

# Rebels blocking peace, says Chissano

**MAPUTO:** Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano on Saturday accused right-wing Renamo rebels of creating new obstacles in peace talks to end the country's 15-year-old civil war.

He said rebel leaders had refused to discuss any substantial issues at the second round of exploratory direct peace talks in Italy this month and had demanded that mediators be brought back into the negotiations.

"Our delegation waited for a fortnight in Rome for the Renamo delegation and then nothing of substance was discussed," Chissano said in his first comment on the talks, from August 11 to 14.

He told a meeting of the 150-member national commission on constitutional changes that Maputo was primarily interested in discussing a ceasefire.

The Mozambique National Resistance Movement and the government, Chissano said, had agreed at their first direct talks in Rome in July that they no longer needed mediation by Zimbabwe and Kenya in their attempts to find peace.

"Now they say they want a mediator



Joaquim Chissano

again. This is not a matter of substance," the Mozambican leader said.

"The question of peace is the main issue of substance."

The direct talks follow more than a year of indirect peace initiatives through the mediation of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and his Kenyan counterpart Daniel arap Moi. — Sapa-Reuter