

Mozambique: secret talks in Rome

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Maputo

THE month-long deadlock in negotiations to end the 15-year-long Mozambican civil war has been broken by the first ever face-to-face meetings between the Mozambican Government and Renamo rebels, held secretly in Rome over the past three days.

News of the talks was revealed in a communique released by both sides last night and broadcast on Mozambican State radio.

The two sides have agreed to meet again in the Italian capital, but no date has been set

yet.

The joint communique said the two delegations recognised each other as "compatriots and members of the great Mozambican family", and the talks were described as "direct, frank and open".

The two sides agreed in the communique to "put aside that which divides" and concentrate, as a priority, "on that which unites" to create a common base for future meetings.

The choice of Rome as a venue for the talks came as a surprise.