranda, several times tying up his wife when she objected to giving them food, and killing his brother-in-law after an escape attempt.

A few interviewees, particularly those with some experience in the Gorongosa area, said the Renamo male nurses and first-aid orderlies sometimes treated civilians as well as soldiers. One said the women soldiers 'went to school'. One said that material from South African parachutes was given to people for clothes, and another that clothes captured in raids were distributed to people living under Renamo control as well as to the soldiers. But there was virtually no other reference to benefits for Mozambican civilians.

Reports from journalists and others who have visited Renamo under Renamo sponsorship have occasionally mentioned Christian churches in Renamo areas. But only a few of the interviewees made any comment about religion. One had been abducted by Renamo while on the way home from church. Another said

that Bibles were brought in from Malawi. One, who said he was a member of the African Assembly of God, said there was a pastor of this Church among the Renamo-controlled population near his base, but that the commanders and the pastor had nothing to do with each other. Resettled in Nicoadala since escaping in July 1987, he was building a church. 'Thanks be to God that I escaped', he said.

Arms, ammunition and medicines

The interviewees described a coherent pattern of supply of arms, ammunition and medicines. What they actually witnessed varied with the specific geographical area and time period they were in the Renamo forces. All of those who served in combat areas made some reference to captured material, but none claimed that such material was the basic source of supplies. The overall pattern includes deliveries over land borders, by parachute drop, by landings of Dakota DC-3 aircraft, and by sea, as well as extensive transport by head portage within and even between provinces.

Two interviewees, who were in the Renamo forces less than six months each, simply said that they got the arms 'from the warehouse' in the base. Those who spent longer times in subsidiary bases (other than the principal base in each province) said that arms came with columns of porters from the provincial base. They said that when supplies were running low, the base commander would radio the information to the provincial base, and carriers would be arranged among the soldiers to make the trip. In contrast to the expeditions for food, civilians were not normally used for weapons transport. Interviewees who had not spent time in a provincial base consistently said they were uncertain how the weapons arrived there, but that they had been told by other combatants that they came from South Africa.

Those with more time in the Renamo forces, or who had been stationed in provincial bases or near the Renamo headquarters in the Gorongosa area, had more information. But even they described a strict need-to-know system in which only elite groups of soldiers met airplanes or ships. Several who had been involved both before and after the March 1984 Nkomati Accord said secrecy intensified after the agreement. After the Accord, said a commander who spent nine years in Renamo forces in central Mozambique, the Dakota aircraft came only at night, to sites kept secret from most of the soldiers.

The pattern of deliveries differed significantly by area of the country. One interviewee who spent from early 1984 to mid-1988 in a base in Maputo province near the Mozambique, Swaziland and South African borders said that some material came over land from South Africa, by head portage. He added that South African helicopters also regularly visited the base, sometimes bringing small quantities of supplies, sometimes doctors, instructors for special courses, or other visitors. He estimated the frequency of the flights as roughly once every two months during the four years he was there.

In the period August 1977 to November 1988, according to Colopes Sitoi, the bases in Gaza province received their supplies not by air drop but by sending porters to the base in Maputo province. Columns of porters were sent four times a year, he said. He did not know from personal knowledge how the material

arrived in Maputo province, but said another soldier told him of having witnessed three parachute drops in February 1988 at 11 pm to dropzones marked with fires.

One interviewee, who was a Renamo first-aid orderly in Maputo and Gaza province from April 1983 through to April 1988, said that, before the Nkomati Accord, arms and medicines arrived by parachute drop in Magude district, in the northern part of Maputo province. After Nkomati he was transferred to Gaza, and only knew that they sent porters to Magude for supplies. He did not know whether the supplies arrived in Magude by air or by land.

Almost all the interviewees who had been in central Mozambique referred to parachute drops or airplane landings, particularly in the area around Gorongosa and most frequently in Maringue district immediately north of Gorongosa and south of the Zambezi, both before and after the Nkomati Accord. One interviewee, who served in the Espungabera area (south of the Beira corridor on the Zimbabwe border) from 1979 to 1982, said the planes arrived there once every three months and made two drops in the same night. Afterwards, as a commander in the Mavonde area (north of the Beira corridor near the Zimbabwe border) from 1982 until late 1988, he normally received supplies by parachute drop once a year. The quantity was generally sufficient for one year, and he was also expected to maintain the arms he captured as a reserved supply. One year, 1987, the expected shipment did not arrive, he said.

