

# PRESIDENT MEETS MNR LEADER

By Nyasha Nyakamu and Newton Kanheema  
PRESIDENT Mugabe met the leader of the MNR, Afonso Dhlakama, for the first time in Malawi yesterday, as a follow-up to the recent one-day meeting with President Chissano of Mozambique last month in Beira.

He told The Herald on his arrival from Blantyre that he and Malawi President Kamuzu Banda met the MNR leader to emphasise the need for peace in the region and particularly Mozambique.

Arrangements were made after the Beira meeting for President Mugabe and Dr Banda to confer on how they could help the peace process and meet Dhlakama. The two presidents prepared for yesterday's meeting with the MNR leader when they met on Thursday.

Further contacts between the MNR and Zimbabwe were possible if needed.

President Mugabe disputed international reports that the MNR leader was meeting President

Mugabe and President Banda in Blantyre to set conditions for the success of the peace talks, including the withdrawal of the Zimbabwean forces from Mozambique.

"We met him in order to influence Renamo positively in pursuing the discussions in Rome and to emphasise the need for

had subsequently complied.

Asked when Zimbabwean troops would be withdrawn from Mozambican soil, the President said: "Once the process has been completed and there is peace we will not leave our troops in Mozambique for a day longer."



peace in the region and particularly in Mozambique.

"It (meeting) had nothing to do with the withdrawal of our troops. It should be a matter for the talks which they are holding in Rome."

President Mugabe said it was the Rome meeting that had decided on the confinement of Zimbabwean troops to the Beira Corridor and Limpopo Corridor and Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean troops were deployed in Mozambique in the early 1980s at the invitation of the Mozambican government, then led by the late president Samora Machel.

He described his talks with Dhlakama as a "good meeting" and hoped that it would help in achieving peace in Mozambique. The discussions with Dhlakama were for the first time and if need

be we will be holding further discussions."

Asked about his impression of Dhlakama with a view to peace, he said: "He is leader of Renamo and my first reading of him is that he is a man with some ideas and a person who naturally is anxious that the position of Renamo be assured after the peace process."

"He is talking peace and expresses his desire for peace."

However, Cde Mugabe said he could not conclusively judge Dhlakama but that the future would determine that.

The next round of talks between the Mozambican government and the MNR are scheduled for January 15 in Rome.

Hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans have been killed, maimed and displaced as a result of MNR banditry since the organisation was set up.

President Mugabe was accompanied on his visit to Malawi by the Minister of State for National Security, Cde Sydney Sekeremayi; the Acting Minister of Defence, Cde Emmanuel Mhangugwa; and other Government officials.