

Figure 4: Warning sign at Catuane close to the South African border, 2003
The sign reads: Warning Land Mines!



Photograph by Wayne Matthews

CHAPTER FOUR

DESPERATE CROSSINGS:

THE WAR THROUGH THE EYES OF A BORDERLANDER

This area has been over the years characterised by the presence of elephants, and the community had learned to live with them, until the civil war broke out in Mozambique. During the war in Mozambique, our neighbours started to harass elephants in Mozambique, and those that escaped fled to join the flocks in Tembe. Whilst we appreciated the increase of elephants in the area, there was a problem in that the most of these *immigrating* elephants were wounded, been harassed, and had narrowly escaped death in many instances. As a result of this, these elephants were unfortunately very aggressive and unfriendly towards the local community, unlike our own herds. These elephants from Mozambique started harassing community members around this area.

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This chapter presents a micro-analysis of the Mozambican war as it played out in the southern Mozambique/ South African borderlandscape. I argue that, in contrast to a macro-analysis of the war that suggests the borderlandscape became disunited during the war, a micro-analysis of the war highlights the union that stretches across the border. During the war the northern side of the borderlandscape became de-populated as Mozambicans sought refuge south of the border. Old ties of kinship and shared ancestry were invoked to emphasise the unity between immigrating refugees and their kinsmen in South Africa. In this manner the war strengthened the social ties linking people in the borderlandscape.

¹ This is an excerpt of a speech delivered by Inkosi Tembe at the Integrated Development Plan Workshop held at Tembe Elephant Park in September 2003. Although Inkosi Tembe's speech refers particularly to elephants coming across the border during the Mozambican War, his remarks can be extrapolated to include the feelings many South Africans have for Mozambicans who crossed the border during the war. Compare in this regard Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) who illustrate how fears of alien plant invasion were used in the media and by government as a metaphor for fears of illegal migrants in Cape Town.

Tragedy: the borderlandscape during the war

From the literature it is apparent that borderlandscapes are frequently contested spaces and militarised environments, and are often profoundly affected by warfare (see Donnan & Wilson 1999:63-86). Hence residents of borderlandscapes experience war in a very particular and unique way.

McGregor (1998:38) argues that, in the case of the Mozambican war, operations:

depended critically on the space provided by the international borders: the border allowed RENAMO to develop international supply networks, and facilitated liaison with the South African military, with supporters in the refugee camps and among self settled refugees, as well as providing access to important informal markets in South Africa and Swaziland.

By the time that war escalated in the southern border regions there was already discontent amongst local people towards the FRELIMO government. RENAMO was able to play on this discontent to garner support amongst the local people. This supports Geffray's (1990) argument that RENAMO, although it was initially a mere instrument of the Rhodesian government, gradually became a popular (peasant) organisation. Geffray (1990) sees an intimate link between the rise of RENAMO and FRELIMO's disregard for traditional authority and custom. FRELIMO's militancy against chiefs and its disregard of local authority structures angered many local people who in return started to support RENAMO.

In the southern borderland district of Matutuine it was especially FRELIMO's villagisation programme that elicited popular opposition. Like other border areas in Mozambique, Matutuine was prioritised for rural socialisation because it was perceived as particularly vulnerable to subversive actions. However, by 1979 Maputo's district and provincial officials recognised that villagisation in this area

would fail because ‘Matutuine’s sandy soils were readily salinated and often only suited to shifting cultivation. In the villages that were created, officials noted hunger, profound economic problems and cross border flight’ (McGregor 1998:42-43).

Southern Mozambique did not escape the cruelties, atrocities and the attacks on civilian populations that are a distinctive feature of contemporary warfare. The interviews I conducted in southern Mozambique show that RENAMO initially embodied popular discontent against the FRELIMO government. However, many informants noted that RENAMO soon began to terrorise the countryside. Most peoples’ recollections of RENAMO comprise horrific tales of bandits (*skebengas*²) who raped³ and tortured villagers, stole their food and killed their cattle. Constant fear of attacks by RENAMO became an intimate part of people’s lives.

