

# Maputo government, MNR sign partial accord in Rome

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ROME.

THE Mozambique government and the MNR on Wednesday signed a new partial accord on ending 15 years of banditry and agreed to start another round of peace talks on December 10.

The government and MNR reached a deal on how political parties will be set up in a multi-party democracy after months of mediation by the Italian government and Catholic churchmen.

The official mediators had hoped to finish all political negotiations by mid-November to clinch a ceasefire by Christmas in the war that has cost over a million lives since 1975.

But under the new timetable agreed on Wednesday, the issue of

a new electoral law will not be tackled before mid-December.

"You never know. Miracles are always possible," Mr Don Matteo Zuppi, one of the mediators, said.

The agreement was signed in a simple ceremony at the headquarters of the Sant'egidio religious community, one of the three mediating parties. The others are the Italian government and Mozambique Catholic church.

MNR bandit leader Afonso Dhlakama, in Rome for talks with the Vatican and the Italian government, did not attend, the bandit "foreign minister" Raul Manuel Domingos signed for the MNR and transport minister Cde Armando Guebuza for the government.

The most difficult points in Wednesday's

agreement were a clause giving the government the right to register all political parties and another under which the MNR will be recognised as a party as soon as a peace deal is signed.

The new law bans any tribalism, separatist or religious parties. Party names that incite violence will not be allowed, political parties will not have the right to question Mozambique's territorial integrity or national unity.

Wednesday's accord marks the first success for the mediators since the government and MNR agreed on the general framework for negotiations last October 18.

The Rome talks have been going on for 18 months. The eighth round, which ended on Wednesday, had begun on October 7. — Ziana-Reuter.