

Mozambique talks end with pledge to reconvene

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THE second round of direct talks between the Mozambican government and the MNR bandits ended in Rome yesterday, with a pledge by both to reconvene at the same venue shortly.

In a joint communique issued at the end of the four-day meeting, the two said that the talks dealt with problems related to continuing the negotiations for peace in Mozambique, in a direct and frank dialogue.

The exchange of views was fruitful and clarifying and expressed their common will to achieve a stable and lasting peace in the country, they said. However, they agreed to suspend the meeting in order to enable them to examine, in greater depth, some particularly complex questions so as to facilitate the negotiation process. They did not say what these complex questions might be.

They reaffirmed their determination to continue developing the dialogue in the light of principles contained in the statement issued at the end of the first round of talks on July 10.

The July statement had committed the government and the bandits to search for a working platform to bring an end to the war and to create political, economic and social conditions that would allow a lasting peace and the normalisation of the lives of all Mozambican citizens.

They had also agreed on the need to put aside what divided them and concentrate attention on what united them.

The two delegations were led, as at the first meeting in July, by the Mozambican Minister of Transport and Communications, Cde Armando Guebuza, and by the head of the MNR "foreign affairs" department, Raul Domingos.

The observers at the meeting were Italian socialist MP Mr Mario Raffaelli, representing the Italian authorities; the Catholic Archbishop of the Mozambican city of Beira, the Most Rev Goncalves; and two members of the Catholic Lay Charity, the Santo Egidio community, Mr Andrea Riccardi and Mr Matteo Zuppi.

The meeting took place in the Rome headquarters of the Santo Egidio Community.

President Joaquim Chissano said on July 31 that Frelimo party's politburo wanted to end 15 years of one-party rule and usher in a multi-party system.

The bandits have killed more than 900 000 people, displaced a third of the country's population of 15 million and crippled the farm-based economy of the Southern African nation. — Ziana-Reuter-AIM-Pana.