Antonios Ngubande told me how he and his father hid in the forest behind their home while RENAMO soldiers raped his mother and sister inside his father’s hut. When they finished raping his mother, the soldiers forced her to kill all the family’s chickens and to cook it for them. The soldiers slept in his father’s hut that night and repeatedly raped his sister. When they left the next morning, they took with them all the fish Antonios’ father had salted and dried, all his palm wine and the little bit of money they had in the house.

Antonios was fortunate to escape the bandits. In other cases, boys were rounded-up by RENAMO soldiers and forced to live with them in their bush-camps.⁴ These boys were taught to operate weapons, learned to smoke and drink with the

² Zulu word that means criminal or thug.

³ During the War RENAMO used rape and other forms of sexual violence as weapons of terror and intimidation. Husbands and children were forced to watch soldiers the rape their wives and mothers. People also tell of husbands that were used as mattresses, being forced to lie on the ground, while soldiers raped their wives on top of them.

⁴ Recruitment into RENAMO was often far less than voluntary. An estimate suggests that up to ninety per cent of RENAMO’s troops were kidnapped and forcefully trained to become soldiers (Nordstrom 1997:50).

soldiers and joined them in their looting campaigns. Petros Zikude, who lived in Matutuine throughout the war, was proud to tell me how he became a *skebenga*. He related that when he was twelve years old RENAMO soldiers took him, his brother and his older sister from their home early one morning. His sister performed domestic duties at the army camp. She cooked food, fetched water and firewood and slept with older soldiers when they became drunk at night. Petros said that his sister, who died within a few months of their capture, always tried to fight off the sexual advances of the soldiers, but she was, 'like a cow caught to be slaughtered... no matter how hard she fought the soldiers always got their way'. Petros also remembers how RENAMO commanders ordered him to kill one of his own relatives during a raid on a small fishing village at one of the bigger lakes in Matutuine. He walked into a house and was stirred when the household head recognised him and called him *mshana* (my sister's son). The old man pleaded with Petros to leave him in peace and to respect his belongings. Petros' commander got angered by the old man's incessant pleas. He told the old man that the only family Petros has are his brothers with whom he fights. The commander accused the old man of being a government informant and ordered Petros to shoot him. Petros was saddened by the experience, but did not give it much thought.

The population of Matutuine were systematically terrorised during the war and forced to leave the area. This was all part of RENAMO's plan to make the area ungovernable and to use the area as a free-movement terrain. In trying to accomplish this they fought a 'dirty war' against the local population, instilling in them a fear of what might happen if they aligned themselves with the FRELIMO government. Some of these atrocities committed by RENAMO are described in more detail below where I analyse the flight of refugees from Matutuine to South Africa.

Flight: escaping the warzone

Comparing aerial photos from 1975 with aerial photos from 1991 confirms oral evidence from informants that the Mozambican side of the borderland became de-populated during the war (see Appendices C, D F, G and H). McGregor (1998:51) states that the borderland areas around Zitundo, which were 'liberated' by RENAMO, became a de-populated no-man's land traversed by armies from both sides. In 2000 I conducted a questionnaire-based survey in the Matutuine district in southern Mozambique. Of the two hundred people interviewed, who currently live in the Mozambican borderland, only fifty-four (twenty-six per cent) lived in the borderland during the war. Fifty-eight interviewees lived in South Africa, thirteen in Swaziland and two in Zimbabwe. A total of 129 interviewees lived in Mozambique during the war, the majority of them, however, in Maputo (see Table 1). This clearly illustrates the depopulation of the southern Mozambican borderland that took place during the Mozambican war. Dominy (1986) states that along the KwaZulu-Natal border with Mozambique,

cross-border movement has been restricted by both the South African and Mozambique governments and in 1979 several people were killed by landmines⁵ laid on the Mozambique side of the border. The South African police and military presence in the areas has also increased considerably (p.91).