Others described the same pattern of a shipment once a year, or sometimes more often. Without more comprehensive data one cannot estimate how large an area each shipment would be intended for, but central Mozambique at least received shipments in several different areas. One interviewee, who was in Zambézia and across the river in Sofala from December 1985 through to February 1987, said that during this time carriers went to the airstrip at Maringue twice, and twice 'to the beach' in the Maganja da Costa area north of Quelimane. Another, who spent most of 1987 in the coastal area north of Beira, said that on one occasion arms were taken from a ship, which he heard came from South Africa. Civilians as well as soldiers had to help carry the material, and it took more than a week to get it all to the base, he said.

In Zambézia, the interviewees referred to portage expeditions across the river to Gorongosa to get supplies, as well as to air landings. One who spent December 1986 to June 1988 in the provincial base at Alfazema in Zambézia said an airplane landed twice during this period, once in April 1987 and once in April 1988. He did not see it, since it was at night, but he heard the noise and he saw the special unit of troops sent out to get the material.

The same pattern was described by another, who was in the Maringue area in 1985 and 1986. He helped prepare fires to mark the airstrip, but only a special unit, of 60 soldiers who carried pistols but not other weapons, went to meet the airplane. The same interviewee, who was transferred to a company-level base in another area for 1987 to 1988, said 40 to 60 porters were sent back to Maringue each year to get supplies.

Two who were in Lugela and Momumbala districts of Zambézia during the 1985 to 1987 period referred to helicopter landings. One referred to a landing in June 1987; the other, less clear about dates but apparently referring to the period of the Renamo offensive in 1986, said that helicopters landed once every

two months.

With the exception of a few, who referred to Dakotas, the interviewees were not able to be specific about airplane types. Two who had been present in the Renamo bases in South Africa before Nkomati referred to the use of DC-3s (Dakota) and to C-130s. Fernando Machia, who was in the Renamo forces from February 1981 through to September 1988 that he had seen four-engine Dakotas (DC-4s) drop supplies in Gorongosa.

This multifaceted supply system is fully consistent with documents captured by government forces when the Renamo central base at Garágua in southern Manica province was taken in December 1981, and when its successor in the Gorongosa area was overrun in August 1985. Minutes from a meeting in late 1980 between Renamo representatives and South African officers in South Africa noted the difficulties in maintaining a high level of supplies by parachute drop, and indicated that 'the South Africans showed willingness to send monthly supplies as from 1981 but by sea'. In another meeting with a Renamo delegation on 28 November 1980, Colonel Charles van Niekerk 'spoke of the difficulty of restocks as the aircraft cannot carry too much weight'. He also recommended that they indicate 'two places where they can make the supply because it cannot be always made at the same place'.

The documents captured at Gorongosa, from the period December 1983 through to September 1984, provide more detail for the period immediately preceding and following the Nkomati Accord. The most revealing are entries from the diary of the secretary to Renamo President Dhlakama, which were later confirmed as genuine in remarks in parliament by South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha (Hansard, 6 February 1986). Botha, who the diaries imply was not informed by the military at the time (1984), specifically noted that 'the information tallies with the flights undertaken by the air force'.

An entry on 16 January 1984 notes that 'because of the commitment which the South Africans will make to Machel, the resupply for the first six months of 1984 will all be delivered in the first few months: 500 pallets in 25 flights in addition to the resupply for January 1984'. A marginal note indicated five drop zones in the south, seven in the centre and three in the north. The schedule for seven drops to specific areas are noted in an entry for 25 January. An entry on 11 February lists nine others, including one with two airplanes on 23 February. A list of contents in the 11 February entry includes 1 730 AK-47s and 4 279 boxes of AK-47 ammunition. A 13 February entry lists 900 AK-47s and 500 boxes of AK-47 ammunition destined for Zambézia. It also says 'Colonel Charlie guarantees to Renamo that even if an agreement is signed with Machel, they will still continue to send airplanes now and then'. On 20 February there is a reference to 'resupply sea route on the coast between Chinde and Beira at Culaima Bay on 9 February 1984'.

