

Renamo calls for peace talks with Frelimo SAR 7/7/89

RENAMO, the Mozambique National Resistance Movement, has called for negotiations with the Frelimo government to end the war. The call, made at a recent congress of the movement by its president Afonso Dhlakama, followed offers by the Frelimo government to grant amnesty to Renamo fighters who laid down their arms and enter into talks with the movement's leaders.

In the last few months Mozambique's President Joaquim Chissano has canvassed the possibility of a mediator for the talks. The Portuguese government and Ivory Coast president Felix Houphouet-Boigny have been mentioned.

Meanwhile, attacks on Frelimo forces by Renamo have continued.

Comment

It has become apparent that neither Renamo nor Frelimo can win the war and while the government, for obvious reasons, refuses to admit this, Renamo has conceded that the war has to end in negotiation.

Frelimo has stated that it is prepared to accept all Renamo elements into the Mozambican community and to "democratise" government policies to accommodate them.

Frelimo has been under pressure from the West and Russia to try to achieve a settlement and has been supported by Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe who had sent a strong force to help Frelimo defend the Beira corridor--the road, rail and oil pipeline link between the port of Beira and Harare. Mugabe would rather have his soldiers back home.

Renamo's call for peace follows the drying up of supplies from SA which has occurred over the last year. SA gave considerable support to Renamo to aid SA's massive destabilisation campaign.

But, under pressure from the West and the Russians and a realisation that destabilisation was counter-productive, SA ended the campaign and stopped sending supplies to Renamo.