⁵ Large stretches of farmable land in Mozambique are unusable because of landmines. Human Rights Watch Africa reports that 'perhaps the most devastating use of land mines was the random dissection of mines in fields and along access paths to stop peasants from producing food.' Mines manufactured in 15 different countries were used by both sides in the fighting, accelerating a devastating famine cycle in the 1980s that sent a huge refugee exodus across the borders with South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi (UN 2002).

Table 1: Places in Mozambique where sampled individuals lived during the war, Matutuine, 2000.

Place Name	No
Bella Vista	2
Boane	1
Cabo del Gado	1
Catembe	1
Catuane	17
Gala	4
Gaza	8
Inhambane	6
Mahau	1
Manicha	3
Maputo	45
Nampula	1
Ponta do Oura	2
Ponta	
Malongane	1
Salamanga	18
Xuxa	1
Zitundo	12
Other	5
Total	129

According to South African Police officers stationed in the area at that time, there were even efforts to electrify the boundary fence. This, for some reason, did not work. Instead, the army planted sisal all along the boundary fence to prevent people from crossing (see Figure 5). This is a technique used by local people throughout Maputaland. Sisal planted in close proximity creates an impenetrable wall. However, because elephants, who roamed freely in the area, kept breaking through the sisal wall, the plan never succeeded⁶. The fence remained a mere three-strand, three-foot high wire construction, although the increase in soldiers along the border made it

⁶ The last free-ranging elephants in South Africa were only fenced in after 1983 with the proclamation of the Tembe Elephant Park.

difficult for local people to cross. In this period crossings from South Africa to Mozambique came to all but a complete standstill.

Figure 5: Sisal planted along the Mozambique/ South Africa border, 2001



Photograph by the author

Most South Africans who crossed the border, were not residents of the borderland, but were rather members of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, the armed wing of the ANC. According to Hennop and McLean (2001:71), this border contained many of the main transit routes used by the liberation movements for smuggling weapons into South Africa. Weapons and ammunition were smuggled through Mozambique into KwaNgwanase (Manguzi) and from there it was transported to Empangeni and Durban. Until the late 1980s, when armed conflict between Inkatha and the ANC escalated in KwaZulu-Natal, very few locally resident individuals were involved in this form of border crossing. Apart from the ANC smuggling weapons into South Africa, RENAMO also smuggled weapons and other supplies from South Africa into

Mozambique, sometimes with the aid of the South African Defence Force, and, according to certain informants, the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources.⁷

As the war escalated in Matutuine, some people sought refuge at the FRELIMO base at Zitundo. But when RENAMO liberated⁸ Zitundo, most people fled south. Their proximity to the international border allowed people an option of escape. Englund (2002) illustrates how people in the Mozambique/ Malawi borderland moved into Malawi during the war for safety, while McGregor (1994) illustrates similar experiences along the Mozambique/ Swaziland border. This option to exit the warzone was not open to people who lived deeper inland and in the more central areas of Mozambique (Magaia 1988; Nordstrom 1997).

Because of their social relationships across the international border, some borderlanders who fled southern Mozambique could rely on ties of kinship or friendship to secure a place to live on the South African side of the border. Others would just cross the border and beg for help. Chief (*induna*) Sigodi Tembe of Mbangweni, a ward on the South African side of the borderland (see Map 4), remembers many families coming from Mozambique asking for land to settle on. Josef Khambule, acting chief at KwaMshudu, an area close to Zitundo on the South African side of the border (see Map 4), gave similar accounts of families and

⁷ An informant who claims to have smuggled weapons into South Africa for the ANC in the 1980s, said that the South African government used the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources as a front for getting weapons to RENAMO. This informant also alleges that the South African government used the infrastructure of the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources to train Inkatha youth armies at a base near Mkhuze in Ingwavuma and to procure weapons for Inkatha.

