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Nel's Renamo visits: more rifts in cabinet ?

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA and Mozambique tottered as SA admitted that it had violated the Nkomati Accord, signed 18 months ago by the two countries, by dealing with the rebel Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) movement.

An outraged Opposition Progressive Federal Party (PFP) called for the resignation of the cabinet ministers involved. Mr Colin Eglin, the party chairman and its spokesman on foreign affairs, said the Foreign Minister, Mr Pik Botha, Defence Minister, General Magnus Malan, and former Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr Louis Nel (who paid several visits to Renamo headquarters), should be fired immediately for supporting Renamo.

"If you start lying and cheating to your friends, your credibility has reached an all-time low," declared Eglin.

"The implications are enormous. If the Nkomati Accord collapses because of clandestine operations, the peace and stability of everyone will be placed in jeopardy. It is ironic that Nel has in effect been given promotion (to Director of Internal Information) when he should have been sacked," he said.

Botha and Malan tried to pacify members of the Mozambican cabinet in Komatipoort by explaining that South Africa had built a landing strip at Renamo headquarters and then flown in supplies to "soften up" Renamo to bring it to accept peace talks with the Mozambique government.

Botha said that SA was determined that the Accord should succeed. By giving details of outlawed African National Congress (ANC) guerrillas in Mozambique and information about ANC members who were arrested after leaving Mozambique he suggested that Mozambique had been guilty of Accord breaches, too.