

Mozambique to resume peace talks in Rome

LISBON. — Peace talks between the Mozambican government and rebels waging a 14-year civil war will resume next week in Rome, an official who has led government delegations at previous meetings was reported as saying yesterday.

Mozambique's Minister for Transport and Communications Armando Guebuza, said negotiations will open April 26, the domestic news agency Lusa reported.

Officials from the Mozambican government

and the Renamo rebel group have met five times since June for talks in the Italian capital.

In December, the two sides signed a partial ceasefire and a nine-nation verification commission was created to monitor the agreement.

Italy's Ambassador to Mozambique, Manfredo di Camerana, who heads the commission, said last week the next round of talks would concentrate on political issues.

These are expected to include Mozambique's

new constitution, which permits opposition parties and free elections, two key demands of the rebels.

Renamo has rejected the constitution, which took effect in December, because it was drafted by the Frelimo party which has ruled since Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975.

The civil war has claimed 600,000 lives and left about half the country's 15 million people in need of donated food. — Sapa-AP

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