On 16 June 1984, Renamo President Dhlakama wrote in a letter to 'Friend Commander Charles' that 'we no longer have war material, mainly in the central and southern areas of our country. We appreciate that we received that last consignment but as soon as we unloaded we had to relieve all the regions in the central area... So we want to remind our friends of the pledge they gave us of keeping up support to us clandestinely'. In a reply on 20 June Colonel van

Niekerk asked Renamo to conserve material and promised to consult his superiors. A month later he sent a radio message promising the delivery of 26 tons beginning August 1 in 'the drop zone to the east of Inhanga'.

According to the diary, a Renamo delegation was taken by sea to South Africa on 9 August 1984, where they discussed the supply situation and other issues with South African officials, including Minister of Defence Magnus Malan, Military Intelligence Chief van der Westhuizen, Brigadier van Tonder and Colonel van Niekerk. They were told that a total of 14 air deliveries had been made from May to July, but the South Africans added that 'at this moment we have transport difficulties because we can't now use the C-130s, which are controlled by the Air Force, and we can't use the Navy because the information might leak'. They suggested that Renamo prepared airstrips in order for civilian aircraft to land. A diary entry for 29 August gives a schedule of six air deliveries from 31 August through to 25 October 1984. In a meeting on 6 September 1984, with General Viljoen, the Chief of Staff of the South African Defence force, as well as General van der Westhuizen, Brigadier van Tonder and Colonel van Niekerk, General Viljoen promised to supply Renamo with 'humanitarian aid' using Air Force C-130s.

The use of C-130s before Nkomati was cited in the author's interviews both by Paulo Oliveira and by a member of South Africa's special forces involved in training Renamo. But the specific references were to parachute drops of Mozambicans who had been trained as paratroopers in the months just before Nkomati, not to supply drops. Despite General Viljoen's promise, no specific evidence on the extent of use of C-130s in supply deliveries subsequent to March 1984 surfaced in the author's interviews.

The general patterns which emerged from the interviews and available documentary evidence suggest that Mozambican eyewitness accounts which occasionally appear in the Mozambican press are more significant than they are generally considered by foreign observers. From conversations with several Mozambican journalists who had been interviewing *amnistados* in 1988, the author concluded that the information from their interviews - most often for radio - only rarely appeared in adequate detail in the print media. In any case, few foreign analysts regularly follow the Mozambican press. Nor does the Mozambican government compile this information in a systematic way for public presentation. The following is an incomplete compilation of such reports in the last year, which make specific reference to arms deliveries.

- Horácio Taimo and Albert Rendiçao, who had been bodyguards for Renamo President Dhlakama until transferred to another area at the end of 1986, told Filemao Saveca, a radio journalist in Manica province, in June 1988 that the supply planes to Gorongosa brought uniforms as well as arms, and that the planes returned to South Africa with ivory and precious hardwood. (*Notícias*, 23 July 1988).
- Anuário Macume told a Mozambican journalist in Inhambane province, in August 1988, that he had taken part in a column carrying arms from the coast of Inhambane near Vilanculo in mid-1987. He said he was told they came from South Africa. (*Notícias*, 30 August 1988).

- Fernando Tepo told Swedish journalist Anders Nilsson in March 1988 in Beira that he had taken part in carrying a consignment of arms and ammunition from a beach site between Beira and the mouth of the Zambezi River in late December 1987 and early January 1988. It took three days and three nights to carry the material, he said, including ammunition, AK-47s, mines, shells for 60mm and 81mm mortars, medicines and blankets. (Radio Mozambique, 15 March 1988, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 18 March 1988).
- Julieta Jhone told Karl Maier of the London *Independent* in July that she and other porters had carried dark green ammunition boxes about 2 feet wide from the coast to the Inhamitanga area in March 1988. (*Independent*, 26 July 1988).
- Local administrator Eta Companhia, of Casa Banana in Gorongosa district, said in early June 1988 that local peasants fleeing Renamo areas the previous week had spoken of parachute drops by two Dakota aircraft in May at the Safrique base (a former game hunting camp) (*Noticias*, 11 June 1988).
- Isabel Jorge told Radio Mozambique in Manica on 20 November that she had last unloaded military supplies, uniforms and combat rations from a South African plane in Gorongosa in October 1988, the month before she escaped (Mozambique Information Agency, 30 November 1988).
- Moises Macaxaze told Radio Mozambique in Manica in February that he had last seen a South African plane resupplying Renamo on 12 November 1988, in Chibuto district in Gaza province (Mozambique Information Agency, 20 February 1989).

