

Mozambican peace talks cancelled

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MAPUTO — As presidents Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique and Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya discussed peace initiatives for Mozambique, the authorities here indicated that reports of dozens of casualties in a rebel attack against the town of Ressano Garcia, near border with South Africa, are not correct.

For the first time on Friday evening the official Mozambique news agency, Alm, confirmed that rebels had attacked Ressano Garcia a few hours after National Party leader Mr FW de Klerk held talks with President Chissano.

But Alm, quoting Mozambique railway sources, said one worker had been killed and another had disappeared.

Other Mozambican sources said three people had died in the attack.

Reports in South Africa said more than 100 people had been killed in the attack against Ressano Garcia, an important railway station across the border from Komatipoort.

Reports from Maputo on Tuesday said 85 people were massacred when about 200 rebels attacked the village of Saguane in the province of Gaza, and reports of this rebel attack seem to have been con-

fused with the attack against Ressano Garcia.

The sudden upsurge of violence in Mozambique came as a church delegation was preparing to meet rebel representatives in Nairobi, Kenya.

The peace talks in Kenya, in which the church delegation was to present a government proposal, never materialised because of an offensive launched against rebel-controlled areas in the Gorongosa area in central Mozambique.

Zimbabwean troops, which are in charge of security in the Beira corridor in central Mozambique, are said to have been involved in the offensive

following an increase in rebel activity around Beira, vital for Zimbabwe's foreign trade.

In Lisbon, a spokesman for the Renamo rebel movement said leaders had to stay behind in rebel-held territory to fight off Zimbabwean attackers.

"The Nairobi meeting never happened because Renamo president General Afonso Dhlakama, who would have headed our delegation, had to stay in Gorongosa to lead the counter-offensive operations," said a communique.

The meeting would be rescheduled when possible, it said.

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Sources said the attack against the Renamo stronghold caught many observers in the Maputo capital by surprise because of its timing, which could wreck the peace process.

President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya held talks in Maputo with President Chissano on Friday and said he had been in contact with Renamo leaders.

"I am very optimistic that they are willing to participate in talks with your government," Mr Moi said.

"The impression I got is that they want peace, that they do not want fighting," he added, but gave no details of when peace negotiations would start.