

MOZAMBIQUE: UN DITHERS

United Nations' representative in Maputo **Peter Simkin** leaves his post at the start of October, precisely the most critical moment in UN humanitarian operations in Mozambique. As we went to press, not a single lorry had yet moved under a July agreement between the UN, the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo) and the government because Renamo has refused to agree to the UN's package of aid routes. Even if a peace agreement is signed as expected on 1 October the UN will start operations only with Renamo's explicit permission on all routes.

Pressure has been mounting in some quarters of the UN in Maputo to cut diplomacy and get on with the action. Simkin's cool, calm approach has kept the UN's lid on but has failed to get trucks rolling. Signs of fracture in different UN agencies appeared in June when two top men flew to meet Renamo boss **Alphonso Dhlakama** at his Gorongosa headquarter without informing UN envoy Simkin. In mid-September, a draft UN press release was leaked: it roundly condemned government officials for stealing food and Renamo for blatant obstruction of any agreement, and proposed by-passing the national relief organisation which it accused of incompetence. The draft was passed round embassies for approval but was then squashed by someone with an eye for diplomacy. Simkin is off to Ethiopia. His successor, **Eric de Mul**, is fresh from a UN post in Mongolia.