Renamo Watch

"We Have to Transform Invisible Networks of Support for Renamo into Exposed and Highly Visible Networks."

-Pexy Nesbit, Author of Apartheid in Our Livingrooms

Exposing U.S. Support in Order to Help Fight Renamo Atrocities

February, 1990

Renamo:
Externally Funded Bandits Terrorize Mozambique

"I was on my way back to school after the holiday" said João Dedeus, a student at the Agricultural Institute in Chimoio, "when they attacked the bus with machine-guns. It crashed, and they shot at us as we climbed out. The "bandits" stole clothes, shoes, watches—anything. I was hurt so I was slow, and they did this' he said, pointing to his face. A big gash had been cut up the side of his face, and his eye plucked out. 'Then they set fire to the bus.' At least ten people were killed in the original machine-gunning and crash, and three more were burned to death in the bus." --from Joseph Hanlon's Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire

The "bandits" who attacked and burned the bus João Dedeus was travelling in are part of the South African sponsored Renamo bandits, whose atrocities have been denounced by even the U.S. State Department as constituting "one of the most brutal holocausts against ordinary human beings since World War II". Renamo has virtually no support within Mozambique and has always been armed, trained, and supported by external forces trying to destroy Mozambican independence.

Renamo has its origins in the Rhodesian (pre-independence Zimbabwe) Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), whose former head Ken Flowers saw the possibility of creating a mercenary force able to disrupt Mozambique's fragile economy and undermine Mozambique's efforts to support guerillas fighting for Zimbabwean Independence. From 1976 onward, Rhodesian security officials, working with South Africans, recruited Portuguese settlers, black and white mercenaries, secret police agents, and former African members of elite special forces of the Portuguese colonial army who fled to Rhodesia after Mozambique's independence in 1975. The CIO provided arms, logistical support and bases along the Mozambique border. It sent Renamo bandits repeatedly into Mozambique to burn villages, plunder agricultural cooperatives, attack railroad lines and road traffic, disrupt commerce, and raid refugee camps.

With the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement in late 1979 guaranteeing the end of minority rule in Rhodesia, Renamo activities declined. When Mozambique captured the main Renamo base in Gorongosa in October 1979, and the Sitatonga in June 1980 Renamo was virtually destroyed. At this point, however, the South African 'Special Forces' took over support for Renamo—bases were set up along the Transvaal border with Mozambique, and Renamo radio began to broadcast from the Transvaal. Since the South Africans took over, Renamo has become dramatically successful in paralyzing transport routes, destroying economic targets and terrorizing the Mozambican population.

Since 1982, over 100,000 people have been killed as a direct result of Renamo activity. Hundreds of thousands more have been killed by a combination of drought and displacement caused by the Renamo war. Over 4 million people, 25% of the population, have been forced to become refugees. Over 30% of the health care posts have been destroyed, 36% of the schools, 1,300 trucks, tractors and buses have been destroyed, 164 train locomotives and 352 train wagons destroyed.

Although the U.S. Government does not openly fund Renamo, an increasing number of private sources in the U.S. do! Right-wing fundamentalism is endangering freedom in Mozambique as well as in the U.S. It is essential that we identify and combat these forces.
Renamo's U.S. Support

Western support for Renamo and the desire of certain Western governments to eliminate FRELIMO take place, more and more, within a privatized setting.

Renamo's main foreign backers are South Africa and former colonists in Portugal who want to retain their foothold in Mozambique. But there are others. In the U.S., the Washington based Heritage Foundation is probably the most powerful. It has widespread connections with the New Right and funds several bodies in Europe as well as in the U.S., including the Mozambique Research Centre which lobbies the U.S. Congress to get Renamo recognized as a respectable political opposition.

Thomas Schaaf, a former missionary to Zimbabwe, now serves as Renamo spokesman in Washington. During his stay in Zimbabwe, Schaaf was an active member of a small evangelical group, Mutare's One Way Christian Center, which has a neighboring mission program in Mozambique. In that capacity, Schaaf regularly received military messages from Renamo President Alfonso Dhlakama. Ian Grey, an Australian convicted in 1987 of illegally entering Mozambique and aiding Renamo, reports that in at least one of those messages, he learned that Renamo was seeking American ground-to-air missiles.

The Dallas-based Christ for the Nations, Inc. provides financial support to the Shekinah Ministries the organization which Ian Grey worked for, and which is headed by Michael Howard, an associate of Thomas Schaaf.

Jack Wheeler and Robert MacKenzie are writers and activists from the far right mercenary magazine Soldier of Fortune. MacKenzie is listed as "contributing editor--unconventional operations" at Soldier of Fortune and is head of the pro-Renamo lobby, Freedom Inc. Wheeler, who heads the Freedom Research Foundation, once went to U.S. Marine Colonel Oliver North to seek U.S. government support for Renamo.

Louisiana businessman James Blanchard III reportedly gives Renamo monthly supplies worth about $3,000.

Television evangelist Pat Robertson, (Republican Party presidential candidate in 1988) has raised money for Renamo and has broadcast pro-Renamo material on his syndicated program, the 700 Club.

Christian Emergency Relief Team (CERT), a Carlsbad, California based mission group which has funded the contras in Nicaragua for years, also is supporting Renamo. Six CERT members were recently arrested in northern Mozambique for illegal entry. While the Mozambican government quickly released them in an effort to avoid conflict with Washington or Pretoria, many signs point to active CERT support for Renamo.

Other U.S. Based Individuals and Organizations that support Renamo:
- About My Father's Business, Inc., Lexington, KY
- American Freedom International; Dennis Hoffman, Director
- Americans For Tax Reform, Grover Norquist, President
- David Balsiger, President RAMBOC (Restore a More Benevolent Order Coalition) and Publisher, Family Protection Scoreboard, Costa Mesa CA
- Bashore International, linked to American Constitution Committee, Director: Judy Campbell Bashore
- Pat Buchanan, syndicated columnist and White House Advisor for President Reagan
- The Believers Church, Coalinga, CA
- Charles Breeze, Jacksonville, FL
- Coalitions for America
- Conservative Action Foundation (CAF)
- The Conservative Caucus, Howard Phillips, National Director
- Cuban American National Foundation
- End-Time Handmaidens, Jasper, Arkansas
- Free Congress Research and Education Foundation; Connie Marshner
- Free the Eagle, Daniel Elynn and Kristina Arriaga
- Freedom, Inc. Valley Center, CA
- Freedom Research Foundation, LaJolla, CA
- Friends of Mozambique, Arturo Vilankulu
- Fund for Africa's Future, Director: Phillips Nicolaides, from White House NSC staff

If you have any information about any of these organizations, please contact us.