

Frelimo asks for UN to monitor ceasefire

Argus Africa News Service
MAPUTO. — As a first step towards implementing the Rome peace declaration, the Frelimo government has asked the United Nations to get ready to monitor a ceasefire and subsequent election in Mozambique.

Announcing this, President Joaquim Chissano said the government would also introduce legislation to put into practice the various protocols signed in Rome with the Renamo rebels during the two years of negotiation.

Mr Chissano at the same time appealed to Renamo members to lay down their arms now and not wait for a formal ceasefire to be negotiated.

"The continuation of violence is absurd," he said at a rally in Maputo at which he publicly reported on his first meeting with Renamo leader Dhlakama in Rome on August 5 and 6.

At that meeting the two leaders failed to reach final agreement on a ceasefire but committed their respective negotiators to do so by October 1.

In the first detailed account of his historic meeting with the rebel leader in the hotel room of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Mr Chissano said he had refused to shake hands with Mr Dhlakama until the rebel leader had confirmed that he wanted peace.

He had asked the question in English as well as Portuguese for the benefit of Mr Mugabe and Lonrho boss Tiny Rowland, who was also present.

Mr Dhlakama had confirmed in both languages that he wanted peace and they had then got down to four hours of intense discussion.

After they had both agreed in principle to a ceasefire Mr Chissano said he had tried first to get

Mr Dhlakama to agree to an immediate ceasefire, then to a two-week timetable but the Renamo leader had refused.

Mr Chissano said much of the discussion had been about the Renamo leader's demand for guarantees that neither he nor his followers would be harmed or harassed after a ceasefire had been agreed to and that Renamo would be able to campaign without hindrance.

These demands had been presented to Mr Mugabe when he met Mr Dhlakama in Gaborone on July 4, together with a list of 34 articles in the Mozambican constitution that Renamo wanted suspended.

At the Rome meeting Mr Mugabe explained, however, that Renamo was not making the suspension of these articles a condition of its acceptance of a ceasefire and was not including the issue in its demands for guarantees.