

Mozambique peace ^{Star} talks grind to a halt ^{Star} 13

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MAPUTO — The peace talks between the Mozambican government and the Renamo rebels are again deadlocked.

The two sides failed last week in Rome to reach agreement on the principles to be used in establishing multiparty politics in the country. And according to the official Mozambican news agency, Aim, the prospects for any chance of reaching agreement on substantial matters during the current round of talks now look grim.

On Friday afternoon — after several days in which the mediators shuttled between the hotels where the two delegations are staying — the two sides finally met in a plenary session. Aim says the meeting was held in an atmosphere of coldness and scepticism.

Renamo now wants the debate on the legitimacy of the Mozambican state and its institutions reopened, a debate which the government believed

had been closed with the signing of the October 18 protocol.

The government delegation has accused Renamo of performing a volte-face, and of once again questioning the established legal and political order, in order to place itself on an equal footing with Frelimo.

According to Aim, Renamo's objective is an agreement on some power-sharing arrangement with the Frelimo government during the transition period leading to the holding of free and fair elections.

Renamo also appears to be unhappy with the role of the mediators, the Italian government and the Catholic church, and wants Portugal, Mozambique's former colonial power, to be involved in the talks.

The talks have not been broken off. Both delegations remain in Rome, but it is far from clear how the mediators hope to break the latest deadlock.