

Uncertainty still ⁸/₅ hangs over family ⁹⁰ held by Renamo

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By LOURENS SCHOEMAN
IT is important for the safety of the Muller family of East London, captured by Renamo rebels in Mozambique recently, that their release be secured as soon as possible.

This was emphasised last night by the South African Trade Representative in Mozambique, Mr Dawid Laubscher, in an exclusive interview with the Herald.

The Mullers' parents, Dick and Ricky Muller, who live in Fernglen, Port Elizabeth, said last night they were very relieved that the family was alive and apparently well.

Mr Laubscher — though optimistic that Mr David Muller, his wife Sandy, their daughter Tammy, 8, and son Seth, 5, would be released soon — said there

was a state of war in Mozambique.

Mr Laubscher said the Department of Foreign Affairs and his office in Maputo were doing all they could to trace the whereabouts of the family.

"I can safely say that the Mozambican Government is as much in the dark about the situation as we are at the moment. But the local head of the Defence Force has promised to assist wherever they can.

"There is no direct contact with Renamo and everybody has to rely on statements by Renamo spokesmen. As far as can be established, the yacht stranded near the coastal town, Vilanculos.

"According to Renamo the family was captured and removed to the province of Inhambane for their safety. The movement said they are well looked after, in good health and unharmed.

"The way the statement is worded in a way implies that the movement would be willing to release the Mullers without too much

Renamo captives

□ From Page 1

fuss," he said.

Mr Laubscher said he had also contacted the International Red Cross

"One does not want to speculate, but I'm positive that Renamo will not harm the family unnecessarily. Their actions in the past have shown that the movement has captured several people, only to release them again after a while.

"But there is always a measure of uncertainty while they are in captivity with the country in a state of war. It is therefore very important that their release is secured as quickly as possible," he said.

Mr Muller senior said he and his wife would now wait for the wheels to start turning. "We are just very relieved to know they are alive and apparently well and unharmed."

The Mullers set off from East London for a trip round the coast of Africa with their yacht Arwin.

□ Mr Muller is an architect who graduated at the University of Port Elizabeth and his wife Sandy a marine biologist.

□ To Page 2