

## **Chissano uses popular voice against talks**

MOZAMBIQUE'S President Joaquim Chissano has been holding a series of meetings with local people in what is being seen as a bid to deflect international pressure for negotiations with the rebel forces. The official news agency, AIM, has reported a number of statements by local populations rejecting talks with the 'bandits'.

The reports are also being used to explain the difference between making contacts with the rebels in order to move the amnesty policy along, and holding negotiations for power-sharing.

Recently there has been speculation that Mozambique is making contact with the Mozambique National Resistance rebels via the mediation of Kenya (*SouthScan* Vol.4/16 p124).

Last month Chissano toured Gaza and Maputo provinces and constantly raised the theme of "negotiations". In

the town of Chokwe on April 12 he told a mass gathering: "We are not going to sit at the negotiating table with the bandit gangs".

Referring to his tours of all the country's 10 provinces Chissano said: "We consulted the people, and they said No to negotiations". He referred to foreign pressures on the government to negotiate with the MNR, but declared: "The people will not allow me to negotiate with them."

He did not specify the source of the foreign pressures.

Speaking in Manhica on April 21 he said he would agree to talk with representatives of the MNR/Renamo about their integration into Mozambican society, but not in order to satisfy their demands. Many in the crowd responded strongly against any suggestion that he might establish negotiations that might lead to the MNR being elected to positions of power.