

War costs Mozambique nearly \$384 billion

Herald Reporter

THE just-ended war between the Mozambican government and Renamo has cost that country nearly US\$64 billion (about Z\$384 billion) and it will take about 50 years for the Mozambicans to reconstruct their shattered country.

Mozambique, still experiencing a fragile peace since October last year, would not be able to hold general elections in October this year as had been scheduled because the involved parties have not yet demobilised their forces, the director of Higher Institute for International Relations in Maputo, Mozambique, Dr Agostinho Zacarias, said in an interview in Harare yesterday.

He is among several other research fellows, political figures, military men and other prominent people to a three-day conference on peace and stability in Southern Africa which opened in Harare

yesterday.

Dr Zacarias said Renamo was using some delaying tactics and had retreated to its headquarters in Marigue, Mozambique.

Officials from the Mozambican government and Renamo were supposed to work together in the demobilisation of their respective military forces and in the whole peace process.

"The situation in Mozambique is very worrying and we will not be able to hold elections in October unless the involved parties have demobilised their forces," he said.

Renamo leader, Mr Afonso Dhlakama, and some of his senior officials were supposed to have already gone to Maputo but this did not happen because Renamo was demanding "beautiful" homes in this Mozambican capital.

Dr Zacarias said the Mozambican government had helped a number of Renamo offi-



Dr Agostinho Zacarias

cial with accommodation as was stated in the Rome peace agreement of October last year. He said the peace accord stated that the government would help Renamo officials have accommodation but not to "provide" them with accommodation.

Renamo had also asked US\$100 million from the international community to help transform itself into a political party. It then appeared that the Mozambican government

was paying a prize for peace in this war-ravaged country.

Dr Zacarias said Renamo needed money to pay staff working for the party and also to pay some incidental expenses.

The 17-year Mozambican war killed more than 100 000 people in that country, displaced about three million others and another 1.5 million is living outside Mozambique because of the war. Its economy has been almost grounded to a halt.

If Mozambique goes to polls before the involved parties, Frelimo and Renamo have demobilised their forces, they could experience the same situation that occurred in Angola, after that country's general elections in September last year.

After the defeat in the elections, Dr Jonas Savimbi's Unita party took up arms and is now fighting the legitimate government of Angola again.