⁸ RENAMO claimed that the areas they dominated were 'liberated' since the 'oppressive' government were no longer in control of these areas. In these areas RENAMO forced the local people to provide them with food and water and sometimes took wives from the local population for work and sex, while young men and kids were forcefully recruited. In Matutuine RENAMO 'liberated' areas by depopulating them. According to McGregor (1998:52) 'this "liberated" countryside was inhabited by RENAMO soldiers and captives in mobile military bases together with (in some places) a tiny dispersed civilian population hiding in the forests and fleeing to the bases for protection.' By depopulating areas RENAMO facilitated movement to neighbouring countries where their strongest base of support lay amongst civilians disaffected by FRELIMO's villagisation projects. It also allowed RENAMO to set up supply networks linking bases in Swaziland and South Africa with Mozambique.

individuals fleeing from Mozambique, asking for a place to stay. Josef remembers that people would arrive without money or food. They would ask for temporary work ('piece-jobs') and would look after cattle or cultivate the fields of South Africans in exchange for food and shelter.

A household survey I conducted in KwaMshudu in November 2002, shows that fifty-nine per cent of people there had left Mozambique during the war (see Appendix I). This figure is probably much higher since people are reluctant to admit that they come from Mozambique for fear of being repatriated. Mozambicans chose to settle in KwaMshudu because it was scarcely populated and distanced from Manguzi where the police and defence forces actively sought refugees. Josef Khambule estimates that more than ninety per cent of the people of KwaMshudu come from Mozambique.

Aerial photos of the area from 1975 confirm that KwaMshudu used to be very sparsely populated before the start of the war in Mozambique (see Appendix C). Furthermore, census information from the Department of Health at Jozini in northern KwaZulu-Natal shows that there was a fifty-two per cent increase in homesteads in KwaMshudu between 1981 and 1986. Whereas there were only 729 homestead in 1981, the number of homesteads in the area had risen to 1,531 by 1986. At the same time, the amounts of huts in the area increased by twenty-six per cent, from 1,600 in 1981 to 2,178 in 1986, and the population increased by 433 people from 3,022 people in 1981 to 3,455 people in 1986. De Bruin (1987:18) attributes these increases to influx of refugees from Mozambique.

In contrast to the increase of both homesteads or kraals (collections of huts under the authority of a single household head) and homes in KwaMshudu between 1981 and 1986, there was a small increase in the number of homesteads, yet a

dramatic increase in the numbers of homes and people in Manguzi, the largest town east of Jozini (see Map 3) over the same period. Between 1981 and 1986 the amount of homesteads in Manguzi increased by only nine per cent, but homes increased with forty-eight per cent, and the population with twenty-six per cent (De Bruin 1987:18).

These figures suggest that in KwaMshudu local headmen freely granted Mozambican refugees their own homesteads. In Manguzi, on the other hand, the police and defence force were much more active and Mozambican refugees settled in huts on the sites of friends and family members. This made it more difficult for the police to find them. The different patterns in the increase of homesteads in KwaMshudu and Manguzi between 1981 and 1986 also suggest that Mozambican refugees settled in KwaMshudu in larger groups or family units, whereas more refugees in Manguzi came there as individuals. Informants in KwaMshudu and Manguzi confirmed this deduction.

There were no structures on the KwaZulu-Natal side of the borderland compared to the refugee camps set up at Giyani in the former 'homeland' of Gazankulu in the present-day Limpopo Province (see Rodgers 1996 and 2002).⁹ Mozambicans fleeing the war to northern KwaZulu merely settled 'illegally' among the population where they were granted accommodation. It would also appear that, apart from a few cases as in Mahlungulo (see below); there was no sense of unity

