

Mozambique accuses rebel side as negotiations stall

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ROME — Mozambique's chief government negotiator at stalled efforts on ending the country's 16-year-old civil war, yesterday accused the rebel side of undermining all that had been agreed so far in the talks.

Transport Minister Armando Guebuza said latest proposals from the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) called into question all that had been worked out since the Rome peace talks began in June 1990 under Italian sponsorship.

Mr Guebuza said the disagreement went far beyond a mere constitutional dispute, but he declined to go into details.

Italy's chief mediator at the talks, Mr Mario Raffaelli, said last week that only a single clause on revising the constitution was holding up agreement on the political aspect of the talks and insisted that considerable progress had been made.

"He says that, it's his responsibility," Mr Gue-

buzza said.

Due to the deadlock, there has been no full negotiating session since the end of last month. Apparently worried about the slow pace of the talks, Italy last week appealed for international help to secure a quick settlement.

Both the government side and Renamo last week asked Portugal, the former colonial power in Mozambique, to get involved in the Rome talks as soon as possible. Lisbon last year brokered a peace accord for Angola, another of its ex-colonies.

Renamo officials in Rome yesterday said talks with the official mediators — Roman Catholic clergymen and an Italian government representative — were continuing, but it was too early to say when all the negotiators might meet again. — Sapa-Reuter.