

## MOZAMBIQUE: Trouble brewing in Army

President **Joaquim Chissano** has set up a special military commission to carry out an inquiry into army moral, following rumours that public sector strikes which have been breaking out in the country for the last three weeks (ION N°413) are likely to affect the army. While the strikers are claiming higher wages, career opportunities and payment of arrears, the situation in the Armed Forces may be a lot worse.

On January 10, an emergency meeting was called at the Ministry of Defence, attended by commanders from the different FRELIMO army corps - the Air Force, the Navy, the Infantry and the Frontier Guards. The meeting was chaired by Major-General **Da Silva Nihla**, member of the FRELIMO Politburo and political leader of Mozambique's Armed Forces, representing President Chissano. At the end of the meeting, which continued into the early hours, the officers drew up a joint-document which reiterated their loyalty to the President.

However, Joaquim Chissano was obliged to form an inquiry commission, while at the same time calling on the Minister of Finance, **Abdul Magid Osman**, to find, jointly, with the Defence Minister, General **Alberto Chipande**, answers to the problems concerning the Armed Forces. Although the rumours of a possible strike in the Army have not subsided, today it is thought in Maputo that a reshuffle at the head of the Armed Forces may be just around the corner.

*I.O.N.- The FRELIMO soldiers have sometimes gone for months without being paid, and sometimes for weeks without food or munitions. This situation has deeply affected the troops' moral. On January 8, several people arriving in Maputo from the north of the country said that they had been stopped at control barriers for security reasons. According to witness accounts obtained by the Indian Ocean Newsletter, the soldiers strongly advised the people not to travel in the following days because "we are preparing to go on strike," they said. The next day President Chissano publically admitted that the claims of the strikers in the public sector were justified but that they must not forget that "due to the difficulties which the country must face today, the soldiers were deprived of food and clothing."*