

# US aid bodies warn on Mozambique

WASHINGTON/ Though the famine in Somalia is considered the most serious threat to human lives in Africa at the moment, the situation in Mozambique should not be ignored, a broad coalition of US non-governmental organisations has warned.

At a press conference on September 14 to issue an urgent appeal for more relief for Africa, John Hammock, executive director of Oxfam America, pointed out: "Mozambique is another Somalia in the making."

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 15% of the population in the northern regions of Liupo and Alua have died since February. The ICRC said 30,000 tons of food must be brought into the country between now and next March, when the next crop should be ready for harvest.

But the civil conflict could impede relief efforts. Sharon Pauling, a policy analyst with Bread for the World, a Church-sponsored advocacy on hunger issues, noted: "War remains the major cause of famine in Mozambique." Over three million people may starve to death if the international community does not succeed in getting enough food to them in time, she says.

In mid-July, representatives from

Renamo and the government promised to allow humanitarian aid to be dispatched under UN and ICRC auspices throughout the country.

But, according to informed sources, only a handful of supplies have been flown into contested rural areas; the land corridors, which are essential for delivering the bulk of relief shipments, have yet to be determined (*SouthScan* v7/33 p255).

According to famine experts in Washington rather than food going into the Renamo-held areas people are coming out. The number of people fleeing these areas is reaching new highs, they say, and hundreds of refugees are arriving every day at camps in government-controlled areas, especially in the Beira corridor.

Nevertheless, the government, on September 14, reiterated its commitment to allowing the unimpeded flow of relief supplies by accepting without reservations a plan of action for the distribution of food aid drawn up by the UN-sponsored committee for humanitarian assistance.

Renamo said it would "give a reply as soon as possible", according to an official.

[Own correspondent; agencies]