

No quick fix in M'bique peace talks probable

E.P. Herald - 2 AUG 1991

ROME — The Mozambican Government and Right-wing rebels resumed peace talks in Rome yesterday after a three-week delay, but neither side held out hopes of securing a quick ceasefire in a war that has killed a million people.

"I'm willing to stay here as long as it takes, but I don't think we'll get a ceasefire. Not in this round," Transport Minister Armando Guebuza said, walking into the seventh round of talks with the rebel Mozambique Nation-

al Resistance (Renamo).

"If we manage to get agreement on the legalisation of political parties and an electoral law this time round, we will have achieved a great deal," said Mr Mario Raffaelli, the official Italian mediator in the talks.

The last round of talks broke up on June 20, after deadlock over the first point of the 20-point agenda.

It took a year for the Italian Government and Roman Catholic churchmen just to get the two sides to agree, on what to talk about.

The Mozambican civil war, one of the last great regional conflicts dating back to the Cold War, has crippled the country's economy and forced 800 000 people to become refugees since Renamo took up arms against the government in 1975.

Renamo "foreign minister" Raul Manuel Domin-

gues said last month there were possibilities of overcoming disagreements over legalising political parties.

In a bid to end the war, Mozambique's ruling Frelimo party has abandoned one-party rule, established since shortly after the country's independence from Portugal in 1975.

It has also renounced Marxist-Leninism and promised democratic elections.

The talks were due to resume on July 10. Delegates said they had been held up because Mozambique's northern neighbour, Malawi, had refused to allow Renamo radio operators to enter the country and man a relay station.

The radio link, set up by the Italian government, allows Renamo negotiators in Rome to speak to the rebel headquarters in Mozambique.

Delegates said the problem had since been overcome. — *See Report*