If the pattern of secrecy indicated by these diverse sources is accurate, it is probable that a regular flow of munitions could be successfully concealed, with only occasional embarrassments such as the documents capture in August 1985 and scattered reports from Mozambican eyewitnesses. Mozambique's coastline extends some 2500 kilometers. A small number of deliveries could elude the poorly equipped Mozambican authorities.

Organization and operations

According to the interviewees, Renamo is not, as is often portrayed, a loose collection of warlords and roving bands, but rather an army with a clear hierarchical structure and good command, control and communications (C3). The reports were consistent from interviewees from different parts of the country, and from rank-and-file soldiers as well as those with command experience.

The interviews indicate that the basic operational unit is the company, composed of approximately 100 to 150 men, generally grouped in one main base with smaller attached bases for special functions such as security and reconnaissance. Each company, with apparently few exceptions, is equipped with radio-transmission facilities and a communications officer who is in regular touch with the provincial base and indirectly with the Gorongosa headquarters base. Two or three companies make up a battalion, with some 450 men at full strength. A provincial base may have two or more battalions in its immediate

vicinity, sometimes dispersed in several bases within a few hours' march of each other. Each province is divided into two or more sectors. Recruits are kept in separate training bases attached to but not integrated with operational bases. A company is divided into platoons and sections, as well as 'groups' selected for specific operations. This pattern, if extrapolated to the national level, would give a total of approximately 20 000 Renamo soldiers, close to the estimate generally given in published sources.

One interviewee who spent nine years in Renamo said that until 1981 the highest rank in Renamo was battalion commander, except for President André Matsangaiza (until his death in October 1979) and President Afonso Dhlakama. Provincial commanders were appointed in 1982; provincial commanders and some others were given the rank of generals in 1983.

Paulo Oliveira said that the headquarters staff was located in South Africa until December 1983. He had lived in the base at the time. According to Oliveira, the general lines of strategy were planned by South African officials in conjunction with Renamo Secretary-General Orlando Cristina until his death in April 1983. The day-to-day command was in the hands of Lt Johan Hurter, an aide to Colonel Charles van Niekerk. Cristina's successor Evo Fernandes played a less direct role in military strategy, Oliveira said. President Dhlakama, who spent some of his time in South Africa and some at Gorongosa, also participated in the planning, but generally deferred to the South African officers.

In preparation for the Nkomati Accord, Oliveira said, the headquarters staff was divided into three regions (south, centre and north) and sent into Mozambique. HQ south and north were mobile, while HQ centre, at Gorongosa, also served as national headquarters. Six Renamo communications officers remained in South Africa to handle communications between Gorongosa and the South African special forces in Phalaborwa. An entry in the Gorongosa diaries for 24 February 1984 says that 'two Renamo men will be trained in ultra-secret communications between Renamo and Pretoria'.

Efficient radio communications seems to be critical for Renamo's capacity to organize its attacks over the wide expanse of rural Mozambique. Of the interviewees, only the two sector commanders and one who had been a communications officer had any information beyond noting whether or not their unit had a radio. One had been a sector communications officer in 1982-1983, with responsibility for the area between the Save and Buzi rivers, overlapping Manica and Sofala provinces. He was later demoted, but said that as far as he could tell, this pattern continued until June 1986 when he left Renamo. He was responsible for 21 radios in his sector, with orders to check in with each five times a day. The messages might be very brief, or include detailed reports of combat, with dates, location, dead and wounded, captured and other relevant information. He was then responsible for transmitting a summary to the central base in Gorongosa over a separate radio link. Messages were spelled out in Portuguese, with a simple word-letter-substitution code.

The practice of requiring detailed regular reports is also confirmed by the radio message diaries of Paulo Sitole (*Tempo*, 28 April 1985) and by Colopes Sitoi, who said that as intelligence officer he had to compile detailed reports of military operations.

