

Maputo talks leaders meet

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ROME.

THE heads of delegations in talks between the Mozambican government and the MNR bandits met on Tuesday in Rome, marking the beginning of direct discussions between the two sides in the eighth round of peace negotiations for the country.

These talks began over a week ago in Rome but were interrupted while the mediators travelled to an ecumenical peace conference in Malta.

The government and bandit representatives are continuing their discussion of political and legal principles to determine the respective rights and obligations of both sides following a ceasefire.

They are still dealing with the concept of the reciprocal policies suggested by the Italian mediators at the last round of talks. At that time, the bandits rejected the mediators' proposal, which it called irrelevant.

Sources at the talks have said that, this time, the bandits presented a counter-proposal with a set of principles that centre around the question of the legal recognition of the government and the commitment to respect the country's basic laws, after a ceasefire.

The bandits would like to have the government's commitment that it would abstain from approving new laws that touch on material under discussion in Rome and that it would review all current legislation that goes against the spirit of the negotiations.

The sources said the bandits had also rejected the mediators' proposal that the two sides commit themselves to reaching a general peace accord by the end of 1991.

The government apparently has said it wanted more flexibility, including the bandits' formal recognition of the government that was implicit in the idea that the bandits respect the established order in the country. — Ziana-Pana.