

SA envoy evacuated after crash in Moz

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THE South African Foreign Ministry's director for African affairs, Mr Derek Auret, was evacuated by a UN peacekeeping force helicopter after an aircraft in which he was flying crashed in northern Mozambique.

Mr Auret was in Mozambique this week to try to persuade Renamo to speed up the endangered peace process.

Mr Auret, who was appointed to his post in January last year, and seven others aboard the plane were unscathed in Wednesday's accident.

Mr Auret had gone to the coast-

al town of Lurio in the northern Nampula province for a "bush summit" with Renamo leader Mr Afonso Dhlakama.

His tried to persuade Mr Dhlakama to meet President Joaquim Chissano, an unnamed South African official said.

Mr Auret flew to Mr Dhlakama's headquarters on Wednesday with the knowledge of the Maputo government and the UN, Foreign Affairs spokesman Mr Patrick Evans said.

South Africa backed Renamo in its guerilla war against the Mozambican government, which

ended with the signing of a peace agreement last October.

"Auret was trying to see what he could do to further a meeting between Dhlakama and Chissano," Mr Evans said.

Other details relating to last October's ceasefire were also discussed.

It was not known if Mr Dhlakama would respond to the call to meet Mr Chissano, he said.

A summit between the two leaders was scheduled for July 17, but was postponed. — Staff Reporter, Sapa-Reuter-AFP