The author spoke to no one with direct knowledge of the Gorongosa - South Africa radio link in recent years. But sources in Harare said that it was an advanced rapid frequency-hopping system which neither Mozambique nor Zimbabwe was able to monitor. The continued functioning of the link can be deduced from the up-to-date military communiques reaching the Lisbon office through South Africa. Paulo Oliveira said that until early 1988 the communications between Lisbon and Renamo were handled by the same Portuguese-speaking officers in the South African Defence Force that he had known in South Africa in 1983-1984. Chivaca Joao also asserted that these same communications links were operative as late as October 1988.

One interviewee, who had been in Renamo group occupying Caia in early 1987, said they had received advanced notice by radio that Zimbabwean and Mozambican troops were to attack the town. Renamo headquarters then instructed them to burn it down. This would seem to indicate sophisticated radio-monitoring capability on Renamo's part, and would be consistent with the statement of Paulo Oliveira that South Africa monitored Mozambican radio communications and passed useful information on to the Renamo headquarters.

The interviewees described a variety of military operations, although the author did not press for details. These included attacks on government military outposts, on villages and on towns, as well as ambushes on roads and railways, sabotage and missions specifically to abduct designated individuals or new recruits.

The officer corps of Renamo, according to the interviewees, included men from all areas of Mozambique. A few, in Zambézia province, said almost all the officers in their unit (counting platoon and section chiefs) were also from Zambézia. In general, however, the interviewees from all areas of the country said that the large majority (80 to 90%) of the commanders were Shona-speaking 'veterans', many from the initial groups trained in Rhodesia before 1980.

Among these commanders, at least, a common Shona ethnicity seems to have contributed to the coherence of the group. The historical political economy of Mozambique, with Maputo and the south oriented to South Africa and Beira oriented to Rhodesia, creates a possible basis for rivalry. And there is no doubt that the most prominent figures in the history of Frelimo's liberation struggle and of the post-independence government have been from the south rather than the centre. Chivaca Joao, in explaining his adherence to Renamo in Lisbon, cited the rivalry, and several of Renamo's exile leaders repeatedly stress this point. The regional disparities of economic development, moreover, are a major subject of internal discussions within the Mozambican government.

In late 1987 former Renamo commander Gimo Phiri split with Dhlakama, forming a new organization (UNAMO) based in Malawi. Both Paulo Oliveira and Chivaca Joao said non-Shona Phiri's resentment of the circle around Dhlakama contributed to the split.

This should not be simplistically understood as 'tribal' conflict, however. The rank-and-file and leadership of both Renamo and the Mozambican government contain Mozambicans of all ethnic groups. And the differences in composition can be in large part explained by geographical and chronological circumstances. Shona prominence among the Renamo commanders can be explained by the fact

that Rhodesia only targeted central Mozambique: the first several years of recruits, both voluntary and forced, therefore came from Shona areas. As a result of seniority, they became the 'veterans'.

Another group among the 'veterans', mentioned by the three long-term Renamo soldiers as well as two other interviewees, consisted of former prisoners who were released by Renamo from government prison camps. They included, apparently, a mix of common criminals and men who had deserted from the Frelimo army over the period 1968 to 1976 (that is, both before and after independence), as well as others imprisoned, rightly or wrongly, for breaches of military discipline or corruption. André Matsangaiza and Afonso Dhlakama both fall into this category, having been imprisoned for alleged embezzlement of military stores.

This group, according to these interviewees, included former Frelimo soldiers who spoke Macua, Makonde and other languages as well as Shona. According to Cole's history of the SAS, as many as 300 were taken from one camp, at Sacuze near Gorongosa, by André Matsangaiza. He had escaped from the camp in 1976 and later returned with Rhodesian assistance. One of the interviewees who had been in the training camp with these men said most were glad to be out of prison, but really didn't want to be in Renamo either. It was like being transferred from one prison to another, he said. Several interviewees, however, said this group was motivated by real bitterness and a desire for vengeance against Frelimo.

