



The Argus

LIBERTY
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Stopping the arms

THIS week has seen the start of a process in Mozambique which has implications for the sub-continent and even beyond. Hundreds of government soldiers and former Renamo terrorists have begun to gather at assembly points to hand over their weapons to UN monitors.

It is the most concrete sign yet of the peace accord coming together in that strife-torn country. Once the demobilisation drive is completed, a major problem will remain in the form of hundreds of thousands of landmines planted during two wars. However, contracts have already been awarded for the start of their upliftment — particularly in the area of the Cahora Bassa hydro-electric scheme.

When that area is secured, plans can go ahead with what has long been a continental dream — the building of a massive African power grid with Cahora Bassa as the starting point.

But the disarming of the estimated 62 000 government and 20 000 Renamo soldiers should have an immediate effect in this country — by plugging one major reservoir of illegal arms, like the ubiquitous AK-47s, which have been used in much of the recent violence.