

UN reaches agreement with Renamo on demobilisation issue

UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali and a high-powered Un team appeared this week to have reached agreement with the Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama to begin demobilisation immediately, overcoming earlier objections.

However, commentators were wary and pointed to agreements reached with the former rebel leader earlier which had been subsequently broken, or had new conditions attached.

Boutros-Ghali visited Mozambique in

a bid to reach an agreement on an election date and the demobilisation of troops. Boutros-Ghali is anxious to demonstrate the usefulness of having deployed about 7,000 'blue helmets' observers and civil servants in at least one region where their presence will not be seen as a debacle. He arrived in Mozambique two days after Renamo made a surprise announcement explicitly embracing a UN resolution setting October 1994 as the deadline for multi-party elections in the country.

In a communique last week Renamo also presented a new proposal on the composition of the National Elections' Commission (NEC) similar to the government's: equal numbers of government and opposition, under a non-voting chairman chosen by the opposition.

Renamo (and the other opposition parties) had earlier rejected the government's proposal, causing the multi-party talks discussing a proposed electoral law to break up.