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Renamo names date for peace talks

LISBON — Mozambican rebel leader Afonso Dhlakama told the Portuguese news agency Lusa yesterday he would meet President Joachim Chissano in Rome on August 3.

It will be their first meeting in 16 years of civil war that has cost an estimated 1-million lives.

Chissano said at the weekend after meeting Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe that he was prepared to meet the Renamo leader to seek peace for the country of 15-million people.

Dhlakama, speaking from Geneva, said he had been contacted by an envoy of

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe on Tuesday to agree on a date for talks. He did not say how long the talks would last.

"We are going to discuss important political questions with a view to ending the war in Mozambique," Dhlakama said. "It is possible that we will reach an agreement to end the war."

He added: "A ceasefire can only be made when (Chissano's government) accepts that democracy be established in Mozambique, and it could even be signed at the summit."

Dhlakama said Mugabe would also be present in Rome, along with a representative of Botswana and observers from the Rome talks. — Sapa-Reuter.