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MOZAMBIQUE

Kenya Peace Talks

Talks between Mozambique's rebels and church leaders representing the government have ended with the two sides still far apart on how to end the country's civil war.

The negotiations, held under the auspices of the Kenyan government for four days at an undisclosed location on August 10th-14th, were the closest yet to direct talks between the combatants in the 14-year conflict.

When the talks broke off on August 14th, the two sides appeared far apart on several crucial issues, including whether the Mozambique National Resistance (known as the MNR or Renamo) rebels will renounce violence and on how to bring them into national politics. But observers thought the very length of the encounter to be a hopeful sign, said one source who was briefed by Kenyan officials.

The talks closely followed the announcement by Joaquim Chissano, Mozambique's President, of a 12-point programme for negotiations, and his

choice of Daniel arap Moi, Kenya's President, as mediator. Mr. Moi and President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, who was also asked by Mr. Chissano to be a mediator, said that the talks would determine the level and nature of subsequent meetings.

The talks, although frustratingly indirect at first glance, represent the most significant contact ever between the Mozambique government and the rebels. (Ind 8, 14/8)

Pretoria's Shadow

The peace negotiations on Mozambique in Nairobi were a grim reminder that in the case of South Africa's relationships in the region, Pretoria's policy of sponsoring violence has paid off and changed the political map of Africa. It also underlines the domi-

nance of US policymakers behind the scenes in Africa.

No one believes that the MNR leader, Afonso Dhaklana, went into the negotiations with a political programme or with a following in Mozambique, or was able to act as a political force independent of South Africa. The decision by the Mozambican government to send church leaders as intermediaries to present their 12-point peace plan to him in Nairobi is a measure of their utter desperation after a decade in which 700,000 Mozambicans have been killed and more than a million-and-a-half displaced. Even as the talks were opening, reports of a new massacre of 54 people including women and children came in from Mozambique.

Mozambique shares with Angola the

and illegal entry into Mozambique.

Zimbabwean Augusto Goncalves was serving a 20-year sentence. He had been an MNR section commander and radio operator.

Sao Tomean citizen Carlos Gamboa Valerio was jailed for 30 years in 1979 after being found guilty of distributing MNR propaganda.

Kenyan, Péter Nguile was sentenced to 30 years in 1986 for espionage, mercenarism and collaboration with a clandestine organisation.

The decision to free them is part of President Joaquim Chissano's efforts to widen an amnesty for government opponents and reform Mozambique's justice system.

Most of the 1,600 prisoners being released are common criminals, but at least 100 cases were linked to security matters. The Revolutionary Military Tribunals which tried those cases were abolished in April, and the new measure frees all those convicted under the 1979 State Security Act. In December 1987, the People's Assembly approved an amnesty for members of the rebel MNR. (Ind 18/8, TZ 19/8)