

At the end of February 1979 the existing convoy system for road travel and transport was extended south of Salisbury so as to begin only 45 miles from the capital, where a dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed on the Kopje (a hill overlooking the city).

The Rhodesian military authorities continued to make regular announcements on the loss of life caused by the war, from which it appeared that during the first few months of 1979 casualties reached about 1,000 people killed every month. According to official figures released on Dec. 20, 1978, the first six years of the war had resulted in the death of 12,039 people (most of them Blacks) [see also page 29442]. The number of guerrillas present inside Rhodesia was then officially estimated at between 10,000 and 12,000.

On the other hand the ZAPU wing of the Patriotic Front alone claimed on Jan. 3, 1979, to have, during 1978, killed 2,913 Rhodesian soldiers and agents and to have wounded 4,827 others. It also claimed to have shot down 53 aircraft (including helicopters) and to have destroyed 395 military vehicles, 284 economic and strategic installations, 49 bridges, 213 railway wagons, 12 locomotives and 201 pylons and telecommunications installations. (Claims of this nature were regularly dismissed by the Rhodesian authorities as unfounded.)

Among Whites killed by guerrillas were two Roman Catholic missionaries—Fr Gerhard Pieper (38), a Jesuit from Berlin, killed at the Kangaire mission (northern Rhodesia) on Dec. 26, 1978, and Fr Martin Hollenstein (44), abducted and killed on Jan. 1, 1979. (The latter's killer was on Jan. 5 reported to have been shot dead by government troops.)

Guerrilla attacks on power and transport installations increased notably during February 1979.

On Feb. 9 guerrillas attacked a fuel depot at Bindura (55 miles north-east of Salisbury) and on Feb. 13 rockets were fired at Salisbury power station, whereafter police killed a Black guerrilla. Responsibility for an attack on Salisbury international airport on Feb. 19 (when shells exploded outside the airport's perimeter without causing any casualties) was claimed by ZIPRA on Feb. 20 and by ZANLA on Feb. 21.

On Feb. 12, 1979, a Rhodesia Air Viscount airliner on a flight from Kariba to Salisbury was shot down (by a Sam-7 ground-to-air missile used by guerrillas, as officially confirmed in Salisbury on Feb. 21) and all 59 persons on board were killed. (For earlier shooting down of a Viscount airliner on Sept. 3, 1978, see pages 29440-41.)

Mr Nkomo said on Feb. 14 that the aircraft had been shot down "by mistake" as it had been thought to be carrying Lt.-Gen. Peter Walls, the Rhodesian Commander Combined Operations, "and 21 military aides". In fact, however, Gen. Walls had been on a second airliner which had taken off from Kariba 15 minutes after the first.

Another Rhodesian airliner was shot at on the same route on Feb. 14.

On Feb. 16 it was announced that South African Airways was withdrawing its twice-weekly Boeing 747 service between Salisbury and London (which had constituted the last remaining direct air link between the Rhodesian capital and Europe), having already ceased its twice-weekly flights between Johannesburg and the Victoria Falls.

Mr William Irvine, joint Minister of Transport, said on Feb. 21 (when he confirmed the use of a Sam-7 missile for shooting down the Viscount) that the British Government under Mr Callaghan (who had on Feb. 13 condemned the shooting-down of the Rhodesian airliner as "the latest in a series of barbaric acts which . . . have not been confined to one side") was "directly responsible" for the increase in terrorism and the loss of hundreds of lives by having "increased the flow of arms to Zambia in order that the terrorist bases be better protected and that the terrorists themselves be better equipped". He warned Britain that terrorism was "infectious" and that it could be only a matter of time before British aircraft themselves became the targets of air piracy by the Irish Republican Army or the Palestine Liberation Organization.

On Feb. 22 Air Rhodesia announced the termination of all its flights to and from the Wankie Game Park (a tourist attraction in north-western Rhodesia) as well as revised schedules for all flights to and from Kariba and the Victoria Falls.

Rhodesian Raids on Targets in Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana and Angola

Following the Rhodesian raids into neighbouring countries described on pages 29441-42, further such raids were carried out by Rhodesian forces between December 1978 and March 1979.

