

MOZAMBIQUE: Efforts in vain ION (400) 7/10/49

As we reported in the September 23 edition of *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, the peace talks in Nairobi between RENAMO and the Mozambican Church leaders, have reached a stalemate. And this despite the continuation of secret meetings last week. According to diplomatic sources in Maputo, the main stumbling block is the Maputo government's refusal to negotiate directly with the rebels, considering that such a concession on its part would be tantamount to acknowledging the movement as a genuine political force.

I.O.N.- *The Church leaders participating in the negotiations seem to be increasingly irritated by what some of them refer to as RENAMO's outdated view of the situation in Mozambique. The Archbishop of Maputo, Alexander Dos Santos, went so far as to say that the leader of RENAMO, Afonso Dhlakama was behaving like a "little boy" ("uma criança"). And this, even though Mr Dhlakama proposed that each time they met around the negotiating table, the session should begin with a...prayer. As for President Joaquim Chissano, he would also like Muslim leaders to participate in the discussions.*

It is surprising however, that the government in Maputo says it does not want to enter into direct negotiations with RENAMO, as, according to our information, two Mozambican cabinet Ministers have been regularly in Nairobi during the last few weeks. And although they may not have been in the same room as the negotiators, they have not been very far away. The two Ministers are namely, Armando Emilio Guebuza, Minister of Transport and Communications and member of FRELIMO's politburo, and Luis Bernardo Honwana, Minister of Culture.

There is still a lot of diplomatic activity over these discussions. Zimbabwe's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mashingaidze Elleck, has joined in the negotiations and has met with RENAMO representatives. Also, Tiny Rowland, the chairman of Lonhro met Cavaco da Silva, the Portuguese Prime Minister in Lisbon just before the latter left for Mozambique (see page 2) and asked him to stop over in Nairobi to meet RENAMO representatives. It seems that Mr Silva was ready to accept, but he had to go to Luanda to settle diplomatic problems created by the Portuguese President's son's plane crash in the South of Angola on his way to Jamba.