

Angolans Display Foreign

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ADDIS ABABA, Jan. 12—Three South African regular soldiers and two Portuguese "mercenaries" taken prisoner in Angola's civil war were presented here today to African heads of state trying to find a solution to that war.

The five, captured over the past four months, were displayed at a press conference by the Soviet- and Cuban-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola as the Organization of African Unity's special summit meeting on Angola went into its third day.

The three South Africans said they had been captured eight days ago at Cariango, near Quibala, less than 250 miles south of Angola's capital, Luanda.

They identified themselves as Andries Hendrik Potgieter, 19, of Johannesburg; Ludewyk Johannes Kitshoff, 18, of Marienburg; and Piet Groenewald, 19, of Caledon.

Potgieter said he was a rifleman in the regular 5th South African Battalion and the other two said they were in a support group attached to it. The entire 5th Battalion, he said, is now stationed in Cela, south of Quibala, in Cuanza South District, and numbers between 250 and 280 soldiers.

The extremely young-looking soldiers, two handcuffed together and the other by himself, said they had been well treated by the Popular Movement since their capture despite long interrogations.

The testimony of the three South African prisoners was believed to be the first confirmation of the presence of entire South African battalions fighting inside Angola with the forces of the pro-Western National Front for the Liberation of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

Their testimony appeared to contradict UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, who told a press conference here Sunday that his forces had nothing to do with the South African troops that had entered southern Angola.

Potgieter, who was captured together with Kitshoff, said they were providing artillery cover in a battle when they suddenly found themselves surrounded by Popular Movement soldiers. "We didn't even know at first whether they were Popular Movement or National Union or National Front soldiers," he said. "We were not in the action."

The Popular Movement's prime minister, Lopo de Nascimento, presented the five captives at a crowded press conference at the Addis Ababa Ghion Hotel to underscore his contention that Angola is currently facing "an invasion from the north and south" by regular forces of the South African army.

The two older Portuguese soldiers, who were described as mercenaries by Popular Movement officials, identified themselves as Maximo Alvaro Fernandes and Francisco Jose Quintinho, and said they had been captured Sept. 17 at Caxito, 35 miles north of Luanda, where they had been serving as instructors for the training of the National Front army.

The two denied that they were "mercenaries" and Quintinho said they had come to Angola on contract to help form a mixed army of troops of the three warring parties for the liberation of Angola. He said Portuguese were fighting in all three Angolan armies and that their preference had been for the National Front.

Popular Movement officials told the press conference they had not brought any captured Zairian troops to Addis Ababa because the summit is being attended by Zaire and other African countries that might be offended, but insisted that regular Zairian army troops are fighting in northern Angola alongside National Front soldiers.

Commandant Juju, the political commissar for the Popular Movement's army, refused to state how many South African and Portuguese prisoners his group holds.

Nascimento, who is prime minister of the Luanda-based People's Republic of Angola,

said that his government is also the victim of "economic aggression" led by the United States. He listed a number of steps he said had been taken by the State Department to strangle the People's Republic and its economy.

Reviewing the current military situation, Commandant Juju, a bearded Portuguese whose real name is Julio de Almeida, said Popular Movement forces are now 60 miles north of Uige (Carmona), the former National Front capital in northern Angola, and then added: "We are going to stop at the border" with Zaire.

The situation in the south, he

said, is "not so spectacular," although the lines of battle are "favorable" to the Popular Movement and are located north of Cela, which he said is "in the hands of South Africa," and south of Quibala, which he said is in the control of his side.

Asked whether the Popular Movement intends to stop at the border of Namibia in the south, Commandant Juju said the Namibians themselves would have to liberate Namibia from South Africa's administration but that if they appeal for international solidarity "we are always present."

Captives

The three South Africans appeared remarkably composed under the stress and strain of the press conference and the trip from Angola via Mozambique and Tanzania to Ethiopia. Potgieter did most of the talking for the three men.

He said he did not know how many South Africans are in southern Angola altogether, that they were getting "normal border pay" for their duty there, and had been told their destination just a few days before their departure. He said they were flown by the South African air force into Cela directly from Grootfontein, in Namibia.