

Mozambique peace talks get under way

Citizen 8/8/89

NAIROBI. — Talks about talks to end Mozambique's 14-year-old civil war started yesterday with Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi saying he wanted to move quickly to save lives.

"Today was a question of procedural things, we are trying to get things started," President Moi said at Nairobi Airport after seeing off Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who came for a one-day meeting.

Mozambique has asked the two presidents to mediate an end to the war which has killed tens of thousands of civilians and

left even more hungry and homeless.

Mozambican clergymen and Right-wing Mozambican National Resistance (MNR) rebels begin talks today based on a 12-point plan presented by the Maputo Government, a joint statement issued by Mr Moi and Mr Mugabe said.

The outcome of today's talks will determine whether meetings between the rebels and Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano's Leftist government take place.

"We'll just have to wait," Kenyan Foreign Minister Robert Ouko

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said earlier when asked about prospects for peace talks.

Although MNR leader Mr Afonso Dhlakama is in Nairobi for talks with the churchmen, he did not meet Mr Mugabe and is not expected to meet Mr Moi.

Neither will he meet Mozambican Transport Minister, Lieutenant-General Armando Guebuza, nor Culture Minister Luis Bernardo Honwana, who are due in Nairobi to monitor the clergy-rebels meeting.

A senior Kenyan Foreign Ministry official said he doubted whether the

government and rebels could negotiate peace before the end of the year.

"The church group will be pursuing very preliminary talks," Mr Bethwell Kiplagat, permanent secretary at the Kenyan Foreign Ministry, said earlier yesterday.

The churchmen will present President Chissano's 12-point peace proposal which says that, as a first step, banditry and terrorism must stop. It does not specifically call for an immediate ceasefire.

In Lisbon, MNR spokesman, Mr Manuel Frank, said at the week-

end that the rebels welcomed Mr Chissano's promise to work for peace but said the two sides were still far from any agreement. The MNR wants to share power, and calls for new elections and the return of authority to traditional chiefs.

Rebels have been increasing attacks near Maputo but government troops and Zimbabwean soldiers, who are in Mozambique to protect their landlocked country's rail access to the sea, have advanced on rebel strongholds in the central part of the country. — Sapa-Reuters.