⁹ Rodgers (2002:14-15) notes that throughout the Mozambican war, the South African government refused to recognise Mozambicans as refugees. Instead, the South African government chose to interpret this mass influx as 'illegal immigration'. Refugees were however allowed to take refuge in the 'homelands' of KaNgwane and Gazankulu, located close to the Mozambican border. These two 'homeland' governments actively encouraged the settlement of Mozambican refugees. However, these rules did not apply in the KwaZulu homeland, where the police acted in line with the South African policy of arresting and deporting refugees who crossed the border. According to Rodgers (2002:16-17) the South African government granted a mandate to the UNHCR to consider these Mozambicans as prima facie refugees in 1992. This was done primarily to attract support for a repatriation programme that was to be funded and managed by the UNHCR. From 1994 to 1995 the UNHCR implemented an organised programme to voluntarily repatriate an estimated 250 000 Mozambican refugees from South Africa. This plan did not, however, concentrate on Mozambicans who had settled informally in northern KwaZulu.

amongst refugees. They did not settle as large refugee communities as was the case in the Mozambique/ Malawi borderland (Englund 2002:84). Out of fear of being deported, people tried to blend in and to hide the fact that they came from Mozambique. Many people I interviewed said that they lost all ties with friends and family from Mozambique. They were not even sure whether those people had left Mozambique or stayed behind.

Amongst the people who crossed the border during the early stages of the war was Jonas Tembe, the man whom we met in the previous chapter. At present Jonas lives in KwaMshudu, on the South African side of the borderland, where I first met him in 2002. In 2002 he was seventy-six years old. When I first arrived at the homestead where he lives, which is on the way to a border market that I frequently visited, he was changing the grass thatching on the roof of one of the huts. I stopped to investigate his work and asked him questions about it. This informal conversation led to a couple of follow-up visits during which I learned more about the war in Mozambique and Jonas's journey from Mozambique to Kwazulu.

Case 4.1: Jonas Tembe's flight from Mozambique

Jonas decided to flee from Mozambique to South Africa shortly after the outbreak of fighting between FRELIMO and RENAMO in the late 1970s. He remembers that the gate at Manhoca was closed and that Mozambicans were no longer allowed to cross the border freely. Jonas and his wife and daughter left Zitundo early in the morning and crossed the border at around mid-day. Every now and again on their way to the border they would see FRELIMO soldiers or RENAMO forces (*bandidios armadas* – armed bandits). They would all quickly hide in the bushes since the soldiers would

catch people and take them to Bela Vista or Maputo, while bandits would abduct women as wives or rape them and force the men to join them, if they did not kill them. After having safely climbed over the border fence, Jonas took his family to live with his uncle's son at Mahlangulo in South Africa - some three kilometres south of the border. Life was good at his relative's house and the family did not have to pay any rent to stay there. They were also given their own field on which to plant crops. They shared a portion of their produce with their relatives.

Mahlangulo, in northern KwaZulu-Natal, became a refuge for many people fleeing Zitundo during the war. Due to its close proximity to Zitundo, many people from Mahlangulo had ties of kinship and friendship with the people of Zitundo.¹⁰

The refugees included RENAMO soldiers who were driven from Mozambique by FRELIMO. FRELIMO put landmines all over the Ponta do Ouro area and made it impossible for RENAMO to operate there. At Mahlungulo RENAMO set up a large base where they gathered food and weapons from other refugees and sent these to their forces inside Mozambique. RENAMO urged refugees from Mozambique, like Jonas, to grow a percentage of their crops for their soldiers in exchange for residential land in Mahlungulo. Jonas remembers that younger men were sent to work on the mines to get money for RENAMO's war effort. These young men transported weapons from areas like Durban and Johannesburg to Mahlungulo, from where they were sent to Mozambique.

McGregor (1998) writes that these cross-border operations also involved

¹⁰ The local chief of Zitundo, Lucas Michangula, was related to the chief of Mahlungulo and aided people who came from his 'brother's' place. As the war gained momentum, Lucas, who was also the FRELIMO appointed secretary of Zitundo, was himself forced to flee to his 'brother's' place at Mahlungulo. Lucas was apparently involved in a scandal concerning Party funds and was summoned for trial in Maputo. Scared of what might happen to him, he fled to Mahlungulo where he joined RENAMO forces based there. According to McGregor (1998:52) many chiefs associated with RENAMO chose to live outside Mozambique during the War, returning when they were required to conduct traditional ceremonies, or other business.

linking up with external markets, such as those for weapons, drugs, ivory and rhino horn, (looted) consumer goods and labour. Some trading took place in open border markets which were controlled by RENAMO, but were also used by government soldiers, petty traders of unclear allegiance, labour recruiters and others (p.55).

