

Our forces to stay in Mozambique: Mahachi,

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Chron.

HARARE — The United Nations peacekeeping force in Mozambique has not yet been formed and Zimbabwean troops guarding the Beira and Limpopo corridors will stay in that country a bit longer, the Minister of Defence, Cde Moven Mahachi, said here yesterday.

Asked when the troops would be withdrawing with the February deadline fast approaching, the minister said: "It depends on the UN. As soon as they are in a position to put in a replacement army (on the corridors) we will pull out any time . . . We are definitely withdrawing."

The troops were originally supposed to leave Mozambique by November 15 last year, according to the October 4 Rome Peace Accord between the Mozambican government and the MNR rebels. The presence of the ZNA was later extended to this month by which time the UN hoped to have had a peacekeeping force in place in Mozambique.

Cde Mahachi said Zimbabwe was committed to pulling out, adding that both sides wanted peace. He said there had been a lull in any military activities by both sides save for odd incidences of a criminal nature.

To illustrate that both

sides wanted peace, he said, it was now safe to travel along the corridors. He said they were still bidding among countries who wished to contribute to the peacekeeping force.

Asked whether the expenditure by his ministry was justified bearing in mind the economic hardships the country was facing and the peace that existed, the minister said it was because of the army that the country's economy was running — Chronicle Corr.