

Durban's Renamo office that isn't

A FORMER SA Defence Force officer says he is setting up an organisation in South Africa "to represent illegal refugees fleeing from Frelimo".

Architect Pedro Buccellato, a sympathiser of the rebel MNR movement, appears cautious about talking too freely until the government has decided on the legality of his organisation in South Africa.

Evo Fernandes, MNR secretary general, has denied Buccellato is "representing" the MNR in South Africa.

Buccellato plans several offices throughout the country, particularly near the refugee camps. His immediate plans are to contact the missionaries that have been helping the refugees in the Eastern Transvaal and other areas.

"Estimates put the refugee figure at between 200 000 and 500 000 and our job will be to bring humanitarian relief to them — food, clothing and medical necessities.

"Secondly, through the MNR, we will seek representation for them at the United Nations.

"The MNR is very close to achieving international recognition. As they share our organisation's aim of setting Mozambique free from Marxism so we can all return to the country, we believe they will represent the cause of the refugees justly."

Buccellato says he was forced to leave after the Frelimo government took power — "like most Portuguese descendants with wealth. We had our homes, our businesses and possessions nationalised.

"That nationalisation came with accusations of capitalist sabotage and not working in the interests of the people and other Marxist philosophies which clashed with the capitalist interests of my parents and

Although Mozambican refugees are fleeing both sides in the war, a new group is trying to gather them together in the name of Renamo. CARMEL RICKARD spoke to Pedro Buccellato, who is opening an MNR office in Durban

grandparents.

"I feel very strongly about the white African issue. We have a place on this continent and have nowhere else to go. We have to believe enough in our convictions to come forward and do work like this because if we do not look after our own people no one else will."

Buccellato says funding for his organisation will come from the "legal" Mozambican refugee community — the whites who have been partly assimilated and are relatively well off. South African commerce and industry will be approached for funding once the organisation takes off.

He says he will write reports about the refugee situation, one of which will go to the South African government. Another will go to the MNR "so they can evaluate the refugee representation issue and decide whether the document is sufficiently well backed and academically qualified to be internationally accepted."

A significant aim of the refugee thrust is to draw up a potential voters' roll. This would be used to indicate those who could cast postal votes in the event of an election in Mozambique. The MNR leadership believes it may force Frelimo to hold an election soon.

Pushed to define the exact relationship between his organisation and the MNR, Buccellato says: "We are in South Africa as an autonomous organisation which is aligned to the

MNR. We are not a representation of Renamo, but a means of representing South African Mozambican refugees to Renamo and to give them access to the UN through Renamo."

He first met MNR leadership in September 1974.

"Later I was approached through Washington, which was looking for representatives of the MNR, and thought I might know of some. I asked around and found them."

Now he is in contact with MNR leadership in Portugal and some spokesmen in the US.

Buccellato says he cannot claim to speak for the estimated 150 000 "legal" and 400 000 "illegal" refugees in South Africa.

"But I do speak for a minority group of 5 000 which has kept in contact. With the Nkomati Accord, when the MNR was banned from South Africa, they were left leaderless. However, these people are not going to come forward until my organisation is given permission to continue with our mission."