While almost all of the commanders were 'veterans' from before 1980, not all the veterans were commanders. Others were dispersed among the other combatants, or, in Maputo and Zambézia at least, grouped in special shock battalions. Several interviewees made special reference to so-called 'Grupos Limpa' ('Clean up Squads') of these battle-hardened veterans, who they said were responsible for most of the massacres and for internal executions within the Renamo forces. One of the interviewees who was in southern Mozambique, as well as Colopes Sitoi, said that in that area 'veterans' in each battle unit were responsible for monitoring other Renamo soldiers, with orders to kill if someone showed signs of deserting or hesitation in battle.

The presence of South African troops or advisers with Renamo was episodic rather than constant, according to the interviews. Most had heard of the presence of 'Boers' but only a few had seen them personally. The member of the South African special forces whom the author interviewed said that in 1982 to 1984 (before he was transferred to another unit), the standard pattern was to send a five-man group for two to three months, for special training courses, intelligence gathering or participation in specific actions. This group would normally be composed of two Afrikaners (the commander and a doctor) and three Africans in the special forces, one of Angolan origin, one of Zimbabwean origin and one of Mozambican origin. A diary entry in the Gorongosa documents for 16 January 1984, fits this pattern, speaking of a 'team' of South Africans to go to Zambézia at the end of January for training 100 instructors and 200 infantrymen.

One interviewee, in Maputo province, spoke of the regular arrival of South African 'visitors' by helicopter in the base until he escaped in mid-1988. The other most detailed reference in the interviews was to the period of the 1986 Renamo offensive in the Zambezi Valley. One interviewee said he was in a base

in Zambézia in 1985-1986 where there were black Malawian and South African as well as white South African instructors. He said the black instructors spoke Chichewa (a Malawian language), English and South African languages; some of the whites spoke Portuguese and others English. There were separate sections of the base for the whites, for the white South African soldiers with a commander named Kinyama. A man with no formal education, the interviewee was not able to be precise about dates or numbers, but was very clear that the languages were not Mozambican and that these non-Mozambicans were present in large numbers.

Scattered interviews by Radio Mozambique indicate the continuing presence of at least small numbers of South African advisers. In March 1988, Abilio Jangane told Radio Mozambique that eight black South Africans had been in a base near Furancungo in Tete province until late 1987. He escaped from the base shortly after they left, he said. In February 1988 former Renamo intelligence officer Luis Tomas told Radio Mozambique that four South African soldiers and one Malawian had been helping to construct an airfield at the Chadora base in Manica province, and were evacuated by helicopter shortly before government forces took the base at the end of 1987.

In November 1988 Juliao Muianga told Radio Mozambique that when he left a base near Catandica in Manica province in January, six Boers who had been in the base as instructors were still there. And Isabel Jorge, referring to a base near Gorongosa, said there were 17 South Africans in the base when she left in mid-November. In Zambézia a displaced peasant recently arrived from Renamo areas in Lugela district told the author in December that there were ten black soldiers in the Renamo base who only spoke English among themselves; he did not know where they were from but was sure they were not Mozambicans.

Leadership and international operations

Only two interviewees, Paulo Oliveira and Chivaca Joao, were able to give any details about Renamo's external leadership and operations. Their statements at press conferences in Maputo are already on public record, and overlap extensively with their comments to the author. The general lines of the historical record are available in published articles. And the proliferation of rumour, intrigue and disinformation in exile circles, with the involvement of private right-wing networks and intelligence agencies of three continents, provides ample reason for caution in conclusions about details. For all these reasons the author decided not to include extensive detail on this topic in this report.

Nevertheless, this account would be incomplete without a general picture of this level of Renamo. Regardless of the accuracy of the details concerning exile intrigue, the two interviews, combined with the lack of awareness among the other interviewees of any Renamo leadership other than President Dhlakama, confirm a wide gap between this exile milieu and the military operations inside Mozambique.

The initiative taken by the Rhodesian regime in pulling together the Mozambicans who became Renamo is well documented (See Johnson and Martin (1980), Fauvet (1984), Flower and Cole (1985), although accounts differ on some of the details of the relationships among the Rhodesian Central Intelligence

Organization (CIO), Rhodesian military units and the Portuguese and Mozambican exiles involved in Renamo's early years.

