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THE CHRONICLE

# MNR claims dismissed

MAPUTO — The Mozambican government on Tuesday denied claims by MNR bandits that Italian mediators had asked President Joaquim Chissano to become directly involved in peace negotiations.

The MNR bandits said earlier in the day that the mediators had requested separate meetings in Rome with Cde Chissano and bandit leader Alfonso Dhlakama before convening a new round of peace

talks.

This would have been a diplomatic triumph for the bandits putting their leader on a par with the head of state.

But a senior Mozambican government official said later in the day: "The Italian mediators have not asked President Chissano to go to Rome. It is a lie. It is completely false."

The MNR bandits, statement issued in Lisbon, said the mediators

wanted the two meetings before proceeding with an eighth round of peace talks.

The government official said the Italian government and Catholic Church mediators had frequent access to President Chissano here. The delegations at the Rome talks have been led by the Minister of Transport, Cde Armando Guebuza and MNR foreign affairs spokesman Raul Domingos. — Ziana-Rtr.