

Chissano repeats refusal to negotiate with rebels

SouthScan 4(12) 22/3/89

MOZAMBIQUE's President Joaquim Chissano has again said his government will not negotiate with the 'bandits' of the Mozambique National Resistance MNR/Renamo.

Speaking on Sunday in Senegal's capital Dakar, he said that the only negotiations possible would be over the mechanisms for reintegrating the rebels into society.

The goals of the rebels were to block Mozambique's economic development, to institutionalise the displacement of the rural population, turning them into nomads, the perpetuation of the emergency situation and the prevention of the normalisation of social life.

Earlier there were reports that the Frelimo government had sanctioned a group of the nation's churchpeople to meet with the rebels (*SouthScan* Vol.3/p64). The government vehemently denied this meant the sanctioning of negotiations.

Chissano was speaking at an official luncheon in his honour given by Senegal's President Abdou Diouf.

He was on his return trip from a European visit including Belgium and Holland; earlier he also visited Gabon.

Chissano also said that conditions were not ripe for a formal meeting in the framework of the latest peace proposal offered by South Africa.

The suggestions for talks came from South Africa's foreign minister, who suggested that the US could play a mediating role between South Africa and Mozambique. The US reacted sympathetically to the suggestion.

He also called for the cancellation of Mozambique's foreign debt of around US\$4.3bn.

In Holland Chissano was reported to have requested military aid, but was told by the ministry of development cooperation in the Hague that "supplying military aid is not part of Dutch development policy".

A reported request for \$50m in additional aid was also rejected.