

Advance contingent of UN military engineers arrives in Mozambique

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Herald Reporter

AN advance contingent of United Nations peacekeeping forces military engineers yesterday started setting up facilities for their colleagues at Chimoi in Mozambique.

The 100-man team started arriving on Wednesday evening with heavy engineering and road-making equipment, tents, transport trucks, medical facilities and an array of sophisticated communication equipment.

MARINGUE

Several countries have already been allocated their areas of operation in which they will be required to enforce peace.

Renamo recently complained that the UN was taking too long to deploy its forces in Mozambique.

Zimbabwe's lifelines of Beira and Limpopo corridors will be guarded by Italian and Zambian forces respectively.

The Italians will total 1 300 when in full strength along the Beira Corridor with their headquarters at Dondo under a full colonel. The Beira Corridor is under the central province command, which also includes the Vanduzi-Changara-Tete route which will be patrolled by a battalion of Botswana troops.

An Italian brigadier-general will command the province.

The Northern Province command, which will primarily ensure peace along the Nacala corridor, will be guarded by Bangladeshi troops under a Bangladeshi brigadier-general.

It is expected that the southern province command which will cover the Limpopo Corridor and Maputo and its environs, will most likely go to a Zambian brigadier.

Maputo, which is said to have originally been earmarked for Japanese troops, might have to be given to another country's forces. The Japanese are reportedly having second thoughts about participating in a process that might require that their troops fight on foreign soil.

Sources along the Beira Corridor and the sprawling bush base of Renamo

leader Mr Afonso Dhlakama at Maringue near the Gorongosa mountains told The Herald that Japan now wished to finance the participation of any country which took its place.

Japanese journalists at Mr Dhlakama's Press conference on Wednesday at Maringue hinted as much in their questions to the Renamo leader.

They wanted him to "justify" Japanese participation in the peacekeeping activities. They said people in their country did not understand the conflict in the Southern African state.

The Brazilian general in charge of peacekeepers has already set up camp in Maputo.

Military sources were at pains to explain the difference between peacekeepers and observers.

"The peacekeepers are authorised to enforce peace," said an officer involved in the peace process. "They can actually fight to enforce that peace."

Observers will only be there to monitor the process and report the violations.

An Uruguayan lieutenant-colonel is already based in Beira with a contingent for monitoring while Swedes are already in place in Chimoi.

Mr Dhlakama said his side would ensure that Renamo adhered to the Rome accord. He said there had been numerous reports that Renamo was not in charge of all the rebel forces fighting against the Frelimo government.

"These reports have now been proved wrong," he told The Herald. "We have ordered that our forces now stop fighting in accordance with the peace accord and they have done so, from Rouvuma to Maputo."

Rouvuma is the northernmost province of Mozambique and Maputo is the southernmost province.

The Renamo leader said what Renamo was now waiting for was to move into assembly points under the direction of the UN, a process which he said was taking too long.