In the early 1980s Jonas' wife died and soon after that his uncle's son also passed away. At that time his daughter married and moved away. Not having any other relatives, Jonas looked up Jim, an old friend of his who lived at KwaMshudu, the little borderland area in South Africa where I first met Jonas. Although they were not particularly good friends in Empangeni, Jim allowed Jonas to live with him for a trial period - to see what 'type of man' he was. During this time, Jim had to hide Jonas from others in the community and from the chief. He feared that someone might reveal that he housed an 'illegal immigrant'. Jim said that South African soldiers sometimes visited peoples' homes in search of Mozambicans. He explained that one could only introduce a foreigner to the chief after you had known the foreigner for a period of three months and were sure you could trust him. When Jonas first came to live with him, Jim went to his neighbours and asked them not to reveal his stranger. According to Jim, everybody already knew, but acted as if they didn't. During his 'trial period' Jonas had to do most of the agricultural work at Jim's homestead and he also had to look after his cattle. Now that the war is over Jonas says that he has nothing to return to in Mozambique and does not want to go back. All his cattle and all his relatives are dead.

From Jonas' life story we can discern two different resources on which refugees secured safety on the South African side of the borderland, namely ties of kinship and friendship. Although in this case Jim was not a good friend, he was at least someone whom Jonas knew. Although filled with tragedy, Jonas' story is not as depressing as

that of other people who crossed the border during the Mozambican war. The two case studies, below, highlight the brutalities experienced by other border-crossers in Mozambique and links to the discussion above on local experiences of the war.

Case study 4.2: Sam Masinga's tragedy

Sam Masinga lived with his family at Catembe, a village overlooking the Maputo bay (see Map 3). Before the war in Mozambique had started, Sam had already crossed the border on a couple occasions in search of work. He worked for the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources at Kosi Bay, Sodwana, Ndumo and Mkhuze and also at Empangeni and Pietermaritzburg. Before the war had started, he crossed the border at the official border posts at Manhoca and also at Komatipoort/ Ressano Garcia. Everything changed once the war began. Sam remembers that the people at Catembe suffered a great deal during the war. 'Soldiers were not only just killing other soldiers; they were also killing normal people.' 'People got scared', he said. 'Some fled to the cities like Maputo and Beira. Others fled to South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.'

At first Sam stayed on, until RENAMO soldiers came to his homestead one day. The soldiers took Sam's baby boy and stamped the baby to death with a maize mortar, in front of Sam's eyes. They also abducted his wife and forced her to live with them in the bush. Soon after the soldiers had left, Sam fled to South Africa with what was left of his family (his mother and two young sons).

Sam knew a man in Catembe called Matheus who helped refugees to cross the border. Matheus knew where the soldiers and landmines were located and could guarantee a safe journey. Payment of R50 could be made later, after a person had

been living in South Africa for a while and had made some money. Matheus did not offer any transport. Once he had gathered all the people in Catembe who wanted to go to South Africa, Matheus led them on a hiking journey through dangerous terrain to the border. Sam recalls that there were about twenty-five people with him on his journey. Apart from soldiers and landmines on their journey south, people also had to beware of elephants. Many of the elephants were extremely aggressive due to poaching by soldiers. From Catembe they went to Majuba, then to Salamanga and on to Zitundo (see Map 3). The whole time they slept in the bushes on the outskirts of these villages, always on the lookout for RENAMO and FRELIMO soldiers. They crossed the border at KwaMshudu during the night. Matheus stayed behind, returning to Catembe the next day.

