FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
10 March 1988

BLACK AMERICAN FACT-FINDING DELEGATION RETURNS FROM TWO-WEEK TOUR OF MOZAMBIQUE

13-Member Delegation Viewed Sites of RENAMO Attacks, Interviewed Dislocated Civilians, Met With FRELIMO President Chissano During Tour Of Premier "Frontline State"

BOSTON -- A 13-person "citizens' delegation" of African-Americans has returned from a two-week fact-finding tour of the strife- and famine-torn southern African nation of Mozambique.

The fact-finding mission was spurred by the persistent reports by journalists and relief workers of the continuing massacre of defenseless Mozambican civilians by the South African paramilitary group, RENAMO, and the failure of the Reagan Administration to honor the stipulations of the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 and condemn the destabilization campaign of the P.W. Botha government.

The delegation, which included representatives of religious, medical, anti-apartheid, and relief and development organizations, travelled throughout three of Mozambique's ten provinces; held meetings with President Joaquim Chissano and other top officials of the FRELIMO government; and interviewed civilian victims of RENAMO human rights atrocities.

The delegation, in collaboration with U.S. Senator John Kerry (D-MA; national anti-apartheid organizations; and and members of the Congressional Black Caucus, is scheduled to hold a press conference in Washington D.C. on 17 March 1988. At that time, the delegation will present its photographic documentation, results of its interviews and meetings, and recommendations to the Congress, State Department, and the White House regarding emergency assistance to Mozambique.

For information re: location of the press conference or scheduling of interviews with delegation members, please call Mr. Mackie McLeod, delegation spokesperson, at (617) 482-3170 or (617) 427-4907.
MOZAMBIQUE FACT-FINDING DELEGATION
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BACKGROUNDER

ABOUT RENAMO

Since the late 1970's, RENAMO "armed bandits", acting as a proxy guerilla unit for the South African Defense Force, have waged a devastating campaign of assassination, mutilation, and robbery against the rural villagers of Mozambique that has depopulated almost 40% of Southern Africa's poorest nation while provoking "man-made" famine and the dislocation of 6.5 of Mozambique's 14 million people, according to U.N. and relief agency sources. Today, after a 12-year "war of attrition", RENAMO's estimated 12-20,000 guerillas, supervised by South African military officers and British mercenaries, have raped, mutilated, and killed or wounded as many as 100,000 people: in 1987 alone, more than 1500 defenseless civilians were massacred by the bandits.

RENAMO has specifically singled out rural health centers, schools, and the relief and service personnel and equipment that support them as targets of their destabilization campaign. Since 1985, more than 700 health centers and 1800 schools, serving millions of women and children, have been destroyed in RENAMO attacks: roughly 200 relief agency vehicles (12 of them from CARE), carrying emergency food supplies, have been blown up.

ABOUT THE ANTI-APARTHEID ACT OF 1986

The Act (PL 99-440) requires that the President issue a report on the extent to which South Africa has made progress toward ending the system of apartheid and establishing a non-racial democracy in South Africa.

The Act requires that, "if the President determines that significant progress has not been made...the President shall include...a recommendation on which...additional measures should be imposed." The law states that the measure of such progress is that South Africa must: repeal the State of Emergency Decree of 1986; respect justice under law for citizens of all races; release all political prisoners and trade union leaders; permit free participation in the political process for all groups; establish a timetable for the elimination of all apartheid laws; negotiate with representatives of all racial groups the future political system in South Africa; and end military and paramilitary activities aimed at neighboring states (the so-called "Frontline States" of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, Zambia, and Botswana).

On 2 October 1987, President Reagan issued a report which stated "that no significant progress has been made toward dismantling apartheid over the past year." Although the Anti-Apartheid Act requires that the President recommend stricter sanctions against South Africa if the pre-conditions have not been met, the President's report does not call for new or stricter sanctions.

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MOZAMBIQUE FACT-FINDING DELEGATION
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DELEGATION MEMBERS

Mr. Mackie McLeod, Regional Coord., Mozambique Support Network
Exec. Committee, AFSC/New England Region
Communications Dir., ACLU of Massachusetts

Dr. Loretta Williams, Senior Staff, Unitarian Universalist Assoc.

Dr. David Hodges, physician, Beth Israel Hospital

Rev. Graylan Ellis-Hagler, Disciples of Christ Overseas Ministry
pastor, Church of the United Community

Betty Richardson, Education Campaign Coordinator, Oxfam America

Kevin Blackistone, journalist, Dallas Morning News

Zubaida Price-McLeod, Peace Ed. Comm., AFSC/New England Region

Fahamisha Patricia Brown, coord., TransAfrica/Free South Africa

Paul Goodnight, muralist, Vietnam veteran activist

Don West, photojournalist

Elba Vargas, private sector entrepreneur, Christian activist

Kathy Eason, Youth Empowerment Comm., AFSC/New England Region

Ulisses Goncalves, (Cape Verdean) teacher, Madison Park H.S.

NOTE: With the exception of Mr. Blackistone, all of the delegation members live and work in Massachusetts.