On Dec. 11 the Mozambican Ministry of Defence announced that on the previous day Rhodesian aircraft had bombed military barracks near the port of Beira, killing 26 persons and wounding 73 others; that two Rhodesian fighter-bombers had been shot down; that napalm had been used in Rhodesian raids on Tete Province; and that other targets inside Mozambique had been bombed between Nov. 29 and Dec. 8.

From Lusaka (Zambia) it was reported that Rhodesian troops had on Dec. 21-22 raided a Zambian Army training school near Kabwe, where about 50 people had been killed. In Rhodesia it was stated that in a raid on a "terrorist" base in Zambia on Dec. 22 Rhodesian troops had "rescued" 31 Black Rhodesian soldiers and civilians captured by the "terrorists".

On Jan. 8 the Government of Botswana stated that a force of 100 Rhodesian soldiers had attacked a Botswana Defence Force camp but had withdrawn after a brief battle, in which no casualties were caused on the Botswana side.

On Feb. 17 Rhodesian aircraft raided ZIPRA camps near Livingstone in Zambia; according to Zambian sources no persons were killed and only two were injured in this raid.

On Feb. 19 Rhodesian aircraft bombed and strafed a storage complex in the Chimoio area in Mozambique.

On Feb. 23 Rhodesian aircraft attacked two ZIPRA camps near Lusaka, one of which Zambians described as a refugee transit camp at Nampundwe and the other as a ZAPU military camp, whereafter Mr Nkomo said that 18 persons had been killed and 122 wounded.

On Feb. 26 Rhodesian aircraft for the first time attacked what in Rhodesia was called "a very large ZIPRA terrorist training camp" at Vila de Boma, south of Luso in Angola (more than 600 miles from Rhodesia's border). According to Rhodesian sources this base had housed at least 3,000 guerrillas trained by Cubans and East Germans. The Angolan Government announced on Feb. 28 that almost 200 persons, including 14 civilians, had been killed and nearly 1,000 injured. (Allegations made by the Angolan Government about the use of South African Mirage aircraft were denied in Pretoria, where it was pointed out that Mirage fighters could not have covered the distance involved.)

On Feb. 28 it was reported that nationalist guerrillas had mistaken two Zambian Air Force fighters for Rhodesian aircraft and had shot them down.

On March 1 "specific buildings" said to house ZANLA forces at a Mozambican army camp at Mutarare (in Tete Province, about 130 miles from the Rhodesian border) were attacked by Rhodesian aircraft.

On March 3 Zambian sources said that five women had been killed and two injured by Rhodesian forces in south-eastern Zambia.

On March 12 Rhodesian aircraft attacked, according to a Rhodesian announcement, an arms depot at Chokwe (or Chocue, formerly Vila Trigo Morães) and a ZANLA headquarters and barracks at Barragem (in Gaza Province, Mozambique); the Mozambique authorities stated on the next day that 16 people had been killed and seven wounded in these raids.

On March 16 the military high command in Salisbury announced that an air strike had been carried out against a ZANLA arms, ammunition and explosives dump at Dondo (25 miles from Beira and 160 miles from the Rhodesian border).

On March 17 further Rhodesian air strikes were carried out on guerrilla bases in the Chimoio area (about 70 miles inside Mozambique).

President Machel of Mozambique stated on Jan. 6 that the mounting bombing attacks by Rhodesian aircraft were seriously disrupting his country's transportation and distribution system. In a statement issued on the same day the Government of Mozambique listed targets hit in four of the country's 10 provinces since early December 1978, from which it appeared inter alia that coal exports from the country's biggest mine at Moatize had been cut off and life had become dangerous for foreign experts working in central and north-western areas of Mozambique. (On Feb. 1 it was reported that some of the attacks referred to had been made by "enemy agents" belonging to a Rhodesian-backed "Free Africa" group intent upon overthrowing the Machel Government.)

Mr Smith's Attitude to the Situation in Rhodesia

Between January and March 1979 Mr Ian Smith—who was still officially the Prime Minister although he was also one of the four members of the Executive Council set up under the internal agreement—made a number of statements reflecting his anxiety at the worsening situation in Rhodesia.

On Jan. 22 he disclosed that the Government of South Africa had made "a very generous agreement" with the Rhodesian Government