Sam found refuge at the house of his brother, who was the first person in his family to flee Mozambique. His brother left only a short while before Sam did and already secured a piece of land to stay and to cultivate. Sam enjoyed his life in South Africa and later married a South African woman. They are currently still living in KwaMshudu in South Africa.

Case 4. 3: Ntombizonke Ngubande's flight from Mozambique

Ntombizonke Ngubande lives in Hluphekeni in South Africa, some fifteen kilometres south of the Mozambican border. She is a relatively frail woman in her early thirties.

Like Sam, Ntombizonke was forced to flee Mozambique during the war.

Ntombizonke was born at Gala close to Lake Piti, inside the boundaries of the Maputo Elephant Reserve (see Map 3).

Shortly after her eighteenth birthday, RENAMO soldiers visited Ntombizonke's family's home.¹¹ They killed her father and her mother and abducted her. Ntombizonke stayed with the soldiers at a camp in the bushes close the lake. There she cooked food for them, fetched firewood and water and forcefully slept with them.

Ntombizonke only stayed with the soldiers for about two months. Then she escaped. She fled with another girl of about the same age who had also been caught by the soldiers. They waited until nightfall and then took the dangerous journey. They crossed the border at Ponta do Ouro during the night and went to live with Ntombizonke's brother at Hluphekeni, just south of KwaMshudu. She has married there and still lives there today.

The stories of Jonas, Sam, Ntombizonke and countless others that I collected during fieldwork confirm that border crossings during the late 1970s and early 1980s were predominantly north-south and motivated by the war in Mozambique. Most people fled in groups, made up of friends and family members, to cross the border. Both Jonas and Sam had on previous occasions crossed the border, before the outbreak of hostilities. This provided them with knowledge of what to expect on the South African side. If it is accepted that most men in southern Mozambique used to cross the border before 1975 (see Harries 1994), then it can be argued that for most people, especially men, the act of crossing the border itself was not novel. What had changed were their motivations for crossing the border, as well as the degree of difficulty in crossing the border. It was in these circumstances that people like Matheus could

¹¹ People at Gala all remember the advent of the RENAMO soldiers there. Induna Tembe, who stayed at Gala during the War, remembers how the soldiers took all his cattle, goats and chickens, leaving him to look for food in the bush. He and other people in the area set up small temporary shelters in the forest, believing it would safeguard them from the soldiers.

make a living. However, in the life histories that I collected, Sam was the only person who employed a guide to cross the border.

RENAMO sometimes provided passes and guides for people wanting to leave the country, and even organised exoduses of people living in communal villages to South Africa or Swaziland before they attacked some villages. Refugees often spoke of their cross-border guides as being RENAMO members. Distinctions between soldiers, refugees, cross-border traders and guides were certainly blurred during the war. The war also created a new traffic in migrants along the old migration routes from the Maputo hinterland to neighbouring countries.

Guiding became a highly exploitative practice during the war because many people could not afford to pay the guides' inflated fees, and arriving in South Africa in debt, they were sold to employers as servants, workers or concubines, the guides thus receiving their dues (McGregor 1998:50-51).¹²

In all three cases of border crossings related above, people utilised kinship and friendship ties to provide them shelter and safety on first arriving in South Africa. These cases differ markedly from that of Raphael Natalicio who had no relatives or friends in South Africa and who had never even been to South Africa before he fled Mozambique in 1986.

Case 4.4: Raphael Natalicio's border crossing

Raphael Natalicio currently lives in Manguzi in South Africa where he works as an independent building contractor. He is in his late thirties. Raphael and his wife, Khalulu, a Zulu woman from Manguzi, had their second child when Raphael and I

¹² Guides selling their services to border crossers are quite common on the United States/ Mexico border where the so-called *coyotes* make a living of guiding illegal immigrants from Mexico to the United States (Anzaldua 1999:33), or along the Strait of Gibraltar where the wolves (*les coups*) perform a similar function (Donnan & Wilson 1999).

first started working together. During that time his mother, who lives in Catembe in Mozambique, visited Raphael's family to help him take care for his toddler whilst his wife was in hospital. Shortly after the birth of his daughter Raphael's mother returned to Mozambique where she lives with her second husband. Raphael's father abandoned the family during the Mozambican war and went to live in Johannesburg in South Africa where he married a second wife. Raphael had not seen his father since he left.

