

New talks begin on Mozambique

Civ. civil war 8/10/91

ROME. — Negotiators seeking ways of ending the 15-year civil war in Mozambique began fresh talks yesterday with government representatives and said it was up to the country's Renamo rebels whether they led to peace.

"I would say that securing a peace agreement at these talks is now completely up to the rebels," Labour Minister Teodato Hunguana said, entering the eighth round of negotiations sponsored by Italy and Roman Catholic churchmen.

Mediators, frustrated by the talks repeatedly stalling, revived them by going to Mozambique and Malawi last month to secure the agreement of President Joaquim Chissano and rebel leader Afonso Dhlakama to a basic agenda.

There has been speculation that the two men could meet for the first time this week at an international peace vigil to be held on the Mediterra-

nean island of Malta. Mr Chissano has confirmed he will attend the Malta gathering.

"We have no confirmation that Dhlakama will come although he has been invited. If they do meet, it would certainly send a message to the people of Mozambique that the Rome talks really are worth while," a leading prelate said.

Monsignor Jaime Goncalves, bishop of the northern Mozambique city of Beira, said Mozambicans had seen little emerging from the Rome talks that could improve their lot and were longing for hope after years of suffering.

The Renamo (Mozambique National Resistance) rebels' Lisbon representative said yesterday that Mr Dhlakama would probably fly to Malta for a meeting with Mr Chissano later this week, but two of the Rome mediators ruled this out. — Sapa-Reuter.