The intelligence operations by Ken Flower of the Rhodesian CIO apparently began as early as 1960, and were stepped up after Mozambican independence in 1975. Renamo's second secretary-general Evo Fernandes, in an 1984 interview (Johnson and Martin, 1988:6), said that the organization was named at a May 1977 meeting in Salisbury, attended by himself, Orlando Cristina, Dhlakama, Matsangaiza, Armando Khembo dos Santos and Leo Milas. Both dos Santos and Milas are Kenyan residents, dos Santos of Mozambican origin, Milas a black American who passed himself off as a Mozambican and infiltrated Frelimo in the early 1960s.

Both Orlando Cristina, of Portuguese origin, and Evo Fernandes, of Indian origin, were associated prior to independence with the Beira enterprises of industrialist Jorge Jardim. The role of Jardim himself up to his death in Gabon in 1982, who was involved with the colonial counter-insurgency commandos and ran a quasi-official secret police group, remains obscure.

The linkage between South Africa and Renamo's external offices was controlled principally by successive Renamo strong-men Orlando Cristina and Evo Fernandes, who coordinated their actions with South African Colonel Cornelius (Charles) van Niekerk. Colonel van Niekerk, promoted to brigadier sometime after 1985, was South African military attaché in Nampula in the early 1970s, monitoring the limited involvement of South Africa in Portugal's counter-insurgency campaign. According to Chivaca Joao, van Niekerk speaks both Portuguese and Macua. After Fernandes' death in April 1988, the Lisbon coordination with South Africa was handled by Asêncio Gomes de Freitas. Chivaca Joao said. Gomes de Freitas, of Portuguese origin, was manager of the Boror plantations in Zambézia before independence.

Renamo also had, from 1982, a National Council composed of both political and military leaders. This council met in South Africa in mid-1983, for example, after Cristina's death (allegedly at South African instigation) required the appointment of a new secretary-general. According to Oliveira, who attended the meeting, there was considerable rivalry but Evo Fernandes was chosen because he had the support of Dhlakama and of the South Africans.

The National Council has met on an irregular basis since then, most recently in October 1988 in Heidelberg in the German Federal Republic. Apart from Dhlakama and a few of his commanders, whose transport out of Mozambique for the meetings was arranged by the South Africans, all the members of this council are Mozambicans who have been in exile since the sixties or early 1970s, living in Malawi, Kenya, Portugal, the German Federal Republic and the United States. According to Oliveira and Chivaca Joao, only a few of them ever visited Renamo areas inside Mozambique.

The relationship of these exiles to right-wing circles and intelligence agencies in their countries of exile has led to a complex pattern of competition and cooperation between these sources of support and South African military intelligence. Oliveira and Chivaca Joao, as well as articles in the London-based *Africa Confidential*, said that it was such rivalries that led to the killings of Evo Fernandes and of several Renamo members in Malawi. The delivery of com-

munications equipment to Renamo from US right-wing groups, they said, was an effort to establish communications links between Dhlakama and outside supporters other than the channel controlled by South Africa (see also *Washington Post*, 31 July 1988). But South Africa was unwilling to give up its monopoly, they said.

In so far as the international efforts do not challenge its control, South Africa probably welcomes them. They can provide a plausible context for official South African denials. But none of the interviewees made any reference to military supplies or cooperation except that with the South African Defence Force and (in the context of the 1986 offensive) with Malawi. The interviews provide no substantiation for reports in the international press alleging that South African support for Renamo has been replaced by private right-wing networks in South Africa or elsewhere.

The interviewees were not in a position to observe at what level in the South African government the decisions concerning this operation were taken. Judgments about the plausibility of private operations, rogue operations by soldiers or ex-soldiers acting out of the chain of command, or disagreements within the South African state must rely on other data and analysis.

It is clear from the interviews, however, that there was no dramatic change in the pattern of supplies, command or communications at any time from the assumption of South African control in 1980 until the end of 1988.

The Nkomati Accord of 1984 was described by combatants present before and after the Accord as producing a greater emphasis on secrecy, and slightly less regularity of supplies, but no basic change in the pattern of relationships. Continued South African involvement through late 1984, in violation of the Accord, was irrefutably documented by the Gorongosa documents.

Some observers now argue that South African assertions of non-support for Renamo should be believed because no recent 'smoking gun' evidence has been uncovered. The author's interviews and Mozambican eyewitness reports, together with South Africa's well-documented past record of deception, make it hard to accept such an argument as credible.

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