Raphael left Mozambique during July 1986. At that time he had lived at Catembe, the same village where Sam came from. Raphael decided to leave Mozambique because of what he perceived to be an increase in both FRELIMO and RENAMO's aggressive recruiting campaigns. Many of his friends had been taken by one side or the other to fight in the war. 'Some of them as young as fourteen years old!' Raphael did not understand the war and could see no reason why he had to fight. Shortly after his sixteenth birthday he left his place in Catembe to live in the city of Maputo, where he believed he would be safe from the soldiers. However, RENAMO even recruited soldiers in Maputo. He told me how buses would stop outside schools and how soldiers would force the teachers to send all the kids (boys and girls) to the buses to fight in the war. Sometimes even the teachers had to accompany them.

Raphael found conditions in Maputo to be as unsafe as those in Catembe, and decided to go to South Africa. He took the ferry from Maputo to Catembe where he met and persuaded his cousin, Alex to accompany him. They set off for Zitundo by bus. During that time and for most of the war RENAMO controlled Zitundo. Just before the bus reached Zitundo, Raphael and Alex jumped off the bus and hid themselves in the bushes, where they waited for nightfall. When it was dark enough

they started to walk towards the border. They crossed the border in the vicinity of Kosi Bay, where the official border post is located at present, from where they travelled to Manguzi.

Unlike Jonas, Sam and Ntombizonke, Raphael and Alex did not have any family in South Africa and thus had no place to stay. For the first few nights they slept in the bushes around the area. One morning at a drinking house (*shebeen*) in Manguzi they met a young man called Sihle who had also fled Mozambique because of the war. They asked Sihle if he knew of a place they could stay or of someone who could offer them work. Sihle wanted to know if Raphael or Alex knew how to play soccer. According to Raphael he was a 'formidable' striker, and Alex was a good goalkeeper. After hearing this, Sihle introduced them to a prominent man in the area who managed one of the strongest soccer teams in northern KwaZulu. The manager invited Raphael and Alex to stay at his place, where six other Mozambicans were also staying. In exchange for a place to stay, food and some money, they all agreed to play in the soccer team. The manager of the team became a father to them and they still have very close contact with him although they don't play soccer anymore.

All these cases illustrate options of escape people in borderlandscapes have when these areas are transformed into warzones. Old transnational ties are strengthened and new ones are created in times of war. Historical ties of kinship and friendship remained important organisational lines for people in the borderlandscape.

Mozambicans were welcomed and quickly integrated into a society with which they shared a common ancestry and culture. It would only be much later, when people were made aware of new ethnicities and identities, that South Africans would

emphasise differences rather than similarities between themselves and the Mozambican refugees.

Conclusion

A micro-analysis of the Mozambican war in the borderlandscape illustrates how people had to react to dramatic changes in their daily lives and circumstances. Yet, whereas a macro-analysis of the war would suggest a strengthening of the border and an end to contact along the border line, a micro-analysis illustrates a greater unification as people north of the border were forced to seek refuge south of the border.

The northern side of the borderlandscape became a depopulated no-man's land. Refugees were welcomed south of the border, but were forced to hide their identities and to stop speaking their own language to avoid persecution. In this manner a micro-analysis of the war suggests that the war actually fostered unity in the borderlandscape, rather than disunity. It was only in the aftermath of the war, with the re-population of the northern part of the borderland, that disunity and heterogeneity was again emphasised. Demobilised soldiers, returnees from South Africa and Swaziland and displaced persons from all over Mozambique populated the post-war borderlandscape. Most of these people have no links to the land or to the ancestors of the area. It is to their stories that the discussion will turn in the following chapter.