

## 600 Renamo soldiers quit assembly camps

MAPUTO — More than 600 Renamo guerrillas on Tuesday abandoned two UN supervised assembly points where they had gathered under a Mozambican peace agreement, UN officials said yesterday.

The UN-chaired joint ceasefire commission heard about the flight of the guerrillas when it met in Maputo on Tuesday to try to resolve food and logistical problems at assembly points.

No official explanation was immediately available for the guerrillas' decision to leave the two assembly points, but officials said those who left made up less than half the number gathered in the two overcrowded camps and said they left unarmed.

The Maputo daily Noticias said the exodus was caused precisely by the problems the committee was meeting to discuss — inadequate diet and logistical difficulties. A spokesman for the UN operation in Mozambique said an investigation into the incident had been ordered.

The assembly points in question are Chiramba, on the south bank of the Zambezi, and Magunde, in the southern part of Sofala.

The camps were designed for 500 men, but on Monday each was holding over 800, the Mozambique News Agency reported.

UN officials said 400 men left Chiramba and 200 abandoned Magunde. They did not take their weapons with them.

When the fighters check in at assembly points they must surrender their weapons to UN military observers. Firearms and ammunition are then stored in locked containers under UN protection.

More than 8 000 government soldiers and 4 000 guerrillas have gone to assembly points since they opened on November 30 last year.

Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama has claimed that his men in the assembly points are going hungry and that he was moved to tears when he visited Chiramba on December 28.

But according to UN official Gerald Buckley, the supplies provided by the UN World Food Programme to the assembly points were increased by between 25% and 60%, depending on the items concerned, on December 21.

Every fighter in the assembly area now receives a daily ration including 333g of maize flour and 200g of rice, beans or peas and vegetable oil and sugar.

This is more than the ration distributed to destitute peasants under Mozambique's emergency programme. — Sapa-Reuter.

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