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Rebel base

taken, says Mozambique

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PRESIDENT Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique claimed yesterday that his forces were now on the offensive against the Renamo guerrillas throughout the country and had captured an important base at Morrumbala, in Zambezia province.

It is reported to have fallen in a combined operation by Mozambican, Zimbabwean and Tanzanian troops as President Chissano was preparing to leave for his three-day visit to Britain.

The civil war and British military assistance have been high on the agenda in the talks Mr Chissano is having in London with Mrs Thatcher and Foreign Office and Defence Ministers.

All but one of Mozambique's 10 provinces are under a state of emergency, but Zambezia has experienced some of the worst fighting.

At a press conference yesterday, Mr Chissano, for the first time, said he was "satisfied" with Malawi's attempts to prevent Renamo using it as a sanctuary for its forces.

Mozambican officers and NCOs are now passing through the British training school in Nyanga, Zimbabwe, at the rate of 120 every three months and it is hoped that this will improve the forces' efficiency and morale.

Renamo refutes claim

Renamo yesterday denied that government troops had captured its bases, saying the claim was propaganda timed to coincide with President Chissano's trip to Europe.—Reuter.