

RENAMO, war and negotiations

The "big attack" launched by the government's Armed Forces in the centre and the north of the country, bolstered by troops from Zimbabwe which the RENAMO had been expecting since May 3, is reported to have begun on May 7, according to the spokesman for the rebel movement in Lisbon. A thousand or so Zimbabwean soldiers and 700 Mozambicans were flown in by Antonov planes on May 9 in the region of Gorongosa. In total the RENAMO, expects that 6,000 pro-government soldiers will enter into the fray. This will have been the FRELIMO's heaviest offensive. RENAMO has meanwhile rejected the offer of mediation by President **Robert Mugabe** of Zimbabwe in the process of negotiations with the FRELIMO at its National Council meeting on May 2 and 3, referring at the same time to the reinforcement of Zimbabwe's military presence in the provinces in the centre of the country. The rebel movement says that the government is seeking to weaken the position of the opposition guerilla in the field in the run-up to eventual negotiations and to win over some of the people in the regions under rebel control.

At the same time as this military offensive, President Joaquim Chissano has also designated the composition of the FRELIMO delegation in preparation for negotiations with the RENAMO. It will include the Minister of Transport, **Armando Guebuza**, the Minister of Information, **Teodato Hunguane**, an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr **Xirindze** and **Pedro Chissano**, the President's brother, former member of the Mozambican colonial forces and today, adviser to the presidency on peace affairs.