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Mandela's Renamo meeting uncertain

MAPUTO — President Nelson Mandela yesterday expressed his desire to meet Renamo president Afonso Dhlakama despite strenuous efforts by Mozambican government members to discourage such talks.

The meeting, due to take place today, hung in the balance last night although Mandela was encouraged to go ahead by UN special representative Aldo Ajello.

Mandela told a news conference he would like to meet Dhlakama but added he would only do so if Dhlakama agreed and the Mozambican government gave the go-ahead.

The meeting may still not take place, as Mandela might return to SA sooner than expected to meet Cosatu leaders in the event of an escalation of tensions due to labour unrest.

In other behind-the-scenes activity during Mandela's three-day state visit to Mozambique, members of the Angolan government have requested an update from him on regional peace negotiations he has been involved in.

During a meeting with Ajello yesterday Mandela indicated SA would support the Mo-

TIM COHEN

zambican election due in October, but did not make any specific offers of help.

Asked at the news conference if he would recommend that Mozambican parties negotiate a government of national unity agreement, as was done in SA, he said he would not dictate how other countries should handle such matters.

Officials accompanying Mandela confirmed that no specific arrangements had been made with regard to bilateral trade issues or on the question of the number of Mozambican migrant labourers allowed into SA.

But both of these issues will be high on the agendas of discussions due to take place soon between ministers from both countries.

It is understood that a meeting has already been arranged between Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Mozambican officials to discuss agricultural and trade issues.

Among other ceremonial functions, Mandela laid a wreath at the grave of former Mozambican president Samora Machel.