

# Chissano upbeat about talks with Renamo

MAPUTO — Mozambican president Joaquim Chissano is "optimistic" about his first meeting with Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama in Rome tomorrow.

Chissano has told a news conference he expects "positive results" to emerge. His optimism is based on comments by Dhlakama to Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe in Botswana on July 4.

Mugabe briefed Chissano two weeks later in Harare, telling him Dhlakama wanted "a serious meeting to discuss peace and sign a ceasefire".

Dhlakama also wanted guarantees for

his personal safety and that of his men, who should not be harassed or discriminated against, and be able to pursue political activities freely.

"We thought Dhlakama was not demanding anything impossible," Chissano said. "The government guarantees all citizens that they can live in peace and security and express themselves freely."

Chissano insisted, however, that Renamo should also give guarantees that it would not murder or harass people.

He hoped Dhlakama was serious about

seeking peace. A breakdown in talks would be a "catastrophe", Chissano said.

The talks between government and Renamo delegations, now in their 11th round, have so far failed to reach agreement on a series of issues, including the composition of a new national army.

But Western diplomats have noted the devastating drought is putting pressure on all sides to reach a quick settlement.

President Mugabe is due to attend the talks and there are reports that Lonrho CE Tiny Rowland will also attend. — Sapa-Reuter-AFP.

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