

Civil war fans Maputo anguish

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MAPUTO. — The death toll in Mozambique's drought-hit areas is rising and relief efforts are hampered by the civil war.

Mozambique's official news agency, Alm, reports that 13 children have died from starvation and hunger-related sicknesses in the village of Chihumdzi in the southern province of Inhambane.

Village chairman Andre Mazive said urgent relief was needed to save the 3 500 inhabitants of Chihumdzi.

The town's health post is empty. The district health authorities wanted to restock the post, but residents decided against it, fearing that the new stocks would attract Renamo attacks.

In the district of Caia on the Zambezi River in Sofala province at least nine people are known to have starved to death.

The district co-ordinator for the government's emergency relief programme, Mr Manuel Nhambi, said more people were arriving daily in Caia town to escape the outlying areas where they faced certain death through starvation.

Bridges on the roads leading to the town have been destroyed and the only way to get supplies to the town is by air and, according to Alm. The last flight to Caia was a month ago.

The neighbouring district of Chemba has not received much-needed food aid for at least three months.